

## SOMS 481: Seminar in Executive Leadership I, Fall 2014

**Instructor:** Dr. Rhonda Struminger  
**Contact:** [Struminger@tamu.edu](mailto:Struminger@tamu.edu) or 979-450-8484  
**Office:** Ash Leadership Learning Center, Suite 105  
**Class Meetings:** Thursdays  
**Office hours:** Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:30 or by appointment

Section	Meeting Times	Meeting Location
558	9:35 AM – 10:25 AM	ANIN 317
559	2:20 PM – 3:10 PM	ACAD 224

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**Prerequisite:** Students enrolling in this course must be classified as a senior in the Corps of Cadets or seek instructor approval for enrollment.

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The objective for this course is to build your capacity to understand and meet the challenges involved in developing and leading ethical and sustainable organizations in today's economy. We will work towards this goal by engaging in self-reflection and analytical thinking about values, work ethics, and workplace dynamics.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain ethical leadership.
2. Articulate a personal philosophy of executive-level leadership.
3. Discuss leadership and followership strategies.
4. Explain his/her approach to work and aspects of organizations they value.
5. Have a plan for applying his/her approach to work and how to keep him/herself motivated.

When we read about organizations, be they exemplary, failed, or muddling through, we keep a natural distance from the information. We don't normally imagine ourselves as part of that organization: how we would behave in that workplace, how we feel personally about that organization's stated values, its products or its human resource policies. From a distance we might make superficial assessments about whether an organization (company, government or nonprofit) is a place we want to work depending on our reading of that organization's culture or conduct.

In this course, we will shorten this distance. We will read and think more deeply about the leadership of and in organizations. How does leadership encourage an organization's capacity to grow? To develop a culture? To define success and failure, meaningfully? We will consider the factors that fuel these dynamics. Further, we will look closely at some of the world's leading organizations in their industries, making use of U.S. and international perspectives.

Equipped with fresher thinking and broader perspectives, you will explore the value of organizational *citizenship*. And, by articulating your own work ethic and personal "workview," you will begin to meet the challenge of *intentional leadership*.

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### Required course text and materials

- Vanourek, B. and Vanourek, G. Triple Crown Leadership: Building Excellent, Ethical, and Enduring Organizations. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012, 304 pp., selected chapters
- Your completed SOMS Individual Leadership Plan (ILP)
- Supplementary articles and videos provided by instructor on eCampus

### Grading

Class Participation/Thought responses	20	<u>Grading scale</u>	
Workview statement	10	90 to 100 points	= A
Mid-term exam/ILP	25	80 to 89 points	= B
Executive Interviews	20	70 to 79 points	= C
<u>Workview paper</u>	<u>25 points</u>	60 to 69 points	= D
Total possible	100 points	< 60 points	= F

### Expectations and comportment

#### *Class Participation/Thought responses*

In class you will be asked to respond to a quote or statement that builds on your reading assignments and other coursework. These “thought response” assignments will be part of your Participation grade. In addition, your Participation grade will reflect the leadership qualities you display in this course. Students who display the traits of a mature, respectful leader will earn the most points for participation: completing all assignments on time, whether reading, writing, researching, or presenting; making regular, relevant contributions in class dialogues and activities; and always showing courteous, constructive engagement.

Attend class each week having completed any weekly assignments and readings. Contribute actively to classroom work, which will include discussions and presentations. In class discussions, share freely of your own experiences, but remember that listening skills are as key to good leadership as are speaking talents. Your most rewarding approach to your classroom involvement will be: Listen, reflect, and respond.

*I reserve the right to give impromptu assignments during class and the completion of these assignments will be part of your final participation grade.* Each time we meet, we have 50 minutes in which to think and learn. Let’s make these all count by arriving on time and by denying ourselves the thrill of social networking, texting, and emailing.

**\*\* Please stay aware of these rules. Avoid their enforcement by coming to class.\*\***

**\*\*Attendance is required. Class participation = *positive class involvement* + attendance.**

Unexcused absences: A student who misses class and does not satisfactorily explain that absence by the close of the second business day following the absence will incur an unexcused absence. Assignments missed without excused absences will be assigned the score “0.” To have an absence excused, a student must provide university-approved documentation (doctor’s note, for example) of the reason for the absence. Unexcused absences will affect your course grade as follows:

1. One unexcused absence (meaning, an absence for which there is no acceptable, documented reason) will not result in an automatic deduction of points from the course grade. **NOTE:** A student may NOT take this unexcused absence on a day when she/he is expected to make a presentation in class, evaluate a presentation in class, take a quiz/exam in class, etc.

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2. Two unexcused absences automatically result in 5 points being taken off the course grade. This will reduce the course grade by half of letter grade.
3. Three unexcused absences automatically result in 10 points being taken off the course grade. This will reduce the grade by a full letter grade.
4. Any additional unexcused absences will earn a student an F as the final grade in the course.

Excused absences: If an absence from a class meeting legitimately qualifies as “excused” under university policy, the student will have an opportunity to make up any in-class work that contributes toward the final course grade. NOTE: the late work must be submitted by a date upon which the instructor and student agree. In cases where there are regularly scheduled make-up exams, students are expected to attend unless they have a university-approved excuse.

### ***Workview Statement and Paper***

In this course, you will write a Workview Paper: a personal statement in which you will define your professional outlook as fully as possible by explicating your work ethic, your intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, the “added value” you offer as an organizational citizen, your standpoint on work-family balance, and so on. Early in the semester, you will write a two-page statement that should address these issues and incorporate insight gained from the course readings. Mid-term, you will submit a more developed second draft. This second draft will not be graded, but I will comment on your work. At the end of the semester, you will submit a final Workview Paper of longer length and greater depth. Your reflections in this final paper should incorporate your learning over the course of the semester. I will offer more details about this assignment in the coming weeks.

### ***Executive Interviews***

Throughout the semester you will work in a group that will be required to identify and interview executive leaders in the Bryan/College Station community. Student interview findings will be presented by each group in class throughout the second part of the semester. GROUPS CAN ONLY INTERVIEW EXECUTIVE LEADERS APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR and presentations will last 10 to 15 minutes. I will offer more details about this assignment in the coming weeks.

### **Submission of coursework**

All coursework should be submitted for my consideration on the day it is due. Some assignments will be due at the beginning of class and others must be submitted electronically via eCampus. Electronically submitted papers must be submitted for my consideration by 9 AM on the day it is due. ***Assignments not turned in without an approved excuse will have 5 points deducted every 24-hour period for which it is late.***

## SOMS 481: Seminar in Executive Leadership I, Fall 2014

September 4, 2014 – Course Introduction

1. Introduction to the course and eCampus; Student Information Sheets and Surveys

Assignments:

- Read *TCL* Introduction and Chapter 1

September 11, 2014 – Becoming/Being a Triple Crown Leader, Part I

2. Discussion of *TCL* Introduction and Chapter 1; Executive Interview groups assigned

Assignments:

- Read *TCL* Chapters 2 & 3
- Chapter 4: Core Values (Rushworth Kidder 2009, *How Good People Make Tough Choices*)
- Watch Core Values of Culture - Tony Hsieh (Zappos), YouTube URL:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbFIPc34AJ8>

September 18 – Becoming/Being a Triple Crown Leader, Part II

3. Discussion of *TCL* Chapters 2 & 3, & the other assigned readings

Assignments: Complete Workview statement; *TCL* Chapter 4

September 25 – Comprehending Organizational Culture & Influencing Organizational Norms

4. Submit Workview statements via eCampus by 9 AM

Discussion of *TCL* Chapter 4, discuss Workview

Assignments:

- Chapter 1: The Rise and Fall of Motivation 2.0 (Daniel Pink 2011, *Drive: The Surprising Truth of What Motivates Us*)

October 2 – The Unogwaja Challenge

5. GUEST SPEAKER: John McInroy

Assignments: Read *TCL* Chapters 5 & 6

October 9 – Defining Desirable Outcomes & Results

6. Discussion of *TCL* Chapters 5 & 6

Assignment: Mid-term exam and completed Individual Leadership Plan

October 16 – Understanding & Focusing on Purpose

7. **Mid-term exam and Individual Leadership Plan due at the beginning of class;** Discuss Executive Interview Presentations, Mid-term exam, and Workview

Assignment: Prepare Workview Draft 2; Read *TCL* Chapter 7

October 23 – Communicating Vision & Purpose

8. Submit Workview Draft 2 via eCampus (optional)

Review mid-term; Discuss Chapter 7; Executive Interview Presentations 1 & 2

Assignment: Read *TCL* Chapter 8

October 30 – Developing Others in a Leadership Team

9. Discuss Chapter 8; Executive Interview Presentations 3 & 4

Assignment: Read *TCL* Chapter 9

November 6 – Executive Decisions and Dealing with Complexity

10. Discuss Chapter 9; Executive Interview Presentations 5 & 6

Assignment: Read *TCL* Chapter 10

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November 13 – Addressing the Need to Change/The New World Order

11. Discuss Chapter 10; Executive Interview Presentations 7 & 8  
Assignment: Read *TCL* Chapter 11; Work on Workview paper

November 20 – Chasing Perfection: Examining Successful Businesses

12. Discuss Chapter 11; Executive Interview Presentations 9 & 10  
Assignment: Prepare Workview paper

November 27 – THANKSGIVING

December 4 – FINAL CLASS

13. Submit Workview paper via eCampus before class  
Summing-up: Values, leadership, and organizations

**Americans with Disability Act:** ADA is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among its provisions, this legislation requires that all students be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability as defined by ADA that requires accommodation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities in room B118 of Cain Hall. The phone number is 845-1637.

**Aggie Honor Code:** The University has a system for the enforcement of the Aggie Honor Code, “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal nor tolerate those who do” to which every student–graduate as well as undergraduate–is expected to adhere and whose violation can result in disciplinary action.

**Clarity on Permissibility of Team Collaboration on Specific Assignments:** Students have asked that each faculty member give clear guidance on each graded assignment as to whether or not it is permitted or even desired that students work together. The School of Military Science includes many team assignments. The instructor will designate which assignments are individual and which are group assignments.

**Plagiarism:** As commonly defined, academic dishonesty/plagiarism consists of presenting as one’s own ideas, the words, writings, etc. that belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and submit it in as your own, even if you have the permission of the person. It does not matter from where the material is borrowed—a book, article, material from the internet, or the paper of another student in the class—all constitute plagiarism unless the source of the work is fully identified and credited. It is important when using a phrase, a distinctive idea or concept as well as a sentence or longer excerpt to credit the source in the text, a footnote or end note. Plagiarism is a violation of academic and personal integrity at Texas A&M University and carries severe consequences. (See Student Rules on Academic Dishonesty.)

***The instructor reserves the right to make changes and substitutions to the course outline and syllabus without prior notification.***