

# Northwestern | Kellogg

## **BUS INST 303-0: Leadership in Organizations**

**Spring 2024**

**Professor Rivera**

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TA: TBA

Class Meeting Time: 2pm-4:50pm

Location: Francis Searle Building 1421

Office Hours: virtual by appointment

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## Course Overview

The goal of this course is to help you understand what an organizational leader does and to help you develop skills to be an effective leader. The course draws on theories and empirical work from psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior relating to interpersonal and organizational dynamics. The course is based around the idea that a leader does not need formal power or authority to lead. Rather, leadership arises from the ability to mobilize people around a particular challenge and to inspire commitment to take action.

In addition to developing leadership skills, as students of the world, we want to have a lens that helps us to evaluate the contributions and consequences of leaders. Not all leaders are effective, and given the wrong motivations or circumstances, leaders can be quite destructive. Thus, as we go through our weekly readings, I will often ask you to reflect on particular leaders and assess what they did well or not so well. Leaders assemble the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups into combinations that best solve those organizational challenges. Effective leaders are able to solve these challenges, improve their teams, cultivate new leaders, accomplish organizational goals, and (hopefully) improve society in the process. In order to accomplish so many things, they must be able to diagnose problems, make effective decisions, influence others, tap into and motivate the human and social capital of organizational members, optimize cross-functional teams, and drive organizational change.

### **Course Format:**

Each day we will focus on a particular set of leadership skills. Our goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies, based on thoroughly vetted, scientific principles. We will accomplish this by discussing key theoretical concepts and real-world examples. In each class session, we will use a group exercise or case to motivate our discussion.

***The format of the class is discussion-based and interactive.*** I will provide mini-lectures each day, but I also want you to be involved in the class by sharing your own experiences and thoughts on the day's readings and topic. We learn more effectively when we're actively engaged with the class objectives. You will participate in a number of group exercises that are designed to help you learn about leadership challenges and to develop the skills needed to overcome those challenges. This format is similar to the format used at many business schools.

Likewise, this course reflects a dual focus on practical and conceptual training. The articles/materials in the course packet and course reserve introduce key concepts and useful ways of thinking about common situations in complex organizations. Some of the articles are written for a general audience and have a practical orientation; others are scholarly articles. Case studies and class exercises provide opportunities to view and assess your thinking about leadership challenges and give you a chance to apply the concepts and tools that we will discuss.

You should come to class prepared to engage the topics as listed in the syllabus for each day. You should also come to class prepared to summarize key points from the day's readings and to contribute to our analytical debriefs of the day's exercises. As you complete readings/assignments, ask yourself:

- What is the basic argument that the author makes?
- What are the key concepts/principles?
- So what? How does this matter for an organization?
- What are the implications for the kinds of challenges I might face as a leader?
- How can I apply this to my career preparation and leadership development?

An **essential** contribution we ask each of you to make to this course is to be professional in your actions in the class and your interactions with your instructors and your classmates. In particular, ***treat the case analyses and exercises seriously***. Sometimes I will assign you to specific roles, and I encourage you to get into the roles you'll be assigned. You should try to do well and accomplish the objective given to you. You should think about your strategies and work hard to make sure they are appropriate and effective. You should consider the consequences of your actions within the framework of the exercise and what they might be in other situations.

One more thing about our classroom sessions: in our debriefs, we will discuss what happened and why. We'll discuss strategies that worked and strategies that didn't. If you should use a strategy that didn't work, I may ask you about it and expect you to be open and willing to discuss it. These exercises will probably be new to everyone. Thus, people may not choose the best strategy or approach in all of the exercises. That's totally fine! I don't expect you to always succeed. By delving into the thinking that led to a particular strategy, we learn about how to handle future leadership challenges. So I am not picking on you when we ask you about your strategies. To learn as much as we can in this class, we need to discuss not just what happened but why. These discussions will provide us with an opportunity to not only learn a lot about leadership but also about ourselves.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Your final grade is composed of:

1. Course Contribution and Quizzes: 20%
2. Reflection Memos: 20%
3. Organizational Leadership Case Analysis (OLCA): 30%
4. Final Exam: 30%

### **Course Contribution and Quizzes (20%)**

This portion of the grade will be based on your regular attendance of class, showing up on time during breaks, and completing the daily quizzes. We expect you to attend every class on time and to stay for the entire class session. **Always let the instructor and our TA know at least 24 hours in advance (or soon as you know) if you will miss a class so that we can make arrangements for any in-class exercises to be certain that your classmates do not suffer from your absence.** Absences that **are not notified ahead of time** will automatically result in a grade penalty (and do not offer make up opportunities for the daily quiz). Students who are absent for two or more sessions will likewise experience an automatic grade penalty.

Each class will have a 15-minute break. It is critical to show up and be ready on time at the start of class and after the break, as we will often initiate an exercise right away, and we will need everyone in attendance to help make the exercise go smoothly. **Out of respect for your classmates and teaching staff, please do not come to class if you are sick, have symptoms, or test positive for COVID but please notify us that you will be absent (see COVID policies, on pp. 6-7).**

As part of your contribution, **we will have weekly quizzes** that will test your knowledge of the readings. The quiz usually consists of multiple-choice or short answer questions and will focus on core ideas and takeaways from the day's assigned reading. **These quizzes are closed book. You may drop your lowest quiz score.**

To get the most out of the classroom experience, I expect you to do all of the required readings and participate in all of the exercises. **Purchasing the course packet is required.** Please buy the course packet at your earliest convenience so that you come prepared to participate on the first day of class. I don't make any money from the course packet, but by law I am not allowed to give you the readings or any of the material for in-class exercises if you do not pay for course packet.

Finally, good citizenship also involves mutual respect, and respect for everyone's learning experience. This involves demonstrating respect for all course participants in lectures, team assignments, and breakouts; communicating with the professor and TA about issues that arise in a timely manner, and complying with Northwestern's academic, classroom, and health and safety policies.

### **Reflection Memos (20%)**

A key part of the learning process in this course is to take the lessons you are learning and apply them to real world situations. An added benefit of these assignments is that they will help you prepare for the final exam. You will be asked to complete applied reflection memos, which are brief, individual written assignments (i.e., 1-2-pages, double-spaced with 12-point font and 1" margins). **The question prompts for each assignment are listed on Canvas, and your responses should be submitted via the course website on Canvas before the start of class on the due date.** Each Reflection Memo is graded complete/incomplete. Memos are evaluated based on how successfully and creatively they integrate and apply the course concepts into the real-world scenario. Please use your own words for these. **The use of AI or internet research is prohibited for reflection memos, and all memos will be run through plagiarism detection software.**

#### **Reflection Memo Due Dates**

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Exercise #1:	Decision-Making	April 16, 2024
Exercise #2:	Influence	April 23, 2024

### **Organizational Leadership Case Analysis (30%)**

The purpose of the organizational leadership case analysis is for your group to analyze how a leader handled a leadership challenge and to make recommendations based on that analysis. **Detailed information on this assignment is included on page 18 of the syllabus.**

Each member of your group will be required to identify a potential leader who you would be interested in studying and assessing how they handled a leadership challenge. Leaders can come from your personal network or you can choose you to analyze a historical leader. Remember, leaders do not have to be someone who has a formal position of authority. Anyone who is trying to mobilize other people to collaborate in pursuit of a common goal is a leader. Leaders can come from the world of business, nonprofits, politics, and even higher education. A fellow student could be a leader!

The analysis consists of (1) one memo describing candidates for the final analysis, (2) a final memo that describes details of your analysis **of one leader** and sources used, and (3) a slide show (i.e., a deck of PowerPoint slides) that is suitable for a ten-minute presentation. The first memo, which is due **week 5**, will have a list of potential candidates for the analysis, as well as summaries describing the candidates, what sort of challenge they faced, and what would make them an interesting subject of the analysis. The memo is graded complete/incomplete. The final memo and slide show, which focus on a single leader and the challenge they faced, **are due before class on the last day of class, May 28, 2024.**

### **Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will be an **in person** closed-book exam that will consist of a series of multiple-choice and short answer questions on **the last day of class during our class time on May 28, 2024 from 2-4:50pm.**

### **Course Materials:**

**Required readings** and **cases** are accessible via the course website. We have made available on the course website any items we are legally able to distribute for free to save you costs. **Readings labeled “Placeholder” in Study.net will be distributed separately via Canvas, in person, or email.** Pp. 6-15 of this document detail assignments due each day of class.

**Optional readings not required.** These reading recommendations provided for students who are interested in learning more about a given topic.

## **Additional Course Policies and Details**

### **Previous Knowledge of Cases**

If you are familiar with a case or an exercise introduced in class, please do not discuss your prior knowledge with other students as this can ruin the learning experience for them. **Telling other students (in any class) about your experience with cases and exercises is an honor code violation.** If you are concerned that your prior experience with a case might be an issue, please let me know before class.

### **Recordings, Postings, Blogging, Tweets, Social Media, etc.**

**Going online to find information related to assignments, cases, or exercises or create essay responses is prohibited unless you have been told explicitly that online research is part of an assignment. In addition, lectures, lecture notes, exercises, assignments, their solutions, and your assignment answers are confidential cannot be circulated, (micro) blogged about, or posted in any form before, during, or after the course. If you are unsure as to the application of these rules, please see the instructor. No audio or visual recordings of the class can be made or circulated without prior permission of the instructor.**

### **Policy on the Use of Generative AI**

You are prohibited from using generative artificial intelligence (AI) to produce any materials or content related to class assignments, including class exercises or cases, reflection memos, and exams.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

Students on this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html>

### **Accessibility**

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (email: [accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu); phone: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being on the NU help [website](#).

### **COVID-19 Classroom Expectations**

Students, faculty and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the [COVID-19 Expectations for Students](#). With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

- Policies regarding masking, social distancing and other public health measures evolve as the situation changes. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with current University, state and city requirements.
- In some classes, masking and/or social distancing may be required as a result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation for the instructor or a student in

the class even when not generally required on campus. In such cases, the instructor will notify the class.

If a student fails to comply with the [COVID-19 Expectations for Students](#) or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

Maintaining the health of the community remains our priority. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID **do not attend class**. Follow the steps outlined for testing, isolation and reporting a positive case. Next, contact your instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.

### **Support for Wellness and Mental Health**

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

Please note that the specifics of this course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Instructors will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

## Leadership Goals and Challenges

April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Class 1

### **Objectives:**

- Introduce course objectives and requirements
- Understand common models of leadership and their challenges
- Learn how to identify and avoid ethical traps in leadership

### **In-Class Case/Exercise:**

- **Theranos**

### **Required Reading:**

- **Theranos.** Choose **one**:
    - Read: “How Elizabeth Holmes’ House of Cards Came Tumbling Down.” *Vanity Fair*.
- OR**
- Watch: “The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley.” (on Course Reserves)

### **Optional Readings:**

- WeWork: The Making and Breaking of a 47 Billion Unicorn [documentary]
- Kitroeff, Gelles, and Nicas. “The Roots of Boeing’s 737 Max Crisis.” *New York Times*.
- Higgins & Summers. “How General Motors Silenced a Whistle-Blower.” *Bloomberg*.
- Tabuchi. “Takata Saw and Hid Risk in Airbags.” *New York Times*.



## Effective Decision Making

April 9<sup>th</sup>

Class 2

### **Objectives:**

- Learn how to identify and stop the most common biases that corrupt managerial decisions

### **In-Class Case/Exercise:**

- OceanGate

### **Required Case Reading:**

- Bogel-Burroughs, Gross, and Betts. “OceanGate Was Warned of Potential for Catastrophic Problems with Titanic.” *New York Times*.

### **Optional Readings:**

- Kahneman. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.

**DUE: Complete online Decision-Making Quiz (on Canvas) before completing the case/readings**

## Influencing Others

April 16<sup>th</sup>

Class 3

### Objectives:

- Learn how to achieve career goals through harnessing the science of persuasion (special guest lecturer Molly Weinstein)

### In-Class Case/Exercise:

- 12 Angry Men

### Required Reading:

- [Hidden Brain - Influence Part 1](#) [Listen to podcast or read transcript]
- [Hidden Brain - Influence Part 2](#) [Listen to podcast or read transcript]

### Optional Reading:

- Cialdini. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*.
- Milkman. *How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*.

**DUE: Reflection Memo #1 Due (Decision-Making) via Canvas**

## **Leading High-Performing Teams**

April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Class 4

### **Objectives:**

- Understand essential building blocks for high performing teams

### **In-Class Case/Exercise:**

- **LegoBot**

### **Required Readings:**

- Haas & Mortenson. [“The Secrets of Great Teamwork” \[link\]](#)

***DUE: Reflection Memo #2 Due (Influence) via Canvas***

**Negotiations**  
April 30<sup>th</sup>  
Class 5

**Objectives:**

- Equip you with the core principles of expert negotiating tactics
- Learn how to lead an effective integrative negotiation

**In-Class Case/Exercise:**

- **The Internship (will be distributed during class)**

**Required Case Reading:**

- Listen: [Work/Life: The Science of the Deal](#)

**DUE: OLCA Memo *Due* (Leader Nominees) via Canvas**

## **Social Networks and Organizational Inequalities**

May 7<sup>th</sup>

Class 6

### **Objectives:**

- Learn the properties of an effective social network
- Learn factors that produce inequalities in organizations

### **In-Class Case/Exercise:**

- **On-Campus Recruiting Case Study**

### **Required Readings:**

- Callier. “A Massive Study Reveals Who Actually Helps You Get that Job.” *Scientific American*.
- Rivera. “Ivies, Extracurriculars, and Exclusion.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.
- Rivera. “Guess Who Doesn’t Fit in at Work?” *New York Times*.

### **Optional Readings:**

- King. *Social Chemistry: Decoding the Patterns of Human Connection*.
- Rivera. *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*.
- Woodson. *The Black Ceiling: How Race Still Matters in the Elite Workplace*.

## Leading Large-Scale Organizational Change I: EIS Simulation

May 14<sup>th</sup>

Class 7

### Objectives:

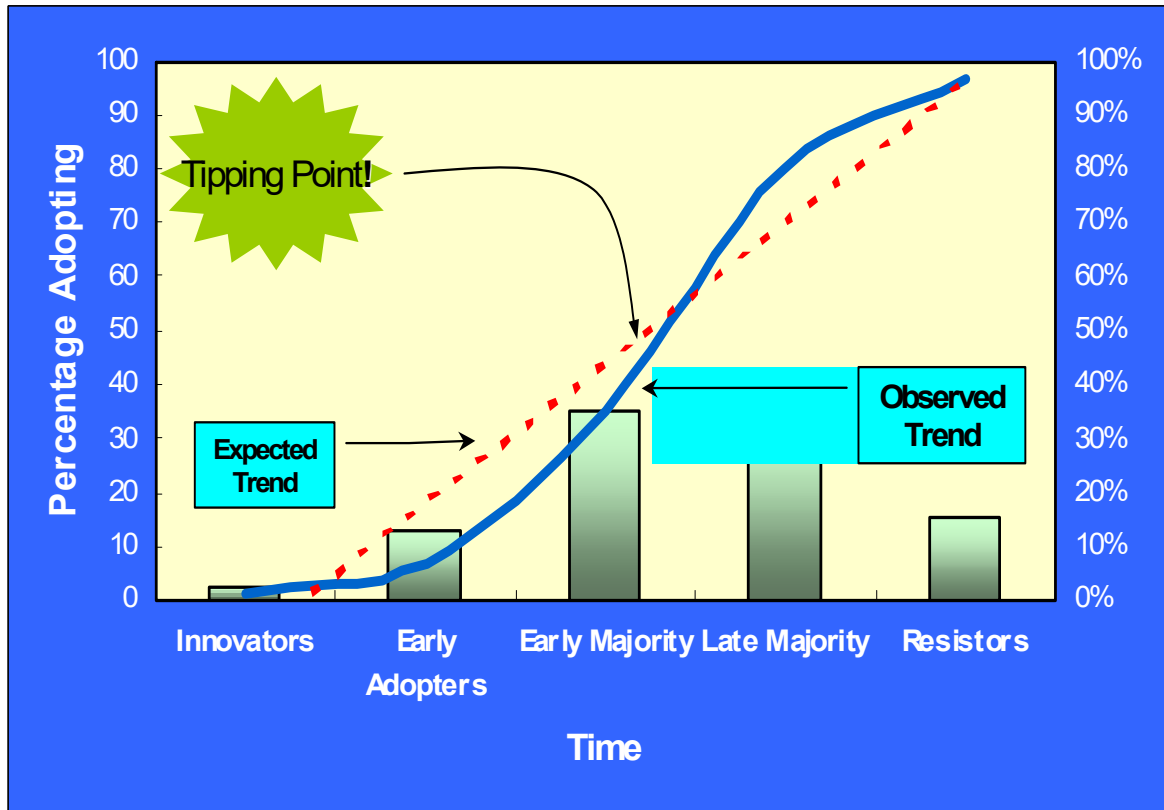
- Gauge your performance in a simulated change program
- Acquire the skills for championing and leading large-scale organizational change

### In-Class Case/Exercise:

- EIS Simulation

### Required Reading:

- *The EIS Simulation Manual 3.0*



## Leading Large Scale-Organizational Change II: The 3Ts

May 21<sup>st</sup>

Class 8

### Objectives:

- Learn how to lead organizational change efficiently by harnessing leadership skills

### In-Class Case/Exercise:

- EIS Simulation (cont'd)

### Required Readings:

- Gladwell. "Chapter 1". *The Tipping Point*.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which strategies were effective at securing adopters in EIS? Which were ineffective?
2. Who do you *target* with a change initiative?
3. How do you figure out what *tactics* work with what targets?
4. When should you *time* your tactics for motivating and achieving change?

**In-Class Final Exam and OCLA Due**

May 28<sup>th</sup>

Class 9

**DUE: OLCA Group Slide Deck and Final Memo**



## Organizational Leadership Case Analysis

Throughout the course we have discussed numerous functions of leadership that help them successfully handle the challenges that come their way. In this analysis, you will focus on a leader of your choosing and analyze what this person did to overcome a leadership challenge.

To complete this assignment you will be assigned to a group. **The choice of the leader is up to your group.** Try to choose someone that faces a real dilemma in mobilizing people to collaborate for a common purpose. It could be a person who you know, or it could be a historical figure. Either way, you will need to be able to get enough information about this leader to create a compelling case study.

To choose a leader, you should meet as a group, and each member of the group should pick one person who they think would be a good fit as a focus of the analysis. After generating a list of all of the candidates, write short summaries (a paragraph or two for each summary) about each person, what makes them interesting, the sort of challenge they faced, etc., and then as a group decide on which of these people the case analysis will focus. Please submit a short memo that contains those summaries and an explanation for why you settled on the final group choice (your group must pick 1). **The memo is due week 5 before class.**

The final product for this assignment is a slide deck about the person and what they did to overcome a leadership challenge and a final memo that contains supporting evidence and a description of what you did in your analysis. **You will not be required to present the slide deck, but it should be organized as if you were to give a ten-minute presentation** (usually, a ten-minute presentation consists of 10-15 slides). The final memo should be at least two pages and should include sources used for the analysis and a more detailed description of the analysis.

I will assess the slide deck based on the level of detail you give to the analysis as well as your ability to **integrate key concepts and frameworks from the class.** The concepts and tools we discuss in class should be the guiding framework for your analysis (e.g., how did this person use their social network as a way to overcome the challenge they faced?). Projects will be graded for their grasp of the class material, their insight into the leader's situation, the appropriateness of recommendations made, and clarity.

### **Key Elements of the Assignment:**

**Part one:** Submission of a memo in week five in which each group member identifies one leader and writes a short summary of the challenge the leader faced. The group will need to meet after to select one leader who will be the focus of the assignment. **The memo should also describe why you chose to focus on the particular leader** for your final analysis.

**Part two:** A group slide show that has a three-part structure (**due Week 9**):

1. **Introduction** about the leader you chose to analyze.
  - i. What is your thesis? Who is the person at the center of your analysis and what makes them a leader? What sort of leadership challenge do they face?

- ii. In the final memo you should include a one paragraph description of the leader, describing their responsibilities and background, and providing additional details about the leadership challenge
2. **Analysis** of the challenge the leader faced and how they resolved it
    - i. Leadership challenges involve an obstacle the leader faces in mobilizing others to collaborate around a common goal
    - ii. **Provide an assessment of the choices** the leader might take, skills they might use, or the tactics they could employ (e.g., negotiation is a kind of tactic)
    - iii. **Provide a critical evaluation** of why the leader's choices were appropriate or inappropriate
    - iv. You should organize and focus your analysis in terms of course concepts. Compare and contrast the experiences of the leader with other leaders/situations we talked about in class to draw general lessons about which strategies are most useful under which conditions.
  3. **Recommendations** section (one or two slides).
    - i. Imagine that you are offering the leader suggestions in real time about how they might have handled the challenge and improve on their outcome. Put yourself in the mindset of a consultant. What advice might you give the leader?
    - ii. You should also offer a separate set of suggestions to your fellow Northwestern students about how they can apply the lessons from this situation to their own experiences. For example, you can highlight parallels between the leadership challenge faced by the person in your analysis and the kind of challenges that a student might face now or in the future.
    - iii. Be sure to base your recommendations in the analysis itself. That is, the recommendations should follow logically from your analysis, rather than being a separate set of ad hoc suggestions about what to do or not to do. Make your recommendations as concrete and specific as possible.

**Part three:** A final memo with supporting evidence and additional details that you were not able to fit into the slide deck (**due Week 9**). The memo should include information about source material, including interviews conducted or articles or books used. The final memo should be at least 2 double-spaced pages with 12-point font and 1" margins. Feel free to change names of the actual leader to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Please submit the final memo and the slide show on Canvas before class on **week 9**.

**Note.** The most informative analyses go beyond description to an explanation of why something happened the way it did using the concepts from class. Well-organized presentations that stress the most important factors rather than simply provide a data-dump of all the possible factors are evaluated more highly. **In all other respects, the project is yours to define.** Be creative.