

Leading Teams Through Change

LDRS 5544, Fall 2021

Course Description

Theory and techniques for guiding tactical, creative, and problem-solving teams through change. Special attention given to the role of social capital and adaption-innovation theories.

Course Instructor

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Course Materials¹

- Franz, T. M. (2012). *Group dynamics and team interventions: Understanding and improving team performance*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-4051-8670-4
- Ferrazzi, K. (2020). *Leading without authority*. New York: Penguin Random House LLC.
- Select readings to be shared via *Canvas* course site.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Analyze problems associated with working in a group or team.
- Describe effective leadership and problem solving in groups and teams.
- Recognize the stages of group development and processes associated with change.
- Specify the role of bonding and bridging social capital in team leadership.
- Describe how individual problem-solving styles affect group interaction.
- Propose practical strategies to improve team performance in the face of change.

Special Needs Requests

If you are a student with special needs or circumstances, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

Academic and Student Support

You can learn about the wealth of academic and student support services available to our students by visiting the pages on the [Virginia Tech Distance Education Support Links site](#).

Student Prerequisite Skills

For your assignment submissions, I expect you to be articulate and clear in your writing, commensurate with graduate level work. In regards to technical competencies, you should be able to:

- Use standard word processing software to write properly-formatted formal papers.
- Navigate web pages using a web browser, such as Firefox, Safari, or Google Chrome.

Tech Support

Student technical support is available through [4Help](#). If you are experiencing technical difficulty accessing materials that you need for this course or a general technical support question please request assistance by filling out the [help form](#) or calling 540-231-HELP. When making a request, please be sure that you provide as much detail (name, problematic URL, operating system, description of problem) as possible to help solve your problem more efficiently. The 4Help service is available 24/7 to reset passwords, monitor system outages, and answer questions on a wide variety of computer related issues. Moreover, you can find answers to many of your questions by reading the [4Help Knowledge Base](#).

¹You can use the University Bookstore website to mail-order your book - <http://www.bookstore.vt.edu>. Also note that the book may be available from other commercial vendors or your local library. Remember, don't wait until the last minute - it may take the book a while to get to you.

Work Load Expectations

One of the challenges students face in distance education is related to time management. As a three-credit-hour course, university standards suggest the workload for this course should total at least 135 hours (9 hours per week). With that in mind, please set aside the time necessary to devote to your learning and completion of course assignments.

Disability Accommodations

Any student in need of special accommodations due to a disability, as recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification. To be eligible for services, documentation of the disability from a qualified professional must be presented to SSD upon request. Academic adjustments may include, but are not limited to: priority registration, auxiliary aids, program and course adjustment, exam modifications, oral or sign language interpreters, note takers/readers, or assistive technology. For more information on disability accommodations, please contact SSD:

Lavery Hall, STE 310, Virginia Tech; 430 Old Turner Street; Blacksburg, VA 24061

Phone: (540) 231-3788 Voice; E-mail: ssd@vt.edu; Website: <http://www.ssd.vt.edu>

Course Administration²

This course is administered online via Virginia Tech's [Canvas course management system](#). The course is entirely Internet-based with no face-to-face contact with the instructor or other students, though there will be opportunities for real-time communication using telephone, chat, or web conferencing software. Unlike some distance learning classes, the pace of this course will be set by the instructor with specified due dates for completion of assignments. Online learning such as this requires basic computer and Internet literacy and a high degree of self-motivation and discipline. People who recognize that they are primarily responsible for their academic success and are confident in their abilities tend to do well in distance-delivered courses. I urge you to take time to consider: [Is online learning right for you?](#) You may also be interested in the [Canvas Accessibility Resources](#).

Course Communication

I will be available to answer your questions:

- **By email**

You may email me if your questions at rrateau@vt.edu.

- **By telephone or videoconference**

I am willing to communicate by telephone or videoconference (e.g., Zoom), but this mode of communication will generally require an appointment.

You will also communicate with your peers during the *Introduce Yourself* and **Discussions** assignments.

General Structure of Learning Modules

This course is divided into 5 modules, each corresponding to a topical unit of study. The general structure of each module is as follows:

- **Introduction:** The purpose of the introduction is to provide pre-study information you can use to recall your prior knowledge as well as to identify critical ideas that will appear in the module.
- **Objectives:** The purpose of presenting objectives is to inform you of what you should be able to do once you have completed the module.
- **Pre-reading questions:** You will have the opportunity to "test" your knowledge of the material in each module before you study the module. You will be presented up to five multiple choice questions on ideas, concepts, principles, facts, and theories that are part of the module. Once

²The syllabus is a guide for the course, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes in assignments and expectations will be announced on Canvas.

you have completed the test, you will receive a score which you can use as an indicator of how well you already understand the main points and details in the module. This will help you identify areas you need to pay particular attention to as you progress through the material.

- **Guiding questions:** The purpose of these pre-study questions is to help you recall what you already know and believe about the topics of the module as well as to pose questions that you should consider as you study.
- **Assigned reading:** The purpose of the reading is to present the basic information, the "facts" if you will, for the module. This material, together with the guidance provided by the interactive activities and the feedback from the formative evaluation, should enable you to successfully master the objectives.
- **Post-reading questions:** You will have available up to five multiple choice questions to test your own understanding of the material you have studied. These questions are linked to elaborated explanations of the answers. As a result, you will be able to enrich your understanding of these ideas by, first, seeing if you understand well enough to choose the correct alternative, and second, by studying the explanation of the answer to ensure your explanation matches the text-based explanation.
- **Interactive activity:** The purpose of activities is to provide an opportunity to interact with one or more of the concepts included in the module. The interactive activity may focus on a single important concept or help you develop an understanding of relationships between concepts.
- **Activities for Assessment:** This section will refer you to the next steps – assignments that will be scored as an assessment of your learning and involvement in the course.
- **Modules:** You will need to complete the existing Module of study before moving on to the next Module.

Honor Code

Virginia Tech's Graduate Honor Code

(<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html>) will be followed and enforced in this class. Violations of the Honor Code include: copying another's work, cheating on exams or assignments, and plagiarism of another's work, whether another student's or something found online.

Activities for Assessment

1. Discussion Forum Posts

As part of each learning module, you must contribute at least two posts to the module's discussion forum. Each reply post must contain at least five clearly and carefully composed sentences and include one minimum citation and its appropriate reference. Additional details and expectations will be shared on the course page in *Canvas*.

2. Blog Reflections

With each module, you will complete an applied learning reflection in the form of a blog entry. (These may build upon the original examples you have offered in the discussion forum posts.) Blog entries should also be connected to the unit of study but will focus more on ONE topic from the unit of study. Blog entries should follow a "what?", "so what?", "now what?" format. Additional details and expectations will be shared in class and on the course page in *Canvas*.

3. Reel Teamwork Paper

During the final weeks of the course, you will watch an assigned movie that highlights many of the concepts addressed in this course. In response to the movie, you will write a paper (of about 1500 words) that discusses the points of the movie that are relevant to this class. This paper will serve as your final exam. Accordingly, you should highlight concepts from all course modules. A detailed rubric will be provided on the course page in *Canvas*.

4. Action Learning Project – Team Project

You will work with others in the class to conduct an in-depth examination of a team that is currently undergoing or has recently undergone change. The selected team must be approved by the instructor. The team review should include interviews with team members, investigation of the team's culture, and analysis of the structure of the team. In order to obtain a complete picture of the team, multiple points of contact will be necessary. (You may not rely on a single source.) Your group should approach this project from the perspective of a consultant group, analyzing the team in light of the concepts learned from this class. The project report should be written in a wiki format (such as Google Docs), so that progress and contributions of each class member can be easily recognized and evaluated. More information about this assignment will be provided in *Canvas*.

5. Peer Evaluation

At the end of the semester, you will anonymously rate the quality of the contributions of the students you work with on the Action Learning Project – Team Project assignment. Your peer evaluation score will be the average of the points you receive from the other members of your team. Evaluations are confidential. Rating criteria will be outlined in advance in a formal peer evaluation form available in *Canvas*.

6. They Said What? - Succinct Recap Phrase

A short, direct comment about the contents of a specific reading or video.

7. Climb Mt. Everest

Climb Mt. Everest in this simulation of team decision making.

All assignments are due by 11:55 PM on the respective date identified in Canvas. Late assignments will have point deductions. No assignments will be accepted after the *last day of class* for the fall semester which is 12-8-21. Dates and assignments are subject to change.

Grading Scale

A	90% - 100%		
B+	87% - 89%	B	80% - 86%
C+	77% - 79%	C	70% - 76%
D+	67% - 69%	D	60% - 66%
F	Below 60%		

Course Outline

Note: Reading materials and resources for each topical unit will be outlined in the Modules function in *Canvas*.

Module #1 – Models of team leadership and problem solving

- Objectives
 - Analyze problems associated with working in a group or team.
 - Describe effective leadership and problem solving in groups and teams.

Module #2 – Stages and processes of group development and change

- Objectives
 - Assess and analyze common contributors to team success.
 - Recognize the stages of group development and processes associated with change.

Module #3 – Role of bonding and bridging social capital in team leadership

- Objectives
 - Specify the role of bonding and bridging social capital in team leadership.
 - Develop a plan for improved team effectiveness through social capital.

Module #4 – Adaption-innovation theory in the context of teams

- Objectives
 - Describe how individual problem-solving styles affect group interaction.
 - Evaluate the merits of different applications of teams in the workplace.

Module #5 Practical strategies for improved team performance

- Objectives
 - Outline team processes that improve problem-solving and decision-making.
 - Propose practical strategies to improve team performance in the face of change.

As a **general rule** your assignments are due by Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday as:

1. Interactive Activity Discussion – due by 2nd **Sunday**
 - a. Reply posts - due by last **Thursday** of the module
2. Reading Reflection Assignment – due by final **Monday** of the module
 - a. Reading Reflection Discussion Assignment – due by final **Monday** of the module
 - b. Reply posts - due by last **Thursday** of the module

3. Module #x Blog Reflection Assignment – due by final **Tuesday** of the module
 - a. Module #x Blog Reflection Discussion Assignment – due by final **Tuesday** of the module
 - b. Reply posts – due by last **Thursday** of the module
4. Succinct Recap Phrase Assignment, They Said What? – due by final **Tuesday** of the module

Virginia Tech Wellness Code

The Virginia Tech Wellness Code:

Virginia Tech is committed to protecting the health and safety of all members of its community. **By participating in this class, all students agree to abide by the Virginia Tech Wellness principles.**

To uphold these principles, in this class you **must** do the following:

- Wear a face covering during class, including as you enter and exit the classroom
- Maintain the designated distancing guidelines of the classroom
- Enter and exit class according to posted signage

If you are exhibiting even the slightest sign of illness, you must not attend an in-person class. Notify me by email and follow the instructions posted at <https://vt.edu/ready/health.html#tips>.