In this course, our exploration into leadership will include gaining insight into ourselves, being attentive to a variety of current and classic leadership theories, focusing on current challenges of leadership and followership within organizations, and reflecting on the context and culture in which organizational leadership is practiced and developed.

We frequently hear the complaint that there is a need for more leaders, or more effective leaders. However, we believe, with the management consultant and theorist Peter Block, that " . . . we can and we must make our organizations more the kinds of places we want them to be . . . " That impact is most likely to occur with attention to our own individual and collective practice of leadership.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: While exploring contemporary theories, principles, and practices of leadership, the course focuses upon understanding
leader/follower relationships in the attainment of organizational and societal goals. Leadership styles are assessed, and effective leadership techniques explored. Attention is given to the contribution of followers to organizational goal attainment.

This is a highly reflective course, grounded in online discussion and interaction with faculty and classmates. The course will be characterized by high challenge, active participation, self-direction, and the encouragement of and respect for diverse viewpoints.

ACTIVITIES: Course design reflects the ideas of Warren Bennis, distinguished professor, University of Southern California and Harvard, and founder of The Leadership Institute: "Leadership skill building happens through these methods: Experience (learning by doing), Example (learning from other successful organizations), Mentoring (learning from senior, successful people), Discussion (Socratic small group seminars), Technology (ongoing, regular mutual sharing of information), and, the oldest--but most neglected--method, Reading and Reflection" (The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, undated, p. 9). In addition, the readings and assignments together echo the ideas of leadership scholar Jay Conger: “... four approaches should be brought together: a conceptual part to understand leadership; skill building to practice teachable skills and awareness building for others; feedback to understand personal strengths and weaknesses; personal growth to bring out emotions and stimulate imagination” (in Mintzberg, 2004, p. 214).

Students will be involved in a variety of activities and experiences throughout the term, including both popular press and scholarly readings in the field of organizational leadership, writing a personal essay, completing a short research activity into their own leadership practices as perceived by self and others, and conducting an interview related to leader/follower dynamics. Each student will explore the ideas of one leadership theorist to share essential components and application of that scholar’s theory with classmates through a sophisticated and high quality power point presentation posted to the course wiki.

Course design will include both full group discussion board postings and comments on classmates’ postings, and individual journal postings that only faculty will be able to read. Blackboard software will support our online work and provide a place for detailed assignment descriptions. Students will need to access the Blackboard course site several times each week for information, as well as being attentive to frequent email messages from faculty.

Management scholar Henry Mintzberg has commented on the nature of reflection in his book, Managers Not MBAs: “Reflecting does not mean musing, and it is not casual. It means wondering, probing, analyzing, synthesizing, connecting—‘to ponder carefully and persistently [the] meaning [of an experience] to the self.’ And not just about what you think happened but ‘why do you think it happened?’
and ‘how is this situation similar to and different from other problems?’ (Daudelin 1996, 41)” (2004, 254). **Reflection is central to the work of this course; it is expected that student reading and reflection will contribute significantly to learning.** Reading and reflective writing related to the book *Finding Our True North* (George, McLean & Craig, 2008) and individual journal postings are one way to ensure thoughtful reflection over course content.

It has been our experience that students’ academic success is most likely with a number of short assignments; therefore the course includes frequent assignments, with related feedback to support growth and skill development. Rich details for each assignment are posted on Blackboard under Assignments. Due dates and points possible are included in the course Detailed Schedule.

Each student will conduct a small research project into a leadership scholar chosen by faculty; the resulting graded “product” will be 8-10 power point slides posted to the course wiki. This will provide other students an opportunity to view the slides, learn from them, and post comments. It is recommended that students explore the ideas of Garr Reynolds [his book is titled *presentationzen* (2008); he also has an Internet blog site] to lift the quality and effectiveness of the slideware for this assignment.

Other graded course assignments include three short papers: an analysis of data from the individual Online Leadership Practices Inventory (7 pages maximum, excluding title page, references and appendices), and an interview overview linked to ideas in Ira Chaleff’s book, *The Courageous Follower* (2009). A final personal essay will ‘tie a ribbon’ around the term’s work by addressing each student’s own leadership challenge set against course components and resources.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH: Throughout the course, attention will be given to students' ability to demonstrate

- **a)** a thorough understanding of the complexities involved in contemporary organizational leadership;
- **b)** professional and effective written skills, with the ability to present material in a succinct and logical fashion, using appropriate academic formatting for written work if required;
- **c)** a high degree of familiarity and understanding of course readings and information;
- **d)** application of assigned material to organizational leadership responsibilities and leadership/followership experiences; and
- **e)** reasonable, respectful and responsible interaction and dialogue with regard to course material, views expressed by fellow students and the faculty.
The University-wide rubric for feedback on written work, developed by the Excellence in Writing Committee, will be the basis for grading all written work.

For this particular course, competency development will focus on the understanding of theories of organizational leadership, their applicability, and personal growth management specifically linked to one’s own practice of leadership.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Online Leadership Practices Inventory [LPI] (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). This 360 degree feedback instrument must be purchased directly from the publisher (John Wiley), through the University of La Verne’s representative at the publishing house. Further details are shared on Blackboard and through email. The related LPI analysis paper is consistently identified as the most powerful course assignment by students in prior terms and sections of this course and also students in the equivalent MSLM Leadership: Theory and Practice course (MGMT 520).

Required Reading:

Bennis, Warren. *On Becoming a Leader* (2009 edition). This memorable short classic book is to be read in full in the first weeks of the term. It was written by the University’s friend and mentor who is known around the world for his lifelong studies of leaders. One of the first graded assignments in the course is built on this reading. Dr. Bennis spoke at the University of La Verne this past March.

Chaleff, Ira. *The Courageous Follower. Standing Up To & For Our Leaders*. (3rd edition, 2009) Of all the available publications on the nature of followership, this one seems to me to be most powerful and of most immediate value to us in our organizational lives. Space this reading across several weeks; a related interview overview and discussion board posting will be assigned. Students will be assigned to small working study groups to develop thoughtful interview questions based on a specific chapter in the book.

George, Bill, Andrew McLean & Nick Craig. *Finding Your True North*. (2008) The reading in this workbook is distributed across the term; as you read each designated chapter, give attention to your own reflective writing in response to the book’s questions and structure. Faculty guidance under Assignments on Blackboard suggests areas for each of the chapters as focal points for individual journal postings. These journal postings are due five times throughout the term, and are graded, with each posting having the potential to earn five points for high quality writing responsive to the assignment description.

Additional short readings may be posted on Blackboard during the term.
EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS: Reading and project/written assignments specified on the course Detailed Schedule must be completed prior to the designated times and dates. Written assignments, discussion boards and other work are due on the dates shown; no work submitted late will receive credit (points).

The university-recommended rubric will be used to assess the quality of written assignments; use the rubric to polish your work before it is submitted. It is wise to create Blackboard postings and all papers in Word and run spelling and grammar checks to ensure the best possible quality of writing. Include your name in the title of every posted file; use .doc and .ppt format only. No .docx or .pptx files will be accepted, since not everyone will be able to access them.

We have a contract as joint participants in the course: we are responsible for coming together as prepared professionals, with ownership of our time and a stake in ensuring that it is spent in ways valuable to us both individually and collectively.

Student success in an online course such as this requires frequent and consistent attention to Blackboard, faculty emailed messages, and due dates for assignments. Stay on top of the work; this advice is central to earning a good grade in the course. It has been faculty experience in previous online courses that students who fall behind are students who do not achieve course success.

The university’s policies for grading are described in the online catalog; grading policies for this course are posted on Blackboard.

Students are to be aware that if any written assignments in this course are submitted to online databases to check for potential plagiarism, those papers will be archived indefinitely in such online sites.

Students’ continued enrollment in this course denotes understanding of and compliance with all elements of this syllabus, with particular attention to academic integrity.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE FACULTY: To be prepared and engaged each week; to return student assignments promptly, with appropriate feedback, to be available by appointment to meet with students by telephone or in person if that is possible; to be responsive to email messages; to hold high standards for all of us. Faculty and students together are responsible for creating and sustaining a safe online environment that facilitates learning, openness, personal growth, and mutual trust and respect. The faculty is committed to the success of each student.
SCHEDULE DETAILS: The course Detailed Schedule provides an overview of each week’s reading assignments, graded work, and other responsibilities. **No work will be credited late.**

COURSE EVALUATION: Continuous evaluation of our work, in academic settings as well as in our professional workplaces, is essential. Throughout the term, faculty and students will periodically stop to assess the focus and quality of our learning together. End-of-term course evaluations for the University are conducted online in the last weeks of each term. **All students are asked to participate in these evaluations, with the goal of 100% participation.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY. Each student is responsible for performing academic tasks in such a way that honesty is not in question. Unless an exception is specifically defined by an instructor, students are expected to maintain the following standards of integrity:

1) All tests, term papers, oral and written assignments, and recitations are to be the work of the student presenting the material.

2) Any use of wording, ideas, or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers requires the explicit citation of the source; use of the exact wording requires a "quotation" format. (*University of La Verne Catalog* online, 2010-2011, n.p.)

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and an illegal act. **Failure to meet these standards for academic honesty will lead to course failure,** and may result in dismissal from the University. See *University Catalog* for details.

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*The College of Business and Public Management, and all courses and activities in its programs, are committed to the University of La Verne mission and its emphasis on four major concerns to affirm a positive and rewarding life: reflective attention to values, community in the context of diversity, lifelong learning and community service.*