The Lee Kong Chian School of Business
Academic Year 2024/25
Term 1

COR-OBHR1308   TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The core objective of the new SMU-X Transformative Leadership course is to nurture a new generation of young leaders motivated and capable of tackling intricate global and local challenges related to the nexus of 'digital disruption, demographic change and diversity' in an integrated, interdisciplinary fashion, providing the opportunity to integrate perceived differences between older and younger people in terms of values, communication priorities; age discrimination or the initiation of new types of social ('digital') behaviours transmitted from the plugged-in 'Generation Z' (born 1996 and after) to Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964). These three challenges (positioned at the interface of both current and future issues) are not only globally relevant but also have significant local implications for Singapore.

Embedded in the experiential SMU-X initiative, the Transformative Leadership course provides students with a unique learning opportunity to develop and implement (socially) innovative solutions to make a positive impact on business and society in close collaboration with reputable partners in business, nonprofits and government. Learners will be paired up with an external SMU-X partner to work on relevant innovative projects with real impact.

The successful completion of such transformative SMU-X projects requires learners diving deep(er) into various disciplines such as social sciences, social services, business, political governance, public policy, demography, technology, etc. It is expected that the chosen practical challenges commissioned by SMU-X partners will 'stretch' students, forcing them to step out of their comfort zones and to explore the unknowns in order to make a 'real' difference 'out there' in both the social and business sectors.

In terms of effective *leader* development, in particular, transformative leadership, the SMU-X course design will support learners in expanding their individual capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. Emphasis will be put on proximal indicators of leader development such as self-views around self-concept, including leader self-awareness, leadership self-efficacy and leader. Through their SMU-X projects, students will appreciate the importance of *leadership* development so that they can articulate what it takes for teams and their leaders to create strong(er) alignment and high(er) levels of commitment. The latter requires interpersonal trust, care and concern as well as shared mind-sets regarding (transformative) goals and values such as the 'real' sharing propelled by collaborative leadership approaches.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Analyze the power and impact of global and local challenges related to digital disruption and demographic change on business and society in general;
- Explain the importance of collaborative transformative leadership in addressing some of these complex issues head on in an integrated, interdisciplinary and novel manner, bringing about transformational, out-of-the box solutions;
- Appreciate what it takes in terms of design thinking to propose user-centred solutions, that create real value for stakeholders of participating client organizations;
- Articulate how selected leadership concepts such as transformational, collaborative leadership approaches can propel innovative problem solutions;
- Reflect effectively about their own leadership outlook and the acquisition of 21th century skills such as collaborative intelligence, through impactful and innovative SMU-X projects.

PRE-REQUISITE/ CO-REQUISITE/ MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)

Please refer to the Course Catalogue on OASIS for the most updated list of pre-requisites / co-requisites for this particular course. Do note that if this course has a co-requisite, it means that the course has to be taken together with another course. Dropping one course during BOSS bidding would result in both courses being dropped at the same time.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

No Final Exam.
Overall cumulative assessment (CA) is 100% of the final grade, consisting of:

Personal Leadership Initiative – PLI (Ongoing)	10%
Peer Evaluation (End of term)	20%
Reflection Essay (End of term)	30%
Group Project (End of term)	40%
- Presentation 20%	
- Report 20%	

Personal Leadership Initiative -PLI (10%)
Students are to create a **400 word (max**) document that either reflects on a recent initiative (within 1 year) that saw the student come out of their comfort zone and made a personal leadership change in their lives **OR** or a future plan that describes a personal leadership plan to make a change to their current situation. Students can choose to be creative in their approach for this assignment if they so wish.
The assignment should include highly viable and actionable details that reflect careful thought and research in order to align/that aligned efforts with goals.

Peer Evaluation (20%)
This accountability exercise will be conducted at the end of the course

Reflection Essay (30%)
This take home graded activity will require you to submit an **1200 word (max)** essay. The purpose for this analysis is to promote the reflection of your experiences throughout the whole course and the takeaways gleaned from guest speakers, client sponsors and company visits. You may also describe valuable insights that you gained about yourself. Notes are allowed to be referred to in this exercise. The **compulsory** format is as follows:

a) Introduction: Description of experience in the course
b) Body: Reflect, describe and analyse 2 significant moments where you gained valuable insights either about yourself or from guest speakers, client sponsors and company visits
c) Conclusion: How do you plan to apply what you have learned into the future

This activity will be carried out on MS Word document, Arial font size 12, at 1.5 line spacing, 2.5cm margins all around. You must submit to e-learn on Week 14. Date to be confirmed in class.

Please save the file in your FULL NAME.

Students are encouraged to carry out good time management to avoid last minute work.
Turnitin plagiarism checker will used to ensure the submissions are original in nature. Those found plagiarizing will be reported to the undergraduate office for punitive actions.
The use of any AI language processing technology, like Chat GPT, **is allowed for up to 180 words**. Exceeding this word allowance may result in investigations of plagiarism and adversely affect your results. Serious cases will be escalated to the School and University administration for disciplinary action.

Group Project (40%)
Presentation - 20%
Report - 20%

Groups of students will be formed to work on the problem identified by the client organisation and propose solutions in a final presentation to the organisation's representatives. Primary data may be obtained from the organisation. Secondary data sourced from the internet, books, reports, credible media sources, lecture notes and site visits are acceptable and highly recommended.

You are to deliver a presentation (20%) and a formal report (20%).

Citations are to be done in APA format.
This activity will be carried out on MS Word document, Arial font size 12, at 1.5 line spacing, 2.5cm margins all around.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

The course approach is based on both analytical rigor and the practical utilisation of leadership principles and concepts. During the course, a variety of teaching and learning techniques will be employed to enable students to think critically and imaginatively about the various implications of the topic. To realize the goal of a shared learning experience between students and instructor, the course is aimed at integrating real leadership challenges, practical experiences, problem-based interaction with both clients and leaders in society, projects, presentations, experiential exercises, and critical reflection on the various course materials. A high level of student participation is required both in the classroom and in the context of the leadership projects. Students are required to read intensively and to participate actively in projects, presentations, discussions etc.

A key assumption is that knowledge is constructed by learners and not merely absorbed from someone with more experience. In constructing their knowledge, learners draw on their previous knowledge, mental processes, and experiences in integrating knowledge with their mental model of that domain (e.g., teamwork, leadership). For that reason, the transformative leadership course is interactive and experiential. Students meet in class and in small groups; they work in project teams both in class and outside class with SMU-X partners; individually and collectively they reflect on their SMU-X project experiences through class discussion and written assignments. Students present their innovative projects and takeaways to classmates, clients, and the professor. In short, the course **requires** student participation as the foundation for learning.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations hours will be announced in class.

CLASS TIMINGS

The course is taught in one 3-hour session per week.

READINGS

To be advised in class

Journal Articles:

Transformative Leadership
1) Boston Consulting Group. (2018). *The Futures of Work* (World Economic Forum, p. 18) [White Paper]. World Economic Forum. https://www.bcg.com/world-economic-forum/future-of-work

2) Fuertes, V., Egdell, V. & McQuaid, R. (2013): Extending Working Lives: Age Management in SMEs. *Employee Relations*, 35(3), 272-293.

3) Downes, L. and Nunes, P.F. (2013): The Big Idea – A new kind of Innovator can wipe out Incumbents in a Flash, *Harvard Business Review* (March issue): https://hbr.org/2013/03/big-bang-disruption/

4) Xu, F., Caldwell, C., Glasper, K., & Guevara, L. (2015). Leadership roles and transformative duties – preliminary research. *Journal of Management Development*, *34*(9), 1061–1072. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-12-2014-0156

5) Shields, C. M. (2011). Transformative Leadership: An Introduction. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 1–17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981292

6) Atkinson, J., Lasbennes, F., & Nabarro, D. (2021). Reflecting on Our Times: Valuing Transformative Leadership in Real-World "Living Systems." *The American Journal of Evaluation*, *42*(1), 130–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214020982071

7) Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative Leadership: Achieving Unparalleled Excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1116-2

8) Grin, J., Hassink, J., Karadzic, V., & Moors, E. H. M. (2018). Transformative Leadership and Contextual Change. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, *10*(7), 2159-. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10072159

9) Montuori, A., & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative Leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.), *Handbook of Personal and Organizational Transformation* (pp. 319–350). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66893-2_59

10) Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative Leadership: Working for Equity in Diverse Contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10375609

11) Phakeng, M. (2019, July 26). Transformative leadership is about building relationships [Opinion]. *The Mail & Guardian*. https://mg.co.za/article/2019-07-26-00-transformative-leadership-isabout-building-relationships/

12) Rebecca Gordon. (2020). Transformative Grassroots Leadership: Understanding the Role of Rojiroti's Women Leaders in Supporting Social Change. *Politics and Governance*, *8*(4), 180–190. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i4.3560

13) Watson, T. N., & Rivera-McCutchen, R. L. (2016). Black Lives Matter: A Call for Transformative Leadership. *The Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *19*(2), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458915626759

Students are expected to excel in 'self-leadership' in terms of proactive library and internet research work.

Useful Links
http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg
http://www.nyt.com
http://www.hbs.edu/about/leaders/
http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu/products/hbr/index
http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/leadership
http://www.ft.com
http://www.businessweek.com
http://www.asia-inc.com
http://www.economist.com
http://www.fortune.com
http://www.herring.com
http://www.obs.org.sg

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx.

Copyright Notice

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Accessibility

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university's disability services team if you have questions or concerns about academic provisions: DSS@smu.edu.sg. Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.

WEEKLY PLAN WILL BE UPLOADED ON ELEARN