MBA 725 Leadership  
Fall 2014 Syllabus  
Dr. Richard Klimoski

**Class meets:**  Tuesday 6:30 – 10:05 pm, Fairfax Campus, University Hall 1200

**Instructor:**  Richard Klimoski

**Office:**  Klimoski-Fairfax Campus, Enterprise Hall 214

**Contact:**  rklimosk@gmu.edu  
Office: 703-993-1828  
Office hours: by arrangement

**Blackboard:**  www.mymason.gmu.edu

**COURSE PURPOSE**

The purpose of this course is to give you a deeper understanding of the demands of organizational leadership and an increased ability to be a successful leader

**CASES**

Harvard Business School Cases:

These must be ordered directly from the publisher. A direct link to our course
case package has been created:

**ARTICLES**

ARTICLES HAVE BEEN PLACED ON OUR COURSE WEB SITE.

YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD MANY OF THE ARTICLES DIRECTLY FROM THE LIBRARIES’ ELECTRONIC JOURNAL COLLECTION

**OTHER COURSE MATERIALS**

MOST OTHER COURSE MATERIALS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ON OUR COURSE WEB SITE

**CLASS FORMAT**

The course will be built around individual and student team work. The course itself will be interactive and will incorporate exercises, faculty and student-led discussions involving the readings and case material. There will be student presentations based on the Leader Profile course report produced by student teams.

I have business executives as guest speakers scheduled for most of the sessions. These individuals will be asked to brief the class on their current leadership challenges.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Become facile with research-based frameworks for explaining effective organizational leadership and learn how to better link theory to practice.
- Gain personal insights in key areas such as how to work in teams, build and use a leadership network, improve communication in hardship and crisis situations and understand different ways to motivate and influence people.
- Articulate the critical competencies for organizational leadership, especially as these relate to managing work groups and teams.
- Understand your own potential for leadership and how to best develop it.
- Energize your efforts to develop this potential.
- Explain the role of leaders in achieving the success of work organizations by creating and insuring the alignment among the tools of leadership including organizational vision, strategy, structure, culture, hiring and socialization programs, reward systems, leadership succession programs.

This course also contributes to the MBA learning goals of:

Teaming and Leading
Analytic Decision making
COURSE DELIVERABLES AND EVALUATION

There are several evaluated deliverables in this course.

DELIVERABLE 1: LEADERSHIP CASE ANALYSES (5 REQUIRED; 50% OF COURSE GRADE)

• Learning teams will be formed. Each member will contribute to the creation of a four-page analysis which provides answers to case questions posed. These analyses will be due on the evening that the cases will be discussed. On the dates assigned, each member will submit a copy of a copy of their team report to the Blackboard course web site. These will be the foundation for class discussions. The members of a team will receive the same grade for the team submitted case report.

DELIVERABLE 2: PARTICIPATION (10% OF COURSE GRADE)

• This is an advanced MBA elective which will be delivered using a case-based discussion format. Course goals can be attained only if there is a high level of student engagement. Thus your evaluation in the course will be based in part on how well you integrate the readings and case materials into class discussions. Your contributions to your learning teams will also be assessed and enter into your participation grade. High levels of engagement during our course sessions will count toward obtaining the maximum number of participation points possible. Regular class attendance is expected.

DELIVERABLE 3: LEADER PROFILE PROJECT (20% OF COURSE GRADE)

The purpose of this exercise is to allow you to explore one or more if the issues or themes addressed in our class from the point of view of actual senior organizational leaders. As such, it would be important for the team to agree on a issue, theme or direction for the interviews early on in the process. Then, as a result of the interviews and analyses based on the interviews, the team should be in a position to come to a set of conclusions regarding the issue(s) addressed (e.g. what it takes to build a top management team, how best to go about succession planning). This means it would be very appropriate to go into the interviews with the goal of answering a question or a thesis regarding the topic (e.g. one based on course materials or on the work experiences of team members).

Each group will conduct a set of interviews (one per group member) with business leaders who meet any one of the following criteria:

• CEO of firm (company must be 3+ years old, >20 people)
• C suite officer (company must be 3+ years old, >100 people)
• President, VP or GM of division of larger company (company must be 3+ years old, >1000 people)
• Active Government SES level leadership position (with significant management responsibilities)
• Active Military – General or Admiral level position or position with significant management responsibilities (e.g., a Brigade or Battalion commander, etc.)

For those up to the challenge, teams might seek out individuals who represent:
• C level position of large firm (3000 or more)
• Top Military and Government officials (administrators, second in command)

Note that the chosen leaders selected for this assignment may not be an immediate supervisor or someone with whom you have an established relationship (e.g. relative, friend).

This project includes both a team report (10%) and a group presentation to the class (10%). Detailed documents explaining the project and the evaluation are posted on our course Blackboard site.

**Deliverable 4: Leadership fitness challenge (10% of course grade)**

While much about how to become a better or more effective leader can be learned from class work, there is a great deal of evidence that “experience is the best teacher” and that practice-driven leadership development works best. Accordingly an opportunity to improve or develop your own leadership potential is being built into our course. This is being described as a “Leadership Fitness Challenge”.

It is clear to those who want to be more physically fit that it is incumbent upon them to plan for and participate in a “workout routine”. Typically this means setting out the time and place during which to exercise or to perform physically demanding activities. It is the regular participation in such activities that leads to achieving some goal. By analogy, the leadership fitness challenge assignment will involve weekly practice in the development of a key aspect of leadership effectiveness- social capital. Points will be earned by fulfilling the activities your workout “plan”

Specific details will be provided.

**Deliverable 5 (10% of course grade):** Over the course of the semester there will be a series of assignments that must be completed but will not be graded per se. Instead, points will be awarded based on the completeness and timely submission of each assignment.

A. Leadership in Action. This exercise asks you to reflect on and describe an example of leadership that you have seen recently, have experienced or have personally exhibited.
B. Individual written contributions. From time to time you will be asked to complete and turn in your answer to discussion questions associated with a class exercise.

C. Leader “User Manual”. You will be asked to create and share a brief statement describing how an individual can best work with you as your subordinate, given your strengths and weaknesses, your personality, your needs and goals. This “user manual” would be detailed enough to serve as an orientation device for new subordinates. But for it to result in a more effective leader-subordinate relationship, it must be valid, based on an honest self-assessment.

D. Draft Leader Profile materials. As noted above, each team will present a report comparing and contrasting the “styles” of two senior organizational leaders. As input to this assignment, each team will be expected to deliver progress report. This draft will include such as the team’s choice of the issue or theme to be investigated, the expected outcome of the investigation, the names of the leaders who are scheduled to be interviewed and the interview questions or protocol to be used.

E. Personal Learning Note. At the end of the term, you will be asked to reflect on and describe how the class experience may have influenced (changed, improved, challenged) you personally and/or professionally.

Grading Standards: A solid job on the case write ups and the leadership profile report will be evaluated at the A-/B+ border. To earn a strong A, performance must go beyond “meets expectations.”

The case write ups and other deliverables are due at the beginning of class on the due dates specified. Late projects may incur a penalty. Missing deliverables will receive a grade of zero. Most deliverables will be posted to our course web site. But I also request that you bring hard copies to class as well.

Semester grades will depend on the total points you earn on the assignments described above; no extra credit will be available. The percentage cutoffs are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% of Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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HONOR CODE

The honor code applies to all work required for this class. You are free to confer with other people when working on your projects, but the final decisions about your projects and the writing should be your own for individual projects, and yours or your group members for group projects. More information about the GMU honor code is given on the GMU web site at various locations, including: http://www.gmu.edu/depts/unilife/honorcode.html and http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12

•SCHOOL OF BUSINESS- STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR:

THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY IS TO CREATE AND DELIVER HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH. STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI WHO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS REQUIRE AN ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST AND MUTUAL RESPECT, FREE EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY, AND A COMMITMENT TO TRUTH, EXCELLENCE, AND LIFELONG LEARNING. STUDENTS, PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI ACCEPT THESE PRINCIPLES WHEN THEY JOIN THE SOM COMMUNITY. IN DOING SO, THEY AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR:

O RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS, DIFFERENCES, AND DIGNITY OF OTHERS
O HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN DEALING WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY
O ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

INTEGRITY IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING COMMUNITY. ETHICAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR HELP PROMOTE A SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT, AND ENSURE EVERY MEMBER THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE EXCELLENCE. SOM CAN AND SHOULD BE A LIVING MODEL OF THESE BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS. TO THIS END, COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO INTEGRATE THESE STANDARDS INTO EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE AT THE SOM. THROUGH OUR PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THESE COMMUNITY STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR, WE CAN CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ALL CAN ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

OTHER

Blackboard Site: This will be a primary way to work with me in order to coordinate such things as class assignments, grades and communications. E-mail: I will occasionally send electronic messages to the entire class. I will use your GMU email address as represented in the Blackboard system. Thus, please be sure you check your GMU email account or have it forwarded to whatever e-mail account you normally use. You are fully responsible for taking the steps listed above, for checking your e-mail regularly, and for any information
communicated to the class via e-mail. You should always feel free to communicate with me via e-mail.

**Disability:** Students with disabilities who require special accommodation should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/or 703-993-2474) and should inform me of their needs so I can take them into consideration. Please take care of this during the first two weeks of the semester.

**Religion:** Students who will miss class for religious reasons should inform me of their anticipated absences during the first two weeks of the semester.

**Inclement weather:** Follow the university position for weather-related cancellation. 703-993-1000 or check www.gmu.edu.

**Late arrivals, Cell phones & beepers:** Please be respectful to others and be on time to class. Also, cell phone and beepers are distracting. Please turn off all audible signals before class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Case and Deliverables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1:</strong></td>
<td>Aug 19</td>
<td>Course overview; Exercise: Leadership in Action; Discussion of readings; Team formation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2:</strong></td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Case #1* (Coach Knight) and Case #2* (Coach K); Discussions of readings; Leader User Manual due</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3:</strong></td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Case #3 (Roizen) Team write up due; Network exercise due; Discussion of readings; Leadership Fitness Challenge Exercise details</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4:</strong></td>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Case #4 (Peterson A) Team write up due; Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5:</strong></td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Case #5*: Zia Yusef (case questions answered) Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6:</strong></td>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>#6(Graham) Team write up due; Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7:</strong></td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Case #7 (Iggy's) Team write up due; Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8:</strong></td>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Discussion of readings* Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9:</strong></td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Case #8 (Sapient) Team write up due; Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge review</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10:</strong></td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Case #9 (Levy) Team write up due; Discussion of readings; Fitness Challenge wrap-up; team Profile reports</td>
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*Individual written work due
MBA 725 Leadership
Readings List

Week 1, August 19: Introduction to Leadership
• Nytimes.com/corneroffice (Searchable collection of interviews with business leaders)

Week 2, August 16: Leadership Styles (teams)
• Wagman et al (2009). Leading teams when the time is right. Organizational Dynamics,38, 3, 192-203.
• Thompson (2008) Teams- Facts and Myths

Week 3, September 2: Developing Leadership Networks
Case: Heidi Roizen (2000). [HBS Product No. 9-800-228]
• Cross & Prusak (2002). The people who make organizations go- or stop. Harvard Business Review, 80,6, 104-111.
Week 4, September 9: Leadership Failure


Week 5, September 16: Leadership development and succession planning

Case: Zia Yusef at SAP (Case material supplied)


Week 6, September 23: Women, Men and Leadership


Week 7, September 30: Becoming the Boss – Learning to Take Charge


Week 8, October 7: Communicating through Challenge and Crisis


Week 9, October 14: Values-based Leadership


Week 10, October 21: Managing change

Case: Paul Levy: Taking Charge of the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (2002). [HBS Product No. 9303-008].

MultiMedia DVD for Paul Levy Case [HBS Product # 303-058].


8/7/14