

Leadership in Corporations: A movie-learning experience

SYLLABUS

VU Amsterdam Summer School

3-14 July 2023



Any general questions for the Summer School support team? Contact amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl.

Course Details

Title	Leadership in corporations: A movie learning experience
Coordinator(s)	Emilia Bunea
Other lecturers	Guest senior leader (subject to confirmation)
Study credits	3 ECTS
Form(s) of tuition	On campus
Approximate contact hours	45
Approximate self-study hours	10

Teaching staff (in order of appearance)

Dr. Emilia Bunea (course coordinator) is a leadership educator and researcher. She previously served in senior roles at large financial corporations, most recently as CEO of an organization with 2 million customers, and currently serves on the board of directors of an asset management company. Emilia received her Ph.D. in Management from VU Amsterdam and is a CFA charter holder. She lectures on leadership at business schools and companies around the world. Her research was published in *Human Resource Management Review*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Academy of Management Proceedings*, and shared through outlets such as *Harvard Business Review*, *Le Monde* and *Psychology Today*. Her TED talk at London Business School received wide acclaim.

Course description

Participants will develop their knowledge of leadership traits and skills, accompanied by in-depth practice of skills such as empathy, social effectiveness, influence and presentation skills. They will learn about, and practice with, the Inspirational Leadership Toolkit. They will become familiar with the application of various leadership styles in practice, with models of employee motivation, building and leading effective teams, the importance of context and culture in leadership, power and politics in organizations, practical approaches to networking, leading change, and ethics in leadership. They will become more aware of their own values and preferences, personality and character, and will acquire knowledge and tools for self-leadership including topics such as stress and burnout, the impostor phenomenon, psychological capital. They will internalize storytelling not only as a practical skill, but as a leadership framework, and will ultimately build their own personal "leadership development movie".

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Have a clear understanding of leadership models and frameworks and how they connect to practice in corporations.
- Have developed their social effectiveness, empathy, influencing, presentation and storytelling skills.
- Know how to use the “Inspirational Leadership Toolkit”.
- Have a heightened awareness of their identity as (emerging) leaders and of their own leadership journey.
- Be better prepared to address practical leadership challenges in a corporate context.

Assignments and Assessment

Prior to course start, complete the “Values in Action” questionnaire (link will be provided).

Students will receive case materials and simulation prompts prior to the case discussion or simulation in class. Students are expected to have read the case materials and to have reflected on the assigned questions, before the case is discussed in class, as well as to have prepared for the simulation. In addition, after each lecturing session, students will receive a material summarizing the concepts newly introduced.

Grading

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

20%	Participation in case discussions
10%	Individual homework assignments (quizzes, short essays)
30%	Reflection video-journal
20%	In-class simulation
20%	Final team assignment

This course relies on active participation in case discussions and on high-quality individual and team preparation. Participation in case discussions should demonstrate a) good preparation by having familiarized oneself with the case materials and having internalized the theoretical basis previously provided during the course that could serve as a lens for analyzing the case and/or performing in the simulations 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.

The reflection video-journal

Students will be asked to record a one-minute video of themselves after each day's course session, reflecting on the (in-class) learning. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of what was taught during the day, but rather your own thoughts on one or maximum two leadership concepts that arose in class (whether in teaching, case discussion/debate or simulations) that especially caught your attention and maybe made you see things in a different light. Moreover, your thoughts on the learning process itself (for example, seeing a colleague react in an unexpected way/thinking about your own contribution/performance in class/thinking about the group dynamics/thinking of how well this or that learning method worked for you and maybe how it could be better) would be very appreciated.

The reflection video-journal is an important tool in consolidating and deepening your learning, as well as good practice for the key leadership skills of reflection and self-reflection. The choice of video as a medium is not only in tune with our course's theme, but also a way to make your authentic presentation/persuasion skills shine brighter.

In-class simulations

Each student will have the opportunity to act as the central character in a simulation around a corporate leadership situation/challenge. Information regarding your "character" and, to some extent, the challenge you are facing/the situation you will encounter, will be provided in advance. Students are expected to be prepared both in terms of familiarity with the character and the expected situation and in terms of knowledge of the leadership concepts/tools already introduced that could serve them in the situation. However, like in real-life, these situations will be "messy", with no mechanical "right vs wrong" way of approaching them and often leaving you no time to think of theoretical frameworks before reacting. You will still have space to reflect on the simulation once completed and, with a cool head, to discuss what leadership insights/tools you could have used or applied differently.

Final team assignment

The final team assignment consists of writing and "acting" a case relevant to leadership. The case should be based on a real-life situation (either from the experience of one of the students or from public events). Students will work in small teams to write and then "act" the case in class, followed by case discussion. Detailed instructions on this assignment will be provided in the first week of the program.

Provisional reading/watching list

Itay Talgam, “Lead like the great conductors”

https://www.ted.com/talks/itay_talgam_lead_like_the_great_conductors

Karen Eber, “How your brain responds to stories and why they’re crucial for leaders”

https://www.ted.com/talks/karen_eber_how_your_brain_responds_to_stories_and_why_they_re_crucial_for_leaders

Emilia Bunea, “Why leaders should take their leisure seriously”

https://www.ted.com/talks/emilia_bunea_why_leaders_should_take_their_leisure_seriously_jan_2019

Preliminary Course Schedule

Monday 3 July, 10:00-15:00

Course introduction. Learning with cine-cases. Your leadership “hero journey”. Your values in action.

Introduction to Crossroads case and characters.

Tuesday 4 July , 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Creativity workshop.

Emotional intelligence, influencing and political skills. Country culture dimensions. Assessing a new culture. First 90 days in a new job.

Wednesday 5 July, 09:30-12:30

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Simulations.

Cinematic case discussion.

Building trust. Understanding and using power. Organizational structures (matrix, centralized vs decentralized, shared service centers, centers of excellence).

Thursday 6 July, 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Simulations.

Leadership styles. Situational leadership. Motivating others. The inspirational leadership toolkit.

Cinematic case discussion.

Organizational citizenship. Headquarters-subsidaries relationships and the role of boundary spanners.

Introduction of final team assignment.

Friday 7 July, 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Simulations.

Cine-case discussion. Sources of stress, romance of leadership.

Paternalistic leadership, adult-adult vs. adult-child relationship. Leading change. Leading teams. Global teams. Fundamental attribution error and social distance.

Monday 10 July, 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Workshop: presentation skills

Cine-case discussion.

Tuesday 11 July 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Simulations.

The leader’s self-management toolkit. Energy sources/uses. Psychological capital, burnout, self-handicapping, impostor syndrome. Role of serious leisure.

Cine-case discussion.

Wednesday 12 July, 09:30-12.30

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Simulations.

Ethical dilemmas in organizational leadership.

Thursday 13 July, 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Student-acted cases. Watch, read, discuss, debrief.

Friday, 14 July, 09:30-15:00

“Leadership Today”-lessons from current events.

Guest talk (senior leader, subject to confirmation).

Group feedback exercise. Personal leadership development plan.

Conclusions, takeaways, your personal leadership movie.

