

MNO2007 LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS

Semester 1, AY2014/2015

Lecturers:

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Module Description

This module explores the issues and challenges of leading responsibly today. Our global competitive business environment is fast, changing, technologically and geographically distributed, and extremely diverse. The work that people do is becoming increasingly complex, interdependent, and knowledge intensive. In light of all these changes, to a greater extent than ever before, getting things done requires an ability to work with and through other people, and this is what leadership is all about.

This module addresses the foundations for leadership in modern organizations. The leadership challenge is compounded because the requirements of speed, global reach and change that our organizations face also create conditions under which unsafe and unethical business practices persist. Reports of insider trading, unsafe products, unfair trade practices and environmental waste are commonplace in the media. Thus, our more focused interest is with morally decent or ethical leadership.

Our course explores fundamental questions about the nature of leadership today. For instance, in light of the global reach of organizations, diversity in workforce and accessibility of information on the World Wide Web, what are the obligations of leaders to meet the expectations of stakeholders, and how can this be accomplished. What challenges do leaders face in building ethical cultures in organizations? This questioning mind-set is complemented with exercises and assignments designed to help students develop (hard and soft) leadership skills, to understand the leadership behaviours of themselves and others, and to think and form opinions independently from others.

Key course topics include: leader personality and behaviors; leadership and followership; power and leadership; leading from the middle; ethical and moral requirements of leaders, leadership and culture, ethical decision-making, and diversity.

The success of this course relies heavily on all of us creating a supportive and safe environment. Therefore, you are encouraged to listen carefully to each other and to articulate your own perspectives in a civil and respectful manner. Your active participation and open sharing is essential. You will learn through interaction with your classmates in and outside the classroom, while working alone and while working on projects in teams with members coming from different backgrounds. This way of learning not only provides you with opportunities to build confidence and sharpen your skills, but also helps you to get to know one another well, and build life-long relationships.

Module Reading:

E-book: Leadership: Theory, application, & skill development, 5th edition, **e-book version** Lussier & Achua (2013).

Other materials: Cases, exercises, and additional readings for each week will be delivered via IVLE one week before class. Students are expected to study them before class starts.

Class Management

Instructors facilitate learning. They structure the processes, facilitate discussions, and give feedback. However, they spend very little time providing anything that you can read on your own. Class time is used for exchanging ideas and generating issues to be resolved.

Students are mature class participants and independent learners. They source and read relevant information besides just reading the textbook or assigned readings, they bring in relevant examples, questions, and ideas, they generate responses to issues raised in class, and evaluate and critique responses given.

Class Culture should stimulate participation, creativity, and spontaneity in order to maximize collective learning. Keywords are high trust, high touch, and high task. Be open and use experiences for learning, be appreciative, active, and questioning when you learn. Maximize your own and others' learning opportunities.

Grading Components

Your overall grade will depend on multiple components. This section provides a brief description of the important grading components:

Individual-based course work

- In-class participation 30%
- In-class quiz 20%
- Individual assignment: feedback exercise (FBE) 15%

Team-based course work¹

- True leadership story (TLS; with partner of choice) 15%
- Team project: Triple M Video 20%

Please note that, as in all grading exercises in the Singapore schools, final grades reflect performance relative to peers. Foreign students, please take note of this and consult your Singaporean counterparts on this issue.

Details of grading components

In-class participation (30%)

We expect that you will participate actively during all sessions, asking constructive questions, making insightful comments, providing examples, building upon the ideas of others, and demonstrating keen interest in all classroom proceedings. To prepare yourself for optimal class participation, you are required to hand in a one-page preparation sheet (in hard-copy) containing your answers and thoughts regarding each assignment, exercise, or case at least 3 days prior to class.

We also expect you to demonstrate a good learning attitude, observe conventional etiquette for interactions both inside and outside class, be on time, and use your laptop and other electronic gadgets in class for learning purposes only. Showing due respect and consideration for fellow students and instructors at all times is also highly valued.

Our perspective on class participation places high priority on the quality as well as the quantity of involvement. Your participation in each class session is evaluated according to the grading scheme below. Halfway through the course (week 7) you will receive individual feedback on your participation.

¹ Although in general, all team members will receive the same grade for team-based coursework, the instructor reserves the right to change individual grades on team work based on an individual's teamwork contribution.

In-class quiz (individual, 20%)

There will be an in-class closed book quiz to test your understanding and application of fundamental course concepts and frameworks. The grade for the quiz should reflect the extent to which you gained hard knowledge regarding to ethics and leadership. The quiz is based on the material covered in the textbook. The quiz will take place during an evening session with all sections and will be followed by an all-section activity. All students are expected to be present during this evening session. There will be no sectional lecture during the week the evening session takes place.

Feedback exercise (FBE; individual, 15%)

In this individual assignment you reflect upon your teamwork experience in the Moral Mazes in Management Video project, using course concepts to make sense of it. You will provide feedback to your peers on their teamwork contributions, both in writing (a one-pager for all of your peers) and face to face. Your feedback should provide practical insight into each person's strengths and areas for development. You will need to substantiate the points you make, using descriptions of incidents/events that have occurred during team interaction. Feedback is most effective when it is specific, concrete, and developmental in focus. We will provide guidelines for developing and delivering feedback.

True Leadership Stories (TLS; two-person group assignment, 15%)

As a group assignment, you are to interview a manager/leader regarding the challenges that he or she faces at his/her job, why these experiences are challenges to this manager/leader, how he/she experiences these challenges, and the consequences of these challenges for him/her. Your assignment involves recording the interview, transcribing the interview, and preparing a two-page reflection essay that addresses key lessons learned from this 'true leadership story'.

Grades for this assignment will reflect the extent to which you are able to collect information, critically analyze information, and think independently.

Moral Mazes in Management (Triple M) Video Assignment (team assignment, 20%)

Triple M Videos are creative and compelling stories that communicate hard-hitting truths regarding morals and ethics in management. They provide managers insight in issues related to creating an ethical workspace and the leadership that brings it about. Your assignment is to dig into this topic and identify one or two important truths that every leader should know, and then communicate your insights in an engaging way. Make your message meaningful, memorable, and motivating!

Not simply entertainment, Triple M Videos serve an instructional purpose. It will be important for viewers to know that there is compelling evidence to support the lessons being taught. Take some time at the end of your video to present this evidence in a compelling manner. Evidence can come in many different forms—interviews with managers, findings from relevant research, and exemplars from history or the news. Last but not least, Triple M Video viewers should be given directions for where they can learn more about the topic.

Additional Information:

- Teams for this project will be randomly assigned by your professor, and consist of 5 or 6 people. All team members should participate in the video.
- Within each section, no more than two teams can select the same topic. Topics areas for TRIPLE M Videos are approved by instructors on a first-come first-served basis.
- Locating and gaining access to the resources needed to complete the assignment is the responsibility of the team as a whole. Be resourceful and plan ahead!
- TRIPLE M Videos should be, at most, 8 minutes in length. Overall team grades will be penalized 10% for each minute (or portion thereof) beyond 8-minutes.
- Video submission consists of uploading the file to Youtube, verifying that it is online, and forwarding the Youtube URL to your instructor by email. Alternatively, teams may hand in a copy of their video on a DVD. It is each team's responsibility to ensure that its video will project on the classroom equipment.
- It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that its completed video conforms with relevant laws concerning acceptable use of any copyrighted material.

Important Criteria for Evaluating Written and Presented Work

Managers and professionals have to communicate in a way that is clear, precise, and informative. They have to organize their thoughts clearly and make their points with logic and supporting rationale. We look for similar elements when evaluating your work:

- **Discipline:** Make sure written work is organized and readable. Convey main points clearly to readers and in a logical manner. Don't gloss over the foundations—spell words correctly and adhere to rules for grammar and usage.
- **Justified Arguments:** Support your assertions with evidence from relevant sources (e.g., text, reading, interviews). Be sure to acknowledge sources.
- **Specificity and Accuracy:** Make specific rather than vague assertions. You will have greater difficulty in justifying general observations/statements. Also, note that accuracy in the use of technical terminology is critical. It is better to use an everyday word you do understand than to use a nice-sounding technical term inappropriately.
- **Wisdom:** Think through the implications of your recommendations (well beyond the obvious). Recognize potential unintended consequences and inherent trade-offs that must be considered.
- **Originality:** The quality of your ideas is important. Show creative, independent thinking as much as possible. Other things being equal, I reward attempts at creativity and thinking “outside-the-box.”
- **Academic Integrity:** Signing your name to an exam or quiz signifies that the work is your own. In written reports, give credit where credit is due, acknowledging sources for both ideas and direct quotations. Follow accepted standards for citing and referencing sources (e.g., APA or MLA format).