

# MLS 5331: Leadership Communication (Online)

## Fall 2024 – Block I

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**Instructor:** Art A. Aguirre, Ph.D. ([aaaguirre@utep.edu](mailto:aaaguirre@utep.edu))  
Office: Kelly Hall, RM 220  
In Person & Online Office Hours:  
Tuesdays 2:00-4:00pm  
Other days by appointment

Online office hours will be available via a Zoom link you can find on Blackboard. I'm also available on other online platforms like Teams, Facetime, Skype, etc. Just let me know what works for you.

### Course Description:

This Section of Leadership Communications (MLS 5331) is designed for us to study communication expressions, media, and channels used in the process of exercising leadership with multiple audiences and within multiple contexts. Students will develop and analyze messages used in the processes of leadership, including but not limited to, engagement, value-sharing, motivation, and decision-making. We will engage in the study of human communication practices, theories, and questions involving leadership by defining leadership, discussing how leaders connect with others, considering how leaders have a capacity produce change, and becoming aware of the many factors that affect leadership. This course is focused on making sense of how to build better relationships with others in groups at work, home, and out in our community.

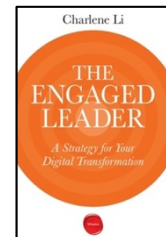
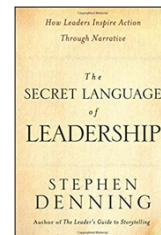
### Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze audiences and contexts in selected communication situations
- Develop messages to an identified audience that motivates change agents, creates context for decision making; inspires organizational members to work toward identified goals
- Identify optimal media for communicating context-specific messages.
- Demonstrate ability to compare competing perspectives and approaches to communication theories.

### Required Text:

Denning, Stephen. (2007) *The Secret Language of Leadership: How Leaders Inspire Action Through Narrative*. San Francisco, CA. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Li, Charlene. (2015). *The Engaged Leader: A Strategy for Your Digital Transformation*. Philadelphia, PA: Wharton.



Access to a computer, a printer, the internet, an active UTEP e-mail address, and an active Blackboard account are necessary. I will be posting additional course materials online for students to access.

**\*\*Please note - This syllabus is a guide and may be changed by the instructor, but notice will be provided. Guest presenters for lecture presentations may be added to the schedule and other tentative additions to the syllabus.\*\***

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **Blackboard Discussions [400 points (50 pts. X 8 weeks)]**

I will be posting a discussion post every week to Blackboard on an issue relating to the readings and/or other relevant topics. You must post your original response by Wednesday at 11:59pm MST, and you must respond to at least TWO classmates on each discussion post by Sunday night at 11:59MST. (NOTE: for week one, your first response is due by Friday). Each original response should address both my prompt and invite a dialogue between yourself and the others. I will be looking for you to contribute with ideas from the readings as well as your personal experience with leadership. Please keep in mind these posts should be well thought out and carefully constructed.

#### **Leadership Demonstration (200 points)**

During the semester, each student will be leading the class in a 10-12-minute leadership facilitation. The session will briefly cover a key concept in leadership communication and engage the class in a demonstration of the concept "in action." I encourage students to be creative with their facilitations and try to choose a task or project that clearly incorporates the leadership communication concepts from the course. These will be video recorded and uploaded to YouTube or any other video hosting platform. I will be giving you more specific instructions via the intro video for the course. Each student will be graded on how well they are able to effectively and ethically communicate to the group, how well they administer the procedures of the task/project, and how well they incorporate concepts into the facilitation.

#### **Final Paper (400 points)**

This 10 to 12-page essay will ask you to synthesize concepts and theories from the course with a case study, personal experience, or other extended example. You will be graded on your ability to elaborate on key issues in leadership communication, demonstrate ethical and effective leadership skills in your responses, and synthesize concepts in communication with real world issues. Students will be graded on the quality of the writing, the depth of critical thinking presented in the essay, and on the overall organization of the essay's main ideas. I ask that you use proper citation formatting (MLA or APA). The primary reason students have lost points for their final paper are for either missing the page count minimum or not meeting the minimum reference requirement.

- 10-12 pages (cover page and reference page are not included in page count)
- 5-8 references (2 must be academic journal articles)

#### **Structure**

- Part 1: Leadership Communication theory/strategy (must come from Denning, Li, and/or Griffin books)
- Part 2: Artifact/Text (What you will be analyzing)
- Part 3: Synthesis (Making sense of the theory/strategy through your artifact/text)

## **Instructor Policies**

### **Coursework**

All assignments and major projects are to be submitted on the due date. I understand that at times, there may be an emergency, and I will consider extreme cases, however, reasons like not being able to access internet, personal travel, or illness should not impede you from planning with me to get work done on time or to figure out what options we have. For written assignments, I expect that students will consult APA, MLA, or Chicago style manuals for the guidelines required for college-level academic writing. I expect that the course's major speaking assignments will be well researched, rehearsed, and prepared with ample time. I will provide specific guidelines for each assignment in the course.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is academic dishonesty and will likely ensure your failing the class. Plagiarism means using another person's ideas, language or other original (not common-knowledge) material without proper acknowledgement of its source. This includes taking information or ideas out of books, from articles, off the Internet, your telephone, from a friend or instructor, and so on. If the ideas or words come from a source or person other than you, you must indicate it in your writing or speech. **Never use another student's work.** A plagiarized assignment will result in failure, and even further disciplinary action in accordance with UTEP policy is possible. Please become familiar with the guidelines outlined by the student handbook, and if there is any question about this topic, please contact me to schedule a meeting.

### **Participation Norms and Expectations**

You are expected to treat the instructor and classmates with respect. This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. *If I find that you consistently disrespect anyone or any group of people in the class, I will speak with you one-on-one to discuss how to remedy the situation. If the problem persists, I will drop you from the course.*

### **Students Accommodations and Support Services**

If you have a documented disability that may influence your performance in this class, please consult with The Center for Accommodations and Support Services. They will help determine appropriate, reasonable accommodations. Following the meeting, please make an appointment me during the first weeks of the class, in person, and provide documentation from Center. I will make any reasonable accommodations necessary to assure your success in this course.

### **Student-Teacher Communication**

I do not use the Blackboard messaging function. I like to respond as quickly as I can to any student questions I may get, so please be sure to use my email for course messaging. And of course, you have the communication options listed above for my online office hours.

### **Etiquette for Online Discussions**

- Always consider your audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment, flaming, or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Do not use inappropriate language, all capital letters, or language short cuts. Online entries should be written in Standard English with edited spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face to face situation.
- Be sure to read everyone's responses before posting. Avoid repetition of what someone else has already said. Add something new to the discussion!
- No credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates' comments carefully and thoughtfully.
- Be sure to post in a timely fashion to receive credit for participation and for the discussion. Pay close attention to the posted deadlines.

### **Other Policies**

Students are expected to know and observe the published deadlines for (a) dropping the course and (b) withdrawing from the course. These deadlines are published on the Academic Calendar, which is available in the my.utep.edu site, the course catalogue, and is in the Dean's Office.

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

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### **Grading Scale**

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

## Course Schedule

Date	Objectives	Activities	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> 8/26	Introductions, syllabus, questions, define "leadership"	Watch course introduction video and RSA video on motivation on BB	Original discussion due by Friday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 2</b> 9/2	The secret language of leadership; Articulating a clear, inspiring goal; The leader's own story	<b>Denning:</b> Introduction, Chapters 1 – 3 "The new science of building great teams – Pentland (on BB)	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 3</b> 9/9	Mastering the audience's story; Cultivating narrative intelligence; Telling truthful stories Foundations of Comm.	<b>Denning:</b> Chapters 4-6	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 4</b> 9/16	Leadership presence; Getting people's attention; Stimulating desire	<b>Denning:</b> Chapters 7-9	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59 <b>Leadership Demo due Sun 9/22 at 11:59pm</b>
<b>Week 5</b> 9/23	Reinforcing with reasons; continuing the conversation	<b>Denning:</b> Chapters 10-11 <b>Mitchell et. al.</b> "Affect and Decision Making"	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 6</b> 9/30	Listen at scale; Share to shape	<b>Li:</b> Intro – Chapter 2	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 7</b> 10/7	Engage to transform; Transform to organize	<b>Li:</b> Chapters 3-4	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59
<b>Week 8</b> 10/14	Understanding the influence of a leaders' emotion	<b>Sy, Cote &amp; Saavedra</b> "Contagious Leader" (BB) Watch TedTalk on "Safety" Aguirre video lecture	Original discussion due by Wednesday at 23:59 Responses due by Sunday at 23:59 <b>Final paper due Sun (10/20) @ 11:59pm</b>

## Basic Grading Rubric for Written Work

Grade	Content	Form	Mechanics
A	Shows outstanding comprehension of material covered; exceptional insight and originality. "This was awesome."	Superbly organized; reflects a logical, coherent flow within paragraphs and major sections. "A joy to read."	Contains no major errors in grammar and form (including spelling, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure, paragraphing).
B	Shows very good coverage of material; "competently done" but not "exceptional." "This was good."	Reflects an overall logical flow, although it could be clearer and more coherent. "A good read."	Contains few major errors in grammar and form
C	Shows adequate coverage of material. "You completed the task."	Suffers from problems in coherence and organization. "I had to work to get through it."	Contains several major errors in grammar and form.
D	Shows some knowledge of material, but coverage is inadequate (incomplete or shallow). "You put forth an effort."	Suffers from major problems in organization and coherence. "I really struggled to follow you."	Contains serious, persistent problems in grammar and form.
F	Coverage of material is unacceptable, indicating little or no comprehension of what is covered.	Problems in organization render the paper virtually incoherent.	Contains numerous major problems in grammar and form.