WILSON 700: STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Leaders as Thinkers: What does good leadership look like?
Winter Term 2024
Thursdays 10:30-1:20, Room LRW 2012

ADVANCE DRAFT

Dr. Catherine Frost (Political Science)
frostc@mcmaster.ca
Office: KTH 510
Office Hours: 9:30-11:30am Fridays

Dr. Violetta Igneski (Philosophy)
igneski@mcmaster.ca
Office: UH 308
Office Hours: 1:30-2:30pm Thursdays, and by appointment

Course Description:

Ethical leadership and civic engagement begin with a deep reflection on one’s commitments and principles, their actions in relation to others, and their impact in the world. This course critically examines commonplace ideas and expectations that shape what we think of as good leadership, such as reason, duty, and individual responsibility. It considers the role of autonomy and relationality in leadership and covers critical skills and virtues that enable people to work collectively to solve local and global problems in an ethical way. It also addresses illusions of leadership that drive polarization, exclusion, distrust, and breakdowns in communication.

Course Objectives:

The focus of the course is on the development of skills that support thoughtful and responsible leadership, rather than on the mastery of a particular set of theories. Course readings have been selected to prompt reflection on challenges facing leadership in the contemporary era and include classical and contemporary sources on ethical decision-making and social justice. Assignments develop leadership capacities and skills of self-reflection, critical reasoning and efficacy, collaborative problem solving and effective communication. The course culminates in a collaborative exercise that will builds on skills and insights developed throughout the term. The course is organized into five themes, and two weeks will be spent on each theme. For each theme, there will be one in-class activity or simulation and one meeting with a practitioner in the field.

I. Vice, Virtue and Character
II. Principle, Duty and the Good
III. Justice and Care
IV. Fear, Courage and the Ego
V. Agency, Solidarity and Empowerment

Required Materials and Texts

- Required readings will be available through Avenue to Learn
• Students have an option to select from the listed “Bonus content” or to identify their own ‘Bonus content” source and confirm its suitability with instructors at least one week in advance. Students are responsible for obtaining these materials independently.

Class Format

• Three hours, seminar discussion, including practitioner meetings and simulations

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Weekly reflections – 25%, due weekly by 10am, Monday following class
2. Contributing bonus content – 10%, due as assigned
3. Participation – 25%, due ongoing
4. Collaborative project – 30%, due April 4
5. Project appraisal – 10% due April 8

Course Evaluation - Details

1. **Weekly Reflections (25%), due weekly by 10am, Monday following class**
   Working from prompts, prepare weekly self-reflections (minimum 500 words) on the role of key leadership concepts. Entries will be graded for insight, clarity of understanding, grasp of the challenges, self-knowledge and reflexivity.

2. **Contributing Bonus Content (10%), due as assigned**
   Students will choose one item from the “bonus content” section of the week’s topics, prepare the material thoughtfully, and plan ways to share their insights on the work as part of the weekly discussion. Students are encouraged to be resourceful and creative in how they introduce the material into discussion (for example, handouts, visual illustrations, or introducing key ideas or key terms into discussion). It is part of the assignment to find a way to introduce your insights and learning in a manner that complements the ongoing discussion. Assignment will be graded for the way the “bonus content” contribution makes clear links to key themes, enriches the weekly discussion, and is presented in an engaging and accessible way. Students can suggest additional content to present as long as it is approved in advance by instructors.

3. **Participation (25%), due ongoing**
   Participation in biweekly activities and practitioner sessions will be graded for creativity, resourcefulness, planning and collaborative solution-building. For simulations, students should be able to identify obstacles, craft a shared sense of goals or objectives, develop workable approaches to challenges, compromise where necessary, and engage resources constructively including drawing on the skills and abilities of peers. For practitioner sessions, students should arrive with well thought-out questions, and should use follow-up questions to deepen discussion.
4. **Collaborative Project (30% groupwork), final items due April 4**

This major collaborative project consists of three parts.

I. **Policy tracking** – in week 1 students will each adopt two public policy issue areas which they will track throughout the course (any duplication between students should be addressed by specializing within that topic). Examples include homelessness, emission targets, long-term care, or AGI (artificial generalized intelligence). Topics that regularly concern the potential for traumatic content should only be adopted after consulting with instructors. Students will identify ongoing legislative and policy initiatives, track their progress through the term, prepare 2 legislative or project-based briefing notes that address a current initiative in their topic area (1pp) and 2 mini-research reports (2-4pp) on each field. One of these four items should be submitted every other week from January 11 to March 7. Items will be graded pass/fail. Items are due by start of class on Thursday.

II. **Coalition Building** – On March 7 the simulation exercise will involve each student presenting one of their issue areas to the class, and together the group will select one of these items to pursue as their collaborative project. The goal is NOT to determine which issue is the most pressing or important, but to identify where the best potential for constructive collaboration exists alongside the potential for meaningful transformation. Presentations will be graded on a pass/fail basis including the teamwork demonstrated in identifying and brainstorming around a common goal.

III. **Action planning and resources** - students will prepare a collated action kit to address the selected public policy issue, including:

1. Expanded research report including an ethical assessment and recommended guidelines (4-6pp)
2. Detailed plans for a media or community event including proposed timeline, budget, key participants, draft media advisory, and identified funding sources (2-4pp)
3. Short popular media item (1,000 words, look at The Conversation for inspiration) and information handout (1pp)
4. Modular powerpoint materials with speaking notes suitable for presentation and distribution (max 20 slides)
   - This kit will be presented and discussed in class on April 4. This effort will be graded collectively.

5. **Project appraisal (10%) due April 8, 2024.**

Following the final class each student will submit an individualized review and appraisal (2-4pp) of the collaborative project that includes a self-assessment and ideas on how to strengthen future efforts.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 11 What makes a good leader?

In this first session we will discuss some of the characteristics of good and effective leadership. We will consider some themes that arise in two famous examples of leadership, one ancient one modern. These are Plato’s “ship of state” analogy, and Martin Luther King’s "I have a dream" speech.

Background reading/viewing:
- Plato, selections from the Republic Book 6: 488a-489d, 492a-495b.
- Martin Luther King Jr. “I have a dream”
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vP4iY1TtS3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vP4iY1TtS3s)

Writing prompts for Jan 11:
What is your image of leadership? How do you visualize or imagine it?
What does civic engagement mean for you?
In your view, is leadership more about fulfillment or sacrifice?
What is your image of human nature?

Theme I. Vice, virtue and character

Week 2: January 18 Virtue, character, and practical reasoning

Readings:
- Aristotle, selections from the Nichomachean Ethics, BK II.

Practitioner: TBA

Week 3: January 25 Virtue, vice, and human nature


Bonus content:
- Sun Tzu (1910). The Art of War. T.L. Giles (Trans.)
- [https://aeon.co/essays/there-s-no-emotion-we-ought-to-think-harder-about-than-anger](https://aeon.co/essays/there-s-no-emotion-we-ought-to-think-harder-about-than-anger)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UmWoqhkJdU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UmWoqhkJdU) (Nussbaum, What is Anger and Why should we care?)
- Greta Thunberg at UN Climate Action Summit 2019 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU)
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270245574_Leadership_and_Virtue_Ethics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270245574_Leadership_and_Virtue_Ethics)

Writing prompts for Jan 18 & 25:
What do you do when faced with conflict?
How do you want to be remembered?
Who is your favourite leader? What qualities make them a good leader?

**Theme II. Principle, duty and the good**

**Week 4: February 1** Acting on principle and doing the right thing

**Readings:**
- WD Ross, excerpts from *The Right and the Good* (1930)
- Immanuel Kant, *On A Supposed Right to Lie from Benevolent Motives* (1797)

**Practitioner:** TBA

**Week 5: February 8** Identifying the good and speaking up

**Readings:**

**Simulation:** Three cases on executive integrity [https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/case-on-executive-integrity/](https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/case-on-executive-integrity/)

**Bonus content:**
- Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (ebook available through Hamilton Public Library) / movie on streaming services
- Immanuel Kant, excerpts from *the Doctrine of Virtue*
- J.S. Mill, excerpts from *Utilitarianism*
- [https://www.griffith.edu.au/engage/professional-learning/content-centre/the-ethics-of-leadership](https://www.griffith.edu.au/engage/professional-learning/content-centre/the-ethics-of-leadership)
Writing prompts for Feb 1 & 8:
What principles guide you?
What are your “passions”?
How do you know when to draw the line?
Have you ever had to sacrifice your principles for sake of the greater good?

Theme III. Justice and Care

Week 6: February 15 Feminism, justice, and care

Readings:

Practitioner: TBA

Week 7: February 22 READING WEEK (no class)

Week 8: February 29 The figure of leadership

Readings:
Adriana Cavarero (2016), Inclinations: A critique of rectitude. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Ch 4 (pp. 45-56), Ch 7 (pp. 71-80), Ch 10-12 (pp. 97-131).

Simulation: Critical Care Triage Protocol during COVID 19
https://www.physiciansforlife.ca/end-of-life-care-triage-ontario-covid19/

Bonus content:
• Thich Nhat Hahn, The Art of Communicating
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZAa8M_sNa4
• https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/framework-change-address-systemic-racism-policing
Writing prompts Feb 15 & 29:
What happens when you fail or fall?
What draws you out of yourself?
When do you feel “cared for” in public life?

Theme IV. Fear, courage and the ego

Week 9: March 7 Self-interest and sacrifice

Readings:

Practitioner: TBA

Week 10: March 14 Loneliness, despair, and catastrophe

Readings:

Simulation: Coalition-building for collaborative project

Bonus content:
- [https://www.effectivealtruism.org]

Writing prompts Mar 7 & 14:
What scares you?
When do you feel most invisible?
From where do you draw courage?
What’s stopping you?
Theme V. Agency, solidarity and empowerment

Week 11: March 21 Responsibility and collective action

Readings:

Practitioner: TBA

Week 12: March 28 Identity, inspiration, and team building

Readings:
Christine de Pizan (2018 [1404-1405]) (selections from) The Book of the City of Ladies, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, Part I (pp. 21-42, 164-7, 51-3), Part II (pp. 135-7, 160-4), Part III (pp. 201-3, 219-221)

Simulation: lottery ticket

Bonus content:

Writing prompts Mar 21 & 28:
Where do you look for inspiration?
What settings bring out the best in you?
Where have you found your most unlikely allies?

Week 13: April 4 Collaborative Action Presentation

- Presentation of action kit materials and discussion.
- Submission of project appraisal (April 8).
Course Policies

Submission of Assignments
- Unless otherwise identified, assignments should be submitted through Avenue to Learn in “.pdf” format.
- Students are expected to complete the assignments on schedule, except in cases of illness or immediate personal emergency covered by documentation.

Grades
Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARK</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Assignments
Unless otherwise indicated late penalties of 10% per day will apply.

Courses With An On-Line Element
Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring
Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection
Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

Copyright and Recording
Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by university instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)
Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Academic Integrity Statement
You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.** Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/). The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
• plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
• improper collaboration in group work.
• copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations
As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy
Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification
The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances
The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.).
Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

**Generative AI:**

**Some Use Permitted**
Students may use generative AI for editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc. their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited. Use of generative AI outside the stated use of editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc. without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student’s responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

**Special Note for WILSON 700 students:** Please be advised that AI is prone to some pretty severe “hallucinations” and these may be heightened when it comes to complex conceptual issues. Even when it deals with concrete issues it generally follows pre-set norms that are predictable and plodding and sometimes stunningly ill-informed. It’s ok to use it to bat around ideas but assume it’s still pretty idiotic when it comes to advanced thought. When it comes to civic engagement and leadership, it may lean towards being dogmatic and narrow-minded so be careful in turning to it for meaningful guidance. When it comes to up-to-date policy tracking, assume AI is behind the curve and that building it into your submissions will leave you out-of-date and ill-informed on key developments.