

UC Davis GSM Syllabus
Strategic Leadership
Professor Elizabeth Pontikes

MGT 410-001 (2 credits)
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Office Hours: Wed 1:30 – 3:30, 3212 or zoom

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A strategic leader is more than a manager: strategic leadership includes the ability to navigate unpredictable situations and to draw on the informal and formal levers of strategy execution to inspire, guide, and direct groups toward the strategic goal. In this class, we will learn the principles of strategic leadership and how to apply them. This includes a deep awareness of your own personality, strengths, and values, as well as a clear understanding of your organization's strategy and vision. We will discuss the leadership situations you are best suited for personally, where you might encounter challenges, and how to develop new leadership skills. This includes the ability to give and receive feedback to strengthen relationships, and how to lead authentically. Finally, we will draw on these lessons for strategic leadership guiding an organization in times of crisis and change.

Course Schedule

Linked items are available online or through the UC Davis library. Readings with **[VPN]** will need to be accessed from on campus or by using the [library VPN](#). Some items will need to be searched for directly. The link will take you to main the database page of the library. Click on "Search within this publication" and then search for the indicated text written as, "AN [Insert number]" in the second field. All other items are linked in the Equitable Access Bookshelf tool, on Digital Campus under "Modules." Items marked with **[HBS]** are from Harvard and can be directly accessed. Items with **[STUDY]** are found in the study.net course, and Harvard simulations and multimedia cases are found in a separate Harvard CoursePack on Harvard's HBSP site. Both Study.net and the HBSP are linked in the Bookshelf tool, as the last two links. Click "view now" to go to the respective sites.

Session 1. Strategic Leadership Overview and Personality (May 6)

We will learn the foundational principles of strategic leadership – which includes both essentials of leadership – inspiring and directing groups toward a goal – and how this can be done to further the organization's strategy. We will cover how to leverage personality to achieve strategic leadership skills. We will apply principles from the readings to approaches from Mary Barra and Ursula Burns from the cases, and begin to chart how you can apply them.

Readings:

- Schoemaker, Krupp, and Howland (2013). [Strategic Leadership: The Essential Skills](#). *Harvard Business Review*. **[Needs VPN, search for, "AN 84424206"]**
- Elsbach, Kimberly. "Leadership and Personality Traits."

Cases (you must be on the VPN; links will take you to the article search):

- Rick Tetzeli, "[Mary Barra is Remaking GM's Culture – And the Company Itself](#)," *Fast Company* Oct 17, 2016.
- "[Fresh Copy: How Ursula Burns Reinvented Xerox](#)," *Fast Company*, Nov 19, 2011.

Class prep:

- Quiz 1 on Canvas
- Prepare a response to the following prompt for class group discussion:
 - o Think of a situation where you or a company you worked for was faced with a strategic leadership challenge – for example an unanticipated or ambiguous environmental shift. Describe the situation.
 - o How did you, or leadership, respond that was in line with the Schoemaker et al (2013) model in terms of anticipate, challenge, interpret, decide, align, learn model? What could have been done differently? Be specific.
- Take this [Personality quiz](#) (in class)

Class Discussion Questions

1. What are examples in the Mary Barra case of Barra using each strategic leadership skill in the Schoemaker article?
2. How might Mary Barra's leadership approach be explained by personality characteristics? Explain.
3. What are examples in the Xerox case of Ursula Burns using each strategic leadership skill in the Schoemaker article?
4. How might Ursula Burns' leadership approach be explained by personality characteristics? Explain.

Session 2: Relationships, Feedback, and Managing Up (May 13)

Productive relationships are key to strategic leadership. In this session we will learn how to give and receive feedback to strengthen relationships, including feedback analysis about ourselves. We will apply these learnings in the Managing Up case, considering what Grace must understand about herself, her supervisor, and her context, to strategically navigate her career advancement.

Readings:

- Bradford & Robin (2021). Ch 7: "Why Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions." *Connect*. [Study.net]

Case:

- Managing Up (A): Grace [HBS W15269] [HBS]

Class Prep:

- Quiz 2 on Canvas

Class Discussion Questions

1. Should Grace send that email to Bill? What would be the likely impact on Landon? On Grace?
2. In order to effectively manage the situation with Landon, what things should Grace understand about herself?
3. Read the conversation between Grace and Landon on pp. 4-5 using the lens of the *Connect* framework. What comments show Grace and/or Landon staying inside their reality and what comments are going "over the net?"

Case Analysis Due (Friday May 16) Write a 2-3 page case analysis of Managing Up (B): Jada [HBS W15270] that responds to the following questions.

1. In order to effectively manage the situation with Landon, what things should Jada understand about herself? About Landon? Use the personality framework in your response.

2. Imagine Jada has come to you for help. Develop a plan for her to manage the situation with Landon in order to meet her career and personal goals. Include what type of actions Jada should take to become the leader she wants to be. Draw on the essential skills and Connect framework.

Session 3. Leading with Authenticity (May 20)

It's impossible to lead if you are trying to be like someone else. To effectively lead you must be true to your authentic self. First, you need to know yourself: your strengths, weaknesses, and values. Next is having the courage to be your authentic self. The Bozoma Saint John case provides an inspirational example of authentic leadership. We will bring together Saint John's insights with Peter Drucker's classic treatise on managing oneself to understand our authentic selves and how to channel that in strategic leadership.

Reflection essay – Due Friday May 23

- Write a 2-3 page essay applying the guidance in Drucker's "Managing Oneself." What are your strengths? How do you best perform? What are your values? Where do you belong? How can you apply these learnings to become a better strategic leader? In your response, also draw on lessons from the Bozoma Saint John case. *Prepare thoughts to discuss in pairs during class.*

Reading:

- Drucker (2005). [Managing Oneself](#). Harvard Business Review [Needs VPN, search for "AN 15524519"]

Case:

- Bozoma Saint John: Leading with Authenticity and Urgency [HBS 921708-HTM-ENG] [HBS]

Class Prep:

- Quiz 3 on Canvas

Class Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on Boz's defining moments. How did her achievements and challenges shape her and allow her to lead others?
2. Reflect on your defining moments. How do your achievements and challenges shape you and allow you to lead others?
3. What makes Boz authentic? When are you able to be your most authentic self? Do you bring your authentic self to every area of your life? If not, what is stopping you?

Session 4. Leadership and Values: Navigating Scandals (May 27)

Navigating a scandal – especially one that includes a high-performing employee – is a challenge for strategic leadership. We will learn models of ethical decision making and frameworks for speaking up to develop skills to make hard decisions during crises and to mitigate scandals. We will also learn how to apply these frameworks to root out workplace abuse and maintain a healthy and productive organizational culture.

Readings:

- Gentile, M. Ch 3: "[A Tale of Two Stories: The Power of Choice](#)." *Giving Voice to Values. How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right.* [VPN]

Case

- Somebody Stop the Radio Star: Jian Ghomeshi at the CBC [HBS W16165] [HBS]. *[Some of you may be aware of criminal accusations against Ghomeshi from his personal life. This session will*

focus on the workplace accusations as depicted in the case and information known at the time, and not the later criminal accusations.]

Class prep:

- Quiz 4 on Canvas
- Prepare a response to the following prompts for class discussion, taken from the Gentile reading:
 - o Recall a time in your work experience when your values conflicted with what you were expected to do regarding a particular, nontrivial management decision, and you spoke up to try to resolve the conflict in a way that was consistent with your values.
 - o Recall a time in your work experience when your values conflicted with what you were expected to do regarding a particular, nontrivial management decision, and you did not speak up to try to resolve the conflict in a way that was consistent with your values.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. What negative behavior is attributed to Ghomeshi? What was the impact of his alleged behavior on Q employees?
2. Why did the employees get together to compile the Red Sky presentation for Groen and Noorani? What risks did they take by following this course of action?
3. The case states that the CBC seemed to be “a model of employer enlightenment” with posters offering support, training programs, and formal policies to make sure employees felt safe. Given this – if it is true that Ghomeshi treated Q staff extremely poorly over a long period of time – how was he able to get away with it for so long without being reprimanded?
4. What are Groen and Noorani’s options now? What are risks and expected outcomes of each option? If you were in their position, what would you do?
5. Apply the framework from the Gentile reading that lists aspects of a situation that enable/disable giving voice to values (e.g. allies, audience selection, etc) that explains: (A) the employees’ decision to compile and give the Red Sky presentation, and (B) how we might expect Groen and Noorani to respond.

Session 5. Take Action: Strategic Leadership through Crisis and Change (June 3)

Strategic leadership is especially important in ambiguous and unpredictable situations, such as when managers are navigating a crisis. We will analyze challenges the leadership team at Nokia India faces in the wake of their battery misfunctions, and apply lessons from the Chilean Mine Rescue to uncover how to balance a directive and empowering approach in an evolving situation. We will also synthesize the course lessons to develop a personal plan to realize your strategic leadership potential.

Readings:

- Faaiza Rashid, Amy Edmonson, and Herman Leonard (2013). “[Leadership Lessons from the Chilean Mine Rescue](#),” *Harvard Business Review*. [Needs VPN]

Case:

- A Bomb in Your Pocket? Crisis Leadership at Nokia India (A) [HBS 910M64] and (B) [HBS 910M65] [HBS]

Class Prep:

- Quiz 5 on Canvas

Class Discussion Questions

1. Why is Nokia facing this crisis? What went wrong in terms of prevention, when people at Nokia HQ thought this was not an issue meriting strong intervention?
2. Do you blame the media for this crisis?
3. Apply the essential Strategic Leadership skills from the class 1 reading. Describe how Poonam Kaul can use at least two skills to lead during this crisis.
4. Apply the lessons from the Rashid et al reading to the case for the dual-imperative approach:
 - a. Envision objectives: How can Kaul provide a realistic assessment for how to get through this crisis? How can she articulate hope?
 - b. Enroll help: How can Kaul set boundaries for who will address this problem? How can she collaborate with diverse experts?
 - c. Engage team: How can Kaul lead a disciplined and coordinated execution of her plan? How can she invite innovation and experimentation?

Course Requirements

- Quizzes (10%)
- Case analysis (25%)
- Reflection essay (25%)
- In-class group case presentations & feedback (20%)
- Course contributions (in-class discussion) (20%)

Quizzes

There are Canvas quizzes due before each class.

Case Analysis

You are required to submit a 2-3 page case analysis essay of the Managing Up (B): Jada case in your course packet, responding to the questions as indicated in the course schedule above. The format must be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, with one-inch margins. The memo is due on **Friday May 16**, between sessions 2 and 3.

Reflection Essay

One reflection essay is due on **Friday May 23** between sessions 3-4, a 2-3 page essay in response to the prompt in the course schedule. The format must be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, with one-inch margins.

In-class group presentations and feedback

You will be expected to complete 2-3 in-class group presentations to apply lessons from the course to a situation of your choosing. You will be assigned to an in-class group and all work will be completed during class time. Your group will be paired with another group to present, and will provide written feedback to your paired group (and submitted on Canvas).

Course contributions

This course depends on participation, and part of your grade depends on your contributions. Class discussion also helps deepen case analyses, exposing ambiguities that are part and parcel of any case

analysis (or real-world situation). To prepare, you will need to carefully read and reflect on the case and all of the readings. Take time to dissect the main issues presented in the case. You may need to read the case twice. The quality of your participation is most important.

Criteria for effective class participation include:

- Does the participant demonstrate a thorough understanding of the assigned readings?
- Do the comments show evidence of analysis of the case?
- Does the participant productively further the discussion and test new ideas, and not simply repeat what has already been said?

To accommodate illness, interviews, travel, etc. I will drop your lowest course contribution grade. Please don't show up sick! Do not email me to request a make-up assignment if you miss more than one class. There are only 5! To be fair to your classmates and uphold standards, missing more than one class will affect your course contribution grade.

You may discuss the materials with others. Study or reflection groups are encouraged. You also may draw on relevant outside information that brings depth, nuance, and perspective to your analysis. However, using outside information to substitute for your original analysis, whether from the internet, classmates who have previously covered the case, or other sources, is a violation of the code of academic conduct and strictly prohibited.

Course Policies

Accessibility

Please let me know if you need accommodations related to a disability or other condition, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Electronics Policy

Use of laptops, smartphones, and other electronics during lecture and class discussion are not allowed. Using electronics in class, even for note taking, is distracting to the user and classmates, and research shows it results in lower grades (see supplementary materials). Electronics are useful for collaboration and in-class polls, and I will ask you to use them for this purpose only. Otherwise, they should be put away. Please consult me if there is a necessary accessibility accommodation, or a one-off situation (for example waiting for an emergency call).

Grading

Requests for a re-grade must be presented in writing within one week of receiving your grade. The entire assignment will be graded again. To accommodate natural statistical fluctuations, grades can go up or down after a re-grade. Course contribution grades cannot be contested.

Integrity and Code of Academic Conduct

I expect that all of you take UC Davis' code of academic conduct as seriously as I do. You must exhibit integrity in all of your activities and adhere to the UC Davis code of academic conduct, described here: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>.

It is an academic conduct violation to present others' ideas or writing as your own (plagiarism), or to discuss cases with students who have already analyzed the case in class. You were informed about this code of conduct during orientation and signed a statement affirming that you understand it. I run plagiarism detection software on all assignments, and no violations of academic conduct are tolerated. I will not hesitate to turn violators over to Student Judicial Affairs.

AI Policy (e.g. ChatGPT)

This course's AI policy aims to encourage the responsible use of AI as a tool for enhancing learning, creativity, and problem-solving skills, while maintaining academic integrity.

You are permitted to use AI for the following:

- **Brainstorming:** interacting with AI to get feedback on ideas, themes, and possible research directions for assignments
- **Idea generation:** using AI to explore various perspectives, concepts, and approaches
- **Outline creation:** you can use AI as an assistant in creating outlines to help you structure assignments.

The following uses of AI are strictly prohibited:

- **Submission of AI generated work:** Students may not submit any written work, in whole or part, that has been generated by AI.
- **Direct quotation:** Using direct quotes from AI-generated content without proper citation and acknowledgement is a form of plagiarism and prohibited. All submitted work must be your original writing or properly cited material from legitimate sources.

Principles of Community

This course depends heavily on discussion, and much of the learning comes from sharing and listening to your classmates experiences as you integrate the readings and lessons. In discussions we are guided by the [UC Davis Principles of Community](#) that affirms the dignity inherent in all of us, and values individuality and diversity of perspectives and backgrounds as an opportunity to listen, engage, learn and grow. We reject all manifestations of discrimination.

Slide print-outs

I will not provide slide print-outs. My lectures are interactive and integrate polling and surprise findings. This makes for a better learning experience and does not comport with print-outs. In addition, research shows you will learn more without print-outs (see supplemental materials). I will upload slides to canvas after class.

Miscellaneous

If you have a situation that causes problems for you in fulfilling the course requirements, **tell me!** I'm almost always able to help. It is much easier to address problems early on; much more difficult after the course is over and assignments are in.

Research informing class rules and guidelines:

- *Power Point hand-outs:* Worthington, D. and D. Levasseur (2015). "[To Provide or not to Provide Course Power Point Slides? The Impact of Instructor-Provided Slides upon Student Attendance and Performance.](#)" *Computers and Education*.
- *Longhand vs laptop note taking:* Muller, P. and D. Oppenheimer (2014). "[The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking.](#)" *Psychological Science*.

- *Laptop multi-tasking*: Sana, F., T. Weston and N. Cepeda (2013). "[Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers.](#)" *Computers & Education*.
- *Student-as-consumer?* "[Students with consumer mindset get lower grades.](#)" Original research: Bunce, L., A. Baird, and S. Jones (2017). "The student-as-consumer approach in higher education and its effects on academic performance." *Studies in Higher Education*.
- *Use of AI to evaluate cases*: [AI May Harm More than Help B-School Students, Study Shows](#). *Poets & Quants*, citing research from HEC's Professor Brian Hill.