

Northwestern University  
Farley Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation  
Spring Quarter 2017

**COURSE: ENTREP 395: LEADERSHIP, ETHICS, AND YOU**

This syllabus is subject to change. Canvas is the best source for the most up to date information.

TIME: Tuesdays and Thursdays, **2:00 pm – 3:20 pm.**

LOCATION: **Ford 1350 (ITW)**

PROFESSOR: Verinder Syal  
[v-syal@northwestern.edu](mailto:v-syal@northwestern.edu) [verinder@thoughtfulsimplicity.com](mailto:verinder@thoughtfulsimplicity.com)  
(847) 975-6054

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment. My calendar is on Canvas.

TA: Kaitlin Shedd [kaitlinshedd2017@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:kaitlinshedd2017@u.northwestern.edu) (949) 466-9603

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*“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power” – Abraham Lincoln*

*“What luck for rulers that men do not think.” – Adolf Hitler*

*“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” - Edmund Burke*

*“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.” - Leo Tolstoy*

*“Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.” - Carl Jung*

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COURSE SYNOPSIS:

What exactly is leadership? Are leaders born? Are you a leader? Where do ethics, and integrity, fit into leadership, and, even more importantly, into your life? Leading others is hard. Leading oneself is even harder.

This course is designed to dig into these questions to help you develop your “True North,” a compass that will help you lead yourself (and others), with *your* values, on *your* terms, to *your* destination.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, coming up with an idea may be the easiest part of your journey. The hard part will be determining how to lead people, develop the right organization culture, get things done, and most importantly lead yourself. **But these challenges are true for everyone** - whether you aspire to be a doctor, engineer, artist, banker, teacher, journalist, or whatever else you fancy.

Therefore, this class is open to seniors and juniors from **all** disciplines, and is by **application** only.

## COURSE OVERVIEW:

Who is a leader and what is leadership? Are leaders born or can leaders be made or make themselves? What does it take to become a leader?

Some leaders have conquered vast lands; others have produced profound thought. Some assimilated all that they encountered; others destroyed everything they touched. Some were heroes; others despots. Even today, some build their people and institutions; others focus on their ego and their net worth. Some serve, some take. **Why?**

We will search for answers by studying historical and current leaders, their character, traits, and methods. In our quest for clarity we will ask: Are there any Universal Principles of Leadership (“UPL”)? We will examine the role ethics, integrity, and character play in leadership? Are these a handicap or are they the very essence of leadership, and perhaps even life?

We will use real life case studies to think about situations that you are likely to encounter in the actual world that awaits you out there. We will think about ethical challenges, crucibles, and grappling with the purpose of leadership and life. We will discuss some of the necessary tools for leadership including Vision, Values, Aligning, Motivating, and Executing (as in getting things done).

But the most important question that you will address will be about yourself: **“What kind of leader do I plan to be?”** Ultimately life is not about what others do, or what is done to you; it is about you, what you do, how you choose to lead, and how you choose to live your life. Yes, it is a choice. And you make the choice.

***“It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves.” – Sir Edmund Hillary***

## Course Syllabus:

The **details** for each class, papers, team projects, grading – you get the idea – **will all be found on Canvas**. The last page gives you a flavor for all the classes we have planned.

**“Participant Centered Learning”** will be our philosophy. All that matters is your learning. It has been shown that when students participate actively and vigorously they learn more. So everyone will need to step forward and get onto the playing field. There will be no place to hide; the workload will occasionally be daunting but, if you are like my past students, you will be energized. Don’t get sidetracked by political correctness; speak your mind but always with civility.

## Norms:

Besides the usual University norms, here are a few quick operating rules.

- Being absent is an absolute no-no. The class generally has 100% attendance.
- Classes will start and end on time. Doors will close at **2:00 pm**; coming in late disturbs everyone. Come early.
- Participation, and even more importantly CONTRIBUTION, is the key to this class. If you are absent you can’t obviously do either. Please stay healthy.
- Make a concerted effort to get to know everyone in the class. These are some of the best contacts you will even make in your life. Trust is the key ingredient to making this class successful.
- No laptops are allowed in the classroom except when your team makes a presentation. Turn cell phones off.
- Water and beverages are acceptable; but please do not bring, or consume, any food in the class.

## Grading (details on Canvas):

I don’t grade on a curve. There are no make ups. Work Hard, Be Timely, Be Insightful, and the grade will take care of itself.

**Team Presentations:** We will have 12 teams and we will study 13 leaders. About half of the presentations will be of leaders that are generally considered good; the other half will be of certified “bad” leaders. The contrast allows us to better understand the differences between the good and bad leaders. You will choose from a list that will be posted on Canvas.

**Required Texts (Available from Amazon or Norris):**

1. **True North by Bill George.** Without a compass can you really navigate leadership or your life?
2. **The How of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky.** The title says it all.
3. **Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less by Greg McKeown.** We have too many choices. We want everything. Now. What we get is a life full of disillusionment and dissatisfaction. Do you not want to live a life of meaning and purpose?
4. **Developing the Leader within You by John Maxwell.** Clear answers, clear plan of action. Are you ready?
5. **How Good People Make Tough Choices** by Rushworth M. Kidder. While deciding between Right and Right decisions can be tough, why do so many have a tough time between Right and Wrong decisions?
6. **How Will You Measure Your Life?** by Clayton M. Christensen. The ultimate question, perhaps.
7. **Winners Never Cheat** by Jon Huntsman. Are ethics optional? I hope not.
8. A Case pack from Harvard Business Review Online: **Details will be posted on Canvas.** Please bring a hardcopy of the case, to be discussed, to the class. You will need to refer to it from time to time.

**I suggest you whip through the Happiness and Essentialism books over the Spring break.**

**Final Thought:** This course is ultimately a journey in introspection, something that is alien to most of us. We keep thinking that leadership is about leading others, but how can we lead others without first learning to lead ourselves? Furthermore, how can we lead ourselves without understanding who we are and where we want to go?

As scary as this may sound on the surface, is this not the purpose of life? “Know thyself,” the sages say. “Be thine own self be true.” This will be a rewarding journey; of that I am certain. The more you are willing to be honest with yourself and open in class, the more fulfilling it will be.

What are we most scared of? The opinion of others, of being found wanting, of not being good enough? Darkness can only be dispelled by light. Together we must create the conditions that will allow each of us to step forward. Sensitivity and honest feedback can co-exist; from travails and despair, perceived or real, insight will appear.

Even though I do not know any of you, I already know that you are leaders. What kind of a leader you will be – that is yet to be determined. You must take the time and make the effort to get to know each other. Most importantly, you must get to know yourself.

**I am excited to take this journey with you. My job will be to support you when needed, cajole you when necessary, and push you when called for. I hope you will explore and embrace those great capacities that surely lie within you.**

Professor Verinder Syal

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An email from a past student may give you an idea of possibilities that lie in this class.

*Professor Syal,*

*The other day, I was walking around downtown Evanston. I was rushing home from the gym, listening to music with my head down. I glanced up for a moment, only to lock eyes with xxx. We were at opposite ends of the street, still quite a ways from each other, but almost immediately, we both reached to take out our headphones. This made me smile. I learned a lot of things from your class, but I think one of the biggest was this idea of human connection. I'm so glad I*

*was able to meet xxx, and all the other students, because of your class. When he told me he was running off to a consulting coffee chat, I was overwhelmed by a genuine sense of happiness and pride. Since class has ended, I find myself stopping a lot more, stopping to remember to ask about the other person's day, stopping to ask if a friend needs help, stopping to remember that the slow, lethargic barista is probably at the end of his 6 hour shift, and maybe he's feeling a little run down or thinking about all the errands he has to run after. You were always so present in class, in our conversations, seemingly never thinking about anything outside of the discussion. That is such a gift. I am grateful for your time and attention.*

*I spent three hours in Norris today, helping younger friends run cases and answering their questions about the consulting recruiting process. It's trivial, but I feel such a sense of satisfaction now. I'm learning to stop more, and I see the effects. Thank you for reminding me to think about today instead of tomorrow, to face reality and see through my translucent excuses, and to remember that every person has a label, a job, a reaction, a flaw, but also a heart.*

## The Classes

### Leadership, Ethics, & You

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Breaking the Ice       | 11. Presentations #3           |
| 2. Leadership Hypothesis  | 12. Presentations #4           |
| 3. Authentic Leadership   | 13. Culture                    |
| 4. How of Happiness       | 14. Execution + UPL            |
| 5. Essentialism           | 15. Role of Ethics             |
| 6. Vision & Strategies    | 16. Ethics Case                |
| 7. Presentations #1       | 17. Winners Never Cheat        |
| 8. Presentations #2       | 18. How will you measure life? |
| 9. Peeling the Onion      | 19. Shackleton                 |
| 10. Develop Leader Within | 20. True North                 |