GP 1194 Strategic Leadership for Public Service Organizations  
Fall 2011  
Tuesdays 6:45 – 8:45 PM  

Instructors  
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Course Description  
Strategic Leadership is an advanced seminar designed to equip mid-career students with the tools, perspectives, and frameworks for executing high-impact strategy within mission-driven organizations. Topics include conceptual frameworks for understanding high impact organizations and the role of strategic leadership, analytical tools for developing and assessing strategy, approaches to working with stakeholders to mobilize commitment, and methods for leading change. We will explore a wide range of sources including established approaches to strategic planning and management, and emerging practices such as narrative leadership and a campaign approach to change. We will draw on the experiences students bring to the classroom. Students will need to gain access to a nonprofit or public service organization, as a professional or a volunteer, in order to fulfill the assignments.  

The course is co-taught by the Research Center for Leadership in Action’s (RCLA www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership) executive director and an RCLA senior fellow who is the director of Advancing Women Professionals (www.advancingwomen.org) and an organizational consultant. It combines scholarly readings, case studies, and a range of activities to support application. We recognize the EMPA students as adult professionals who learn best when they are responsible for their own education and are given opportunity for application. Over the course of the semester, we will delve into the roles and tasks of strategic leaders and the contribution of strategy to building organizations that achieve lasting impact.  

Objectives  
The purpose of this course is to develop in the EMPA students an understanding of and an enhanced capacity to enact the roles and tasks of strategic leadership in the service of building a mission-driven organization with deep and lasting impact. Specifically, by the end of the course students will be able to:  

• Identify critical components of high impact organizations and articulate the role of strategic leadership in building such organizations;  
• Apply a set of analytical tools to develop and assess effective strategy;  
• Work with others to mobilize the commitment required to deliver on a strategy; and  
• Understand a variety of perspectives on how to lead a change agenda.
Readings
Readings, primarily available on blackboard, are comprised of journal articles and book chapters and are listed under each session below.

In addition to the assigned readings for each week, we ask that you read Heath, Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard*, Broadway Books, NY, 2010 by the beginning of session 9 on November 1st.

Course Requirements

Class Participation (25%):
Students must complete all readings before class and engage actively in the discussions and classroom activities. To participate fully, students should allow sufficient time to complete readings and spend time reflecting on how their experience supports or challenges the concepts presented in those readings in preparation for each class. The blackboard contributions described below are meant to help students prepare for class discussion. The instructors have outlined assignments in the syllabus for sessions in which there will be classroom exercises. These exercises include group presentations and peer consultations among other activities. All students are expected to actively engage in these exercises and will be evaluated on the quality of their participation. **Please note that there are readings due for the first class.**

Blackboard Contributions (10%):
In preparation for class discussions and exercises, students must submit brief comments on readings, including questions they’d like the group to take up at the next session, on the course blackboard site. Students are required to comment on blackboard prior to at least 10 of the sessions by midnight the night before class. Comments must include references to the readings and should focus on what students found compelling or useful as well as critiques of theories presented.

Analysis and application papers – (65%):
1. Environmental and Organizational Assessment (3-4 pages) – Select a nonprofit organization or government agency that you want to focus on during the semester. Describe the organization or agency briefly. Identify one macro level trend you believe is impacting the world of public service, and describe how that trend is playing out in this organization or agency. Select one of the analysis tools from the readings and use it to assess that organization or agency and to identify a strategic challenge.

Due before the start of session 5 on October 4, 2011

2. Memo on Strengthening the Role of Middle Managers (3-4 pages) – Develop a brief memo to the head of either the organization or government agency where you currently work or the one you’ve chosen to focus on for the semester that suggests three steps that can be taken to strengthen the role of middle managers. Please be sure to include an analysis of the current conditions and make a case for how you will overcome barriers and leverage opportunities that exist.

Due before the start of session 10 on November 9, 2011
3. **Strategic Change Case (5-7 pages)** – This will be the major written and graded assignment for Strategic Leadership. It is designed to assess your ability to synthesize the concepts learned throughout the class and apply them to a real world case for change. In particular, emphasis should be placed on the concepts presented in the articulating vision, mobilizing stakeholders, building leadership as a collective achievement, and leading change sections of the course, though you are free to bring in other concepts as appropriate.

Select an example from your own work in the nonprofit or public service sector, or initiate research in your field of interest. Describe an approach to leading change on a challenge that you have identified for the organization, the sector, or for society. Imagine that you are a strategist who is responsible for developing the approach or approaches that should be used to lead change for the organization or social change for society. You should apply at least three concepts from articulating vision, mobilizing stakeholders, building leadership as a collective achievement, and leading change to develop your approach. In presenting your approach, please address the following:

a. Describe the situation as it currently exists and the change challenge to be addressed based either on your own knowledge of the field or research that you do.

b. Create a change strategy and explain how this strategy makes use of the ideas from the readings.

c. Identify at least one small win that could be achieved in the near term and explain why and how it can be accomplished.

d. Articulate a BHAG for the change challenge and identify one crucial change the strategy could achieve toward that BHAG in the mid-term.

e. Describe who needs to be mobilized and how they should be engaged.

Due by December 13, 2011.

*Note: All assignments must be emailed to both instructors prior to the start of the session for which it is due. Please label your document using the following system: LastnameFirstname_Assignment# (e.g. GodsoeBethany_Assignment1). Include this label as the name of the document itself and as the title at the top of your paper. You may also include a more descriptive title on the paper (e.g. Going Global: A Case for Change at the Research Center for Leadership in Action). Also include your NYU Wagner mailbox number at the top of the first page.*
Schedule

Session 1: September 6, 2011
Exploration of Key Components of the Syllabus & Individual Reflections on Leadership

Readings:
- Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, Primal Leadership Chapter 6 pp 92-112 (available on blackboard)
- Senge, Peter, The Necessary Revolution: Working Together to Create a Sustainable World, Chapter 27. (available on blackboard)

Application and Assignment:
Please come to class prepared to participate in small group interviews with your classmates and to:
- Describe an experience that has shaped your leadership trajectory;
- Share a recent or current professional challenge that is relevant for this course; and
- Build your learning agenda based on the “five discoveries” in Primal Leadership

At the end of class we will ask for people to sign up to make presentations in either session 2, 3, or 7, and you will be divided into teams accordingly. Those who sign up for session 2 will be asked to prepare a presentation about a public or nonprofit organization that embodies the characteristics of excellence described in the readings for session 2. Those who sign up for session 3 will be asked to become experts on one session 3 reading and present to the rest of the class the key concepts and a real world example of those concepts in action from either their own work or outside research. Those who sign up for session 7 will be asked to make a presentation about a strategy for developing distributed leadership within a public or nonprofit organization.

Session 2: September 13, 2011
Strategies for High Performance

Readings:
- Collins, Jim. Good to Great and the Social Sectors, 2005. Note: This text may be ordered online for approximately $10 from Amazon.com or another bookseller.
Application and Assignment:
Team presentations of high impact and/or great organizations, followed by questions and responses with the rest of the class. The class will collectively develop criteria for assessment, and we will use a participatory voting process to select the team that makes the most persuasive case. Small prizes will be given for the winning presentation.

Session 3: September 20, 2011
Defining Strategy and Strategic Leadership

Readings:

Application and Assignment:
Expert presentations on key concepts and examples of application for each of the week’s readings.

At the end of class we will discuss the organizations you are choosing to work on throughout the rest of the semester. Please bring the name of the organization to class and your thoughts on how you will gain access if it is not your current place of employment.

Session 4: September 27, 2011
Tools for Reading the Environment & Assessing your Organization

Readings:
Application and Assignment:
In addition, take time to reflect on your own experience of these kinds of exercises and tools in your own professional life. What made them most productive? What were some of the challenges to effective implementation? How might you approach it differently in the future?

At the end of class, we will group you into trios for next week’s application exercise.

***Assignment 1 due before session 5***

Note: Bring 2 copies of your completed paper to class

Session 5: October 4, 2011
Strategic and Business Planning – Part 1

Readings:
- Bryson, John M. Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, Chapter 2, pp. 30 -61. (available on blackboard)
- Pietersen, Willie, Strategic Learning, Chapter 5 and pages 117-119. (available on blackboard as two separate documents)

Application:
Bring two copies of your completed first paper to class. Exchange it with the other two people in your trio working group. Discuss how you would initiate a planning process with the organization that you described in your paper and give one another feedback on the approach discussed.

Session 6: October 11, 2011
Strategic and Business Planning – Part 2

Readings:
- Case materials on guest speaker’s organization

Guest Speaker:
Sam Schaeffer, Executive Director, Center for Employment Opportunities NY
The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is dedicated to providing immediate, effective and comprehensive employment services to men and women with recent criminal convictions.
For Sam’s bio and materials on CEO please refer to blackboard.
Session 7: October 18, 2011
Building Leadership as a Collective Achievement

Readings:
- Three NY Times and Digital Activism and Power articles on the use of social media in social change. (available on blackboard)
- CLASSIC: Wheatley, Margaret J. *Goodbye Command and Control*. Leader to Leader, July 1997. (available on blackboard)

Application and assignment:
Team presentations on strategies for creating distributed leadership in a nonprofit or public organization.

Session 8: October 25, 2011
Articulating Vision

Readings:

Application:
We will practice communicating vision through a “Vision Stand” exercise in which each person will have 1-2 minutes to share his or her personal vision for the impact he or she seeks to have in the world.
Session 9: November 1, 2011

The Role of Middles in Strategic Leadership

Readings:
- Heath, Chip and Dan Heath, Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard, Broadway Books, NY, 2010

Session 10: November 8, 2011

Board Governance

Readings:
- Governance as Leadership summary. (available on blackboard)
- Governance as Leadership: A Conversation with William Ryan. The Bridgespan Group, 2009. (available on blackboard)

Application:
Based on a scenario that will be distributed in class, you will be invited to analyze an issue from the perspective of a Board of Directors, operating in the fiduciary, strategic or generative modes.

***Assignment 2 due before session 10***

Session 11: November 15, 2011

Leading Across Differences

Readings:
- Beyond Diversity: Working Across Differences for Organizational Change, Center for Gender in Organizations, June 2004. (available on blackboard)
- Ernst & Young, Groundbreakers: Using the strength of women to rebuild the world economy, 2009. (available on blackboard)

Application and Assignment:
You will be divided into three groups. Each team will be asked to draft recommendations on how to initiate changes in public service workplaces that will test new approaches to diversity.

**Session 12: November 22, 2011**

**Leading Change Part 1**

**Readings:**
- Briefing Notes: *The Campaign Approach to Strategic Change, Strategies for Listening in to an Institution, and Sweeping People into a Campaign for Strategic Change*. CFAR, 1999. (available on blackboard) Note: These are three brief documents.
- *Matta, Nadim and Peter Morgan, Local Empowerment through Rapid Results*, in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2011. (available on blackboard) NOTE: Please also visit [www.rapidresults.org](http://www.rapidresults.org) and review their approach.

**Application:**
We will work in small groups to discuss how the theories from the readings this week will apply to the final papers you are developing.

**Session 13: November 29, 2011**

**Leading Change Part 2**

**Application and Assignment**
Bring in an outline of your final paper to discuss in small groups. What points are strongest? Where does your thinking need to deepened and refined? Be prepared to receive and offer feedback in small group consultations.

**Guest speaker:**
Fatima Shama, Commissioner, NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs

The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) Building on its Charter mandate, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by recommending policies and programs that facilitate successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the City.

For Ms. Shama’s bio please refer to blackboard.
Session 14: December 6, 2011

The final session will synthesize all the key ideas from the course. We will return to your learning agenda, and see how much progress you have made. We will create action plans for future growth.

Application and Assignment
Bring in a one-pager synthesizing a few key ideas from this course that have been meaningful for you and will influence your work. We will ask you to hand in your synthesis, but it will not be graded. We will use this to better understand what you have learned from the course and as input to our work on continuously improving this course in future semesters.

**Assignment 3 is due by December 13.**