

Syllabus

Welcome to Leadership Lab

Leadership Lab is a course designed to provide you with ideas and tactics to help you continuously grow your ability to influence situations and outcomes.

Throughout our work together, you will become more aware of outdated patterns of behavior that undermine your influence as a leader and be equipped with the knowledge and tools to instill new, more effective patterns.

During this course you will learn how to guide your own development and to make personal changes in line with your larger goals and aspirations. This kind of self-leadership is foundational to experiencing a rewarding career and a meaningful life.

Course Outcomes

The first outcome is that you will define and make progress on specific, personal development goals that enhance your abilities to influence situations and outcomes. We call these “development projects.”

The class helps you to identify patterns of behavior you’re committed to changing. You may have wanted to make a change for a long time or you may have only recently noticed something you wish to work on. Either way, having identified worthwhile changes you want to make, the class creates an experiential and supportive space in which you will learn what it takes to grow and change.

A sample of development projects Booth students’ have identified includes:

- Being more courageous by using your voice in a variety of situations
- Staying engaged during disagreements rather than avoiding them
- Developing habits and skills that improve important relationships
- Managing one’s reactions and frustrations that get in the way of working effectively with others
- Developing a stronger, more self-assured interpersonal presence

The second outcome is that you will learn a set of ideas and tactics for guiding your development in the future.

You will apply the approaches introduced in class to your development projects. These approaches will help you make progress on your current concerns; and, these same approaches are tactics that you can apply to future development projects, long after the course is over.

Some of the approaches covered in class include:

- In-depth analysis of what you want to change and why
- Experimenting with thoughts, emotions, and behaviors as the components of existing behavioral patterns
- Designing new, behavioral patterns better suited to the challenges of leading
- Initiating and sustaining action over time to make progress
- Dealing with procrastination and lack of follow-through in making desired change

It is important to note that Leadership Lab requires a deeper level of engagement than many classes.

Leadership Lab introduces a valuable set of ideas on human development and helps you apply them to yourself.

The class consists of activities, assignments, and interactions that involve analyzing your aspirations, understanding others, learning to work with your thoughts and emotions, generating meaningful development goals, crafting a leadership identity, and weekly experiments with new behaviors.

Additionally, you will be supporting your fellow classmates as they engage in the same kinds of work. The personal nature of the course work relies on a willingness to try difficult things, to be vulnerable, and to take responsibility for your own development.

Course Assignments

The course requires students to complete two types of assignments.

Weekly Development Assignments (10)

Each student will complete 10 Weekly Development Assignments. Each assignment contains 2 to 4 activities. Individual activities typically require 30 to 60 minutes to complete and culminate with short, written analyses. These assignments focus on moving your development projects forward; they are the active ingredients of making personal change.

Some additional information regarding Weekly Development Assignments:

In the initial weeks of the course, students define and explore the developmental projects they wish to work on within class. The activity of these initial weeks can be described as “problem finding.” When we want to make a change, we’re often familiar with the pain point that animates our desire for change. To truly make lasting change, however, we need to move beyond mere familiarity with a recurring experience. We need to come to a place where we genuinely understand the nature of the issue.

The Weekly Development Assignment for week 5 will include a set of questions that require you to conceptualize your development project. Building on the frameworks and assignments of the initial weeks, students will respond to a set of questions that help to conceptualize their developmental project.

In the latter half of the course, students design and experiment with new behavioral patterns. These efforts help students to live into new, more effective ways for influencing situations and outcomes.

The Weekly Development Assignment for week 10 (i.e., Final’s week) will invite students to reflect on the work of the quarter. Students will revise and update the conceptualization of their development project, survey the progress they have made, and formulate next steps in order to continue their efforts and/or to maintain the gains they have made.

Group Presentation (1) (10 minutes during Week 5 class)

Students will be assigned to small groups. Each group will explore the logic of one emotion (e.g., guilt, anger, etc.). Groups create a single page summary and deliver a 10-minute presentation to the entire class. Recognizing and understanding emotional experience is critical in guiding your development. This assignment will allow you to explore one emotion in greater depth and to learn from the presentations of your peers. This assignment requires 2 to 3 hours to complete.

Social Support

One-on-One Coaching

Coaching is an important feature of this class. Each student is required to schedule four one-on-one conversations with their Leadership Coach. We use coaching because development of this kind is not readily scalable. Even students working on similar development projects will necessarily do so differently. This is because even with a common objective, the underlying pattern of thoughts, emotional investments, and behaviors differ from person to person. Leadership Coaches help students apply course material and tailor it to individual student needs.

Peer Insight Partners

The course will also utilize an insight partner model. At the end of each class meeting, you will be paired with a peer and given a collaborative development activity. Peer-to-peer conversations support two important forms of learning. They introduce the tactic of activating social support for the difficult challenge of making personal change. They also provide a context for learning more about the process of self-development by offering a window into a peer's change process.

Grading

Late assignments will receive a small penalty *for every day* they are late.

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Attendance and active participation is a critical part of learning in this class for two reasons. First, class is conducted entirely in person (unless we are required by the University to meet virtually). We don't record class in order to preserve the confidentiality of student voices during class discussions and live-cases. Thus, one needs to be present to benefit from course content. Second, each week during class, insight partners have peer coaching interactions. Without regular attendance, students and their insight partners miss a critical component of the class.

This part of your grade includes (a) attendance at class meetings, (b) actively participating in class activities during each class meeting, (c) completion of preparatory activities for class (e.g., discussion boards, completing questionnaires, etc.), and (d) active participation in coaching conversations.

Group Presentation (10%)

The group assignment will help students to build an understanding of a specific emotion and its logic. Student presentations help us learn from each other's work.

Weekly Development Assignments (70%)

Students must become adept in applying the ideas and tactics covered in the course. Engaged application of course material will be assessed via the completion of weekly development assignments. Completed activities offer an opportunity to assess the quality of students' application of course concepts.

Booth Honor Code Pledge

Each student shall sign the following pledge on midterm and final papers: "I pledge my Honor that I have not violated the Chicago Booth Honor Code during this examination." At the discretion of the professor, this pledge may be required on any other graded work for a course.

Student Accommodations

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, please contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. To receive a reasonable accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Disability Services. Please contact the office at 773-702-6000 / TTY 773-795-1186 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit the website at disabilities.uchicago.edu. If you have an approved accommodation from Student Disability Services that you plan to use, please contact Academic Services as soon as

possible. (Accommodations@chicagobooth.edu). Academic Services will provide support and coordinate the details of your accommodations on your behalf.

Readings

The only required text is *How to Change* by Katy Milkman. Students should obtain a copy via their preferred bookseller. All other readings will be available on Canvas.

Working Outline: Assignments, Readings, and Class Topics

A complete outline with assignments and readings for each class meeting will be distributed during our initial class meeting.

Week 1: My Development Project & Introduction to the cognitive-behavioral model

Class Topics¹

1. Introduction to Leadership Lab
 2. Introduction to the social cognitive framework
 3. How to unpack an experience
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Week 2: Emotions as Information

Class Topics

1. Recognizing and working with emotional experience
 2. Interpreting emotional experience
 3. Generating Commitment for change: Change for whom?
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Week 3: The rules I live by

Class Topics

1. Identifying our own assumptions and rules for behavior
 2. Generating Commitment for change: Measuring commitment
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Week 4: Who am I when this happens?

Class Topics

1. Identity work and its importance for change
 2. Crowdsourcing solutions for making change
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¹ **Class Topics:** This section previews the topics we will address in class. Class meetings will include a balance of lecture to develop a clear understanding of course content (~30%) and activities and discussions that enable students to experience and personally connect with the course content (~70%).

Week 5: Creating new solutions

Class Topics

1. Group Project presentations
2. Planning and scaling your development project
3. Forming habits that promote growth

Week 6: How can I think differently?

Class Topics

1. Changing the rules we live by as part of our development
2. How can we measure progress?

Week 7: How can I act differently?

Class Topics

1. Taking action despite our fears as part of our development
2. Strategies that enhance follow-through

Week 8: How can I be different?

Class Topics

1. Working with our identity as part of our development
2. Bouncing back after lapses in follow-through

Week 9: How can I feel differently?

Class Topics

1. Working with emotions as part of our development
2. Maintaining gains
3. What next?

Final Weekly Development Assignment is due Monday December 9th by 11:59pm
