**PUBP 1142: Teams and Collaboration – Fall 2017**

**Instructor**: Wes Wynens, Ph.D. Director, LEAD Program (leadership.gatech.edu); Director, Leadership Minor; Co-Director, Grand Challenges Living and Learning Community wes.wynens@gatech.edu 404-717-5156

Office: Room 219, Student Services Building (Flag Building) Class Time: TuTh 9:30 – 10:45 Class Location: Brittain Commons, Office Hours: Monday 9-11 by appointment.

**Course Description**

This is a course in Groups, Teams, and Complex Problems designed to give you exposure to essential theories and concepts for analyzing, understanding, and managing teams that work on complex problems suited to multi-disciplinary approaches. The content of the course draws upon the literature of critical thinking, cognitive science, creativity and innovation in social science, science, and engineering, as well as the literature of team and group dynamics. The course combines these elements in a context within which students apply their learning to broad societal challenges. You can think of the course as problem based learning focused on how to identify and resolve complex open-ended problems. This course examines components that comprise teams, highlights key factors that influence team effectiveness, develops skills in diagnosing opportunities and threats that face teams, and enhances teamwork expertise.

This course also gives students an understanding of recent approaches to tackling complex problems in the context of multi-disciplinary teams. It is explicitly designed to give teams knowledge and experience in team-centered work on complex open- ended problems that are situated at the intersection of policy and technology. Team management is studied through reading and discussing cases, learning and implementing techniques to build and sustain teams, and completing team tasks where you can apply the skills and knowledge you’ve learned to a real-world team. Teams in the class take on a practice problem in the first part of the course and then a problem of their choosing in the second half.

The course has three broad foci. First, this course examines the interpersonal processes and structural characteristics that influence the effectiveness of teams, individual behavior in face-to-face interactions, and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. In short, we will examine, “what does it take to be a good teammate?” Second, this course seeks to understand the theory and processes of group and team behavior to inform how you can effectively lead teams. This course will help you understand the general principles and processes of effective leadership so that you can lead in a wide variety of situations. Third, this course is intended to allow you to practice the art of engaging difficult problems in a team context. Deliberate use of effective team problem solving methods will be explored against the backdrop of effective team behavior and societal challenges.

Work increasingly demands the capacity for effective team and group interaction. This course seeks to create intentional team interaction around complex open-ended societal

challenges. It is designed to give students the knowledge and working models of how to address broad societal challenges in the context of teams and groups. There are elements of public policy, team dynamics, and team leadership embedded in the course.

**Specific Learning Outcomes**

My goals for this course are to help you... • Improve your analytic abilities in understanding the behavior of individuals and groups

in organizations,  • Apply tools for diagnosing and enhancing team effectiveness.

• Increase your awareness of how successful team members lead and what separates them from their unsuccessful counterparts,

• Gain experience in leadership situations, including learning to deal with conflict, time pressure, and different accountability systems, and

• Develop confidence as a team leader, knowing that leadership happens everywhere in organizations (not just at the top) and that your long-term effectiveness depends on your ability to lead others

• Understand how to apply team and group skills to complex societal problems that intersect policy and technology

• Learn to apply models of problem solving in team and groups contexts

**Course requirements and grading.**

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| Peer Teaching | 25% |
| Problem 1 Poster Presentation (team score) | 30% |
| Problem 2 Film Presentation and Paper (team score) | 35% |
| Peer Evaluation | 10% |

**Peer Teaching (25%).** You and a friend on your team will be responsible for teaching a grand challenges relevant topic to the rest of your team. For this assignment, you will:

1. Create a 3-5-page double spaced summary of the topic(s).

2. Additionally, you will create a method (slides, handouts, etc.) to use in relating what you learned to the rest of your team.

3. Finally, your lesson will include a practical exercise you can use to help your team understand the topic. This assignment will re-occur every three weeks for the first nine weeks of class.

**Peer Teaching Topics**

1. **Successful Teams** - Identify what makes some teams more successful than others. If you were to create a recipe for team success, what would the ingredients be? What factors are important at the individual, group, and task levels? Due September 12 by start of class.

2. **Mental Models and Cognitive Bias** - What is a mental model? What are some common mental models we employ to address complex issues? What are some common cognitive biases? What biases are likely to afflict teams and how do we overcome them? Due October 3 by start of class.

3. **Complexity and Innovation** - Distinguish between simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic systems. Suggest how innovation might occur in complicated and complex systems. What are the dominant types of innovation? How does innovation really happen? Due October 24 by start of class.

**Problem 1 (30%).** Problem 1 will be given to you in class as an open-ended question that you must work to make recommendations for. It will follow the model we discuss in class and the instructor will provide directions for each step in the process. When groups have concluded all steps of the process, each team will produce a poster presentation outlining their results. Directions for the poster presentation will be provided in class.

**Problem 2 (35%).** Unlike problem 1, problem 2 will be based on the grand challenge space you have chosen to work in. You and your team will work through the appropriate steps in the thinking process (fall process flow) to devise an initial “How Might We?” to serve as the launching point for the spring semester. At this point in the class, it will be up to you to propose ideas regarding some part of a grand challenge that you might want to address. The deliverable for problem 2 will be a video depiction of the problem/proposal and a short problem statement. Instructions for these products will be provided. This assignment is due on the final two regular days of classes.

**Homework and Interim Assignments.** In order to complete our work, I will be giving homework and interim assignments that will lead to the creation of the two major milestones of the semester. These assignments and homework are considered formative assessments v. the summative assessments on Problem 1 and 2.

**Teammate and Facilitator Evaluation (10%).** For problems 1 and 2, you will provide an evaluation for each teammate using the format provided by your facilitator. You must provide evaluations of all of your teammates for each team product. Failure to provide evaluations will result in a zero for your own evaluation grade.

**General Words About Teamwork:**

The issue of equity is a concern that some students have about working in teams and about team grades. If you work harder and do better work than your peers, why should your grade be dependent on them? This view is generally a function of coming from educational environments that only ask for and measure individual performance. Your output for many of the assignments in this class will be a team product, such as a team case presentation. Team tasks should be given team rewards. This means that you not only must make a direct contribution to the development of the in-class presentation, but that you also have an obligation to make your team work effectively.

An infrequent problem associated with group projects is a team member who does not do his/her share of the job. You are urged not to let problems develop to the point where they become serious. Beware of excuses like: “I am too busy with urgent work - health - social – problems right now but I’ll make it up later.” It is surprising how many people who have one problem have a series of other problems. Be reasonable, but don’t be a doormat. Everyone in this class is expected to carry an equal share of the teamwork load.

I will not supervise the process any more closely than would most professionals in similar circumstances. Rather, you are expected to get the work done and to manage each other. You are on your honor that you will do your fair share. Teams often ignore problems wishing that they would go away. More often they don’t; they only get worse. Try to solve the problem among yourselves. If you can’t, bring it to me. If I am convinced that someone has not carried his/her fair share - for any reason - I will reduce that person’s grade as low as to 0 if I believe it is warranted.

**Working Together in Class.** Role Clarity. Freely interacting or leaderless teams can be difficult to master. In order to avoid common group process losses, each week a different member of your team will serve as a discussion leader, and each team will specify and assign appropriate roles to team members. Role assignments should take advantage of team members strengths, but also respond to the needs of the tasks. Common team roles can include, but are not limited to discussion leader, note-taker, time-keeper, summarizer, group dynamics observer, assumption tester, etc. Teams will define and assign roles they think most appropriate to individual skills and needs of the task. Teams will make these roles explicit enough to relate them to your facilitator. Roles can and probably should change over time.

**Tools**. We will make use of a social exchange platform to conduct and document the bulk of the work in this class. Slack is a communications and file sharing platform that each team will use to accomplish discussions, turn in assignments, etc. Your facilitator will be a part of your Slack team.

**Administrative Policies Policy on Classroom Professionalism.**The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the GC community.

The collective class reputation and the value of the undergraduate program experience hinges on this. Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects. The classroom experience is enhanced when:

· Students arrive on time. On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time. On time arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions. · Students minimize unscheduled personal breaks. The learning environment improves when disruptions are limited.

· Students are fully prepared for each class. Much of the learning in the undergraduate program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but their peers who count on them, as well.

· Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues. Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.

· There is a large body of evidence showing that our devices make us less able to learn and focus. Laptops, phones, tablets will be put away and out of site. When students are surfing the web, responding to e-mail, instant messaging each other, and otherwise not devoting their full attention to the topic at hand they are doing themselves and their peers a major disservice. Those around them face additional distraction. Fellow students cannot benefit from the insights of the students who are not engaged. There will be cases where learning is enhanced by the use of laptops in class. Faculty will let you know when it is appropriate to use them. In such cases, professional behavior is exhibited when misuse does not take place.

· Phones and wireless devices are turned off. We’ve all heard the annoying ringing in the middle of a meeting. Not only is it not professional, it cuts off the flow of discussion when the search for the offender begins. When a true need to communicate with someone outside of class exists (e.g., for some medical need) please inform the professor prior to class.

**Policy Regarding Re-Reads of All Graded Coursework:**

In the event that you feel something was missed in the grading of your work (be it mathematical error or other), please write a brief summary of what you feel needs further attention and submit this re-read request with your original work with my, or my TA’s comments within 1 week of receiving your grade. If you request a re- read, I will read the work again from scratch and your grade may go up or down. Each grade component is considered final one week after given to the class and will no longer be open for re- reading or discussion. I do not accept personal lobbying efforts on behalf of grade changes.

**Accommodations.**

If you have any physical or learning disabilities that require special assistance, you need to get documentation from the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPT). ADAPT can be contacted at (404) 894-2564 or 210 Smithgall Student Services Building. I will be happy to work with you and accommodate as appropriate your learning needs upon receiving your documentation.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Unless other arrangements have been made in advance, the student is expected to submit their assignments when due. There are no exceptions.

**Attendance Policy:**

Coming to class is vital to doing well in this course. Attendance is mandatory and attendance will be taken each day. **Students will be counted as absent after 9:40**. Students may be excused from class for illness, family emergency, or religious holidays; please notify the instructor ahead of time if you will be missing class or other GT approved absences. **The door to class will close precisely at 9:40. If you’re**

**not in the room by then, you will be counted as absent.** Students can have 3 unexcused absences. Each absence after 3 will result in the loss of a letter grade for the class, and excessive absences will disappoint your team.

**Instructor Communication Policy.** Messages sent to the instructor are encouraged but should not necessarily be considered a reliable means of instant communication for important messages. The sending of a message to the instructor, unless it receives a response from the instructor, cannot be assumed to have reached the instructor. The instructor will respond (as soon as the message is opened) to any messages received from students to confirm that the message has indeed been received. If the student sends a message and does not receive a response within 2-3 days, the student should assume that the message was not received and the student should attempt another means of communication, such as calling the instructor, or wait until the next class to convey the message.

**Plagiarism Policy:**

“Plagiarism” involves submitting work prepared outside of class that is not entirely the student’s own, such as papers, reports and oral presentations that use direct quotes from other authors without proper citation of those authors. Plagiarism is not tolerated and penalties for plagiarism are severe.

In this class, you must fully comply with the requirements of the Academic Honor Code. If you have any questions about academic misconduct or the Academic Honor Code, please review www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/honor\_code.php. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

The class values academic discussion and recognition of contributions made by authors and researchers in the field of leadership studies. It is considered a complement to an author to recognize their contributions to management studies by either paraphrasing (putting their ideas into your words) or using direct quotes (using their words to express their ideas, within quotation marks). Whether the ideas are paraphrased or directly

quoted, it should be clear to the reader of an paper which ideas are the students and which belong to the cited authors.

To facilitate the process of citing references in an organized and consistent way, and to reduce the risk of unintentional plagiarism, please use the APA format for use in writing papers in this course.

**Flexibility:**

The schedule described in the course outline is subject to change. The instructor will work with students to finalize weekly assignments in advance of each class period. I will endeavor to make assignments in a reasonable amount of time.

**Device Rule**

No devices will be permitted in class. This includes all internet capable machines. They must be out of site as well. During the production of team project work, devices will be permitted on a limited basis.

**Course Outline**

Week 1 - Understanding interpersonal dynamics in the context of team development - Developing a model of team behavior - Creating your team operating system

Week 2 - Introduction of Practice Problem - Conducting desk research appropriate to the topic - Ideation do's and don'ts

Week 3 - Conducting interviews to understand human choices and behavior - Alternative interview methods based on subject needs - How to document your findings - Conducting team reviews to assess team performance

Week 4 - Concept mapping and sense-making relevant to your interview and research findings - Insight combination and surfacing of original ideas - Alternative methods to select your best ideas (the Pugh Matrix) - -Peer teaching assignment 1

Week 5 - Introduction to prototyping and build-out of initial prototype - The value of low fidelity prototypes

Week 6 - Running your first prototype experiment - Designing experiments based on the need to test your riskiest assumptions - Documenting your experimental findings

Week 7 - Principles of poster design - Design a poster that best represents your thinking, prototype, and experimental results - Poster session in-class

Week 8 - Team review and honest conversations - Understanding the breadth of potential grand challenge projects - Form teams based on initial hunches regarding an approachable grand challenges problem space - Peer teaching assignment 2

Week 9 - Create new team operating system - How to think about large-scale open-ended problems - Crafting a problem statement - Creating your first "How Might We?" statement

Week 10-13 - Turning your hunch into a working prototype - Desirability, Feasibility, and Viability explained - Planning for your prototype - Peer teaching assignment 3

Week 14 - How to communicate the value of your prototype to a wider audience

Week 15 - Final presentations - Final team and peer review