Instructor Information
- Professor Sonia Ospina
- Email: sonia.ospina@nyu.edu
- Office Address: Puck Building, Rm 3075
- Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4-6 pm or by appointment.

Course Information
- Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 6:45 – 8:45pm
- Class Location: GCASL 374

Course Prerequisites
- CORE-GP 1022, Introduction to Public Policy or CORE-GP 1020, Management and Leadership

Course Description
This course explores collective leadership as a tool for advancing social change in the context of democratic governance and from the bottom up perspective of community based organizations. Students use frameworks —of leadership and of social change— to challenge their traditional, leader-centered understanding of leadership, and reflect on their own leadership potential and capabilities as effective change agents in their own spheres of influence. The course is available to students in all Wagner specializations—management, policy, finance, SI3 and Advocacy—and programs—International, PNP, Health and Urban Planning.

In contrast to traditional approaches to leadership focusing on single heroic individuals who influence followers, the course introduces a perspective that fosters a collaborative mindset and a relational approach to engaging the world, namely, collective leadership. Consistent with the demands of today’s complex problems, in this view, leadership happens as members of a group produce collective achievements towards enacting a shared purpose. This requires awareness of the self in relation to others, complemented by awareness of the constellation of
relationships, structures, processes and institutional dynamics that shape leadership and may produce or derail change efforts embedded within larger systems. Leadership emerges as a group makes meaning to create the conditions to find the direction required to transform their individual efforts into collective achievements.

The course explores the role of leadership in social change organizations, where community efforts aim at transforming thinking, policies and structures, in the search for inclusive, transparent and democratic systemic solutions to the intractable social problems their communities face. This approach takes into consideration the contested arenas where the responsibility to address these problems is negotiated and distributed among social actors with differential access to resources and power. The primary focus is on organizations working with communities on the ground, and thus the emphasis is on action at the organizational level, but connections to the individual and policy levels are considered.

Using real examples from the US, complemented with some from around the world, the course is firmly anchored on frameworks and key concepts around the constructs of leadership and systemic social change. Students are invited to explore implications of drawing on insights from social change organizations to other public service institutional contexts and to assess the pitfalls and promises of doing so. Students will also explore the practical implications of developing collective leadership capabilities as part of their leadership repertoire. However, those searching for a hands-on, experiential, leadership development personal experience are urged to consider other courses focusing on leadership skills and competencies.

**Course and Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course you will:

1. Recognize your own mental models and assumptions about leadership and social transformation; and use these to identify key personal strengths, gaps and strategies to develop leadership capabilities as an effective social change agent.
2. Be able to contrast a perspective of leadership (emphasizing its collective dimensions) with traditional perspectives (emphasizing its individual dimensions); and articulate the benefits and challenges of a collective perspective to produce effective social change.
3. Assess how examples of leadership practices in social change organizations help individual efforts become collective achievements; and appreciate the power of leadership work that weaves individual, organizational and policy levels of action.
4. Apply insights about collective leadership practices for social transformation by exploring how they are enacted in one social organization in a particular policy arena of your choice (and be exposed to other through your team work).
5. Articulate and share lessons drawn from your chosen organization by engaging in deep conversations and team work with peers who share the passion for addressing a similar policy problem within a social organization of their choice.
Course Requirements and Assessment

Class expectations

The course is structured as a seminar. Classes are a mix of brief lectures, case studies and exemplars, in-depth discussion based on readings and written assignments, and a few guest speakers. It is, therefore, very important to prepare the reading assignments prior to class and to participate actively in the discussions. Reading guides for each session highlight key concepts and ideas for class discussion and exercises.

All required readings (journal articles, case studies/applications, links for required review) are available electronically via NYU’s and Wagner’s online electronic services per NYU student library privileges.

Summary of Assignments and Associated Learning Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Course Objective Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Throughout the course</td>
<td>#2, #3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Four journal entries      | 20%    | 1) Wednesday, Sep 11
2) Wednesday, Sep 25
3) Wednesday, Oct 9
4) Wednesday, Nov 20 | #1, #2                   |
| Individual mid-term report| 25%    | Friday, October 18           | #1, #2                   |
| Team memo                 | 10%    | Friday, November 15          | #5                       |
| Team final report         | 25%    | Wednesday, December 18       | #3, #4, #5               |

- Your class participation, grounded on the readings (see READING GUIDES FOR EACH CLASS IN NYUCLASSES’ Class tabs to focus your reading).
- Four sets of journal entries where you discuss your reactions to the readings from two classes each (for a total of 8 classes);
- An individual mid-term report where you reflect on your positionality vis a vis social change leadership and your capabilities to enact collective leadership (personal reflection);
- A brief team memo describing the team’s fieldwork plan;
- A final team report of what you learned about collective leadership from your fieldwork and the team project.

Assignments build cumulatively. Please refer to NYU Classes Instructions for Assignments, under the RESOURCES tab. You will find there the complete instructions, expectations and grading criteria for each assignment. It is your responsibility to study these documents as part of your preparation for the course.

* Please see Appendix at the end of the syllabus for information on how letter grades are assigned.
Absenteeism, punctuality, and in-class conduct

You are expected to attend all classes, and arrive on time. If you miss a class due to unavoidable circumstances, please send the professor a message in advance and contact another member of the class to get what was covered in class. Missing more than two classes without excuse will affect your class participation grade. Systematic tardiness, disruptive behavior (including unrelated side conversations, use of cell phone or computer for information withdrawal that is not related to class) is unacceptable and will also negatively impact your grade.

**Academic Integrity.** I expect strict adherence to University guidelines for academic integrity. You are responsible to know these guidelines and to understand what constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is very likely to result in a failing grade for the course. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath.

**Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU:** Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays:** NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.
Overview of Course Contents

Part I: New Vistas On Leadership: From Individual To Collective

1. Introduction: exploring our assumptions (Sept. 4)
2. From leaders to leadership: Implications of new thinking (Sept. 11)
   • First set of journal entries: classes 1 & 2, due on Sept. 11

Part II: Grounding Social Change Leadership: Systemic Change and Systems Leadership

3. Social transformation: variations in the meaning of social change (Sept. 18)
4. Systems thinking, leadership and social transformation (Sept. 25)
   • Second set of journal entries: classes 3 & 4, due on Sept. 25
5. The social change leadership framework: Collective leadership in action (Oct. 2)


6. Leadership practices 1: Reframing discourse (Oct. 9)
   • Third set of journal entries for classes 5 & 6 due on Oct 9
7. Leadership practices 2: Bridging difference (Oct. 16)
   • Individual midterm report due on Friday, Oct. 18
8. Leadership practices 3: Unleashing human energies (Oct. 23)
9. Leadership strategies 1: Participatory Action Research (PAR) (and Preparing for fieldwork) (Oct 30)
   • (Heads up: Team memo: Plan for fieldwork due on Friday, Nov. 15)
10. Leadership strategies 2: Building democratic organizations through governance and collective leadership tools; Art of Hosting (Nov 6)
11. Leadership strategies 3: Leadership development in social change contexts (Nov 13)
    • Team memo: Plan for fieldwork due on Friday, Nov. 15
12. Mobilizing collective capacity for social transformation: integration and applications (Nov 20)
    • Fourth set of journal entries: classes 11 & 12 due Nov. 20
    > November 27 (NYU Thanksgiving Recess starts – no classes scheduled)

Part IV: Lessons and Reflections about Social Change Leadership

13. Class crowdsourcing exercise: Sharing learning from your field work (Dec. 4)
14. Scaling up and concluding reflections (Dec. 11)
    • Final team report due on Wednesday, Dec. 18, in lieu of final exam
Course Contents

Part I: New Vistas On Leadership: From Individual To Collective

Class 1. Introduction: Exploring our assumptions (Sept. 4)

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Watch the following video:
  - Sasquatch music festival 2009: Guy starts dance party (3 minutes)
- Drath, Bill (Wilfred). (Document # 1): Two notes on relational leadership.
- Watch the following video: Wayfinding Leadership: Wisdom for Developing Potential | Chellie Spiller | TEDxHastingsSt (19:20 minutes)
- Case example:

Class 2. From leaders to leadership: Implications of new thinking (Sept. 13)

Assignment:

- Due today: First set of journal entries for classes 1 & 2

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Overview of leadership theories:
  - Sorenson G. and G. Goethals. 2004. Leadership Theories: Overview. Read ONLY the following sections: Introduction; Trait, behavior and Situational or Contingency Approaches; Theories of Transformational Leadership; Cognitive and Constructivist Theories; The Future.
- Collective leadership: a relational approach to leadership (core ideas)
  - Heifetz, Ronald A. 2010. Leadership
- Case examples:
  - Drath, Wilfred (Document # 2): “Leadership beyond leaders and followers”
  - The Electronic Hallway: “Keeping industrial polluters out of Austin's Latino and African American Communities. PODER.”
Suggested:

- If you are really curious about the theoretical assumptions of the DAC model, you can also read:

Part II: Grounding Social Change Leadership: Systemic Change and Systems Leadership

Class 3. Social transformation: variations in the meaning of social change (Sept. 18)

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Approaches to social change?:
  - A familiar case: The Kony Story - Follow the instructions on the NYUClasses document of this name (please leave time, the video –30 minutes long– plus the readings will require some time to process).
  - A current debate:

- Existential dilemmas?
  - Kivel, P. 2007. “Social service or social change?”

- Case example:

Suggested:

- If you are really curious about a social science view on change, you can also read:

- If you are really curious about the nature of social change and its applications to the social sector and social partnerships, here is a recent how-to guide you can read:

Class 4. Systems thinking, leadership, and social transformation (Sept. 25)

Assignment:
- Due today: Second set of journal entries for classes 3 & 4

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):
- Read this blog: Living Systems Leadership.
- Handout: Briefly review the “Habits of a Systems Thinker” one-pager posted in NYU Classes. Once you have done that, please follow the instructions posted below the handout.
- SSIR Editors. Leading Systems.
- Case example:
  - Wheatley & Frieze. 2011. Walk out, walk on: A learning journey into communities daring to live the future now. Please browse read:
    - “Joubert Park: South Africa: From Problem to Place”, pp. 75-100.

Suggested:
- If you are really curious about systems theory applications for social interventions and for leadership thinking you can also read:

Class 5. The social change leadership framework: collective leadership in action (Oct. 2)

Required Readings (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):
- Overview of the framework:
  - Parés et al, 2017. Democratic leadership: the work of leadership for social change. READ ONLY from page 76 (start on section 4.3.1) to page 79 (stop before 4.4) AND pages 85 (start at 4.5) to 88 (stop before 4.6) (you will read more next week).
- For explanation of the leadership practices:
• For the focus on community engagement:
  o Minieri et al, 2005, “From Constituents to Stakeholders”, Research Center for Leadership in Action, NYU/Wagner (see specific reading instructions in NYUClasses)
    o Study this hand-out: Rogal, Twelve thoughts on working with communities
• Case examples:
  o Movement Network Leader Case Study: Sarita Gupta (No need to read the Appendixes).
  o Barbara Ransby, "Shattering the Myth of the Leaderless Movement” Color Lines.

Suggested:
• If you are really curious about a variation of the framework with much resonance, you can also read
• If you are really curious about stakeholder engagement in the context of philanthropy, you can also read

Part III: Mobilizing Collective Capacity for Social Change:
Leadership Practices, Strategies & Tools

Class 6. Leadership practices 1: Reframing discourse (Oct. 9)

Assignment:
• Due today: Third set of journal entries for classes 5 & 6

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):
• Continued from last week: Parés et al. CHAPTER 4: Democratic leadership…document. READ ONLY Reframing Discourse section (4.4.1) on pages 80-81.
• Listen to the webinar: Shifting Mental Models to Advance Systems Change (61 minutes).
• Watch this Video: Andy Goodman on storytelling (11:52 minutes).
• Study this handout: Good cause, lousy message: The 10 immutable laws of storytelling.
• Explore the various tabs of the Storytelling and Social Change: A Strategy Guide in the website Working Narratives; be prepared to discuss an insight in class.
• Case Examples:
  o Reframing immigrant reality: Casa of Maryland: Creating “Co-Authors of Justice”.
  o Read the following blog about reframing indigeneity through the media by Manuela Picq: A dynamic year of indigenous communication.

Suggested:
• This is an interesting effort to reframe issues of race and racial equity:
  o Reframing Racial Equity: Center for Social Inclusion. “Let’s Talk about race” and “Talking about race toolkit”
• Here is an illustration of an Indigenous public service leader reframing issues of safety in the reservation through her work:
• Here is an illustration of reframing happening through expressive activities:
• If you are really curious about organic and mechanic metaphors of social change, you can also read

Class 7. Leadership practices 2: Bridging difference (Oct. 16)

Assignment:
• Individual midterm report due on Friday, October 18 by midnight.

Required Readings (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):
• Continued from last two weeks: Parés et al. CHAPTER 4: Democratic leadership…document. READ ONLY Bridging difference section (4.4.2) on pp. 81-83.
• Wei-Skillern, J, D. Ehrlichman and D. Sawyer. 2015. The Most Impactful Leaders you’ve Never heard of.
• Case examples:
  o Movement Network Leader Case Study: Evelyne Shen. (No need to read the Appendixes)
Suggested:

- If you are really curious about inter-organizational collaboration, you can also read
- An in-depth case of leadership for building coalitions:

Class 8. Leadership practices 3: Unleashing human energies (Oct. 23)

Required Readings (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Continued from last two weeks: Parés et al. CHAPTER 4: Democratic leadership...READ ONLY Unleashing Human Energies section (4.4.3) on pp. 83-85.
- Case examples:
  - Choose one of the following two:
    - Theodore, Nick. 2009. When Workers Take the Lead.
    - Electronic Hallway: Center for Young Women’s Development: How Young Women Ex-Offenders are Transforming Themselves.
  - Wheatley & Frieze. 2011. Walk out, walk on. Please read:
    - Kuzunda Learning Village, Simbabwe: From efficiency to resilience, pp. 103-128.

Suggested:

- If you are really curious about applications to a more traditional health care setting, you can also read
- If you are really curious about the theory of popular education and/ or practical guidance to implement trainings based on the popular education approach, you can also read

Class 9. Leadership strategies 1: Participatory Action Research (and preparing for fieldwork) (Oct 30)
We start by looking at Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a leadership strategy to engage community participants in the social change work. We then use some of its tools to think about the fieldwork you will be doing for your final project.

**Guest speaker:** Alexa Kasdan, Consultant and Director of research and policy, Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, New York (see bio in NYUClasses)

**Team work with feedback:** Stepping back to prepare/share fieldwork observations, questionnaires and team memo.

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Explore the Research for Organizing Toolkit. Focus on the following sections:
  - Overview of Participatory Action Research
  - Designing your research
  - Getting your data
- McDonald and Rogers. 2014. Interviewing. UNICEF Guide

Suggested:

- If you really want to learn about the details and “secrets” of good interviewing:
    - Variations in Qualitative Interviewing (p. 341 – 348)
    - Question Options and Wording Questions (p. 348 – 365)
    - Ethical Issues Checklist (p. 408 – 409)

Heads up:

  Team Memo: Plan for fieldwork due on Friday, November 15 (one memo per team). Please upload by midnight.

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**Class 10. Leadership strategies 2: Building democratic organizations through governance and collective leadership tools (Nov 6)**

**Guest Speakers:** Kelly McGowan, Executive Director, Going Up-Stream and Richard Rivera, President of RR Consulting & Associates (see bios in NYUClasses)

Required Readings and E-materials (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- For governance:

- **For Art of Hosting**
  - Study/browse [The Art of Hosting webpage](#).

- **Case examples:**
  - Organization Unbound. Changing the Way we Change the World.
    - Watch the video [Changing the Way We Change the World](#).
    - Then choose ONE of the four self-guided workshops; study the slides in the chosen workshop as if you were going to organize a group session. Be prepared to describe and discuss.

**Suggested:**
- If you are really curious about the Art of Hosting, you can also read

**Class 11. Leadership strategies 3: Leadership development in social change contexts (November 13)**

Panel of practitioners to explore collective leadership and leadership development issues today, from a practitioner perspective, and to distill the underlying assumptions about leadership that frame and shape the existing practices, strategies and tools.

**Panelists:**
- **Amparo Hoffman**, Director of the [Ghanaian Women’s Social Leadership Program](#), NYU/Wagner
- **Joan Minerie**, Executive Director, [Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock](#)
- **Corey Blay**, Program Director, [NYU Leadership Initiative](#)
- **Ericka Stallings**, Co-Director, [Leadership Learning Community](#)
Assignment:

- **Due today:** Third set of journal entries for classes 5 & 6
- Team memo: Plan for fieldwork due on Friday, Nov. 15

Required Readings (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- Leader Case Study: Dugan, 2017, Mary F. Morten

Suggested:

- If you want to explore a proposal of leadership capabilities for the social sector:
- If you want to see some of the precursors and very well developed initiatives with applications of leadership development with a collective lens:

**Class 12. Mobilizing collective capacity for social transformation:**
Integration and applications (Nov. 20)

Assignment:

- Fourth set of journal entries: classes 11 & 12 due Nov. 20

Required Readings (See “Reading Guides” In NYU CLASSES’ Class tabs):

- The following readings offer real examples of the various concepts learned so far:
  - An application in a public service delivery system: Joost Vos & Hendrik Wagenaar. 2014. The Munchhausen Movement: Improving the Coordination of Social Services through the Creation of a Social Movement.
Suggested:

- If you are really curious about how to bring a social change orientation to a social service organization, you can read:

November 27 (NYU Thanksgiving Recess starts – no classes scheduled)

Part IV: Lessons and Reflections about Social Change Leadership

Class 13. Class crowdsourcing exercise: Sharing learning from your field work (Dec. 4)

Drawing from your fieldwork (including your interviews), we will use a ‘crowdsourcing’ exercise to develop collective insights in the classroom. To prepare, use further instructions in “Crowdsourcing preparation guide” in NYUClasses.

Class 14. Scaling up and concluding reflections (Dec. 11)

Assignment:

- Final team report due on Wed, December 18, in lieu of final exam.

Required Readings and E-materials:

- Scaling up:
  - Mont, S. 2018. Introduction to the Next Economy.
  - Choose one of the following global organizations and study its logic and proposals to work for social change, looking for evidence of assumptions of a collective leadership approach. Come prepared to talk about your reactions (both critical and appreciative) in the context of what you have learned in this course.
    - Global Tapestry of Alternatives (global)
    - SDGs Transformation Forum (global)
    - Vikalp Sangam (country based- India)
    - Community Wealth dot org (country based- US)

- Concluding reflections:
  - Ashford, MW. 2004. “Staying the Course.”
  - Study the hand-out: Wheatley, M. Core Practices of Life-Affirming Leaders.
Appendix. Explanation of Letter Grades and Criteria

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0 points</td>
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Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- **(A) Excellent:** Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- **(A-) Very good:** Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- **(B+) Good:** Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- **(B) Adequate:** Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- **(B-) Borderline:** Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in "good standing."
- **(C/-/+ Deficient:** Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- **(F) Fail:** Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

Syllabus updated: 09/06/2019