

Business Administration 1910: Freshman Seminar

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I. Course Description

Critical thinking is essential for success in college and in careers. This seminar will engage students in analyzing a series of case studies reflecting decision-making situations which students and student leaders often confront during their college years. In the process of exploring these cases, students will develop a better understanding of leadership, and they will experience a variety of approaches to problem solving and analysis. Critical thinking skills will be developed as students explore underlying issues, recognize core problems, and identify potential solutions. In the process of expressing their perspectives, students will also sharpen their understanding of persuasive communication.

Text: *A Casebook for Student Leaders*, Holkboer and Hoeksema, Houghton-Mifflin, 1998.
Available in the West Bank Bookstore (Smith Hall)

II. Assignments

A. Individual Assignments:

1. Two individual case write ups (500-750 words each). The two cases you will be writing on will be assigned.

Your write up will take the form of a well-organized essay, with a thesis statement, main body, and conclusion. As you analyze the case, consider the following general questions, but do not limit your response to merely answering these questions. Additional information and background to assist your case analysis write ups will be presented during class.

- a. What is the real problem?
- b. What values and/or value conflicts are involved in this case?
- c. What ideas or concepts from class discussions or presentations are useful in analyzing this case?
- d. What is the best solution? Why?

Although you may choose to discuss your case with your team mates, your paper is to be an original work, independently developed and written.

2. Written responses to two of the three Minnesota Mutual Leadership Lecturers. Due dates are listed on the course calendar.

Questions to help frame your responses:

- a. What were the key or main ideas presented?
- b. In what ways did the speaker contribute to your self-awareness or to your understanding of leadership, values or ethics?
- c. What are the implicit or explicit values or value conflicts that are relevant to this presentation?
- d. In what ways do you see yourself similar or different to the speaker in terms of values, attitudes etc.?

One of the two Minnesota Mutual responses should be reviewed with your team members and revised prior to submission based on your team members' reactions and suggestions. Submit the original draft, the team members' comments, and your revised response as a portfolio.

See comments above regarding the importance of independent development and authorship of these papers.

B. Team Assignments

1. Facilitating Case Discussion: Each team will facilitate discussion of two separate cases and prepare a brief persuasive paper related to the case. The persuasive essay should be three to four pages (typed, 750-1000 words) and written to support your group's recommended solution. The cases your team will prepare will be assigned.

a. What to record in your discussions and report on in your presentations. (These are suggestions—they are not to be considered as the "outline" for your presentations. Be creative!) The formal case write up should present this information in the form of a well-organized essay.

What is the problem?

- What is the problem as seen by each character in the case?
- Is there information missing from the case that would make your solution easier to derive?
- List the key issues in the case.
- What did your group agree on?
- What were areas of disagreement.

What are possible solutions?

- What are some realistic options for the protagonist?
- List the three best solutions.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of each solution.
- List options that were dismissed as impractical or undesirable and the main reason they were dismissed.

What is the best solution?

- What values is this judgment based upon?
- What are some possible applications or lessons that can be derived from this case?

b. As part of your presentation, you might also lead the class through "Questions to Guide Discussion" and to the "Case in Point" questions. Determine ways to make your presentation interactive with the class members.

2. Final Team Projects

Identify a controversial issue, event, or activity involving ethics, values or leadership that is occurring on campus this semester. This could be something occurring on a very local level (e.g. something happening in your dorm) or something that is more campus or state wide. Your team will need to submit a one-paragraph explanation of two possible topics to me by October 24, 2002.

For the Final Project:

- Meet with your group to come up with two possible topics that you would be interested in using for the final project. Submit these two ideas to the instructor by 6:00 p.m. on October 24. You will be notified within two days regarding which topic was approved.
- Write up a summary of the situation following the format used in our Casebook for Student Leaders (approximately 500 words). If available, include newspaper articles, Web site information, or any other relevant materials as appendices to your write up.
- Apply questions and analytical approaches to this situation similar to those we have used for the formal case discussions. You will submit your written responses to these questions as the written component of the final project (approximately 500 words).
- Prepare an interactive presentation in which you engage the class and lead them through your analysis and solutions. These presentations will occur during the final two class sessions.
- Your team presentations will occur the final class period.

III. Grading:

1. You can earn up to 100 points. Grades will be based upon the following:

Participation:(see below)	20 points
Two Individual Case Write Ups:	15 pts each = 30
Two Minnesota Mutual Lecture responses:	7.5 pts each = 15
Two Team Discussion Facilitation:	10 pts. each = 20
Final Team Projects	25

2. Some of the factors that will determine your Participation Points are the following:

- Attendance
- Quality and quantity of oral contributions to class

- Attentiveness to class discussion and fellow classmates
- Performance on in-class exercises
- Teammates' evaluation of your performance on team projects

3. Team contracts

During the first two weeks of the term, you need to meet with your team members and agree upon the following:

- How you want your team to function together?
- What level of effort you expect from each other and as a team?
- What problems you want to avoid?
- What you will do if you encounter problems in working together (including, what you will do if a problem persists even after having discussed it) ?

Once you have agreed upon the terms, write up your team contract. Each team member needs to sign the contract. Submit one copy to your instructor on September 26, 2002. Each member should also retain a copy.

Course Calendar

Date	Classroom Activity	Assignments Due
1. 9/5	Introductions and overview; Expectations; Case Study Methods; Critical Thinking: sample case	
2. 9/12	Leadership, Decision-Making and ValuesCase Discussion: Midnight Hacker	"What is Ethics?"-on ClassNet Complete Rokeach Values Inventory Notes on Midnight Hacker questions
3. 9/19	No Class: Attend <i>Leadership Perspectives</i> lecture on 9/26, 12:00-1:00. View videotape of lecture if unable to attend in person. Write-up due Thursday, 10/3	Complete Rokeach Values <i>Team Meetings for Presentations and Final Project Planning</i>
4. 9/26	Exploration of Capitalism Guest lecturer: Richard Goldman	Attend Leadership Perspectives lecture at 12:00: Bruce Roselle; write up due 10/3.

		Team Contracts due
5. 10/3	Self-Assessment: Discussion of MBTI Leadership: Values and Team Dynamics Case Presentations: The Charity Case—Team 1 Crisis of Conscience—Team 2 Smoldering Volcano -Team 3	Complete MBTI Leadership Perspectives Lecture - Paper due
6. 10/10	Leadership Characteristics; Priorities and Time Management Case Presentations: Team 4: Rockdale Scandal Team 5: Buried Secret (Distribute "Team Roles: Self-Perception Inventory")	Read: "What's In it For Me" Team Presentations or Individual write-ups as assigned
7. 10/17	Discussion of Team Role Inventory	Complete Team Roles Inventory
8. 10/24	No Class: Attend Leadership Lecture at 12:00-1:00 p.m.	Attend <i>Leadership Perspective</i> Lecture: David Oreck; write-up due 10/31/02 Submit Two Ideas for Final Project Topics by 4:00 p.m.
9. 10/31	OPEN TOPICS: Critical thinking and leadership in current events	Leadership Perspectives Lecture: Paper due. Bring articles or notes on two issues relevant to course discussions on values, critical thinking and leadership.
10. 11/7	Thinking Critically about Leadership and Diversity: Case Presentations La Raza Derecha: Team 1 Celebration of Whiteness: Team 2	Team Presentations or Individual write-ups as assigned Team Meetings for Final Projects
11. 11/14	Thinking Critically about Individual Rights: Case Presentations Defender's Dilemma: Team 3	Team Presentations or Individual write-ups as assigned

	World's Apart: Team 4 Mind of the Beholder: Team 5	Team Meetings for Final Project
12. 11/21	Mn. Mutual Lecture: 12:00-1:00 p.m/Team meetings with Instructor (20 minute meeting between 3:30 and 5:30 in lieu of class meeting)	Attend Leadership Perspectives Lecture: Linda Mona; Write up due 11/27 Team Meetings with Instructor to discuss final projects
13. 11/28	Thanksgiving: No Class	Leadership Perspectives Paper due 11/27
14. 12/5	Critical Thinking and Leadership: Class Analysis of "Loneliness of Long Distance Runner"	Readings on Title IX
15. 12/12	Final Presentations	Final Team Projects Due

Source:

Rinehart, Jerry. Business Administration 1910: Freshman Seminar. Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota. 11 Nov. 2002. <<http://legacy.csom.umn.edu/Classnet/CM2Fal02.cfm?p=150>>.