

LAR 303 Impact Seminar: Connecting Knowledge to Choices and Actions

Doane College - Lincoln

2017 Winter II Term

Tuesdays 6:00–10:00 pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

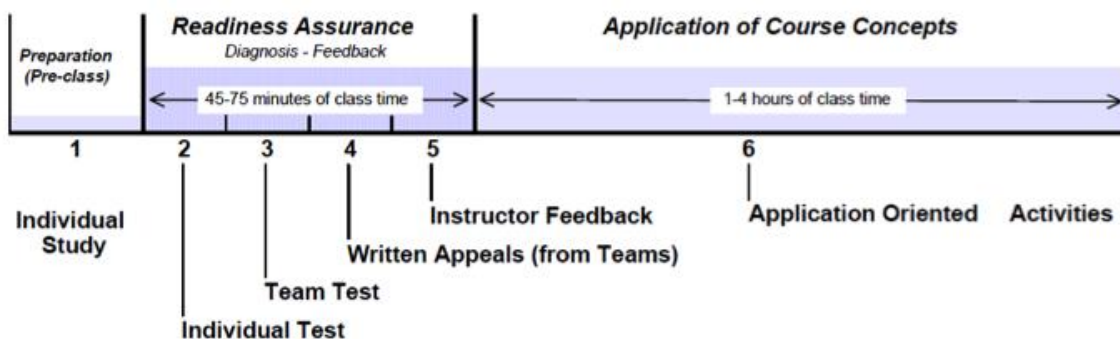
This course will develop students' teamwork and leadership skills to prepare for citizenship or work as they connect theory, practice and experience. Students, drawn from multiple fields of specialized study, will collaboratively analyze a complex real-world problem, develop an empathetic understanding of multiple perspectives needed to comprehend the issue, and propose possible solutions. Students will be engaged through experiential pedagogies selected as appropriate by the LAR 303 instructors. Students will publically present work. Prerequisites: Junior or senior status, and successful completion of LAR 202 or equivalent, 3 credits.

TEACHING STRATEGY

This course is taught using a Team-Based Learning (TBL) pedagogy. TBL is an evidence based collaborative learning teaching strategy designed around units of instruction, known as "modules," that are taught in a three-step cycle, referred to as ***The Readiness Assurance Process (RAP)***: preparation, in-class readiness assurance testing, and application-focused exercise. Each class typically includes one module.

Team-Based Learning Instructional Activity Sequence

(Repeated for each major instructional unit, i.e., 5-7 per course)



Preparation (Pre-class). Students must complete preparatory materials before a class or the start of the module. Materials may be text, visual or other, and set at a level that is appropriate to the students and the course.

Readiness Assurance. Readiness Assurance Test (RAT): Students complete an Individual Readiness Assurance Test (IRAT) in class, consisting of 5 to 20 forced-choice questions. After submitting their individual answers, they take the same test, the Team Readiness Assurance Test (TRAT), with their team. All members of each team share the same TRAT score, and both IRAT and TRAT scores count toward the students' grades.

Appeals. Teams have the opportunity to do a written appeal of a multiple choice question they felt was poorly written, the answer was mistakenly coded, or their answer choice is better. Instructor Feedback: The instructor may review material from the RAT that students still feel are problematic.

This test approach that counts for assessment is important, as it gives students a real incentive to learn materials beforehand, attend classes, and contribute to team discussions. The readiness assurance process holds students accountable for coming to class prepared and working together as a team.

Application of Course Concepts. The remainder of the learning module is taken up with exercises that help students learn how to apply and extend the knowledge that they have pre-learned and tested. Teams are given an appropriate problem or challenge, and must arrive at a consensus to choose a "best" solution out of options provided. Teams then display their answer choice, and the educator facilitates a classroom discussion between teams to explore the topic and the possible answers to the problem. This application phase consists of primarily individual work outside of class and with most (if not all) group work occurring in class.

Four principles underlying Team-Based Learning. Team-Based Learning implementation is based on four underlying principles (Michaelsen & Richards 2005):

1. Groups should be properly formed (e.g. Intellectual talent should be equally distributed among the groups). These teams are fixed for the whole course.
2. Students are accountable for their pre-learning and for working in teams.
3. Team assignments must promote both learning and team development.
4. Students must receive frequent and immediate feedback.

UNDERGRADUATE CORE OUTCOMES (Common to all LAR 303 courses)

Students will work to:

- Construct a reasoned understanding of a problem with evidence of relevant contextual factors, including ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the problem.
- Articulate multiple approaches for solving the problem and propose one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicate a deep comprehension of the problem.
- Engage all participants to foster a constructive team climate.

- Reflect on their progress on the essential learning outcomes, drawing on their specialized studies (majors/minors), foundational areas of knowledge, liberal arts seminars, and experiential activities in order to express their distinctive voices, define their own ethical values, and understand and prepare for their multiple roles in a just society.

COURSE OUTCOMES (Specific to this course)

Students will work to:

- Identify critical characteristics and skills of leaders.
- Identify and refine your concept of leadership.
- Identify and refine your concept of team work.
- Identify your personal leadership style, strengths and developmental needs.
- Demonstrate and apply positive leadership skills and behaviors in practical situations.
- Demonstrate and apply positive team building and group dynamic skills in practical situations.
- Demonstrate ability to influence behavior of others in a group situation.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills around leadership in small groups and teams.

REQUIRED TEXTS (2)

Levi, D. (2016). *Group Dynamics for Teams*. (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-4833-7834-3

Northouse, P.G. (2015). *Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and Practice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-4522-5966-6

GRADING

Your grade for the course will be determined by the following:

Individual Performance (IRATs, Reflections, and Final Reflection) **30%**

Team Performance* (TRATs, Team Exercises, Final Team Project) **70%**

* A **Peer Evaluation Score** is calculated based on a peer evaluation process and this score will be used as a multiplier for adjusting each students' final team performance score. Near the middle and end of the term, each individual will anonymously rate the contributions all of the other members of their Learning Team and submit their evaluation to the instructor. The mid-term evaluation will be for practice and awareness purposes only, however, the end of term evaluation will impact each individual students'

Team Performance Score up or down from the total points earned. Peer evaluation scores will most likely be the average of the sum of the points they receive from the members of your team. Peer evaluations are considered by the instructor as Team Performance Score adjustment *requests* made by team members according to their experience working with all other team members. The instructor reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding Team Performance Score adjustments.

IRATs. An Individual Readiness Assessment Test (IRAT) will be given in class at the beginning of each learning module. This part of your individual performance grade will consist of short true-false or one multiple choice questions that provide the opportunity for peer teaching and enable the instructor to assess whether or not students have a sound understanding of key concepts from the readings. RAT questions will focus on foundational concepts (avoiding picky details) but will be difficult enough to create discussion within teams. Due to the nature of the Readiness Assurance Process (RAP), there is no way to make-up any missed IRATs.

Reflections. As a way to document your journey through this course, you will be submitting a variety of weekly written reflections related to the material we encounter. Due dates and specific information related to each entry will be posted on Blackboard. All reflections must be submitted electronically through Blackboard using the assignment link provided. You should upload your reflection as a saved Word document from your computer into the Bb link provided. For each reflection, you will be asked to respond to different questions regarding leadership/teamwork inventories, team processes, your thoughts on the class, etc.

Reflections will be graded on a **Complete (10 points)** or **Incomplete (0 points)** basis (see below for details).

The *requirements for a complete reflection* are:

- Reflections should *thoughtfully* respond *in depth* to all questions posed
- Submitted as a saved Word document using the Blackboard assignment link provided, by the due date/time
- Completed in a question and answer format (i.e. questions *must be* left in your submitted document)
- You should spend about 25-30 minutes writing your responses (this typically results 500-600 words, excluding the actual reflection questions)
- Some reflections will require you to complete work before you reflect, make sure these tasks are completed

If you fail to meet EACH and EVERY bulleted requirement above, or if any reasonable person would not believe you wrote for 25-30 minutes, you will earn an Incomplete (0 points) for the submitted reflection.

It is suggested that you set up a regular time to write your reflection each week. This time will best serve you if it is scheduled after our class session for that week and before the

due date of the reflection (e.g., between Friday morning and Sunday evening each week). Reflections do not need to be proofread, as grammar and spelling will not be examined.

Final Reflection. The final individual reflection will be a critical reflection of approximately 1500-2500 words covering your experiences during the term.

TRATs. Following each IRAT, students will retake the same test in their teams (TRAT). Members must reach agreement on each test question, thus the discussion required to choose a group answer both serves as an excellent review of the readings and provides the opportunity for peer teaching.

Team Activities. Students will complete a series of group activities intended to demonstrate application of key concepts covered through the Readiness Assurance Process (RAP). The group activities are also intended to promote effective development of group cohesiveness in ways that prepare group members for effective completion of the final team project.

Final Team Project. Each group will have the opportunity to complete a final team project through application of a creative structured problem solving approach in order to solve complex real world issue assigned by the instructor. Teams will also present their solutions publicly at the end of the term.

Course Grades: Percentages assigned to each grade in this class will be as follows:

A+ 100-97%	B+ 89-87%	C+ 79-77%	D+ 69-67%	F 59% and below
A 96-94%	B 86-84%	C 76-74%	D 66-64%	
A- 93-90%	B- 83-80%	C- 73-70%	D- 63-60%	

GENERAL POLICIES

*Due to the structure of this course, there will be **no make-up tests** allowed.*

Late submissions. All other assignments (e.g., Reflections, Team Activities) will be automatically docked 10% of the total points available per day beyond the assigned due date (e.g. a late reflection worth up to 10 points will be docked 1 point per day beyond the due date). Anything submitted after 11:59 p.m. (or as otherwise designated) on the due date will be considered late.

Grades of Incomplete. Incomplete course grades will generally not be allowed. Any exception to this will be determined mutually between instructor and student at the instructor's sole discretion and within Doane College's policy for grades of Incomplete.

Attendance. Students are expected to attend every class meeting and be on time. Any excused absences should be discussed with me beforehand. Most class time will be devoted to group discussions and activities designed to cultivate team development and deepen understanding of topics. Since there is no way to replace that type of learning experience, it is extremely important that you attend every time.

Academic Integrity. It is assumed that all students will maintain the highest degree of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in consequences as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Disability Resources. Students with disabilities substantially limiting a major life activity are eligible for reasonable accommodations in college programs, including this course. Accommodations provide equal opportunity to obtain the same level of achievement while maintaining the standards of excellence of the college. If you have a disability that may interfere with your participation or performance in this course, please meet with me to discuss disability-related accommodations and other special learning needs.

Automatic Failure. A students' disregard for the communication policies, expectations, and/or general policies stated in this Syllabus will be subject to an automatic failure of and dismissal from the course.

Course Planning Guide. A Course Planning Guide is provided for the purpose of encouraging and supporting full accountability of each student to their own performance, as well as the performance of their team. It is subject to change by the instructor, and if it is changed, a revised copy will be provided. Each student is highly encouraged to get organized early on and remain organized all the way through the term.

New York Times Subscription. Doane students now have access to the New York Times for free. I suggest registering for access using the following steps and then using it as an important reference throughout the semester.

- Visit **nytimes.com/grouppass** from a networked **computer on campus**
- Use your **Doane College email address** to create a free NYTimes account
- You have successfully created an account when you see the **START YOUR ACCESS** screen
- Now you can enjoy your subscription to NYTimes, INYT.com, and NYTimes mobile apps by logging onto your account from anywhere, even off campus

Expectations of Students. Since this is a 300 level capstone course, your instructor expects the following from each student.

- Be inquisitive; think deeply and critically
- Use previous knowledge acquired from coursework and life experience when approaching every assignment and decision
- Work should reflect your absolute best effort
- Be professional. Your actions and assignments should impress an employer or boss.
- Be an active participant in all activities and discussions

Instructor Disclaimer. The instructor reserves the right to modify the Syllabus and the Course Planning Guide to meet the educational goals of this class and Doane College.