Servant Leadership, Values and Systems
MGT 4193
Spring 2027

Instructor: Ilya Gokhman, Ph.D.
Office Hours: To Be Announced

Course Overview and Description

The philosophy of Robert K. Greenleaf, outlined in his essays on servant leadership, can be beneficial to students as they embark upon their career and future leadership roles. The concept of servant leadership is often misunderstood and discounted as a viable leadership model for the corporate world. However, Greenleaf emphasized the critical nature of institutions and described himself as a student of organizations. Servant leadership is defined as a philosophy of life and leadership dedicated to the growth of others and committed to building values-driven institutions that contribute to just, caring, and sustainable societies. Greenleaf placed emphasis on the role of values, personal introspection, and the ability of the servant leader to understand the environment in which they operate. He was also concerned with the methods used to achieve objectives. This course will explore both the individual and organizational perspectives of servant leadership.

The course has been designed to enhance students' awareness of their values and the ways in which those values are reflected in their decisions and actions. We will explore the gap and tension between stated individual and organizational values and those that drive behavior. Students will gain a better understanding of the systems in which they operate and learn how to identify points of leverage to effect change. Contemporary concepts of integrating values and system-level thinking will be studied, providing the student with knowledge that may influence their leadership philosophy, style, and strategy

The following concepts are vital to the development of effective leaders and will be integrated into this course:

- Leaders must know how to effectively deal with ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Individual and group performance is highly valued by the institutions of society; therefore, a good leader must be able to excel alone and as part of a team.
- Leaders must possess the ability and discipline to investigate new sources of knowledge, recognize shifts in the current environment, and adapt to address these challenges and opportunities
- Leaders should have the ability to reflect and learn from their previous experiences.
- Leaders should be able to convey and share their previous experiences in such a way that others might gain valuable knowledge and insight from them.

Learning Objectives

This course seeks to expand students' abilities to:

- Understand the concept of servant leadership as articulated by Robert Greenleaf and how to apply these to their personal and professional lives
- Identify their personal values
- Explore how to reflect those values in their actions and behaviors
- Recognize the gap and tension between stated values and actions
- Understand the implications of current actions and decisions on future abilities to exercise influence
- Think systemically
- Understand foresight and its role in leadership
- Work with others to create effective learning environments
- Share insights, new knowledge, and understanding with others in the class
- Develop a personal philosophy for achieving selected life goals and building meaningful relationships
- Develop Moral Courage

Required Course Materials

Book

- *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition). Robert K. Greenleaf. Greenleaf Center, 2002. (Available from at Georgia Tech Bookstore, Greenleaf.org, Amazon.com, VitalSource, and numerous additional new and used book retailers)

Articles and Cases

Reading for this class will include cases and articles for purchase from Harvard Business School Publishing. This coursepack link and the specific readings will be shared with students on the first day of class. The total cost of the coursepack will be under $100.

Additional materials may be handed out in class or distributed via Canvas.

Grading Policy

A – 90% and above
B – 80% to 89%
C – 70% to 79%
D – 60% to 69%
F – Below 60%

In general, grades will not be rounded up. The only exception will be for students who show an exceptional enthusiasm for the course through class engagement.

Grade Distribution

Class Engagement	25%
Individual Assignments, Reflections, and other Deliverables	30%
Leadership Project Group Deliverables	30%
Final Essay/Project	15%

Module Assignments and Deliverables

Each module of this course is focused on a particular topic. Students are expected to read the articles, chapters, and essays assigned in each module. Some modules may also have videos associated with them. Each module will have at least one deliverable. The purpose of these deliverables is to engage students in the learning process, contribute to class discussion, and allow students to demonstrate their grasp of the learning materials. Refer to the course Canvas site to see specific assignments and deadlines.

Deliverables include:

- Individual reflection essays and LMRs
- Completed exercises (handed out in class/posted on Canvas)
- Leadership Development Group presentations and reflections

Late submission will be penalized 20% for each day past the due date.

Learning Materials Reflection (LMR)

The LMR is a critical component of this course. It provides the professor with evidence that the student has read or viewed the assigned learning materials and has articulated their primary takeaways. It also provides the student with a summary of the assigned materials, which will be beneficial for the final essay.

Participation and Engagement

Students are expected to come to class prepared by reading the assigned articles and engaging in class discussion. Class meetings are intended to serve as a forum for exchanging and discussing ideas. Our class will involve lectures, but a key ingredient for creating a learning environment is for students to contribute their insights, reflections, and questions. The expectation of class meetings is that students come ready to engage. Students will be evaluated on their engagement on a four-point scale.

4: Excellent Contribution to Class
3: Meaningful Contribution to Class
2: Present and Attentive during Class
1: Distracted or Distracting during Class
0: Absent or Significantly Distracted or Distracting
* A student may receive a negative score if they grievously violate class norms or expectations

Leadership Project Groups

Students will organize themselves into Leadership Development Groups (LPG). Each LPG will meet periodically during the semester to discuss assignments, prepare for class activities, and deepen their understanding of servant leadership. One of the critical elements of the LPG is to foster a learning environment for other members of the class. Each LPG should assume responsibility to help others in the class grow and develop as servant leaders. A component of the final grade will be based on a peer assessment and feedback from other LPG members.

Final Essay/Project

The final assignment is intended to capture the student's understanding of the course's concepts, as well as their goals and aspirations in leadership, values, and relationships. Students are expected to reference and integrate the appropriate readings, lectures, activities, and guest speakers into their final essay/exam. Additional guidelines will be provided.

Attendance

Class attendance and participation are integral to the class and are considered for grading purposes. Only official institutional absences will be excused (see https://studentlife.gatech.edu/resources/class-attendance).

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment

to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student Well Being Resources

Georgia Tech provides students a variety of service to support mental and physical well being. For information on these services, visit
https://students.gatech.edu/health-wellness-recreation

Student Academic Success Resources

A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success and information about advising can be found at Success at Tech.

> Academic Support: The Office of Learning and Academic Success Initiatives (a division of the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success, Academic Success & Advising) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at success.gatech.edu/tutoring, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283

Responsible Use of AI Tools

You may use AI tools like ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas, clarify concepts, for research, or refine grammar—but not to generate full or partial essays. All work you complete must reflect your own original leadership thinking and original leadership voice.

If you use AI in any part of your assignment, include a brief disclosure (e.g., "Used ChatGPT to outline ideas"). Failure to disclose may be considered academic misconduct.