NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
SYLLABUS
(version 11/30/2017)

Course Title: Executive MPA Seminar: Leadership
Course Number: EXEC-GP.3190
Credits: 4.5
Professor: Dr. Matthias Birk
Contact Information: mmb17@nyu.edu
Semester: Spring, 2018
Dates: In-person sessions on the following Mondays:

1. Feb 12
2. Feb 26
3. Mar 5
4. Mar 19
5. Mar 26
6. Apr 9
7. Apr 16
8. Apr 23
9. Apr 30
10. May 7

Time: Each class will begin promptly at 4:55PM – please arrive just a few minutes early.
Ending time will vary somewhat over the term but class will never run later than 8:25 PM.

Location: Silver, room 504.

DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to create an “action-learning” community in which you will integrate your
professional experience, this class and other graduate course work, with a final exploration of
leadership concepts, theory and applied practice. The course is also designed to strengthen
your ability to lead, including as a colleague who can support leadership behavior in peers, and
as one who can promote leadership behavior in supervisors and subordinates.

Specifically, as a result of your work in this course, you are expected to become:
• conversant with a broad survey of theoretical concepts and assumptions about leadership
and leadership behavior;
• a better navigator of the internal and external factors influencing successful leading;
• demonstrably more expert in using a variety of skills -- such as appreciative inquiry, positive
deviance, narrative inquiry and action research -- to frame and describe personal leadership
challenges as a step towards increasing successful leading;
• deft in consulting with others, and receiving and providing constructive feedback;
• able to synthesize and apply leadership theory
• more insightful about personal leadership competencies, paradoxes and challenges.
Growing out of this increased awareness, you will leave the class with an action plan for continued development of your personal leadership capabilities.

This is an academic seminar with a significant component of experiential learning. The class will be managed as a learning community including both participants and the professor.

**To succeed in this course, you will:**
• Read all assigned materials in advance of each class;
• Attend all sessions of class;
• Conduct a 360° survey on your leadership including both self-reported data and data from others;
• Reflect on your own transformational journey and write a paper about it

This is a 4.5 credit course and due to the highly experiential nature of our classroom work together, you are expected to attend **ALL** class sessions. Clearly, emergencies occur. Therefore, if you know that you have obligations that preclude attending all class sessions, or if you believe you MAY have such obligations emerge over the course of the semester, please think carefully before proceeding.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- George, Bill & Baker, Doug (2011). True North Groups: A Powerful Path to Personal and Leadership Development

Required readings assigned for each class are listed below.

**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of course material in a variety of ways, some verbal and some written. The writing assignments for this course vary in scope. Some writing assignments are as short as a page or two, while others are more substantial as outlined below. Your total grade will be made up of the following percentages:

- 30% class participation (including facilitation of a reading discussion and your final teachback)
- 20% Annotated Bibliography
• 20% Leadership Challenge Paper
• 30% final paper

30% class participation –
People have different styles of learning and interacting. I’m offering these suggestions to maximize our mutual learning.

• Come to class prepared and oriented to the topic at hand
• Ask questions of real inquiry – what are you deeply curious about with regard to the concepts being discussed?
• Expand your conceptual reach by understanding the material through application to your own leadership challenge
• Communicate ideas – good questions demonstrate higher levels of mastery than assertions
• Communicate your feelings and offer and seek information
• Encourage the contributions of others
• Don’t withdraw; alternately, don’t dominate
• Try to enjoy through serious play

In addition to you showing up in an active and supportive manner in the class you will be asked to Facilitate a discussion on the reading for one of the classes together with 1 or two other students. You will be assigned to a particular class and asked to co-lead 15 mins of discussion with your fellow students. In advance of the class you should think about 2-3 most critical questions you would like to discuss with your peers. You should pose these to the group and facilitate an inclusive discussion around these. Please send round 2-3 discussion questions in advance.

The final class is a teach-back class: You will be asked to facilitate a short (10mins max. depending on number of students in the class) session in which you share with the group a major insight, an inspirational story, and a take away. It should be personal, meaningful and contain a learning. This could be about for example

• An Aha moment that you had during the class and an insight you want to share
• A person (historic or alive) that you find embodies a certain leadership quality
• An exercise you do with the group that deepens one of the learnings of the class
• A new framework you found powerful you want to share with the class
• A poem that embodies some of the growth you have experienced
• Anything that you want to share with class as close out

20% Annotated bibliography of required readings and survey assignments
For each class, prepare and turn in a soft copy of your annotated bibliography for the assigned readings. All readings should be annotated.
Annotated descriptions of articles should be succinct and very concentrated. The following questions may assist in preparing your approximately five sentence write-up of each article:

- What, in general, is the main concept in the material?
- What new paradigms and words are important in this material?
- What common words does this author use that are essential but have an unusual or special meaning?
- What concepts are not clearly defined?
- How does this material clarify, support or contradict other articles and knowledge? How does it challenge the attitudes that you hold?

Finally, each annotation must include one sentence that addresses this final question:

How does this article relate to YOUR leadership challenge?

Note: Assertions of unsupported opinion (i.e. I loved/hated this article) are not appropriate.

**20 % Leadership Challenge Paper:** (3-5 pages): Submit a written description of a leadership challenge you face in your work. This should be a first-person (i.e. you are a prime actor in the situation), current, serious and potentially changeable challenge that you are facing. It can be in your workplace, a volunteer organization, or other association, but should not be a challenge you face in your family unless you work in a family-based business. Your paper should be written with a mindset of accountability (we will talk about this in class) - focus on what you can influence not on the problems others are creating.

**30% Final paper**
Write a substantial and critical reflection on your learning during this course. Use feedback from your 360° Feedback and key issues addressed in the course that are important to you as your point of departure. You should also reference any critical learning moments that provided a “breakthrough” insight. Cite course readings and discussions that informed your learning. Explain how you may (or already have begun to) behave differently because of this new knowledge or skill. Writing this will be easiest if you keep a journal or notes throughout the course.

**COURSE ACTIVITIES BY SESSION**

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- Conscious Business Book (Ch. 8) | Bibliography     |
| Mar 26 | Mindsets            | - Conscious Business Book (chpt. 1 & 2)  
- David Foster Wallace - *This is Water Commencement Speech* | *Bibliography*   
- Leadership Challenge Paper |
| Apr 9  | Difficult Conversations | - Conscious Business Book (ch 4, 5 & 6) | *Annotated Bibliography* |
| Apr 16 | Mindfulness         | - tbd                                                                 | *Bibliography*   |
| Apr 23 | Values, Purpose & Priorities | - Conscious Business Book (ch 3)  
| Apr 30 | Vulnerability       | - The Gifts of Imperfection Book                                      | *Bibliography*   |
| May 7  | Teachback           | None                                                                  | - *Bibliography*  
- Final Paper |

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