

15.974 PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP
DRAFT SYLLABUS – December 1, 2005
Spring 2006 – H2

Section A – Wednesdays 8:30 – 11:30am E51-063

Section B – Thursdays 8:30 – 11:30am E51-085

Instructor: Pat Bentley

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Course Summary

Leadership is the ability to influence a group of people towards a goal. In this course students will increase their own leadership capacities through feedback, reflection and practice. Even though all of us have had leadership opportunities, we all too rarely receive candid, insightful feedback on our actual performance that then allows us to think, act and speak more effectively in the next situation. The heart of this course is the repeated coaching and real-time feedback the students will receive on their own leadership activities from their peers and the instructor. Students will use readings, role plays, experiential exercises, and self-reflection, as well as focused coaching and feedback, to optimize their own leadership capabilities. You need not be in a position of authority to take this course. Course deliverables include: active participation in your own leadership growth during the semester and a written packet that summarizes your reflections and experiences around leadership during the course.

Course Evaluation

This course will be graded Pass/Fail. This structure gives you the freedom to work on your leadership skills without the pressure of an overly detailed measure of success. As is true in so many things, you will get out of this course what you put into it. In order to Pass, all assignments must be completed and handed in by 4pm of the last day of class (17 or 18 May 2006) with appropriate effort.

Course Assignments

- Class Participation
- Sloan Distributed Leadership Survey and 360 Feedback
- Creation of your Leadership Packet: Leadership Definition, Self-Assessment, Action Plan and Results, Leadership Journal, Next Steps
- Meeting with class Instructor to go over your Self-Assessment and Action Plan.

Course Readings

All readings for this course will be found in the Reading Packet available from CopyTech.

Explanation of Assignments

Class Participation – I look for your attentive, active participation in class. Missing more than one class will jeopardize your grade.

Sloan Distributed Leadership Survey and 360 Feedback – an online assessment of your leadership skills through the lens of the Distributed Leadership Model used here at Sloan. You are asked to take the Survey and have at least five of your colleagues use it to give you feedback. Ideally your colleagues will include at least one of your managers, and at least two each of your peers and your direct reports. You may also ask for feedback from your customers.

Leadership Definition – a definition of leadership that resonates for you.

Self-Assessment – your candid assessment of your current strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

Action Plan and Results – Based on your Self-Assessment and the results from the Distributed Leadership Survey, you will create an Action Plan, a plan to improve specific areas of your leadership abilities during this course. Your Plan states both what aspects of leadership you wish to improve and where you will practice these new leadership skills and to what ends. You can focus on one large opportunity (such as running a Sloan Club) or a multiple smaller opportunities (study groups, class projects, your best friend’s wedding). At the end of the course you will hand in a written report of your Action Plan and the Results you achieved. In the last class you will also give a brief presentation of your results.

Journal – You are expected to keep a Journal where you document leadership moments you encounter. This Journal is where you will record and analyze your own leadership opportunities through the lens of your Action Plan: what I did well, what I might have done differently. For example, if your Action Plan calls for you to improve your ability to drive rapid decisions, you should record each such opportunity you encounter and how you respond to that opportunity. The Journal is your scrapbook of leadership in the raw. You may also find it helpful to record other people’s leadership examples (good and bad) that you observe or read about that pertain to your areas of focus. At least four times you are expected to review the weekly video and critique your own strengths and weaknesses as demonstrated in the role play. From time to time you will be asked to present some of the stories from your Journal to the class.

Alternate to Journal – if you wish to substitute a different activity for the Journal, you must get permission from the Instructor prior to April 20th.

Meeting with Class Instructor – you are expected to meet with the Instructor (outside of class) at least once to go over your Self-Assessment and proposed Action Plan. This will be scheduled early in April. Once you receive the results from the Distributed Leadership Survey, I would be happy to meet with you to go over those results.

Next Steps – At the end of the course you will outline your plan to continue your own leadership growth. This may be a continuation of your Action Plan. It may have different components. It should have at least a one year horizon.

Course Outline

5 or 6 April– Introduction and Overview

- Set the baseline. What understanding of leaders and leadership have each of us already acquired?
- Brief overview of the theories and themes in this course.

12 or 13 April – Leadership Frameworks

- Trait Theory
- Sloan Distributed Leadership Model
- Brief discussion of Action Plans
- Leadership traits Role Play

Read:

- Kouzes, James and Posner, Barry. The Leadership Challenge. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002 (3rd edition), pages 13 – 22, 25.
- Goleman, Daniel. “What Makes a Leader.” Harvard Business Review, November-December 1998, pages 93-102.
- Ancona, Deborah. “Leadership in an Age of Uncertainty.” Managing for the Future, Organizational Behavior & Processes, 3rd Edition. Edited by Ancona, D., Kochan, T., Scully, M., Maanen, J. South-Western College Publishing, 2005, pages 8-16.
- Welch, Jack. “Four E’s (A Jolly Good Fellow)” Wall Street Journal Friday, January 23, 2004, page A14.

Due this week:

- Self-Assessment and Action Plan
- Completion of Distributed Leadership Assessment
- Myers-Briggs type
- Meeting with Instructor

19 or 20 April – Communication

- Different communication styles and structures
- Giving good feedback. How to be a good coach
- Journal entries
- Sloan Leadership Assessment results
- Giving/receiving Feedback Role Play

Read:

- Caproni, Paula. The Practical Coach: Management Skills for Everyday Life. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001. Chapter 4

Due this week:

- Review results from Sloan Leadership Assessment
- Revised Self-Assessment

26 or 27 April – Situational Leadership

- Explore Leadership Types
- Journal entries
- Situational Role Play

Read:

- Goleman, Daniel. "Leadership that Gets Results." Harvard Business Review, March-April 2000, pages 78-90.

3 or 4 May – Influencing Others

- Leading from any chair
- Journal entries
- Leading from any chair Role Play

Read:

- Heifetz, Ronald. Leadership without Easy Answers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1994, pages 183-189.
- Zander, Rosamund Stone and Zander, Benjamin. The Art of Possibility. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000. "Leading from Any Chair," pages: 66 - 77.

10 or 11 May – Decision-Making

- Decision-making models
- Decision-making styles
- Decision-making Role Play
- Journal Entries

Read:

- Williams, Gary and Miller, Robert. “Change the Way You Persuade.” Harvard Business Review, May 2002, pages 64-73.

17 or 18 May – Closure

- Final Role Play
- Brief summary of results of Action Plans
- Feedback on Course
- Course evaluations

Due 17 or 18 May:

- Final version of Leadership Packet:
 - Leadership Definition
 - Self-Assessment
 - Action Plan and Result
 - Journal
 - Next Steps