Syllabus
PSM C3105 – Leadership in Public Service

Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:50 – 7:20 PM in room NAC 6/329

The City College of New York
Instructor: Kamilah Briscoe
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00
Office: Shepard Hall, Suite 550
E-mail: kbriscoe@ccny.cuny.edu

Course Description
Leadership is an often cited, but rarely understood concept. Definitions of leadership vary from those that emphasize intangible qualities like charisma and magnetism to those that stress character traits like persistence and courage to those that highlight tangible skills like facilitation and team-building. Similarly, scholarship around leadership brings a variety of approaches to understanding why and how individuals lead, and explores leadership through an array of different lenses.

This course takes the practice of leadership as its main subject for study. How do leaders lead? What do they do? What do they need to know to be successful? It assumes that leadership can be learned through the practice of skills, through guided reflection and discussion, and through observation and analysis of everyday leaders in everyday situations. By the end of the course, students will understand models and theories of leadership and leadership development, learn to identify leadership skills in themselves and in others, and understand how leadership operates in different professional settings and contexts.

More specifically, after an introduction to leadership theory and the development of paradigms and theories that guide current thinking in the field, students will be asked to read and respond through weekly memos to case studies that present leadership challenges; explore their own leadership strengths through carefully designed interactive activities, guided reflection and discussion; observe leaders in action and conduct interviews with current leaders in the field to test theories of leadership against real-world examples; and build skills in teamwork, team-building, effective communication and leadership strategies by completing a carefully guided team project.

This class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:50 – 7:20 PM in NAC 6/329.

Textbooks
Difficult Conversations, Stone, Patton and Heen
Strengths Based Leadership, Rath and Conchie

Additional required reading materials will be placed on Blackboard (Assignments section) and/or distributed in class.
Weights to Calculate Final Grade

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- Written Individual Assignment (40%)
- Case Memos (40%)
- Attendance and Participation (20%)

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE (%)</th>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 - 96</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 – 93</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92 - 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 - 86</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 - 83</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82 - 80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 – 70</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 69</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late assignments will result in the lowering of your grade by five percentage points each day the assignment is late.
Individual Paper and Presentation
Each student will be required to write an individual leadership analysis paper by the end of the course. The paper is a self-directed inquiry into an aspect of leadership that the student – in consultation with the professor – deems important to her/his professional development, and academic growth. The paper will be executed in the following stages:

1. Define a question: The most important task for this paper is to define the leadership question. The question should come from a personal assessment of your own interests, strengths, areas for growth and/or career trajectory. Examples of acceptable questions include: What challenges do women face as leaders in small, social service agencies? How do leaders in large, complex health care facilities communicate effectively with outside stakeholders? What tactical skills are most necessary for principals in urban public schools? How do leaders in small local advocacy organizations balance their personal values and their professional ethics?

You will hand in a draft of the question on June 17th along with an explanation of why that question is important to you and how it will help you advance your career, or develop a new skill or knowledge base.

2. Identify sources: You will need at least five sources. One of these sources must be an interview with a professional in the field. Once you’ve identified your question, I will consult with you to identify books and other resources that might be useful.

You will hand in a list of your sources on June 17th.

3. Interview protocol: Once you’ve identified your question and an interview subject, you are responsible for submitting a list of interview questions. Unless prior permission is obtained, your interview must be an in person interview. Consider this as you define your question (i.e. make sure the question is one that can be answered, at least in part, by someone accessible for an in person conversation).

The final paper should accomplish two big tasks:

1. It should use the resources you’ve identified to answer your original question.
2. It should teach the reader something about leadership.

You will be asked to present, informally, what you’ve learned through writing this paper to the rest of the class at the end of the semester. If you’ve succeeded at this assignment, the class should learn something new about leadership from your presentation.
There is no official page minimum or maximum for the final paper. Rather, I expect that a good paper will introduce the reader appropriately to the question at hand, describe why the question is important to you and to others, reveal (and critique) the findings of your reading and interview as they relate to the question, and conclude with your own thoughts.

This is not a journal, nor an informal writing assignment. I expect that you will write in a professional, if not academic, tone, that your final paper will be organized and coherent, and that outside sources will be cited appropriately.

Individual papers will be graded based on the following criteria:

I. The paper addresses a meaningful question of leadership in public service in contemporary society. The question is drawn from the writers’ academic or professional experience and takes into account relevant ideas, concerns, and questions from the field.

II. The paper makes use of relevant, up-to-date, sources for investigating the question of interest. The paper both reports on, and analyzes, sources in depth. When appropriate, the paper uses other class materials (readings, discussions) to further explore the topic under investigation.

III. The paper uncovers clear, meaningful, actionable lessons that enable the writer, and the audience, to understand approaches to leadership.

IV. The paper is well-written and well-organized, devoid of writing errors; sources are appropriately cited.
Case Memos

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to work in teams on four separate case studies. The case studies are – in most cases – taken from real-world situations at operating non-profit organizations. Because the cases are drawn from the real world, the situations you’ll encounter are complex: they explore the diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders and deal with challenges that are full of ambiguity. As in real life, the problems you encounter in these cases may be obvious, but the causes of these problems and the array of possible solutions may not be. Let me be clear: there are no “right answers.” There may be partial solutions, compromises, and risky proposals, but there are no right answers.

Your goals for these case memos are multiple:

1. **Work effectively in a team** to analyze the case and present recommendations for future action.
2. **Identify in each case the core problems presented** (there will always be multiple problems), **isolate the leadership challenge** (who is the leader and what challenge of leadership is s/he facing), **present several possible courses of action**, and **make final recommendations for action**.
3. **Write up your case study in a memo**, addressed to the leader in question, of no more than four, single-spaced pages.

Working Effectively on a Team

Working effectively on a team is a core skill that you will exercise and develop while preparing your case analyses. At the outset of the course, we will talk specifically about team dynamics, and you will be asked to reflect on and assess your teams’ performance, as well as your own performance, at regular intervals. Let me say from the outset, no one is expected to perform perfectly and each team will face challenges. The purpose of teamwork in this class is to allow you to reflect on and improve your skills working in groups. Your ability to work effectively on a team is an important part of your learning for this course, though, for reasons you can imagine, it is very difficult to quantify or grade. It will, however, be reflected in your final grade in two ways:

1. You will receive a “team” grade on each of your case studies. Good teamwork is typically reflected in good work products, and vice-versa.

2. I will review surveys, as well as respond to any indications that I have that teams are not functioning well. If it comes to my attention that teams are experiencing problems that are the result one person’s individual effort or participation, that person’s grade may be affected. **Keep in mind that team problems are *rarely* the result of one person’s individual effort or participation.** In many cases, it is the job of the team to create a work setting in which everyone is comfortable, motivated, and accountable. In some cases, however, despite the best efforts of team members, one person becomes so distracting that the team cannot function. In these instances, a lowering of a grade may be necessary.
Analyzing the Case
Case analysis can take any number of forms, but the questions below should guide your inquiry.

1. **Identifying the problems**: What are the core problems presented in the case? What are the *symptoms* of the problems? How did the issue(s) arise? Who is impacted most by the problem(s)? What constraints exist within the organization? What problems need to be addressed immediately? Which are less urgent? Consider the impact of organizational structure, organizational culture, organizational values, decision-making processes, and internal and external communications have on the situation at hand. What information do you have access to? What information might you need to make a more accurate diagnosis (in particular: whose perspectives are shared? What might you learn by hearing the perspectives of others?)

2. **Isolating the leadership challenge**: Who is the leader? What is the scope of her/his decision-making power? What seem to be the leaders' individual strengths and/or weaknesses? What does s/he value? What must the leader do to resolve or improve the situation? What information does s/he have at her/his disposal? What information might s/he have to find out?

3. **Defining criteria for success**: What does a successful outcome look like? What are the core criteria for a successful decision? What does success look like for the organization? For the individual leader?

4. **Presenting alternatives**: What options does the leader have? What are the positive and negative consequences of each of these actions? What are the consequences for the organization? The leader? The other stakeholders? What obstacles might the leader encounter in each scenario? What skills must the leader have in order to be successful in each of these alternate scenarios? What skills must be developed (and is there enough time to develop them?). Is doing nothing a viable alternative?

5. **Making a recommendation**: Based on your assessment of the case and your evaluation of the alternatives, what is the most prudent course of action for the leader? How would you recommend s/he proceed? How would you recommend that the leader mitigate the inevitable challenges that might occur? In this section, be sure to “step out” the plan of action: what must happen first, then what, then what, etc.
Writing the Final Memo

Your final memo should be formatted in the following way:

1. Title page, with the names of each of your team members.
2. Introduction
3. Analysis of the Problem
4. Identification of the Leadership Challenge
5. Criteria for Success
6. Alternatives
7. Recommendation with action plan

The memo should be no more than five, single-spaced pages, excluding the title page (12 point font, 1” margins). Please proofread your memos and submit writing that is professional in tone. Submit your memo each week via email to kbriscoe@ccny.cuny.edu by Sunday, 5pm. Only one person per group need submit the final memo.

Case studies will be graded based on the following criteria:

I. The analysis clearly identifies core problems in the case, and distinguishes core problems from the symptoms of problems. The paper clearly identifies the leadership challenge in the case, and uses relevant details from the case to support the findings.

II. Criteria for success are clearly outlined, achievable, and realistic, based on the circumstances presented in the case.

III. Alternatives are thoroughly described; challenges, consequences, and opportunities for each alternative are realistic and stem logically from the case. Each alternative is plausible and possible.

IV. Recommendations and action plans reflect an understanding of course materials, and take into account relevant class readings and discussions. Recommendations are feasible, and thoroughly described.

V. The case analysis is well-written and well-organized, devoid of writing errors; sources are appropriately cited.
**Academic Integrity**
Academic dishonesty of any sort is strictly prohibited at The City College of New York. Go to: [http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf](http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf) to download a copy of the University’s academic integrity policy handout.

**Lateness and Absence**
Students are expected to attend and be on time to every class in which they are enrolled. The instructor has the right to drop a student from a course for excessive absence or lateness, with no distinction made between excused and unexcused absences. Go to: [http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/CCNYBulletin/upload/CCNY-Graduate-Bulletin-2008-10-2.pdf](http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/CCNYBulletin/upload/CCNY-Graduate-Bulletin-2008-10-2.pdf) for more information on this college policy.
# Course Calendar (Subject to change at instructor's discretion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introductions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>No Assignments; Syllabus Review; Introductions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| June 5 | Reading: Advancing Leadership Theory and Practice, Nitin Nohria, Rakesh Khurana |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Working with Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| June 10 | Reading: The Left Declares its Independence, Todd Gitlin, The New York Times  
Developmental Sequence in Small Groups, Bruce W. Tuckman |

| June 12 | Reading: The Discipline of Teams, Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith |

Writing (~1 page): Describe the best and worst experiences you’ve had as a member of a team in a professional or academic setting. What made the good experience good and the bad experience bad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Managing Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| June 17 | Reading: How Apple Works: Inside the World’s Biggest Startup, Adam Lashinsky, CNN Money  
Leadership That Gets Results, Daniel Goldman  
What Great Managers Do, Marcus Buckingham  
Managing Your Boss, John J. Gabarro and John P. Kotter |

Writing: Case Study 1 Due (June 16, 5pm)

| June 19 | Reading: Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen |

Writing (~1 page): How do you manage conflict in professional or academic settings? Describe a recent or memorable conflict that is reflective of your conflict management style. What happened? How, if at all, did the conflict get resolved? What were the consequences (positive and negative) how the conflict was handled?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Understanding Organizational Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| June 24 | Reading: The Influencer, Chapter 9, “Change the Environment,” Kerry Patterson et al.  
Organizational Culture, Edgar Schein |

Writing: Case Study 2 Due (June 23, 5pm)

| June 26 | Writing (~1 page): Take the OCAI (distributed in class). How often have you been a member of an organization or group that reflects your organizational |
culture preferences? How often have you been a member of an organization or group that is in conflict with your preferences? In the latter case, how did you adapt?

**Week 5**  
**Leadership Skills**

*July 1*
**Reading:**  
*How to Play to Your Strengths*, Laura Morgan Roberts, et al.  
*Strengths Based Leadership*, Tom Rath and Barry Conchie

**Assignment:** Take the Strengths Finder Test, and come to class prepared to discuss the results

**Writing:** Case Study 3 Due (June 30, 5pm)

*July 3*  
NO CLASS

**Week 6**  
**Leadership and Identity**

*July 8*
**Reading:**  
*Gender, Culture and Leadership: Toward a Culturally Distinct Model of African-American Women Executives’ Leadership Strategies*, Patricia Parker and dt ogilvie  
*Women and Leadership*, Robin J. Ely and Deborah L. Rhode  

*July 10*  
**Reading:**  
*Power and Leadership*, Joseph S. Nye  

**Paper Updates**

**Week 7**  
**Review and Closing**

*July 15*  
**Reading:** *What Leaders Really Do*, John P. Kotter

**Writing:** Case Study 4 Due (July 14, 5pm)

*July 17*  
Wrap Up  
**Assignment:** How to Play to Your Strengths Due

**Week 8**

*July 22*  
**Writing:** Individual Papers Due

Individual Presentations