

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP & ETHICS

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Leadership is a central dimension for collective action. No sustained group action will take place without leaders to provide the unifying vision, the initial impetus and the continuous integration for the various forces that have to join in any collective effort. Important as it may be, leadership is also a notion that gives rise to many oversimplistic conceptions and generates frequent misunderstandings.

This elective seminar is not meant to teach methods of good leadership, nor will it provide insights into how to gain influence and become a “leader”. Rather, it aims to provide students with a reflective learning experience on leadership gained through studying the leadership phenomenon from a variety of insights and perspectives drawn from different disciplines (psychology, sociology, history, organization theory...). In these workshops students will:

- Explore different issues and dilemmas of leadership in collective action
- Highlight the challenges of leadership in today’s organizations
- Provide students with a genuine opportunity to reflect on the ethical dimensions of leadership and their responsibility in confronting them.

A key component of this workshop series is a group project tutored by the lecturers. This project will enable students to use the knowledge and insights gained during their period of study to investigate a dilemma of leadership¹ applied to an organization of their choice, and to demonstrate skills of analysis and critical reflection.

¹ Dilemmas of leadership are hard-to-resolve but important issues of leadership in organizations such as the consequences of charismatic influence and of fairness versus effectiveness under condition of workplace diversity.

By the end of the semester, each group will perform a group presentation of their investigation followed by a class discussion. Eventually, each group will be asked to write a summary paper of their learning journey which should benefit from, and reflect on, the discussions and readings done throughout the workshop. The size of this paper should be between 1.000 and 2.000 words.

The above-mentioned learning outcomes will be met by means of 12 two-hours sessions split as follows.

- 7 “Key leadership issues and debate” sessions
- 2 “Group tutoring” sessions
- 3 “Group presentations and discussions” sessions

For each “Key leadership issues and debate” session students will be asked to read a selection of documents. The crucial importance of these readings must be strongly emphasized, as the success of each debate is greatly dependent on the work done in preparation of each session.

The evaluation of students will be based on:

- 30% Participation in class
- 40% Group presentation
- 30% Summary paper

The program of the 12 sessions will be as follows:

1: Mapping the territory of leadership

Wed 24 February 2010: 19h15 - 21h15

Part 1: Introduction

In this first part of the session students will be introduced to the purpose and learning outcomes of this workshop series. The groups will be formed and the guidelines for the group projects will be explained.

Part 2: Mapping the territory of leadership

Documents given to students in preparation of this part:

- 📖 Article: “What is leadership? (Bolden 2004)
- 📖 Article: “The ambiguity of leadership (Pfeffer 1993)
- 📖 Article: “Transformational leadership: An evolving concept examined through the work of Burns, Bass, Avolio and Leithwood” (2006)

Activities in class

The session will comment the specific nature of the leadership territory from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Then, students' answers to the above questions will be compared and discussed in the light of available knowledge on leadership. It will be completed by a short video of Peter Drucker on leadership.

2: Shackleton's last expedition: leadership under extreme circumstances.

Thursday 25 February 2010: 12h30 -14h30

Documents given to students in preparation of session 2:

- 📄 Abstract: Emotional intelligence (Goleman 1997)
- 📄 Article: Leadership that gets results (Goleman 1998)
- 📄 Article: The bond between intelligences (Cumar *and al* 2008)
- ✍ Leadership questionnaire (Blake and Mouton, 2002)
- 🎥 Documentary on Lord Shackleton's last expedition,

Leading question:

Does emotional intelligence matter more than IQ for predicting leadership potential?

Activities in class

In this session students will be encouraged to examine the multifaceted nature of leadership at a small group level in a very challenging course of events as well as to reflect on the significance of self-knowledge and emotional intelligence in leadership situations. From the story of Lord Shackleton's last expedition carried out under extreme conditions and unexpected circumstances, students will be invited to discuss the degree of relevance of the Blake and Mouton's leadership grid and will be prompted to reflect on the following issues:

- To what extent being in tune with someone's emotions and feelings can influence his or her behavior?
- To what extent using one's emotional self-knowledge can help to manage behavior and sustain energy levels and motivation of subordinates?

3 : The limits of leadership: Tolstoy's War and Peace

Wed 10 March 2010: 1015 – 12h15

Documents given in preparation of session 3:

- 📄 A summary of Leon Tolstoy's book "War and Peace"
- 📄 Article: "Situational leadership: A critical view" (Graeff 1983)
- 📄 Article: "The leaderless organization" (Nielsen, 2006)
- 🎥 Documentary made by James March on Tolstoy's War and Peace

Leading question:

What might be the limits of the Great Man theory of leadership in any given organisation?

Activities in class

There are obvious limits of the Great Man theory of leadership, as well as reasons to believe that events shape themselves. As a result, the central issue discussed in this session is the extent to which rulers and generals are 'history slaves'. In the light the documentary made by James March on Tolstoy's War and Peace and theories of situational leadership, students will be encouraged to reflect on:

- The relative role of leadership, context and social forces in the shaping of events.
- The actual contribution of leadership in history.

4: The pitfalls of rationality: leadership lessons from the life of R. McNamara

Friday, 12 March 2010: 17h00 –19h00

Documents given in preparation of session 4:

- 📄 Article: "The limits of rationality" (Nielsen 1991)
- 📄 Article: "Rationality, foolishness and adaptive intelligence" (March 2006)
- 📄 Article: "The decision for war and the limits of rationality" (Moles 1999)
- 📄 Article: "Robert McNamara blind sport" (Levin 2009)
- 📄 Article: "Evidence based management" (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2007)
- 🎥 Documentary on Robert McNamara's life as a Secretary of Defence of the US under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson entitled "The Fog of War".

Leading question:

To what extent rational information gathering, the normative measurement of performance and rational decision procedures should be considered to be prime-requisites for efficient management and leadership?

Activities in class

Based on the documentary on Robert McNamara's life as a Secretary of Defence of the US, the session will discuss students' answers and reflect on the issues implied by the preparatory questions. In addition, students will watch a short video excerpt from an interview with James March who discusses the importance of intentions.

5 & 6: Getting and using information and informants: exit or voice.

Wed 24 March 2010: Session 5: 10h15 - 12h15 / Session 6: 12h30 - 14h30

Documents given in preparation of sessions 5 & 6:

- 📄 Article: "Tobacco firms kept quiet on polonium role in cigarettes" (2008)
- 📄 Article: "Jeffrey Wigand: The whistle-blower" (Fast Company, 2007)
- 📄 Article: "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory" (Ciulla 1995)
- 📄 Article: "Whistle-blowing and morality" (Bouville 2007)
- 📄 Article: "Creating moral organizations" (Maccoby 2005)
- 🎬 Movie: "The Insider", Directed by Michael Mann. With Al Pacino, Russell Crowe, Christopher Plummer (Session 5)

Leading questions:

What are we to do with knowledge about unlawful or unethical behaviour gathered on the job? Should we use exit or voice? When is it appropriate to exit or voice?

Activities in class (Session 6)

The session will open a debate drawn from the movie "The Insider", a feature movie that recounts the chain of events that pitted a former tobacco executive Dr. Jeffrey Wigand against his former employers. Students will be encouraged to discuss the threats and opportunities to become a whistle-blower in an organizational setting and to reflect on the potential conflicts existing between leadership, organization's purposes and society's interests.

7: Economic ideology and moral tension

Wed 31 March 2010: 19h15 – 21h15

Documents given in preparation of session 7:

- 📄 Article: "Capitalism as false consciousness" (Graham 2006)
- 📄 Article: "Language in the new capitalism" (Fairclough, 2000)
- 📄 Extract from "The rationalization of everything" (Lippmann and Aldrich 2003)
- 🎬 Extract Movie 1: "Wall Street", Directed by Oliver Stone (2001)
- 🎬 Extract Movie 2: "Dominium Mundi" by Gerald Caillat (2008)

Leading questions:

Is leadership ethics soluble in capitalism?

Activities in class

The session will open a debate drawn from an extract from the movie "Wall Street" (i.e. the famous speech "Greed is good" given by Michael Douglas) and an extract from the movie "Dominium Mundi" about the Western *managerialization* of world's societies. Students will be encouraged to explore the political dimension of leadership by discussing the contemporary tensions existing between the dominant economic ideology and the moral pressures of leadership practice.

8: Group tutoring

Monday 12 April 2010: 19h15 – 21h15

9: Group tutoring

Wed 14 April 2010: 19h15 – 21h15

10: Group presentations and debate

Monday 19 April 2010: 12h30 – 14h30

11: Group presentations and debate

Wed 5 May 2010: 19h15 – 21h15

12: Group presentations and debate

Thursday 6 May 2010: 19h15 – 21h15

Some suggested additional readings:

- Ciulla, J. B. *The Ethics of Leadership*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002
- E. Friedberg (Ed.) *Decision Making*, DVD, R&O Multimedia, 2002
- EJ Garcia: *Raising leadership criticality in MBAs*, Higher Education. Vol 58/1 07/ 2009
- John W. Gardner: *On Leadership*, New York, The Free Press, 1990
- James March: *Decisions and Organizations*, London, Basil Blackwell, 1988
- James March: *Explorations in Organizations*, Stanford University Press, 2008,
- Michael Maccoby: *The Leaders we need and what makes us follow?*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2007
- Michael Maccoby, *Narcissistic Leaders*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2007
- Pfeffer and Sutton: *Hard facts, dangerous half-truth and total nonsense; profiting from evidence-based management*, Harvard Business School Press – Boston 2006
- Philip Selznick: *Leadership in Administration*, Evanston, Row Peterson, 1957.