

Corporate Leadership

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Syllabus

Course Format

This course will be taught over two weeks for a total of 45 contact hours, including a half-day excursion at the headquarters of a corporation. Teaching will consist of lectures, case studies and simulations. Additional individual/group preparation time will be needed, estimated at cca 2-3 hours per day.

Course Materials

Required reading before class: Kouzes, J. & Posner, B. 2017. “**Leadership**”: The Leadership Challenge, 6th edition, Wiley.

Other materials for the course will consist of case studies and articles that will be provided ahead of the corresponding in-class discussion. Students are expected to have read the case/articles and to have handed in their answers on the initial questions assigned to each case/article, before it is discussed in class. In addition, after each lecturing session, students will receive the presentation summarizing the concepts newly introduced.

Grading

Students’ final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

10%	Class and excursion attendance
30%	Participation in case discussions
20%	Individual in-class presentation
40%	Individual/team written assignments

This course relies on active participation in case discussions and on high-quality written work. Leadership rests on effective communication; hence the quality of written and oral communication will constitute a significant portion of a student’s grade. Participation in case discussions should demonstrate a) good preparation by having familiarized oneself with the case and having internalized the theoretical basis previously provided during the course that could serve as a lens for analyzing the case b) the ability to make a persuasive and complete argument; c) the ability to build on other students’ contributions, either in order to (thoughtfully and respectfully) disagree, while bringing good arguments for doing so, or in order to develop the prior speaker’s contribution further, by adding a complementary perspective. Written work

should be logical, concise but persuasive, and where applicable, supported by examples and citations that show good understanding of the frameworks taught in class.

Written (team) assignments

These assignments will typically consist of answering questions related to newly introduced cases; there is no one “correct” answer for each question asked: answers to the questions should demonstrate that students have considered the knowledge acquired in class and, where applicable, have used it as a background for their own, critical thinking about the question, in order to generate a well-argued answer to the question. Students may sometimes take a surprising position in their written analysis, that at first sight goes against common sense; this is entirely accepted and even encouraged, provided it is supported by a coherently built argument using the theoretical tools provided in class. Equally, challenging the theoretical concepts discussed or outlining where they may fall short in explaining the phenomenon being studied is an entirely valid approach to your assignment.

Individual in-class presentation

Grading for the final presentation will reflect the student’s presentation skills development based on interactive work in class, the use by the students of concepts mastered in the course and the logic and persuasiveness of the argument presented.

Academic Integrity

Important: Being an ethical leader begins with academic integrity. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the VU’s policies on academic integrity, which can be found at <https://www.vu.nl/en/about-vu-amsterdam/academic-integrity/index.aspx>. Make sure that you have understood what constitutes plagiarism and other academic integrity transgressions, to avoid any unintentional errors. Ignorance of the academic integrity policy will not be accepted as an excuse for violating it.

Provisional Course Schedule

This provisional schedule is intended to give an overview of the topics being studied and of the course work expected. A final schedule will be communicated no later than two weeks before the start of the course.

Monday 20 July, 10:00-15:00

- Course introduction. Learning with cases.
- You at your best: best self activation exercise.
- What is corporate leadership? Leaders vs. Managers. Traits and skills of leaders (Mumford, Todd, Higgs, & McIntosh, 2017). Different skills required at different leadership levels (Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007). Lifetime development (McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006).
- Five practices of exemplary leadership, part 1 (Kouzes & Posner 2017)
- Exercise: eliciting your values

Homework assignment: Read case “Leadership styles”. Submit written answers to assigned questions before 8pm.

Tuesday 21 July , 09:30-15:00

- Case discussion: “Leadership styles”
- Five practices of exemplary leadership, part 2 (Kouzes & Posner, 2017)
- Charismatic leadership (Antonakis, Fenley, & Liechti, 2012; Fanelli, Misangyi, & Tosi, 2009)
- Corporate governance in a multi-stakeholder world and its interaction with leadership
- Ethics in leadership. Narcissism, hubris (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; McManus, 2018) and role of governance

Homework assignment: Read case “Worldcom”. Submit written answers to assigned questions before 8pm.

Wednesday 22 July, 09:00-13:00

- Case discussion: WorldCom
- Five practices of exemplary leadership, Part 3.
- Leadership in context. Country and corporate culture.
- “Am I a leader?” The leader identity, the “impostor syndrome” (De Vries, 1990), “spirals of leadership identity” (Day & Dragoni, 2015)

Homework assignment: Read case “Renault-Nissan” and selected articles on Carlos Ghosn. Submit written answers to assigned questions before 8pm.

Thursday 23 July, 09:30-15:00

- Case discussion: Carlos Ghosn and Renault-Nissan
- Case discussion: Elizabeth Holmes (based on materials provided in class)
- Presentation skills, interactive session.

Homework assignment: Watch “Why leaders should take their leisure seriously”, https://www.ted.com/talks/emilia_bunea_why_leaders_should_take_their_leisure_seriously_jan_2019

and answer the assigned questions.

Friday 24 July, 09:00-14:30

- Discussion: Leadership and positive self-complexity.
- Presentation skills, interactive session – continued.
- Five practices of exemplary leadership. Part 4.
- Leading change. Governance in relation to change management.

Homework assignment: Read cases “DBS transformation” and “Anna Frisch at Aesch AG” and submit written answers to assigned questions before 6pm on Sunday 26 July.

Monday 27 July, 09:30-15:00

- Case discussion: DBS transformation
- Case discussion: Anna Frisch at Aesch AG: Initiating lateral change
- Navigating corporate settings (1). Networking and mentors.

Homework assignment: study materials needed to prepare Friday's individual presentation

Tuesday 28 July

09:30-12:00

- Excursion to the corporate headquarters of a large organization.

13:00 – 15:00

- Debrief of visit, leadership lessons.
- Navigating corporate settings (2). Leading from the middle. "The shark smelling blood effect" (based on victimology theory, Curtis, 1974).

Homework assignment: Read cases "Complexicom" and "Kristen Peters" and submit written answers to assigned questions before 8pm.

Wednesday 29 July, 09:00-13.00

- Case discussion: Complexicom
- Case discussion: Kristen Peters.
- Sensegiving and storytelling. When the vision is more than words.

Homework assignment: Read assigned materials on Tesla and Elon Musk and submit written answers to assigned questions before 8pm

Thursday 30 July, 09:30-15:00

- Tesla case discussion
- Play to lead: interactive session

Homework assignment: finalize preparing individual presentation

Friday, 31 July, 09:30-14:30

- Student presentations
- Course conclusion

Bibliography

Antonakis, J., Fenley, M., & Liechti, S. 2012. Learning Charisma. *Harvard Business Review*, 90(6): 127-130.

- Chatterjee, A., & Hambrick, D. C. 2007. It's all about me: Narcissistic chief executive officers and their effects on company strategy and performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52(3): 351-386.
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- Fanelli, A., Misangyi, V. F., & Tosi, H. L. 2009. In Charisma We Trust: The Effects of CEO Charismatic Visions on Securities Analysts. *Organization Science*, 20(6): 1011-1033.
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