Groups, Teams, and Leadership – Fall, 2007
BUS 38116-01: Thursdays, 1:30 – 4:30
(Harper Center, Classroom C-08)

Website:  https://chalk.uchicago.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp  (check the Chalk website often and download course notes, additional readings, homework assignments, etc

Instructors: Reid Hastie, Professor of Behavioral Science, HPC 406, 773 834 9167 (office), 773 702 0458 (fax), reid.hastie@gsb.uchicago.edu  (office hours after class meetings and by appointment); Teaching Assistant: Annika Weckerle, aweckerl@chicagoGSB.edu

Texts:


Optional:  Thompson, L.L.  (2004, 2nd edition).  Making the Team: A Guide for Managers.  Upper Saddle River, NJ:  Pearson (ISBN 0-13-141658-8, pbk.) – abbreviated THOMPSON below.  This is a textbook covering most of the topics included in the Groups, Teams, and Leadership course.  The course is skill-oriented and “textbook learning” is a minor part of its contribution to your professional knowledge base. Nonetheless, many students would like a systematic treatment of the material covered in the course, so this text is offered as an optional supplement to the course exercises and discussions.


Reading Packet available at the Bookstore [Abbreviated READING below]


Description:  This course is designed to make you a more effective leader and member of teams, committees, task forces, and other small groups.  We will move back and forth between scientific behavioral analyses of group processes, prescriptions for better performance, and challenge experiences with students working in small teams to solve production, decision, and feedback problems.  It should help you build the following skills:  manage groups and teams effectively,
motivate and lead people, deal with conflict productively, increase team creativity and ingenuity, make better group decisions, evaluate and reward team performance, and to understand and use “Emotional Intelligence” in teams.

Prerequisites: none

Teaching Method: In-class exercises including case discussions, interactive demonstrations, with some lecture and discussion. Warning: Because the course is based on many in-class exercises, you should not enroll unless you plan to attend all the meetings and arrive on time. If you are late for a class, you are likely to miss the start of the exercise and you will not get credit for the exercise. Repeated tardiness or absences will result in a substantial grade reduction. If you must be absent for a class, it is essential that you inform the instructor in advance (reid.hastie@chicagoGSB.edu).

Meeting Plan Overview
Meeting #1 (September 20): Introduction, Learning Objectives, and Conceptual Frameworks
Meeting #2 (September 27): Performance and Productivity [individual “Evaluating Team Performance” papers due]
Meeting #3 (October 4): Team Decision Making
Meeting #4 (October 11): Communication and Collective Intelligence
Meeting #5 (October 18): Communication and Collective Intelligence (con’t)
Meeting #6 (October 25): Creativity and Innovation in Groups [individual Midterm Essays due]
Meeting #7 (November 1): Leadership I [individual “Leadership Essays” due]
Meeting #8 (November 8): Leadership II [group “Leadership Exemplar” projects due]
Meeting #9 (November 15): Beyond Simple Groups [individual Wisdom of Crowds reviews due]
Meeting #10 (November 29): Course Wrap-Up [group “The Apprentice” projects due]
Finals Week (December 6): [individual “Teamwork Analysis” papers due]

Methods of Evaluation: A student’s grade will be based on his or her performance on:
- (30 points) in-class participation in discussion and team performance exercises (including occasional short written reports and case analyses);

- (10 Points – due September 27) Individual Paper: How we should evaluate team performance – evaluating student performance in course project teams


- (10 points – due November 1) Individual Paper: Leadership Self-Analysis;

- (10 points – presentation and write-up due on November 8) Group Project: Leadership Exemplar Analysis;

- (10 points – due November 15) Individual Paper: Review of James Surowiecki’s The Wisdom of Crowds;
- (10 points – presentation and write-up due on November 29) Group Project: Lessons from “The Apprentice”;

- (10 points – due December 6) Individual Paper: Analysis of the effectiveness of my course project team.

Students will be graded on the GSB curve (with the average grade set to equal 3.33 on the 4-point scale).* All students are required to complete all of the course requirements (for example, if a student fails to turn any one of the major assignments (see above), even if he or she has enough points to pass the course, that student will receive an incomplete grade).

*The default grade in the course is a B; exceptional performance will be rewarded with an A, mediocre performance will receive a C; a good prediction is that if 40 students are enrolled in a section of this course, approximately 10 will receive As, 25 will receive Bs, and 5 will receive Cs.

Notes on the In-class Participation Grade (30/100 points): The instructor, TAs, and students will provide ratings of the quality of each student’s contributions to the class meetings. In addition, there will be occasional brief in-class writing assignments (graded pass/absent), and perhaps some case preparations. Of course, students are expected to prepare for and attend all class meetings, act in a professional manner, and participate enthusiastically in all the class exercises.

Notes on “How we should evaluate team performance?” individual assignments (10/100 points; due on September 27, maximum length 1,000-words).
Propose a practical procedure for the evaluation of the course group projects (“Leadership Exemplars” and “The Apprentice” Analysis, see assignments below). Start with your interpretation of what the goals of those assignments should be (for student skill acquisition) and work backwards to outline a procedure that can be followed by your instructor to assess individual and team performance (i) to incentivize those objectives and (ii) to assign credit properly and reliably. You may find the Baron & Kreps (Chapter 10) reading and the Burton, DeLong, & Lawrence readings useful starting points to think about designing performance evaluation systems to achieve organizational objectives.

Midterm Essay (10/100 points, due on October 25 – maximum length 1,000-words). Write 6 short notes on the following topics: (i) provide 3 examples of the most useful implications for your personal career development of the material covered during the first 5 weeks of the course; (ii) provide 3 examples of material that was covered that was the least useful for your personal career skills development. In each case describe the material from the course and then provide a clear argument for your conclusion that it was either useful or not useful to you personally.

Notes on the Leadership Self-Analysis Paper (10/100 points; due on November 1 – maximum length 1,000-words). Focus your attention on the next 10 years of your professional life. At the end of that period, what type of leadership role do you aspire to be in? Describe the role and its requisite skill set. Considering the readings assigned up to this point in the course (especially True
North and the readings for the November 1 meeting) and any other sources you can bring to bear, what do you believe is a good conceptual framework in which to describe those skills (personality traits, a list of skills, a relationship in an organization, a useful metaphor or analogy, … [something else?]). For you personally, which skills do you believe you already possess and which do you think need training and development? What plans do you have to further develop your weaker skills?

Notes on the “Leadership Exemplar” group project (10/100 points; oral and written presentations due on November 8). Students will be assigned to 5-member teams and each team’s task is to construct a 15-minute presentation to the class summarizing the products of their research on an exemplary leader (you should also construct a written document summarizing your presentation, e.g., a thoroughly annotated PowerPoint slide show or a term paper format summary). One possibility is to interview a manager-leader and elicit his or her best advice on how to create and manage successful teams (a good choice would be a successful manager in the local business community). Summarize this advice and, where possible, compare it to the lessons about effective teamwork you have learned from the readings and experiences in this course (you may want to use the True North interview format to guide your “research”). Another possibility is to conduct a scholarly analysis of one prominent leader’s style, habits, and strategies. This would probably involve reading biographical sources and personal or journalistic accounts of the chosen leader’s performance. Again, it is probably most appropriate to choose a business leader, but a community, political, military, sports, or religious leader could also work out. And, again, your goal is to extract useful lessons for good practices and to provide instructive illustrations of these practices in action.

Notes on the Wisdom of Crowds review assignment (10/100 points; due on November 15 – maximum 1,000-words). Your boss has asked you to provide a review of James Surowiecki’s best-seller, The Wisdom of Crowds, summarizing the most important messages for practice in your company. (If you have never worked in a business environment, use the GSB or another “academic business unit” as “your company.”) More specifically, she asks you if it would be worthwhile to pay Mr. Surowiecki $100,000 to visit your company as a consultant and to spend a day reviewing in-house practices and suggesting improvements. A central question you should address as you read the book and write the review is: What are the conditions under which groups are especially effective? When do groups make good decisions? When do they fail? What tasks are most effectively solved by groups (individuals)? What are Surowiecki’s answers to these questions? (A subtext is always: Are Surowiecki’s conclusions based on valid data and credible “logic”?) You should also pay careful attention to the innovative collective judgment and decision-making systems (e.g., information markets) that Surowiecki describes. Which of these look truly promising (and how could they be used effectively in your own organization)? (I strongly recommend reading the wikipedia entry on "Wisdom of Crowds" after you’ve finished the book - it isn't perfect, but it will help you get the main points of Surowiecki's argument clear in your head before you tackle the essay - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom_of_crowds)

Notes on the “The Apprenticeship” group project (10/100 points; oral and written presentations due on November 29 – your instructor will provide DVDs of episodes from the show). Your (group’s) task is to conduct a content analysis of one of the seasons of the television show, “The Apprentice.” Granted the show is artificial and a little cheesy, but it still
provides many illustrations of effective (and ineffective) leadership. Your task is to derive the major lessons for effective leadership you can from the behavior of the teams in the show and to document your conclusions with specific citations (Episode #, minute ##) to the source materials. Of course, you should compare what you learn from your content analysis with what you’ve learned in this course. As a general principle, it is better to pick a few episodes that provide clear illustrations of your points, rather than by exhaustively analyzing too many episodes. You should construct an oral presentation to the class (15-minutes) and prepare a documentary summary (e.g., annotated PowerPoint slides or a term paper).

Notes on the “Teamwork Analysis” individual paper (10/100 points; due on December 6; maximum 1,000-words). This paper should be a summary of the activities that occurred in your course project teams as you prepared the “Leadership Exemplar” and “Apprentice” presentations. You should also evaluate the effectiveness of the teamwork and suggest possible improvements in its “team process.” The report should also include ratings and constructive feedback on the performance of each of your team mates in accomplishing the project objectives (your instructor will provide you with standardized forms for the ratings and feedback).

Incomplete Grades: A student who wants an “incomplete” grade in the course, must request the incomplete grade before the final meeting (November 29). Under these rare circumstances, the student will be able to receive credit for the course by completing missed assignments (including examinations), the next time the course is offered by this instructor.

Honor Code and Professionalism: Students in this course are required to adhere to the standards of conduct in the GSB Honor Code and the GSB Standards of Scholarship. Students are sometimes uncertain about how to apply the Honor Code in specific situations. The following information is presented as guidance but should not be interpreted as a complete set of rules (when in doubt, ask the professor). Do not use material from prior sections of this course in the GSB or from similar courses at other universities. As a rule of thumb, ask if the material or information is available because it was covered in some section other than yours, and do not use the material or information if the answer is “yes.” You should not consult students who took the course in prior quarters at any school from any instructor, nor should you look at their notes, their old assignments, or their old exams. Students are encouraged to collaborate in advance of completing any individual assignment, but they should independently conduct any analyses and produce original written reports. I.e., all final written products must be your own original work. When we are engaged in one of the in-class exercises, students should not show confidential information to other students, deliberately collude with other students to change the nature of the exercise, or share information about the exercises with others not enrolled in the course. And, finally, it will be considered a violation of the honor code in this course, if a student participates in one of the group exercises that he or she has already completed elsewhere, but does not inform the instructor before the exercise begins.

Students should also strive to be “professional” in their conduct in the class, treating fellow students and the instructor as they would valued co-workers in a job setting. When “teamwork” is required, students should take the exercise seriously* and work together constructively to meet or exceed the goals of the assignment. (* Yes, most of the in-class exercises are artificial, by necessity. But, they are designed to teach students general lessons in an engaging and effective
manner. Remember, they are certainly more fun, more memorable, and more effective than the alternative – the traditional lecture.)

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a physical, psychiatric, or learning disability, please let the instructor know within the first two weeks of the semester so that your learning needs can be met.

**Meeting Plan**

**Week #1 (September 20).** Introduction: Course Goals, Learning Objectives, and Conceptual Frameworks  
(optional) THOMPSON (*Making the Team* text): Chapter 1

**Week #2 (September 27).** Performance and Productivity [individual “Evaluating Team Performance” essay due]  
(optional) THOMPSON: Chapters 2, 4, Appendix 3  

**Week #3 (October 4).** Team Decision Making  
(optional) THOMPSON: Chapter 6  

**Week #4 (October 11).** Communication, Coordination, and Collective Intelligence  
(optional) THOMPSON: Chapters 5 and 9  
*Harvard Business Review,* July/August (HBS Product #97402).

**Week #5 (October 18).** Communication and Collective Intelligence (con’t)  

**Week #6 (October 25).** Creativity and Innovation in Groups [individual “Midterm Essay” due]  
(optional) THOMPSON: Chapter 8  
*INC., May,* 1-12.  
Week #7 (November 1). Leadership I [individual “Leadership Analysis” essay due]
( optional) THOMPSON: Chapter 10

Week #8 (November 8). Leadership II [“Leadership Exemplar” group projects due]

Week #9 (November 15). Beyond Simple Groups [individual *Wisdom of Crowds* reviews due]
(optional) THOMPSON: Chapter 7, Appendices 1 and 4

Week #10 (November 29). Course Wrap-Up [“The Apprentice” group projects due]

Week #11 (December 6). [individual “Teamwork Analysis” papers due]