

University of Delaware
Leadership Program, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy

LEAD 341: Decision-Making and Leadership (3 credits)
Spring, 2008, Thursday 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall, Room 37

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Introduction and Course Description

Leaders make decisions – decisions about what to do, how to do it, when, why, with whom, for how long, assuming what, and resulting in what end. Sometimes those decisions result in positive outcomes; sometimes not. Sometimes decisions are made alone, sometimes with others, but always relative to others. Followers, too, make decisions; which, oddly, at times make them leaders. Regardless of one’s actions, a decision is always made, even if it is the decision to not decide. Decision-making is perhaps one of the most important facets of leadership, and critical to the development of a leader. Leaders make decisions based on priorities aligned with their values, and accept and work within the consequences of those decisions.

Leadership and Decision-Making (LEAD 341) examines the person, process, context, and product of decision-making (DM), and more importantly explores the relationship between effective DM and effective leadership practice. If DM is so important to leadership, what does one need to know about DM to be a better leader? Consider leadership as a process of influencing others toward a common vision. Further, consider that effective leadership lies in the leader, the followers, the context, and the interaction between all three. This course explores DM from multiple perspectives, and provides students the opportunity to consider their DM processes and dispositions as well as those of others, all to the end of enhancing capacity to effectively lead.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain and apply the relevant research, theories, and processes of effective (and ineffective) DM at the individual, group, and organizational levels.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate applications of effective DM to leadership, and explain implications for real-world leadership and DM across varied contexts.
3. Students will be able to clearly explicate their dispositions and mental processes as a decision-maker, and apply this to the context of effective DM.

Course Readings/Texts

Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink: The power of thinking without thinking*. New York: Little, Brown.
Hammond, J., Keeney, R., & Raiffa, H. (2002). *Smart choices: A practical guide to making better decisions*. New York: Broadway Press.
Klein, G. (2002). *Sources of power: How people make decisions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Article bundle: *Harvard Business Review*, 84, 1 (January, 2006). Special Issue: Decision Making: Better, Smarter, Faster.

Sequence of Classes, Topics and Assignments*

Date	Topic	Read for this class	Assignment Due
Thurs. Feb. 14	Introductions: Course, topic, self, and others Happy Valentine's Day & Big Decisions!	Klein (K) ch.1	LEAP1: Should/not
2/21	The BIG Picture Processes	Hammond, et al.	LEAP2: DM Log Present #1 - PrOACT
DM Log (10 pts.) - Spend a single day logging every decision you make, including when you decide not to decide or (in retrospect) fail to consider a decision. Write a reflection paper describing the experience and the lessons about leadership and/or DM you learned. (2 page reflective paper and submit decision log)			
2/28	Person, Constructions, Critical Thinking Introduction to Person and Influence	K5 Gladwell (G) ch. 3	LEAP3: Brain Present #2 - Case
3/6	Person Physiological, Social, Emotional influences	K9, 10 <i>Decisions without Blinders</i> (HBR)	Present #3 - EQ
3/13	Person to Process – Individual – Rational Dispositional, Reflective Rational versus Intuitive	K15	LEAP4: DM Practice Present #4 – Rat v Int
3/20	Process – Individual - Rational Rational processes – micro Rational Traps and Risk Quiz 1	McKay ch. 10	LEAP5: Risk Profile Present #5 - Risk Quiz 1
3/27	Person to Process – Individual – Intuitive Motivation, creativity, and sources of power	G1,2 K3	LEAP6: DM Traps
Spring Break March 28 – April 6			
4/10	Process – Individual – Intuitive Intuitive Traps		LEAP7: Klein Jig
4/17	Process – Group	<i>All the Wrong Moves</i> (HBR)	Present #6 – Group
4/24	Process – Group		LEAP8: Group DM Present #7
5/1	Organizational DM Systems and structure Foresight, vision, and ethics Quiz 2	<i>Who has the D?</i> (HBR) and H11 <i>Culture of Indecision</i> (HBR)	Quiz 2 Present #8 - Case Present #9 - Experts
5/8	Organizational DM (Steele Symposium Poster Fair)		LEAP9: DM Org Analysis

5/15	Leadership Applications	Review Klein pp. 102-107; 121-126.	LEAP10: Ideal DM Present #10 - Ideal
	The Wise Decision-Making Leader	K16, 17 Gladwell-Concl.	
FINAL EXAM:			

***Schedule subject to change based on new information, opportunities, and/or interests of the class.**

Assignment Overview

All assignments are due on the date noted. Because assignments are complementary to class content and discussion, and because you are not first-year students, late assignments will not be accepted.

Grading Scheme or Weight Attached to Different Assessments

Assignment	Group or Individual?	Points	%	Grading Scale
Presentation	G	50	25	A 186-200
Quizzes (2 x 25)	I	50	25	A- 180-185 B+ 174-179
Class Contribution	I	25	12	B 166-173 B- 160-165
Leadership Exploration and Practice (LEAP)	I/G	75	38	C+ 154-159 C 148-153 C- 140-147
				D+ 134-139
				D 128-133 D- 120-127 F 119 and below

Presentation (50 pts.) – Small groups of students will be assigned a presentation topic related to some facet of the course (e.g., rational decision-making technique from McKay chapter 10). The group will present the topic in action to the class, addressing the following:

- An explanation of the topic and any practical applications
- a real-life example incorporating the topic
- how and why this topic could be important to a leader

In addition to the presentation, groups must create and submit a 1-page creative handout summarizing the topic.

Class Contribution (25 pts.) – As adults responsible for your own learning, your attendance and participation are your decisions. However, you will learn more, and contribute more to the learning of others, if you are present, involved, and engaged. Thus, while there is no daily requirement/penalty for attendance, attendance and participation are expected in all facets and phases of the course, both in the classroom and in experiences outside the classroom. A cost/benefit analysis of your overall contributions will determine your final contribution to the course. Group project efforts will also count toward your individual participation grade – just like in the real world. Group projects will incorporate a degree of peer assessment to be determined in class.

Quizzes (2 x 25 pts.) – Two quizzes of varied format will assess student learning during the semester. Further information regarding content will be provided in class, while information regarding format will not...

Leadership Exploration and Practice (LEAP) Assignments (75 pts.) – Learning leadership requires reflection, engagement, and then more careful thinking to integrate the new ideas and practices into what you know and who you are. This activity will be prompted by various topic-related experiential assignments distributed in class. **Generally, one LEAP assignment will be due each Thursday**, although their distribution will vary based on the size of the assignment. These assignments are often individual, although at times students may be asked to work with a partner or in a small group. Each assignment will have explicit instructions, however students should be prepared to share their experience with the class on the assigned date, and when not noted assume that they should submit a 1-2 page reflective paper on the experience, specifically noting implications/lessons for decision-making in leadership.

Late assignments WILL NOT be accepted. If you are not in class on the day an assignment is distributed, YOU are responsible to find out what you missed and complete the assignment on time. There will be no exceptions to this. There will be additional LEAP opportunities (extra credit) throughout the semester as available.

General Course Expectations:

- Be present and punctual. You can't lead if you can't manage, especially yourself.
- Be prepared, be awake, be willing to engage and sometimes lead.

- Changes in course content or schedule may be made during the semester. Changes will be emailed to the class list as applicable.
- No late work accepted. Electronic submissions are acceptable (tmiddleb@udel.edu).

- All written work should be word-processed, free from spelling and grammatical errors, and proofed by a peer for clarity prior to submitting. A simple staple will suffice – no plastic covers.
- All work is to be in the student's own words unless quotation marks and referenced pages are provided. Failure to do so is plagiarism and unethical.

- Cherish diverse perspectives, take the risk of sharing your own, conflict in the spirit of learning.

- Any person who may require alternative instructional and/or evaluative procedures due to a disability should feel free to discuss these needs with the professor so that appropriate arrangements can be made.