

MLS 661 Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Leadership Spring, 2005

Betty Robinson
Email: brobinso@usm.maine.edu

"Ethical ideals are food for the soul. Without soul, we lose our connection to others, and without our connection to others, we can't lead or follow well." (Nair, K. 1997)

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." (Gandhi)

"The more we heard their hate, the more we realized we had to stay, take the hate on, for their sakes as well as ours... We have to find our way toward others, toward family member and friends, but also toward strangers – that (i)s the moral call..." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Introduction

What do we care about? To what are we committed? How do we know what is right? Do passions ever call us to leadership? Does soul or spirit have a role in leadership? This course approaches the study of leadership from the perspectives of meaning, values, human interconnectedness, and spirituality¹ - the hunger to understand our lives, to be part of a larger whole, to be complete, to serve. We examine how spiritual practices or attitudes relate to moral principles and how both might be integrated in leadership practice.

The instructor's role is that of a "midwife" and a facilitator, not the metaphorical "banker" who "deposits" information into the brains of students. Instead, a midwife-teacher supports the evolution and increased depth of students' thinking and focuses on the application of resulting knowledge to practice.

Texts:

Ethical Dimensions of Leadership. Kanungo & Mendonca.

Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit and Servant Leadership.

Spears, Larry C. (ed.).

How Good People Make Tough Choices. Kidder, Rushworth.

Country of My Skull. Krog, Antjie.

Optional: Let Your Life Speak. Palmer, Parker.

Readings on electronic reserve.

Objectives for Student Learning

Understanding that the MLS program study of leadership requires study of the self, the organization or community, and the world:

1. Analyze and articulate the reasoning of ethical perspectives as they apply to leadership practice. There are ethical consequences in exercising leadership.
2. Develop awareness of and reflect on your values in practice.
3. Recognize the "dark" side of leadership (Johnson, 2001).
4. Analyze the ways in which ethics and spirituality are culturally bound phenomena and explore the linkage or contrasts between the two concepts.
5. Raise questions about personal spirituality in various leadership situations such as change, moral decision-making, ethical behavior, and one's role in the world in light of opportunities for leadership.
6. Engage, apply, and synthesize the concepts of servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1970), including the issues of human need for connection, meaning, and making a difference, as well as the ecological nature of organizations, communities and the world.
7. Continue to improve learning and communication skills.

Weekly Coursework

1. Jan 18 Reviewing and agreeing on our work.
2. Jan 25 Ethical Dimensions, pp. 1-9, 24-32 (on charismatic leadership) (the rest of Ch. 2 is good review material re: leadership theories), 33-51 and How Good People, pp. 7-29.
3. Feb 1 Ethical Dimensions, pp. 75-126 Reflection posting 2-3 paragraphs. Propose an interview question. Brainstorming on interviewees. IRB Review process.
4. Feb 8 How Good People, pp. 30-108. Propose an interview question.
5. Feb 15 How Good People, pp. 109-222. Reflection posting or response posting 2-3 paragraphs. Interview subjects submitted, discussed, and approved.

Note: Permissions to use this material must be obtained directly from the author.

6. Mar 1 Country of My Skull, pp. v-88 and 131-161
Further discussion on interviews? Video?
7. Mar 8 Country of My Skull, pp. 201-232,293-317,341-386
Reflection posting 2-3 paragraphs on Country of My Skull
8. Mar 15 Insights on Leadership, Service, pp. xi-77. Discuss final
research paper topics.
9. Mar 22 Insights on Leadership, pp. 185-215 & 258-278 Interviews
due and discussed.

Spring Break

10. Apr 5 Forray and Stork, "All for One: A Parable of Spirituality and
Organization"; Wheatley, "Leadership in Turbulent Times Is
Spiritual" (electronic reserve). "A Leader's Conscience: The
Integrity and Spirituality of Vaclav Havel," Haughey in Conger
& Assocs. (1994) Spirit at Work. Discuss final research
papers—progress.
11. Apr 12 Insights on Leadership, pp. 308-321 & 340-358
12. Apr 19 Topics classes. Readings assigned by students.
No more than three per class!
13. Apr 26 Topics classes.
14. May 3 Topics classes.
15. May 10 Searching for synthesis and identifying what learning is
needed next. **Final papers due.**

Assignments & Student evaluation

Three short (2-3 paragraph) Blackboard postings
 Leadership interview and analytic write-up in teams of two. APA style.
 Participation including facilitation of your "topics" class.
 Final Research Paper. APA style.

The leadership interview requires you to identify a person who exercises leadership and is willing to be interviewed on issues of ethics and/or spirituality as they pertain to the individual's leadership behavior and experience. Suggested interview questions will be generated by the class and USM IRB approval will be obtained. All interviewees will be anonymous. Material that might identify the interviewee will be modified to protect her/his identity and no record of the interviews will be kept by either the students or

Note: Permissions to use this material must be obtained directly from the author.

the university. The interview will be written up as a case study in APA format. (8-10 pp.) This assignment will be completed in teams of 2.

The Topics classes will be facilitated by each of you as a way of sharing with the rest of the class what you've learned from your research for the final paper. Each topic will be related to spirituality and/or ethics as well to leadership practice.

Prior to your turn to facilitate, you'll provide a piece or several very short pieces for us to read. Either bring these to class as copied handouts or get them to me 10 days in advance so I can have them placed on Blackboard.

Please also provide us with a copy of your bibliography via posting it on Blackboard before the end of semester.

Note: Permissions to use this material must be obtained directly from the author.