

## SOMS 482: Seminar in Executive Leadership II Spring 2014

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**Office hours:** Thursdays 9:00 – 10:30 AM or by appointment  
**Class session:** Thursdays 11:10-12:00 PM, MILS 213

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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.

### Course Philosophy and Description

An executive leader makes decisions for an entire organization. A values-based leader is engaged in an ongoing dance with the ethical dimension of making decisions and managing an organization's culture and environment. Ethical organizational cultures and decisions are products of an authentic person in the leader's role. "Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are" (George et al. 2007, 130).

This course recognizes that to make useful generalizations about the nature of leadership is difficult, because leaders by definition are responding to their immediate circumstances. Forces larger than the individual - historical legacies, the socio-political zeitgeist, even natural disasters – also affect how successful leaders can be. Still, as they make difficult decisions, the best leaders make very personal disclosures. Some observations about good leaders: Usually, they are factually well informed, have thoroughly considered opinions, and adhere to firm ethical convictions and principles. All of these elements contribute to the clarity of a leader's intentional decisions. Equally important: Good leaders leave ample intellectual space for their own personal growth and change.

Through the assignments and our class conversations we will explore what it is to have an ethical foundation and a worldview that expresses itself through authentic actions and responses. This course is designed to enhance your capacity for intentional leadership by widening and deepening the pool of ideas, knowledge, and reflections that you can draw upon to build your self-awareness, your perceptiveness, and your worldview. These are essential foundations for your capacity to be an intentional, authentic leader.

### Learning Objectives

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

1. Identify and discuss the ethical dimension in complex situations.
2. Distinguish between various ethical philosophies.
3. Explain and practice the steps of the ethical decision-making process.
4. Have a plan for developing his/her personal effectiveness as an ethical leader.
5. Recognize and apply characteristics of authentic intentional leadership

### Required course reading and materials

- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 2003. “Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning,” Penguin Books, London, 244 pp.
- Your own completed SOMS Personal Leadership Development Plan
- Articles and videos provided by instructor

### Grading

Worldview statement	15 points
Quiz 1	10
Quiz 2	10
Thought Leadership project	25
Final Worldview paper	25
Participation	15
Total possible	100 points

### Grading scale

- A = 90 to 100 points
- B = 80 to 89 points
- C = 70 to 79 points
- D = 60 to 69 points
- F = < 60 points

### Submission of coursework

#### Submission deadlines:

- January 23: Revised Individual Leadership Development Plan showing markup
- January 30: Worldview statement (2 pages, double-spaced)
- March 27: Rough Draft of the Worldview paper (**recommended**)
- April 24: Worldview Final Paper (4-5 pages, double-spaced)

All coursework must be submitted electronically for my consideration by 10:30 AM on the day it is due. I will send an email confirming whether or not I successfully received your document – if I did not receive your document successfully, **you are responsible for re-sending the document within 24 hours of my email.** *Assignments not turned in without an approved excuse will have 5 points deducted every 24-hour period for which it is late.*

### Writing Requirements

**All papers MUST be typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times Roman font with 1” margins.** Your name, the course information, and the date should be in the header and page numbers should be in the footer. *Papers that do not conform to these requirements will be marked down 5 points (half a letter grade).*

### Expectations and comportment

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. Complete all assignments on time, whether reading, writing, researching, or presenting. Make regular, relevant contributions in class dialogues and activities. Always show 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.

Each time we meet, we have 50 minutes in which to think and learn. I encourage you to make this time worthwhile by arriving on time and by denying ourselves the thrill of social networking, texting, and emailing.

### **Attendance**

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

Attendance is required. Remember that class participation = class involvement + attendance.

Unexcused absences: If you miss a class and do not explain your absence by the close of the second business day following the absence, you will incur an unexcused absence. **Any in-class assignment missed without an excused absence will receive the score "0."** *To have your absence and/or late assignment excused, you must provide me with documentation (doctor's note, for example) of the reason for your absence.*

Unexcused absences will affect your course grade as follows:

1. I will allow each student one unexcused absence this semester (meaning, an absence for which you do not provide a documented reason). You may NOT take this unexcused absence on a date when you are expected to make a presentation in class.
2. After two unexcused absences, I will automatically take 5 points off your course grade, reducing your grade by a half letter grade.
3. After three unexcused absences, I will automatically take 10 points off your course grade, reducing your grade by a full letter grade.
4. Any additional unexcused absences will result in your receiving an F as final grade for the course.

Excused absences: If your absence from a class meeting is excused, I will offer you the opportunity to make up any in-class work that contributes to your final grade, to be submitted by a date upon which we agree. In cases where there are regularly scheduled make-up exams, students are expected to attend unless they have a university-approved excuse.

### **Thought Leadership Project**

Instructive examples of leadership are multi-dimensional stories of achievement. Leadership occurs when, on the one hand, a leader has an accurate understanding of a *situation and its context* and on the other, he or she responds *intentionally* to these. The Thought Leadership Project is designed to increase your capacity to make tough decisions as thoughtful, informed leaders. To do so, we will explore some of the intellectual and ethical challenges you will face once you leave Texas A&M University.

Based on our discussions and the first quiz, five themes based on the classes' interests and the challenges of ethical leadership will be identified. Readings related to these five themes will be assigned and the class will be broken up into five groups. Each group will be assigned a theme and will lead a class discussion about leadership as it relates to the theme. Each group presentation must present an argument pertaining to a question related to the theme. The discussions from these theme weeks should influence your worldviews.

## **Worldview paper**

Last semester, many of you wrote Workview papers – articulations of your core values, work ethic, and personal orientation towards work and working life. Now, you will broaden this thinking to articulate your worldview: a comprehensive conception of the universe and of humanity's relation to it.

In this class, you will write a “Worldview Paper.” It sounds difficult to do, and it is. Your worldview is the *source* of your values. *You rely upon your worldview to ensure alignment of your values, purpose, principles, and objectives.*

Early in the semester, you will submit a 2-page (double-spaced) piece describing your personal worldview, upon which I will give feedback. Then, we will incorporate your Individual Leadership Development Plans into the project. Our goal is to develop personal, concrete tools that can help you make important decisions. At the end of the term, you will submit your final Worldview paper (4-5 pages double-spaced). I will provide more details on this assignment, and the others, in the coming weeks.

## **Sessions by week**

### **January 16**

Welcome to SOMS 482: Important class content meeting!

Assignments: Read Csikszentmihalyi Chapter 1, Watch (20 minutes):

<http://www.ted.com/talks/view/lang/en//id/366>

### **January 23, Class 2**

Discussion of Chapter 1 and Worldview assignment

Assignments: Read Csikszentmihalyi Chapters 2-3; Write Worldview statement

### **January 30, Class 3**

Submit Worldview statement; Discussion of Chapters 2-3

Assignments: Read Csikszentmihalyi Chapters 4-5

### **February 6, Class 4**

Concepts Quiz 1; Discussion of Chapters 4-5

Assignments: Csikszentmihalyi Chapters 6-7, Watch Hans Rosling’s Asia’s Rise – how and when:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/hans\\_rosling\\_asia\\_s\\_rise\\_how\\_and\\_when.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_asia_s_rise_how_and_when.html)

### **February 13, Class 5**

Discussion of Chapters 6-7; Ethics

Assignments: HBR article “How (Un)Ethical Are You?”

### **February 20, Class 6**

Submit hard copy of your ILDP, showing markup; Discuss Unintentional bias, ethics, and themes

Assignments: Csikszentmihalyi – Chapters 8 & 9; Review the following web page “Ethics vs. Morals”

[http://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethics\\_vs\\_Morals](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethics_vs_Morals); Write about an ethical dilemma you have faced in your life (or know about) that you are willing to share

Suggested Reading: “The Discipline of Building Character”

**February 27, Class 7**

Discuss ethical dilemmas; Introduction to Thought Leaders Project – form groups & select themes, receive theme reading assignments

Assignments: Prepare for Quiz 2, I suggest meeting with your group

**March 6, Class 8**

Content Quiz 2 (Review of *Good Business* and other course concepts); Discuss themes and Thought Leadership Project; Review Worldview Paper Assignment

Assignment: Readings for Theme A

(March 10-14 is spring break week; no class)

**March 20, Class 9**

Group A presents

Assignment: Readings for Theme B

**March 27, Class 10**

Group B presents

Assignment: Readings for Theme C

**April 3**

No Class

**WORK ON WORLDVIEW PAPER!!**

**April 10, Class 11**

Group C presents; *Submit optional rough draft of your Worldview paper*

Assignment: Readings for Theme D

**April 17, Class 12**

Group D presents

Assignment: Prepare Worldview paper

**April 24, Class 13**

Submit Worldview paper

Review and summing-up

**\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\* The final class meeting concludes all coursework. All student assignments must be submitted to the Instructor at the beginning of the final class meeting.**

**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. You should also be aware that academic dishonesty involves acts other than plagiarism. If you have any questions regarding academic dishonesty, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website at <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.

**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.*

## References

George, Bill, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, and Diana Mayer. February 2007. “Discovering Your Authentic Leadership” *Harvard Business Review*.