

Leading Teams
MGT 490B-1

Pre-Term 2024

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Course Summary

Whether you are an entrepreneur or a high-tech CEO, whether you work in finance or consulting, your success at work depends on your ability to collaborate and motivate others to do so. Organizations today bring together groups, teams, and networks, sometimes without creating a clear chain of command, stable roles and established boundaries. In these more fluid and dynamic leadership situations, effective performance requires frameworks for analyzing collaborative (as opposed to individual) decision making and facilitating successful informal relationships (as opposed to formal organizational structures).

The course has two primary goals. First, it teaches the science and art of collaboration. Concepts from social scientific research will help you analyze and diagnose group dynamics and determine your strategic options as a manager and leader. At the same time, you will gain practical interpersonal skills for implementing effective strategies for group situations. The second goal is to teach you what it means to be an MBA student at the GSM. By working together in this course, you will experience and shape the collaborative culture of the GSM and develop the academic norms to help you succeed over the next two years.

Course objectives

The first goal of the course is to provide a model of creating and leading groups and teams that complements more traditional models of management. To this end, we will be developing frameworks (based in social science) for analyzing groups' goals and options. We will answer questions such how to structure decisions in teams, how to enhance group creativity and innovation, and how to manage the conflict that sometimes arises in group contexts. The approach of the course is based on the belief that a conceptual understanding of optimal strategies (*the science of collaboration*) is of little use without the behavioral skills required to implement these strategies (*the art of collaboration*). Therefore the course emphasizes cases and exercises that let you apply the concepts concretely. You will analyze cases that illustrate dynamic social interaction processes that can either facilitate or impede success. You will also participate in in-class exercises that

simulate challenging problems, followed by class discussions of how your experiences reflect relevant theoretical constructs. These exercises are designed to provide a forum in which to hone your team skills and leadership abilities.

The second goal entails instilling and enacting the collaborative culture of the GSM MBA program. Many of you have not been in school for a while; also, the pedagogy and culture of an MBA program is different from that of an undergraduate or other degree. As an introduction to the program, you will be introduced to the pedagogical methods of case analysis and group problem solving as a means of developing the skills and strategies associated with effective managerial decision making. The course also provides an opportunity to get to better know a group of people who will be very important to you in the years to come – your fellow students in the program.

Course Format

The course is designed to help you establish productive individual and group work techniques that will enable you to get the most out of the MBA program. In order to develop these skills, everyone will be placed into a core study team (4 to 5 people) for the duration of the course (which will extend through the fall quarter OB core course). This group will provide a context for experiencing and learning about the effects of group membership first hand.

Course materials and assignments

Group discussion periods, written assignments, and activities will provide many opportunities for students to discuss, reflect on, and explain their group's functioning. The primary teaching method in this course is inductive, experiential, and case-based. Relatively little class time will be devoted to standard lectures.

Required readings:

There is a small packet of course materials available through HBSP and these will be linked in the Canvas site for the course. Items are labeled with **[HBS]** Link here:

Linked items are available online or through the UC Davis library. If noted, links 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 journal. Click on “Search within this publication” and then search for the indicated text written as, “AN [Insert number]” in the second field.

Grading:

Active learning	20%
Personal reflection memo	20%
Group case analyses	40%
Final group poster	20%

(1) Active learning through participation (20% of final grade):

Class participation is an essential part of the learning process in this course.

What you learn in this class will depend not only on completing the readings and listening to lecture but also on student discussion. Spirited, informed discussion of the readings, cases and exercises is a critical component of the course. In evaluating class participation, I will attend to both the quantity and quality of comments, but quality is ultimately the most important. Because class time is limited, each time a student is called upon is an opportunity to advance the discussion in a way that enhances everyone's learning.

What constitutes a quality comment? Here are some general guidelines.

- An “exceptional” comment provides some fundamental structure to the conversation either by distilling an underlying theme from disparate comments or by critiquing a set of comments. An exceptional comment will change the way people view some important part of the case or exercise.
- A “good” comment advances the conversation, by making an analytical point and referring to supporting data, by asking a good question, by offering a thoughtful critique of previous comments, or by expanding on previous comments. Supporting data may come from readings, from other cases, or from personal experience.
- A “fine” comment provides some information that adds to the discussion.
- A “poor” comment is one that seems to indicate a lack of preparation and/or a lack of attention to the “flow” of the conversation (for example, making a point that has already been covered earlier).

I will be taking notes on your individual participation at the end of each class session. Additionally, a main goal of the course is to successfully work in teams, which means that not only are you expected to participate in the discussion, but also to actively participate as an interdependent member of your assigned team. Teams will therefore evaluate their members' contributions to the group as well.

(2) Personal Reflection Memo (20% of final grade)

As an individual, write a memo (no more than three pages) describing your most ineffective group experience (please do not use your team from this class as your example!). This memo should incorporate your own team experiences with theoretical insights from the course. The memo should use concepts from the readings and lectures to explain on what dimensions you feel the group was ineffective, and suggesting what could have been done to make the group more successful.

Due: September 6th

(3) Group Case Analyses (40% of final grade)

Case Assignment #1: Due Friday, August 23th

Erik Petersen at Biometra

As a group, write a 5-page paper that answers the following questions. Be sure to justify your answers using concepts from this session's readings.

1. What are the 2 or 3 main problems that Erik Peterson is facing at Biometra?
Be specific about a few symptoms (i.e., specific things happening that are troubling) and how these symptoms are evidence of these problems. Please focus on problems that Erik as a manager could do something about.
2. How effective is Erik Peterson in dealing with each problem you identified?
 - a. Discuss his specific strengths and shortcomings in dealing with each problem. Cite evidence from the case to support your assessments.
 - b. Conclude with 1-2 sentences evaluating Erik Peterson's *overall* performance at Biometra in positive/negative terms.
3. What actions, if any, should Peterson take to turn the situation around and prepare for his meeting with Chip Knight and the executives?
 - a. Recommend what Erik should do about each problem that you identified above.
 - b. Next, offer at least one specific recommendation to Erik about a concrete action he should take before the upcoming senior management visit.

Case Assignment #2: Due Friday, Aug 30

Blake Sports Apparel and Switch Activewear

As a group, write a 5-page paper that answers the following questions. Be sure to justify your answers using concepts from this session's readings.

1. Did Barker have the right people in the right roles on the executive team? If not, what should be changed?
2. Did Barker appropriately structure and manage the team? If not, what should be changed?
3. How could Barker bring the executive team together to consistently perform at their very best, so as to more effectively and efficiently reach or exceed the company goals?

(4) Group Poster (20% of final grade)

Assignment to be discussed in class.

Guidelines for all written assignments:

1. I do not accept late papers.
2. Please adhere to all page limits, using 12 point font size and double spacing (and no fiddling with margins, either!). Otherwise the paper will lose half a letter grade.
3. Remember to cite appropriately, even when drawing on the readings I've assigned. Otherwise, how will the reader know what reading you are referring to?
4. A good paper:
 - Is clear and effective at getting your point across
 - Directly demonstrates that you have learned something from the class:
 - Specifically refers to course concepts
 - References appropriately
 - Provides specific, detailed evidence to support your points

Classroom Etiquette, Guidelines & Policies

1. Come to class, on time. We all lead busy, complicated lives, but coming late, leaving early, or not showing up at all affects your classmates and impedes your ability to benefit from this course.

2. All class members will treat each other with respect and dignity. It is not acceptable behavior to insult, harass, or demean any member of the class. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.

3. Follow all assignment policies and deadlines. Late assignments will not be accepted and there are no make-up or extra-credit opportunities. Please note that all assignments are required, even if they are not graded. This includes any surveys and short assignments listed on the course schedule.

4. All students are required to comply with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct, found here:

(<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>).

In general, students should adhere to the UC Davis Principles of Community, copied below.

The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society carries within it

historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.

We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.

We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences.

We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1st Session: Introduction to teams and the course (Tues, Aug 20)

Readings: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/> (Read this page on the ethical lenses and the framework for ethical decision making; feel free to click through to the links with more in-depth essays on each lens)

In Class: Introduction to the course
Team exercise
Ethics exercise

2nd Session: The realities of managing (Fri, Aug 23)

Readings: Hammond, J S. (2002). "Learning by the Case Method." Harvard Business School Press, Reprint #376241. **[HBS]**
Gabarro, J. J., DeLong, T. J. & Soo, J. (2010) "Erik Peterson at Biometra (A)." *Harvard Business School Case*. (Revised June 2016.) 411031 **[HBS]**
Gabarro, J. J., DeLong, T. J. & Soo, J. (2010) "Erik Peterson at Biometra (B)." *Harvard Business School Case*. (Revised June 2016.) 411032 **[HBS]**
Eccles, R. G. & Nohria, N. (2003). "Actions: The Realities of Managing." *Beyond the Hype*, Philadelphia, PA: *Beard Books*: Chapter 3. **[HBS]**

In Class: Case discussion: Erik Peterson at Biometra (A&B)
Discussion: Preparing Cases
Cardboard Box and INSITE! Creativity exercise

Handout: Erik Peterson (C&D case)

Due: Group Case Analysis #1

3rd Session: Creativity and Decision Making (Tues, Aug 27)

Readings: Gladwell, Malcolm. [The Bakeoff](#). *The New Yorker*, Sept 5, 2005. [Needs VPN]

Sunstein, C. and Hastie, R. 2014. "[Making dumb groups smarter](#)." *Harvard Business Review*, 93: 91-100. [Needs VPN]

In class: Debrief of creativity exercise
Decision-making exercise

4th Session: Leadership in Teams (Fri, Aug 30)

Readings: Pearce, C.L. and Barkus, B. (2004). [The Future of Leadership: Combining Vertical and Shared Leadership to Transform Knowledge Work](#). *The Academy of Management Executive*, 18: 47-59. [Needs VPN]

Groysberg, B. and Baden, K.C. (2017). "Blake Sports Apparel and Switch Activewear: Bringing the Executive Team Together." *Harvard Business School Case*. 417048 [HBS]

Haas, M. and Mortenson, M. "[The Secrets of Great Teamwork](#)." *Harvard Business Review* 94 (June 2016): 70–76. [Needs VPN]

Casciaro, T. and Sousa Lobo, M. "[Competent Jerks, Lovable Fools, and the Formation of Social Networks](#)." *Harvard Business Review* 83 (June 2005): 92–99. [Needs VPN, Search for, "AN 17276987"]

In class: Tanagram Exercise
Case discussion: Blake Sports Apparel

Due: Group Case Analysis #2

5th Session: Designing Teams (Fri, Sep 6) NOTE! Today we will meet from 2-6pm

Readings: None

In class: Group Feedback Exercise
Working Agreement Exercise
Group Poster Presentation

Due: Personal Reflection Memo