Wayne State University

PSY 7560
Theory and Research on Leadership and Executive Development

Winter, 2002

Instructor: Marcus W. Dickson Office: Room 132, Psych. Building
Phone: (313) 577-0753 Email: mdickson@sun.science.wayne.edu
Office hrs: By appointment (or just stop by – I’m usually around)

Class: Wednesday, 9:35am–12:20pm
Room: 120 Psychology Building (71 W. Warren)

Prerequisites: PSY 7500


Recommended texts:
The Leadership Quarterly.

There will also be several assigned readings from other sources. These will be available in the Louttit Reading Room soon after the beginning of the semester.

Course Description and Purpose:
This course is designed to provide you with an exposure to the broad range of theory, research, and practice relating to organizational leadership and executive development. We will cover the development of leadership theory, including highly influential (but no longer supported) conceptions of leadership, as well as contemporary thinking about leadership in organizations.

At the end of this course, you should:
1) have an extensive working knowledge of the major theories of and research on organizational leadership, and their inter-relations;
2) understand how these theories complement each other and explain different stages and aspects of organizational behavior;
3) be able to discuss the validity of leadership research and theory, and the applicability and prescriptive implications of the various theoretical perspectives and research findings;
4) have an understanding of several approaches to executive development, and the benefits and difficulties associated with these.

The structure of class sessions will be directed discussion. (See “Participation”, below, for additional comments on this.)

**Final grades:**

Six things are considered in calculating final grades: a mid-term exam, a final exam, a research proposal, a team presentation of a leadership development program, a book review, and in-class participation. The six components count in the following percentages:

- Participation/Preparation: 10%
- Book review: 5%
- Mid-term exam: 25%
- Research proposal: 35%
- Final exam: 10%
- Leadership Devel. Program: 20% (Shared grade among team members)

The final exam will consist of two parts: one relating to the new material covered since the mid-term exam, and one relating to the course as a whole.

**Exams:**

There will be a mid-term and a final exam. Both exams will be take-home exams, and will consist of essay questions. The exams will cover assigned readings and all materials covered in class (including student presentations). You are expected to cite your sources in your essay answers, and to follow American Psychological Association (5th edition) style and format. The final exam will be a single, comprehensive question.

**Leadership Development Program:**

Early on in the semester, the class will divide into two teams. Each team is responsible for choosing a particular type of leadership position, and creating a leadership development program tailored to that position. On the next to last day of class, each team will have an hour to present their program. The presentation should incorporate mini-demonstrations of the type of exercises, instruments, experiences, etc. that would be a part of the leadership development program you design. We’ll talk more about this assignment in class.

**Book review:**

One of the class activities will be to assess the common themes among popular press leadership/management books. To this end, each person in class (including the instructor) will read and review one of the best-sellers in business and management that relates in some way to leadership. These reviews will be brief (1250 words), and should include a 1-page appendix listing the key ideas/dimensions from the book. We’ll talk more about this in class.

**Research Proposal:**

You will also write an applied research proposal, focusing on needed research in an area of the leadership literature that needs further attention. Alternately, you can propose research within a specific organization to address a specific leadership problem within that organization. Maximum
length for this proposal is 20 pages of text. Specific directions for the assignments will be given in the first two weeks of the semester.

**Participation/Preparation:**
Regular attendance of all enrolled students is essential for facilitating class discussion. Each student brings expertise in different areas and different experiences to the class. When you are absent, the class as a whole suffers, and so regular attendance is expected. Attendance alone, however, does not necessarily connote participation. Thus, students are expected to actively and constructively contribute to class discussion. This cannot be accomplished without having read the assigned materials in advance of class sessions.
Note that each week’s readings are accompanied by discussion questions, and these will form the basis for the beginnings of each week’s class discussions. In preparing for class each week, you should first read the discussion questions, and then quickly skim all of the readings to get a sense of each one. Then read in detail, keeping the discussion questions in mind, and looking for points of consensus or disagreement between the various readings. Preparing this way will go a long way towards ensuring that your contributions to the class are meaningful and thoughtful.

In general, I will start off each class with a brief lecture/discussion of the general points of the day’s topics. I will try to highlight several key issues, including points of contradiction or controversy, levels of analysis issues, and areas in which too little evidence exists to speak with confidence. Following that introduction, we will move into a phase of the class session that is much more participatory. This could be open discussion of the readings for that week, participation in a relevant exercise and subsequent discussion, presentations by students of assigned readings, or other types of activities that are NOT me lecturing.

When I evaluate participation/preparation at the end of the semester, I consider two primary things: 1) does the student actively and regularly contribute to the class discussion by presenting his/her own interpretations/viewpoints/experiences relevant to the class topic; and 2) do the student’s comments reflect adequate preparation for the week’s class session, through reading and pondering the readings and discussion questions? Note that it is impossible for me to evaluate point 2 in your favor unless you fulfill the expectations of point 1. I say this not to force you to speak when you have nothing to say, but rather to highlight the importance of contributing to the class discussion on a regular basis.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Jan. 9  
*Henry V – Is this leadership? If not, what is? And why should we care anyway?*

**Required readings:**

**Background reading:**

**Recommended readings:**
Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Discussion topics:
- The trait theory implicitly assumes that leaders are “different” from non-leaders, and many people intuitively agree with that view. Stogdill (1948), however, concluded that there are no specific traits that clearly distinguish leaders. What led Stogdill to his conclusion, and why have others continued the search?
- What appears to be the most promising focus for research in this area, and why?
- Are leaders simply different from others? What implications does your conclusion have for leadership training/development?
A major turning point: Contingency theory and its progeny

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Topics for discussion:
- Why did Triandis say that the introduction of Fiedler’s contingency model was the primary dividing point in the history of leadership theory? Is Triandis overstating the case?
- What are the difficulties with the early conceptions of contingency theory?
- Why are the other theories reviewed here seen as related to Fiedler’s contingency theory?
- Why was Path-Goal theory eventually seen by its author as insufficient for describing the process of organizational leadership?
Jan. 30  

1) Do this for me, I'll do that for you:  
Transactional and exchange theories  
2) Cognitive approaches to leadership

Required readings:  

Recommended readings:  

Topics to discuss:  
- Given the obvious importance of leader perceptions and cognitions, why did research attention only turn to this topic so recently?
- Review Meindl, et al.’s (1996) “Romance of Leadership” concept, and assess Chemers’ evaluation of which leadership theories are susceptible to these effects.
- How does Lord and Maher’s descriptions of leader cognitive processes compare and contrast with Fiedler’s?
- Is LMX a sufficient description of the situations leaders face in organizations? If not, why not?
Transformations, Visions, Charisma, Inspirations, etc.: 
Theories of getting performance beyond expectations

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Topics to discuss:
• Given the definitions of transformational/charismatic leadership, do you think Conger and Kanungo’s attempt to behaviorally operationalize charisma is the best route to take?
• When would transformational/charismatic leadership be most effective in organizations, and when would it be least effective?
• Would this style of leadership be more effective at some hierarchical levels than others?
• Is there a reason that the primary theorists associated with this style of leadership are American?
Feb. 13

Turf wars or meaningful distinctions?
Integrating the various “outstanding leadership” theories

Required readings:
__Beyer, J. M. (1999b). Two approaches to studying charismatic leadership; Competing or complementary? The Leadership Quarterly, 10(4), 575-588.

Recommended readings:

Topics to discuss:
- Are there meaningful distinctions between the various conceptions of transformational/charismatic/visionary leadership, or is this simply a turf war?
- Why did transformational theory catch on so much more than charismatic theory?
- What will be the effects of people like Yammarino, Spangler, and Dubinsky on the future of leadership theories?
**Dealing with values and practices:**
*Leadership and culture*

**Required readings:**
Harder, J. *Play* (2001). CD-ROM

**Recommended readings:**

**Topics to discuss:**
- Given Schein’s description of culture management, culture management should be one of the most important components of a leader’s work. Is it, or is culture too amorphous to manage?
- Schein’s conception of organizational culture focuses on how leaders and founders create culture. Isn’t it also possible that organizational cultures only allow the emergence of certain types of leaders?
- Why would non-founder leaders need to worry about culture, if it is created and determined (and thus already in place) by the organizational founder?
- Will *Play* be able to achieve their goal of growing from 30 to 150 employees, while still maintaining the culture that characterizes the organization currently? What will the organization leaders need to do to accomplish this, or is it simply a quixotic task?
Feb. 27       Mid-term exam due – Class WILL meet for in-class exercises and deeper discussion of *Play*.
The US is not the world – Leadership and societal culture

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Topics to discuss:
- Given the extremely large role of the United States in the global marketplace, and the dominance of western business education throughout the world, are issues of societal culture differences still important today?
Mar. 13  No class – Spring recess

Mar. 20  How do we make leaders leaders?
Leadership training and development

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Topics to discuss:
- Almost 40 years ago, McGregor described several difficulties with leadership development programs of the time. Have we resolved those difficulties, or are we still wrestling with them?
- Do we know what it is we are supposed to teach aspiring leaders?
- Do we know how to teach what we try to teach?
How do we make leaders leaders?
Leadership training and development

Required readings:

Recommended readings:
Building Our Model

No new assigned readings for today. Re-read House and Shamir’s article on integrating Transformational, Charismatic, and Visionary approaches, as a basic model of what we are trying to do. **Be prepared** by having thought about the common themes that have emerged among the popular press books, as well as how these themes compare to the academic/research-based approaches we have considered.

How do YOU intend to make leaders leaders?

**Required readings:**


Presentation of class team Leadership Development Programs. Each team has 1 hour to present and demonstrate your leadership program.
Chemers, Locke, Burns, and Us: What do we make of these different models?

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Topics to discuss:
- Chemers and Locke present two different approaches to integrating and summarizing the key issues of leadership. Is one approach better than the other? Is one approach better in certain situations than the other?
- Do you agree with Locke’s description of the four things that “really matter”?
- Do you agree with the ways in which Chemers has integrated other theories into one?
- How do these three approaches (Locke, Chemers, and Burns) fit with what we have found in the popular press on leadership?
Final exam due