

**Texas A&M University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Department of Agricultural Education**

Syllabus

Biographical Application of Leadership Theory

AGED 689

3 Credit Hours

Fall 2002

Thursdays, 2:00-5:00pm

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Office hours and appointments: Office hours are Tuesdays 9:00-11:00am and Thursdays 9:00-11:00am and 1:00-4:00pm. Please feel free to make an appointment with me if these times conflict with your schedule.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to discover how leadership theories correlate with the lives of leaders of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each week we will examine the biography or autobiography of a leader who is commonly held in high regard, examining the process and the products of that leader. Class participants will be expected to take a stance grounded in theoretical context as to how each leader achieved what he or she achieved. Historical context must be taken into account.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

This course will be conducted in seminar format. To be effective, all class participants must actively engage in each discussion. Proper preparation will be mandatory and includes thorough reading of selected material and consideration of the thought questions listed on the Course Outline. Outside readings related to various leadership theories are not required, but may be necessary in order to make a compelling argument regarding that week's leader. Please keep this in mind.

To address certain concepts, we will approach discussions in an active learning style. From time to time activities will be used to explore issues in a more in-depth fashion. If any student has such an activity that he or she would like to facilitate in class, please feel free to do so. Notifying me in advance of such plans will assist us in allocating proper class time to accommodate the activity.

In addition to the weekly class discussion, there will also be periodic written assignments. Students will also be asked to share the content of the final written assignment in a short and informal presentation at the end of the semester. Assignments should be of professional quality and turned in on or before the given deadline (see Course Outline for assignment deadlines and Coursework Requirements for assignment descriptions).

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Because each student will bring a different perspective and opinion related to the weekly topics and leaders, discussion will be complete only with all students in attendance. I do however realize that life is not always as we wish and that legitimate reasons to miss class do arise from time to time. If you are unable to be in class, we will miss you. If possible, please notify me *prior* to the class meeting. I would love to be able to share your thoughts and opinions with the class if you are able to share them with me.

In addition, it is expected that students will:

- conduct themselves as professionals;
- maintain a respectful classroom environment;
- use inclusive language in speaking in writing;
- raise questions and contribute observations;
- be responsible for the content of assigned readings;
- take active responsibility in building and ensuring a constructive learning community and environment in the classroom;
- complete assignment on time. Late assignments must be discussed with instructor in advance of the due date (unless a legitimate emergency prevents class attendance);
- treat information shared in class with respect and sensitivity.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a leaning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Koldus 126, 845-1637.

REQUIRED READINGS

You will be responsible for purchasing a course packet from Copy Corner. The course packet contains excerpts from biographies and autobiographies related to each leader we will discuss. All necessary readings are included in the course packet. If you would like further information on a particular leader, all books from which the course packet copies have been taken are available in the leadership library located in 131 Scoates Hall.

LEADERSHIP LIBRARY

If at any time you wish to brush up on a particular leadership theory or concept, please feel free to browse the leadership library. Books are checked out on a 24 hour basis. Many leadership books and articles can also be found in the various libraries on campus. Please note that the **Journal of Leadership Studies** has been moved to the Policy Sciences and Economics Library.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following course outline is tentative and is subject to change to meet our needs as a class.

Class Date	Class Topic and Questions for Thought	Assignment Deadlines	Required Readings (all readings are from the course packet)
29 Aug	Determination – Helen Keller <i>For what is she known?</i>		<i>Story of my life</i> by Helen Keller; Doubleday, 1954
5 Sept	Strength – Jack Roosevelt Robinson (Jackie Robinson) <i>Did baseball use Jackie Robinson or did Jackie Robinson use baseball?</i>		<i>Baseball's great experiment: Jackie Robinson and his legacy</i> by Jules Tygiel; Oxford University Press, 1983
12 Sept	Vision – Walt Disney <i>How did Disney's empire produce creativity?</i>	Current event leader report 1 due	<i>Disney version: The life, times, art, and commerce of Walt Disney</i> by Richard Schickel; Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1997
19 Sept	Honesty –Franklin D. Roosevelt <i>Was FDR really a visionary?</i>		<i>Roosevelt: The lion and the fox</i> by James M. Burns; Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956
26 Sept	Revolutionary – Jack Kerouac <i>Did he start a revolution for the Beat Generation?</i>		<i>On the road</i> by Jack Kerouac; Viking Press, 1957
3 Oct	Justice – Earl Warren <i>Did he make changes for the better?</i>		<i>Earl Warren, a great American story</i> by Irving Stone; Prentice-Hall, 1948
10 Oct	Belief – Martin Luther King, Jr. <i>Did he practice what he preached?</i>	Biography review due	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> by Adam Fairclough; The University of Georgia Press, 1995
17 Oct	Progressive – Benny Goodman <i>Was Benny Goodman a great band leader or just a musician?</i>		<i>Benny Goodman and the Swing era</i> by James L. Collier; Oxford University Press, 1989
24 Oct	Diplomat – Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) <i>Could he really be considered a diplomat?</i>		<i>Authentic Mark Twain: A literary biography of Samuel L. Clemens</i> by Everett Emerson; University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984
31 Oct	Advocate – Lyndon B. Johnson <i>He never wanted to be the President. Was he really an advocate and for whom?</i>	Current event leader report 2 due	<i>Accidental President</i> by Robert Sherril; Pyramid Books, 1954
7 Nov	Attitude – Anne Frank <i>Despite being held in captivity by the Nazis, she kept a strong spirit. Is she to be believed?</i>		<i>The diary of a young girl/ Anne Frank</i> by Anne Frank; PAN Books, 1954
14 Nov	Inspiration – Oprah Winfrey <i>Should we really care about her childhood struggles now?</i>		<i>Oprah Winfrey: Media success story</i> by Anne Saidman; Lerner Publications Co., 1990
21 Nov	Thanksgiving Holiday		
28 Nov	Paper Presentations	Vision autobiography paper due	
At final exam time	<i>The greatest leader ever is/was ...</i>	Final discussion	

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

There will be no written exams for this course, however there will be a **discussion exam** during our final exam time where you must contribute to the conversation. Contributions to the conversation should, as always, be constructive and should show your ability to intelligently converse (and possibly debate) on the topic of leadership theories and theory application. You will generate a discussion regarding who you believe to be the greatest leader. Keep this in mind as we move through the semester's topics.

Other class projects include, a **critical review of a biography or an autobiography of a perceived twentieth or twenty-first century leader**. Each student will select a biography or autobiography apart from those included in the course packet and analyze the effectiveness of the person profiled. Elements of the review should include, but are not limited to, a discussion of his or her most dominate leadership traits, strengths and weaknesses of that leader, a historical context explaining why that person would or would not be effective in another time, and relation to a theory or theories. Your review should be 10 to 12 pages in length and professionally written.

Twice during the semester you will submit a 2 to 3 page **report analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a leader prominent in the popular media**, especially news magazines and newspapers. Consider why this person is currently in the limelight and is this for positive reasons or negative reasons. With what leadership theories do they seem to fit? What could they be doing to improve their image, if needed? These are thoughts for you to consider and not to confine you.

Finally, you will **write the first chapter of your autobiography**. This is a *vision* project and should be treated as such. Do not consider your life to date, but rather where will you be in at least 20 years and what will have happened on your journey there. As the first chapter, you will provide the reader with an overview of what to look forward to in your book. Be as daring and creative as possible, but also be true to yourself and your vision and dreams. The length of the paper should be between 12 and 15 pages.

All projects will be explained further in class.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation are essential components to successfully complete this course and both are factored into your final grade. Your enrollment in the class indicates a commitment to attend scheduled class sessions and to actively participate. Your participation as an active learner and contributor to the learning of other participants is required. Students are encouraged to share articles, resources, and other information in class when appropriate. There are many in-class activities, case studies, and exercises that require full participation and, while there are no specific grades for your participation in these activities, full and active involvement is required to earn your full participation grade. Significant contributions will be those that improve the class discussion and understanding or help people focus on specific tasks or areas of inquiry. Again, in case you are unable to attend class or will need to arrive late or leave early, prior arrangements should be made with me. Students who miss more than 20% of class time (9 hours) will be encouraged if not required to drop the course.

GRADING

All coursework will be graded by the instructor and will be assigned a grade based on a 0 to 100 point per project. Because the work commitment differs for each project, percent values for your overall grade will be weighted differently and will be:

Autobiography/biography review	20%
Current Events leader analysis	10% each
Autobiography first chapter	30%
Final discussion	20%
Class attendance and participation	10%

The grading scale for the final grade will be:

A = 100-90%	D = 69-60%
B = 89-80%	F= Below 60%
C = 79-70%	

SCHOLASTIC MISCONDUCT AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Scholastic dishonesty consists of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information with intent to gain academic advantage. Academic dishonesty comes in a variety of forms. The most common forms are plagiarism, cheating, and academic misconduct. Students who participate in any of these activities will be subject to appropriate University disciplinary action and will receive a failing grade for the course.