

PAD 656

Capstone Seminar in Nonprofit Leadership and Management Practice

Spring 2004

Class location: UR 326

Instructor: Cam Stivers

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Office hours: Monday 4-6 or by appointment

Prerequisites: UST 550 and either PAD 651 or PAD 652, or instructor permission
4 credit hours

Introduction

This seminar considers key aspects of leadership and management in the nonprofit sector as they are applied in practice. It aims to integrate significant theory and research results with practical skills. This course is intended as a capstone experience for students pursuing the graduate certificate in nonprofit management and/or the MPA nonprofit specialization. Therefore, it is best taken as close to the end of the student's coursework as possible.

The approach of the course is to engage students in discussions and exercises that explore the relationship between theories and practices of nonprofit leadership and management. The relationship between theory and practice in professional education has a long history in which the two are seen as being in tension with each other, if not actually contradictory. Practitioners tend to see theories of leadership and management as irrelevant to the task of diagnosing and solving organizational problems; at the same time, theorists and researchers tend to see practical skills as lacking the rigor and sophistication that characterize "real" knowledge. This course aims to move beyond this impasse by providing a range of opportunities for students to figure out for themselves just how relevant and helpful existing theories are. At the same time we will explore how practices may already be grounded in implied theories that, if made explicit, can be weighed and consciously chosen or rejected.

Much of our time in class will be devoted to discussions and to exercises, especially working through complex case situations. We will treat case situations as opportunities to diagnose problems and to select meaningful ways of addressing them. We will focus especially on top-level leadership and management (and the possible differences between them). This will necessitate consideration of the tension between internal and external factors, since much of the complexity of leadership and management stems from having to balance the two. Therefore we will not only consider elements such as the management of human, fiscal, and technological resources but also the organization's political and economic environment. By and large, the focus will be on issues encountered in leading and managing small to mid-size community- and faith-based organizations.

The overall goal of the course is to provide a framework within which members of the class can actually practice leadership and management skills in as realistic and practical a way as is possible within the confines of a class situation.

By the end of the course, students should:

- Understand the nature of leadership and management and the differences between them
- Understand the factors with which nonprofit leaders and managers have to cope
- Be able to analyze complex case situations and suggest plausible ways of dealing with them
- Perceive an improvement in their leadership and management skills.

Course Reading

Michael Jenkins and Deborah Bradshaw Jenkins, The Character of Leadership: Political Realism and Public Virtue.

Edwards, Yankey, and Altpeter, Skills for Effective Management of Nonprofit Organizations.

Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses

A number of case narratives will be made available, either in class or through electronic course reserve.

Assignments:

- There will be four cases (A-D) that will be done in class in groups and presented orally. These cases will either be handed out the week before or available on electronic course reserve (ECR).
- There will be four homework cases (#1-4) to be analyzed in writing and handed in. Again, these will either be handed out the week before they are due, or available on ECR.
- There will be a mid-term and a final, consisting partly of case analysis and partly of essay questions reflecting on the issues of theory and practice, leadership and management, considered in the course. The midterm will be done in class; the final will be a take-home.
- At the beginning and end of the course, students will perform a written assessment of their own leadership and management skills. The final exam will include the end-of-course self-assessment.

Class schedule

1/26/04	Introductions and initial discussions; self-assessment Case A (for next week) handed out
2/2/04	Jinkins & Jinkins, Preface, introduction, part I (through p. 57) In-class case analysis A Written case analysis #1 handed out
2/9/04	Jinkins & Jinkins, part II (pp. 61-97) Hand in written case analysis #1
2/16/04	President's Day – no class
2/23/04	Machiavelli, <u>The Prince</u> (skip # 4, 5, 8, 10-14, 16, 19, 26) <u>The Discourses</u> (brief excerpts TBA) Case B handed out
3/1/04	Jinkins & Jinkins, part III (pp. 101-138) In-class case analysis B Written case analysis #2 handed out
3/8/04	Jinkins & Jinkins, part IV (pp. 141-193) Hand in written case analysis #2
3/15/04	Spring Break – no class
3/22/04	Midterm Case C handed out
3/29/04	ASPA conference – no class
4/5/04	Edwards, et al, Introduction, Chs. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 In-class case analysis C Written case analysis #3 handed out
4/12/04	Edwards, et al, Chs. 9, 10, 12, 14 Hand in written case analysis #3 Case D handed out
4/19/04	Edwards, et al, Chs. 16, 17, 18, 19 In-class case analysis D Written case analysis #4 handed out

4/26/04	Edwards, et al, Chs. 20, 21, 23, 24 Hand in written case analysis #4
5/3/04	Edwards, et al, Ch. 25 Course review and wrap-up Final exam handed out (will include final self-assessment)
5/10/04	Final exam due

Grading:

Student work will be assessed based on the plausibility of the student's analysis of cases and the quality of the argument in presenting and defending the student's action recommendations. It should be remembered that there is seldom if ever one clear right answer for what to do in addressing an organizational problem. Yet not all possible answers are equally plausible. Choosing an approach or making a decision means acting in the absence of absolute clarity and exercising one's judgment to the best of one's ability.

Since this is an advanced seminar aimed at honing leadership and management skills, it will not be possible to do an outstanding job without getting actively involved in class sessions. That means not only actually showing up (which is crucial), but also vocally participating in discussions and exercises. "Making mistakes" is part of the process (just as in riding a bike, knitting, or learning to play a musical instrument).

More than one absence may necessitate make-up work.

Grades will be based on the following performance elements:

Class attendance and participation (discussions and case analyses)	25%
Written case analyses (homework)	25%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%