



MGMT 500: Leading Teams and Organizations

Fall 2016

Instructor: Eli Awtrey	Class: M/W evenings, PAC 390 (Gold) & 392 (Purple)
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OVERVIEW

"When I finally got a management position, I found out how hard it is to lead and manage people. **The warm, fuzzy stuff is hard.** The quantitative stuff is easy — you either don't do much of this as a manager or you have people working for you to do it....as long as you can use an HP 12 calculator or a spreadsheet, you have the finance knowledge that you need for most management positions. I should have taken organizational behavior and social psychology — and maybe abnormal psychology, come to think of it."

—Guy Kawasaki, in an interview with NYT columnist Adam Bryant (March 20, 2010)

Whether you're already an experienced manager or aspire to become one, this course is designed to give you the tools you need to be more effective in leading teams and organizations. We'll do this through three interrelated objectives:

- **Expand your management knowledge past common myths or intuitions on how people work.**
 - We'll do this by using evidence-based research on the behavior of people and teams.
- **Hone your leadership and management skillset for current and future roles.**
 - We'll do this through experiential assignments that practice class insights.
- **Apply leadership and other OB concepts to issues in your organizations.**
 - We'll do this by applying the research we discuss to real situations in the workplace.

COURSE CONTENT AND ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and may be adapted depending on our progress through the quarter.

Class	Module	Class topic	Readings	Nudge?
9/28 (W)	Intro	Class “why” & “how”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evidence-based management</i> 	
10/3 (M)	Leading through motivation	Extrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Do financial incentives drive firm performance?</i> <i>On the folly... (on Canvas)</i> 	
10/5 (W)		Intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The power of small wins</i> <i>A practitioner’s guide to nudging (skim)</i> 	
10/10 (M)		<i>Apply</i>	<i>Case: New England Patriots</i>	*
10/12 (W)	Leading through differences	Personality & culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How to become a better leader</i> 	
10/17 (M)		Team composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The unselfish gene</i> 	
10/19 (W)		<i>Apply</i>	<i>Case: Managing a Global Team (Sun Micro)</i>	*
10/24 (M)	Leading through process	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Teamwork on the fly</i> <i>The new science of building teams</i> 	
10/31 (M)		Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Organizational traps: Madness/wisdom of crowds</i> <i>The wisdom of crowds has a bad track record</i> 	
11/7 (M)		<i>Apply</i>	<i>Case: TerraCog Global Positioning Systems</i>	*
11/21 (M)	Leading through culture	Identifying culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Leading by leveraging culture</i> <i>Manage your emotional culture</i> 	
11/28 (M)		Changing culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cultural change that sticks</i> <i>Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail</i> 	
11/30 (W)		<i>Apply</i>	<i>Case: Campbell and Bailyn’s Boston Office</i>	*
12/5 (M)	Integration	Simulation	-	
12/7 (W)		Debrief & conclusion	-	

Unless otherwise noted, materials are found in your Harvard course packet

Required Course Packet from Harvard: <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/53510653>

Assignment	Description	Due	% of Grade
1. Individual case write-ups	Two (optional third)	Before class	30%
2. Team “nudge” project	Design a workplace intervention	See below	20%
3. Personal development journal	Reflection on work and theory	10/21 & 12/9	10%
4. Final exam	Individual, take-home	12/7	20%
5. Class contribution	Peer-evaluated, quality != quantity	-	20%

Case analysis write-ups (2 total; 30% of final grade)

Choose two of the business cases that we will be covering in class. Your analysis of the case should be 2-3 pages long (single-spaced) and cover responses to the posted questions for the case. Each analysis will be evaluated on the basis of (a) the depth of your critical thinking and analysis; (b) the strength of your arguments, including providing evidence for your point of view; and (c) the professionalism of the document, including the quality of your writing, neatness, spelling, and punctuation. These are due before class on the day we discuss the case via Canvas. Late submissions are not accepted. If you are not satisfied with your performance on one of these, you have the option of writing a third analysis to replace your lowest grade.

Team “nudge” project (20% of final grade)

For the team project, you will find a problem that needs to be fixed in a workplace. This could be your workplace, or it could be the workplace of a friend or family member. But it needs to be a real problem (as opposed to a fictional exercise).

Your task will be to create a “nudge” to fix that problem. Use the ideas from our class on nudges (October 10) in generating your nudge. You may also find it useful to read Milkman et al. (2011)¹ as well as the HBR article from your coursepack titled “A Practitioner’s Guide to Nudging”. And for even more background reading, you may find it helpful to read *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness* by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein.

Note that an effective nudge addresses a concrete problem, and does so in a relatively subtle manner. Try not to be too heavy-handed in your nudge. If you are not sure if you are being too heavy-handed, check with me. In creating your plan for a nudge, generate a way to see if it worked. Ideally this would involve data.

Time will be made at the end of the term for short (5-7 minutes) presentations of your nudge. The presentation will not be a part of the grade, but rather a learning opportunity for the class. Ideally this will involve an opportunity for the class to help figure out ways to either improve the nudge, the implementation of the nudge, or alternative nudges that may be more effective.

Milestones:

- Workplace problem identification (due 10/17): In a one-page, single-spaced document, describe the organization and problem for which you will be designing an intervention. While this can be fairly abstract (since it is early-stage), you want to work hard to think things out early. It will serve you well to outline a few possible intervention ideas so I can give you feedback.
- Mid-quarter check-in (due 11/10): Again in a one-page, single-spaced document, describe the evolution of your idea as you gain knowledge in organizational behavior.

¹ Milkman, K. L., Beshears, J., Choi, J. J., Laibson, D., & Madrian, B. C. (2011). Using implementation intentions prompts to enhance influenza vaccination rates. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 108, 10415-10420.

- Final paper (due 12/7): You will write up a report about your nudge. The format for the report should look roughly like this (single-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font):
 - a. Description of the problem. May include description of previous attempts to solve the problem, and why you think those attempts failed (1-2 pages).
 - b. Description of your nudge. This should include a rationale for why you think it would work, how you would implement it, and your plan for determining how well it worked (3-5 pages).
 - c. Recommendation for ways to adjust the nudge if it does not work (~1 page).
- Presentation: You will provide a 5-7 minute presentation describe the problem you are addressing and the nudge that you designed. Everyone does not need to participate in the presentation.

Personal development journal (10% of final grade)

The purpose of this assignment is to provide a structured manner to reflect on the ways that our class readings and discussions relate to your work life. For some of you this connection will seem very natural, while for other this will be a relatively strange concept. However, the major benefit of this class (to all of you) will be (a) using the concepts here to help you interpret the organizational context around you and (b) to learn how to influence it in an effective manner. Thus, making the connection between concept and reality is critical.

The logistics of this assignment is relatively simple. For each class session, I would like you to reflect on the reading and describe in writing how it relates to your experience at work. This could be in many different fashions. You could describe how a class concept explains some phenomena that were originally rather confusing. Alternatively, you could take a framework from class and use it to describe ways that things in your workplace could be better implemented.

Whatever approach you take, the final deliverable should be a journal of collected reflections on how the field of organizational behavior helps you interpret things at work. Since the purpose of this is more developmental than evaluative, I will only lightly grade these for quantity and quality. For the former, each entry should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs and there should be an entry for each class session with a reading attached to it (i.e. eight entries). For the latter, I'll be looking to see a depth of critical thought that indicates you spent a non-trivial amount of time considering the ideas. I will collect the journals halfway through the quarter to provide some non-graded feedback

Final Exam (20% of final grade)

The final exam for this course will be conducted as an online, take-home exam. This will be an individual effort—no group work allowed. It will consist of several “case style” essay questions that present a short scenario and ask you to interpret it through the lens of this course. As with your case write-ups, these will be evaluated in terms of (a) the depth of your critical thinking, (b) the quality of your evidence and arguments, and (c) the professionalism of your document.

Contribution to the class (20% of final grade)

This class is heavily based on discussions between all of us. Because of this, I will evaluate the degree to which individuals contribute to this part of the learning process. However, I recognize that different people have different preferences for engaging in large group discussions. Thus, you will have the opportunity to earn your contribution grade in three settings:

1. In-class discussion: In order to free me for discussion facilitation during class and to add an element of fairness to the process, discussion contributions will be peer-evaluated. At the beginning of class, about four randomly selected students will be asked to measure the contributions of their peers on a rough three-point scale. These marks will be averaged and constitute the in-class discussion points for the day.
2. In-class team challenges: A variety of in-class team assignments will be given throughout the quarter, some of which have small differential grading based on performance.
3. Team project and assignments: At the end of the quarter, you will provide feedback on your perceptions of how much each of your team members contributed to the large team project and the smaller team challenges.

Effective and worthwhile discussion includes contributions that demonstrate knowledge and integration of course material, build on responses of others, and offer critical but respectful analysis of others' comments. As such, your participation grade in the four modes listed above will be indexed in three ways: (1) the frequency of your contributions, (2) their quality (ability to draw on course materials and your own experience productively; ability to advance or sharpen discussion and debate; willingness to take risky or unpopular points of view; use of logic, precision, and evidence in making arguments; and going beyond the "I feel" level of introspection); and (3) the professionalism of your conduct (punctuality, preparedness, respecting class/team members and their contributions, and refraining from conduct that is distracting).

ADMINISTRIVIA

Grading Details

- **Grades are not given—they are earned.** In your professional careers, employees who do what is expected of them are generally considered to be average performers. Those who do what is expected of them but do it excellently are good performers. But those who go above and beyond what is expected of them and do it excellently are stars. In order to earn above average grades in this course, your work will need to go above and beyond expectations.
- **If you wish to dispute a grade on an exam or assignment,** please return the assignment in question to me along with a written one-page statement describing your dispute² *within one week*. Indicate specific questions/items which you would like me to consider, and back up your

² Full disclosure: I paid for my MBA by working as a parking ticket judge.

claims with specific notes, page numbers, cites, etc. Do note that I reserve the right to adjust your grade *in either direction* based on my reanalysis of your assignment.

Class Attendance

Class attendance with your scheduled section is critical to participation in the learning experience. In accordance with Foster MBA Program policy, attendance is required aside from circumstances related to (1) illness or (2) unavoidable conflict with a job or internship interview that cannot be rescheduled. Regardless of the rationale for missing a class meeting, please note that you are responsible for the learning experience that takes place in your absence. Please work within your core team to address any material you may have missed, and please contact me afterward should you have lingering questions or concerns about course content.

Technology, Professionalism and the Classroom

Each student is expected to be on time to and prepared for each class meeting as well as fully engaged in class content throughout the class meeting. I ask that you stay offline³ during class sessions and only use your laptop for class-related activities. Research shows that being online (surfing the Web, checking email, texting, etc.) inhibits your ability to learn and distracts those around you (including me—yes, I can tell). Thanks for supporting this policy.

The Honor Code

I employ the principles and procedures espoused by the Foster School of Business MBA Honor System to maintain academic integrity in the course. The Honor Code of the Foster School expressly prohibits cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, and lying to administration or faculty as it pertains to academic work. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be handled by referral of the matter to the Foster MBA Honor Council.

I expect that you will complete all deliverables required in the course in accordance with the principles of the Honor Code and submit them by the due dates assigned. If you have any uncertainty about how the Honor Code applies to a specific deliverable in the course, please ask before taking action; when it is not possible to ask before acting, please err on the side of conservatism.

Disability Resources

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students, 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from the office of Disability Resources for Students (formerly Disabled Student Services) indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for this class.

³ When I'm in these situations, I like to switch off my wireless internet to limit incoming alerts and notifications.