

AGS 730: Learning to Lead

Fall 2020

Professor: James Noonan, Ed.D.
Contact Information: jnoonan@salemstate.edu
Room: Sullivan Building, 207-C
Office Hours: TBD and by appointment (via Zoom)



Course Description:

This course introduces educators to the foundational theories and practices of adaptive leadership, with a particular focus on the ways in which teachers transition into formal and informal leadership roles. Emphasis will be placed on how to analyze a school's needs through a leadership lens, how to build collaborative relationships across roles, and how to lead school change processes as part of a learning organization.

Essential Questions:

1. Which habits of mind do we need to adopt as informal and formal school leaders?
2. How do we determine a school's adaptive and technical learning needs?
3. What role(s) do leaders play in creating, managing, and changing learning in schools?
4. What will be our individual challenges in helping our schools learn?

Global Goals:

- To provide course participants with an understanding of the connections between adult learning and school culture, and how to lead organizational learning in schools.
- To develop and nurture the idea that leaders also must be teachers and learners, and that the work of teaching and learning must be carried out in public.
- To deepen course participants' understanding of the connections between how schools learn, how adults learn, and how students learn.
- To grow specific, learnable strategies to identify a school's learning needs and to then begin meeting learning challenges as teachers and leaders go about their essential work.

Learning Objectives:

Participants in this course will:

1. Analyze organizational learning theory and practice, as it appears in the literature and as it applies to our specific school contexts.
2. Use specific research-based leadership tools to *first identify* and *then support* student, adult, and school learning.
3. Use structured conversations (e.g., discussion protocols such as the "Consultancy") to analyze specific dilemmas of practice and refine our thinking and writing.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the concept of organizational culture, especially in the context of specific school settings.
5. Reflect on and make public personal, individual leadership challenges.
6. Use a collaborative inquiry process to identify and analyze a problem of leadership practice and support the learning of other members of the class.

Note on Teaching and Learning in the Time of COVID-19

The language of a syllabus—dates, do’s, don’t’s—is designed to introduce you to a course in ordinary times, but as we know all too well these are *not* ordinary times. Much like last spring, we may find ourselves dealing suddenly with unexpected challenges, whether to our health, the health of people we care about or care for, employment, internet access, childcare, or more. We may also find our course once again interrupted in ways that we cannot yet anticipate.

I am excited to teach and learn with you in this course, and I want to make clear from the outset that *my first priority is your well-being*. If you experience any challenges that affect your work in this course, please communicate with me as soon as possible. I don’t need to know the details, though you may share as much as you want to. I only need to know that you need to discuss alternative arrangements to help you get the most from the course. And if you are experiencing challenges more generally, I am happy to serve as a point of contact to connect you with the resources you need.

Finally, I acknowledge that teaching and learning online can create its own set of challenges for developing a community. Watching videos or talking to each other through video platforms is just not the same as sitting across a table from each other. And while there are comforts working and learning from home, please believe me when I say that I understand that distractions happen and may even happen during synchronous class times. I welcome children, siblings, roommates, pets, or other wandering guests and I understand if/when you need to step away to take care of yourself or others.

These are strange and uncertain times, and we will get through them together.

Course Format (Online, Blended)

Normally, this course is a “hybrid” course, meeting in person five times and conducting the rest of the work online. However, because of ongoing disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the course this year will be held fully online in what is known as a “blended” format. This means that some of the work will happen asynchronously, with everyone working independently and at your own pace, but we will also convene as a group five times throughout the course. Synchronous sessions will be held on Zoom and last approximately two hours, from 5:00-7:00 pm on the dates below. Additional information about Zoom is available on the course website’s [Read Me First Guide](#) under “Synchronous Meeting Etiquette.”

- Tuesday, September 1
- Tuesday, September 8
- Tuesday, September 22
- Tuesday, September 29
- Tuesday, October 13

Crew

During our first session, you will be assigned to a 3-4 person “crew.” As a crew, you will be responsible for the learning of the group and for the learning of each individual member. Your online reflections will be posted to a crew discussion board. Small group conversations during our synchronous sessions will be held in crew. Consider these colleagues your first sounding board and your support network. As a crew, plan to model “[expedition behavior](#)” for each other.

Required Text

This course has one required text. It is available from many online retailers. If you're able, consider buying it from an independent bookstore. [Bookshop.org] [IndieBound]

Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, & Marty Linsky. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and The World*. Harvard Business Press.

Other individual readings will be distributed in-class or digitally on our course website.

Course Requirements for Assessment:

- 10% Preparation for and participation in class/online activities (*obj 1-6*)
- 30% Weekly online reflective writing and responses (*obj 1-2, 4-6*)
- 30% Presentation of leadership dilemmas & initial inquiry project ideas (*obj 3 & 6*)
- 30% Final Written Project (*obj 1-6*)

No final exam will be given; instead, the final project will serve as the final assessment.

Assessment Mechanism by Learning Outcomes Matrix:

	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6
Participation in class activities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weekly reflective online writing	X	X		X	X	X
Presenting a leadership dilemma			X			X
Final written project	X	X	X	X	X	X

Determination of Final Grade:

A = 94-100 %	B+ = 88-89 %	C+ = 78-79 %	F = 69 % or below
A- = 90-93 %	B = 84-87 %	C = 74-77 %	
	B- = 80-83 %	C- = 70-73 %	

A Note on Grades and Grading

While this is a graded course, the focus of your efforts should be on *your learning* (and not just your grade). In our class discussions and your written reflections, I want you to take risks, to be unsure and uncomfortable (and to be okay with that), to challenge what you may have previously thought, to challenge what I think and what the authors we read may think, and to struggle when using new ideas for the first time. As with your work in leadership more broadly, please lean into the places where you may not know the answers rather than feeling that you must always present polished final products to earn a good grade. On the contrary, the extent to which you are able to acknowledge your uncertainty – and the disequilibrium it may bring – is a critical part of learning and leadership. Because I recognize that risk-taking and uncertainty are a part of your learning, it is also central to the way I assess your learning.

Course Website

Our course website can be found on Canvas (<http://elearning.salemstate.edu>) and is accessible using your SSU Navigator username/password. If you are unfamiliar with Canvas, not to worry: we will review the system during our first synchronous session. The course home page contains important information to help you successfully complete the course. We will use weekly [modules](#) to guide our learning. Modules will run from Wednesday to Tuesday, with new modules opening each Wednesday. Each

Wednesday, plan to visit the course module and read the welcome note, which contextualizes our work and gives you a checklist of your assignments for the week.

Course Hashtag (#AGS730)

Increasingly, educators are finding community and opportunities for deeper learning through online social media platforms like Twitter. For this reason, in addition to posting on the course site, I encourage you to post reflections, resources, or questions related to course material on Twitter. Tweet threads that cite and reflect on course readings may be considered a weekly reading reflection, provided they include the hashtag (#AGS730) and you include a link to the thread on Canvas. I will also periodically post reflections or media relevant to the course through my Twitter account ([@jmnoonan](#)). When engaging on social media, please be mindful of the privacy of your classmates and of me by sharing content that does not call out individuals or their personal stories.

Office Hours

Office hours are an opportunity for students to meet one-on-one with me. This time may be used to ask questions and clarify understandings of course concepts, work through connections between course theory and lived experiences, give me feedback on the course, and more. I reserve time before and after our online synchronous sessions for virtual office hours—by Zoom or by phone—and am happy to meet at other times more convenient for you. Please just [send me an email](#) and I'm happy to arrange it.

Equal Access

[Salem State University](#) is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid, or adjustment should speak with the instructor immediately. Students with disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities (Meier Hall, Rm. 102) and obtain appropriate services.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Students must comply with the Covid-19 Health and Safety Protocols for the 2020-2021 Academic Year. This includes wearing masks in class and on campus in public spaces, practicing physical distancing where possible, including in class, engaging in a daily symptom check, notifying Counseling and Health Services at 978-542-6413 if they have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, and not coming to campus or to an in-person class if they have any of the symptoms related to COVID-19, until cleared by the Student Life Wellness Area. Students who have documented disabilities that may prevent them from complying with these policies are required to contact the Disability Services office.

A Note on University Closings

In the event of a university-declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to www.salemstate.edu for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a university-declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course that will be posted on our course website. Students should review the plans and gather all required materials before an emergency is declared.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE (FALL 2020)

- Adjustments may occur as the course progresses (and our collective expertise/interests emerge). Check daily agendas/website for updated information on assignments and readings.
- Grey boxes in the table below represent “fully online” weeks when we will not meet in person

Date	Focus	Readings/Topics	Assignments
Session 1: 9/1	Course Overview How will we organize ourselves as a learning community? What does leadership have to do with learning and development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lavin (2020, April 9), “What is school without a school?”, <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i> • Watch: Intro to Adult Dev video • Breidenstein et al. (2012). Why leadership for adult learning is crucial (Ch. 1) 	video introduction
Session 2: 9/8	Observing: Adaptive vs. Tech. Change What is a technical challenge? What is an adaptive challenge? Why is knowing the difference important for leadership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heifetz et al. (2009). Part 1: Introduction: Purpose & Possibility (Ch. 1-3) • Listen: NPR Throughline, “Fear of Technology” (listen) 	Reflection/response
Session 3: 9/15	Diagnosing/Interpreting: Perennial Paradoxes and the Perils of Misdiagnosis How do you know when you’re facing an adaptive leadership dilemma? How does school culture shape one’s capacity to diagnose and respond to adaptive challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heifetz et al. (2009). Part 2: Diagnose the System (Ch. 4-7) • Evans. (1996). Culture of Resistance (Ch. 3) <p><i>Recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Petriglieri. (2019). Hacking inequality at home, <i>MIT Sloan Management Review</i>. 	Reflection/response List of possible dilemmas
Session 4: 9/22	Intervening: Leading Change (part 1) What does it mean to be a leader in a <i>learning organization</i> ?	Fishbowl: dilemma coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heifetz. (2009). Part 3: Mobilize the System (Ch. 8-12) • Evans. (2010). They’ll Never Understand (Ch. 3) 	Reflection/response
Session 5: 9/29	Intervening: Leading Change (part 2) Who are you as a leader? How does ‘who you are’ affect how you manage challenges, including those related to race?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evans. (1996). The Authentic Leader (Ch. 9) • Benson & Fiarman. (2019). Go Slow to Go Far (Ch. 10) • <i>Skim:</i> Heifetz. (2009). Part 4: See Yourself as the System (Ch. 13-18). 	Reflection/response In-class presentations

Date	Focus	Readings/Topics	Assignments
Session 6: 10/6	Purpose: How do you stay connected to your purpose? How do you create “holding” environments for yourself and others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Petriglieri. (2020). “The Psychology Behind Effective Crisis Leadership,” <i>Harvard Business Review</i> Kessler. (2020). “Helping Your Team Heal,” <i>Harvard Business Review</i> <i>Skim:</i> Heifetz. (2009). Part 5: Deploy Yourself as the System (Ch. 19-22). 	Reflection/response
Session 7: 10/13	Creating Leadership Communities: What have we learned? What do we do with what we’ve learned?	<i>Recommended</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vasquez (2020), “What if we... don’t return to school as usual?” 	Reflection/response In-class presentations Course evaluations
10/20	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final projects due by midnight! 	

Acknowledgments

Some of the statements and policies on this syllabus were adapted from Drs. Megin Charner-Laird, Jacy Ippolito, Roopika Risam, Tony Jack, Chris Buttimer, and Matthew Kraft.

Attribution

This syllabus—its policies, assignments, and sequencing—is by James Noonan and licensed under [Creative Commons BY-NC 4.0 \(Attribution-NonCommercial\)](#). You are free to share and adapt it, with attribution and only for non-commercial purposes.

Brief Overview of Major Assignments

Weekly Online Reflective Writing & Responding to Colleagues (30%):

These small, pass/fail online writing assignments will be in the form of short (~300 words) reflections on the week's readings. I will post discussion questions, but reflections can focus on any aspect of the readings that stand out. Consider new ideas that resonate or that you find dubious. Make personal or professional connections. Whenever possible, use these reflections to "play" with new ideas, techniques, and tools introduced in the course. In addition to posting your own reflections, you are expected to respond to at least two colleagues' posts each week. Reflections are due each Sunday by 11:59pm. In addition to posting your own reflections, you are expected to respond to at least two colleagues' posts each week. Responses are due each Tuesday by noon.

Presentation of Leadership Dilemmas (30%) & Final Written Analyses (30%):

The final project for this course (60% of final grades) will provide you the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course concepts through a multi-step process that will be heavily scaffolded by in-class work.

Briefly, you will:

1. Describe the demographic landscape of your own school setting (e.g., teachers, students, leadership, community, etc.).
2. Identify an array of dilemmas related to teaching and learning in your school/district and distinguish between technical/adaptive elements of the dilemmas.
3. Select one authentic, adaptive dilemma of leadership/change to focus on. Diagnose the dilemma, interpret stakeholders' interests, and ultimately present the full dilemma in the form of a short case study (~1-2 pages). The audience for these dilemmas will be class colleagues.
4. Use the "Consultancy Protocol" to explore the dilemma/case with colleagues in class. Through these consultancies, case dilemmas will be explored, understood, and expanded. Notes should be taken during the presentation and exploration of case dilemmas to assist with the post-consultancy reflection. Ultimately, a ~2-3-page written summary of the protocol discussion and debrief process must be written for inclusion in the final project.
5. Write a final memo (~4 pages) describing: 1) What was learned about the original dilemma; 2) Reflections on the process of "learning publicly," using a protocol, and "tuning" our work together; 3) What next facilitative and professional learning steps will be taken as a result of the work done in class.

The completed final project will be close to 8 double-spaced pages, with 12 pt. font, and 1-inch margins. Further details on the final project will be given in class.

Selected Bibliography:

- Barth, R. S. (2007). Risk. In *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 211–218). Jossey-Bass
- Benson, T. A., & Fiarman, S. E. (2019). *Unconscious Bias in Schools: A Developmental Approach to Exploring Race and Racism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Breidenstein, A., Fahey, K., Glickman, C., & Hensley, F. (2012). *Leading for Powerful Learning: A Guide for Instructional Leaders*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Evans, R. (1996). *The Human Side of School Change: Reform, Resistance, and the Real-Life Problems of Innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Evans, R. (2010). *Seven Secrets of the Savvy School Leader: A Guide to Surviving and Thriving*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2006). Chapter 12: Understanding change. In *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*, (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kessler, D. (2020, July 1). Helping Your Team Heal. *Harvard Business Review*, 53–55.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Petriglieri, G. (2020, April 22). The Psychology Behind Effective Crisis Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership>
- Petriglieri, J. L. (2019). Hacking Inequality at Home. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Retrieved September 6, 2019, from <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/hacking-inequality-at-home/>