



**The University of Texas at El Paso  
College of Liberal Arts  
Master of Arts in Leadership Studies  
Program Syllabus**

**Course:** MLS 5151 Professional Skills

**Instructor:** Areli Chacon Silva, Ph.D; [achaconsilva@utep.edu](mailto:achaconsilva@utep.edu); 915.667.6326(cell)

**Office:** 223-B Kelly Hall, UTEP

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-Thursday 11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon or by appointment

\*This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion to meet students' instructional needs and/or to accommodate time constraints.

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**Course Objectives:** Professional Skills (1-0) An exploration of skills, values, and behaviors that contribute to success within the profession. Skills to be developed may include professional report writing, presentations, time management, project management, and others. Discussions of values and behaviors may include such matters as ethics and professionalism among others.

**Course Expectations:** To create and maintain a positive learning environment, you are expected to take responsibility for your learning and play an active role in developing your academic skills and your own leadership development. To this end, you are each expected to aspire to excellence.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism means using someone else's work without giving that person direct credit. This includes using written text from any source or another's ideas. Academic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and a student's integrity. Acts of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious and will be dealt with according to UTEP's policy. Graduate students are expected to be cognizant of and adhere to university policies and professional codes of behavior regarding academic integrity and ethics. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to me or refer to the [UTEP Graduate Catalog](#) or the [APA Manual](#).

**Assignments:** It is expected that out-of-class written assignments will be typed (word processed – 12" font) using APA (6<sup>th</sup> edition) format (Sample paper available at: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008\\_560.pdf](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008_560.pdf)), free of mechanical errors, and adhere to standards of professional writing. You should keep a copy of every assignment. Keep all returned assignments until the end of the semester. Read the directions for assignments carefully, budget your time, and start early on each assignment so you are finished and



have time to **proofread** and **edit** before due dates. Starting early will allow you enough time to take your assignments through multiple drafts and to devote rigorous thought to them.

An assignment that does not adhere to the directions will not receive a passing grade. If you have any questions, or if you do not know what any of the grading criteria refer to, please ask. I am available by E-mail almost anytime between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and about 5:00 p.m. and will respond as quickly as possible. I can and will respond much more quickly to E-mail inquiries than to telephone messages.

**Special Help:** Because this is a graduate-level class, you should possess those communication skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, viewing, and visually representing) and computer skills that are necessary for you to express your thoughts in effective language and also complete and submit those assignments.

**Disabled Student(s):** If you have or believe you have a disability which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the Disabled Student Services Director. You may call 915.747.5148, visit the Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) website at: [www.utep.edu/dsso](http://www.utep.edu/dsso), or the DSSO office in 108 East Union Building. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the DSSO on a yearly basis.

**Performance Assessments:** To be eligible for a course grade, the student must complete **all** the requirements listed below.

- Read the textbooks and other assigned readings. Participate **positively** in all on-line activities.
- **Grading Scale:** A = 90-100% (excellent), B = 80–90% (superior), C = 70-79% (competent), D = 60-69% (below competent), F = 0-59% (failing).  
Grades will be arrived by summing points earned on the following assignments:

<u>Activity or Assignment</u>	<u>Points available</u>
Self-introduction	5
Weekly Online discussion questions	80
Assignments (2) -	
10 page final paper on team leadership (based on a case study)	<u>15</u>
<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>100</b>



## **Activity or Assignment**

### **1) Self- introduction:**

Please introduce yourself by providing the following information about yourself. Feel free to respond to other people's posts with questions and comments!

Name, Where you are from/where you live now, Program of study, Place of employment, Hobbies/interests, Most recent movie you have seen (and say whether or not it was good), Favorite TV show, One sentence definition of leadership, One other interesting thing about yourself. If possible, please post a recent picture as well.

**Points Available: 5 points**

### **2) Discussion Questions**

Based on **Hackman** and your personal experience discuss the following questions:

1. What is an effective team? Share with us a time you created, led, or were part of one. What leads you to evaluate that team as effective? Explain the criteria you use to draw this judgment and how it fit clients' perceptions.
2. Hackman differentiates between "real teams" and "teams in name only." Explain a time you were on real team, how it operated, its successes, and what you learned. How is that different from a "team in name only" experience?
3. Which of the following reasons does Hackman use to explain why managers/policy makers dismiss the benefits of team stability? Discuss your answer.
  - a) They refuse to believe the evidence. Also, it would disrupt trade, limit workers' schedules, and it would be impossible to workout at the international level
  - b) They refuse to believe the evidence. Also, it would disrupt trade, limit workers' schedules, and they believe employees prefer learning from and working with "new" people.
  - c) They refuse to believe the evidence. Also, it would disrupt trade, limit workers' schedules, and enhance initially trigger such productivity that manufacturers would be unable to keep up.
4. Power is the ability to "make" someone do something, say complete a task. Authority exists when a leader compels others to complete a task because they respect the leader, his/her position or rank, their unit, or organization. When you are assigned a leadership



position based on your rank, how do you gain the authority to lead those who report to you? In other words, how do you get your subordinates to respect and follow you out of respect and not only because of your rank?

5. In Chapter 4, Hackman (2002) explains his view about design of work teams. Please share your own experience in the composition of teams and contrast them with Hackman's, as well as the group size. What is the ideal number to keep the team working? What interpersonal skills are vital to get a successful group work experience?

6. "[S]tructural conditions that foster the effectiveness of face-to-face teams are just as critical for virtual teams – but with one caveat: It is much harder to create those appropriate conditions in virtual teams" (p. 131) this is an online-virtual class. Consider Hackman's observation and discuss if you agree or disagree.

7. Hackman (2002) discusses three organizational systems in chapter 5, they are the reward system, the information system, and the educational system. Explain according to your experience how the three systems support needs of work teams. Address with some examples.

Based on **LaFasto and Larson (2001)**, discuss the following questions:

1. Based on chapter 1 (be honest) are you a good team member? What characteristics make you a good or bad team member? Review the Allison and Kate case in page 21. How do you deal with a "Kate" member of your team? Give a personal example on how to be collaborative with people that can, people that cannot, and people that will not....

2. When LaFasto and Larson (2001) asked in their research what behaviors were the most important in a team relationship the outcome were openness and supportiveness. However the greatest challenge in team relationships is contention. Do you agree with this idea? Why? Explain.

3. What are the most common mistakes of a team leader? LaFasto and Larson present six dimensions of team leadership in chapter 4, based on you experience what is the most important dimension? Explain with detail.

4. According to chapter 5, explain what is an organization environment? Discuss Figure 5.1 Three dimensions of Organization Environment. Do you agree: Clarity drives confidence and confidence drives commitment? Why?

Based on **Maxwell (1998)**, discuss the following questions:

1. According to Maxwell (1998), the only thing a title can buy you is a little time- either to increase your influence or to erase it. Share your own idea of *influence* in a team.



2. "Leaders who develop followers hoard power, develop the bottom 20%, need to be needed, treat their people the same for "fairness". Leaders who develop leaders; give power away, develop the top 20%, want to succeed, treat their leaders as individuals for impact." What is your personal experience on developing leaders vs. developing followers?

3. From the first 21 irrefutable laws of Leadership presented by Maxwell (1998) tell us which one represents the key factor for your success working with teams.

Based on **Roberts (1987)**, discuss the following questions:

Roberts' book was originally published in 1985. It became a New York Times best seller with more than half a million copies being printed. Next year will be the book's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. How well do you believe this book can serve leaders today? Why?

Roberts' book contains many enduring tenets of effective leadership. Describe the three most beneficial ideas you discovered in this book. Why do you think these ideas are still valid today? Critical arguments are expected in your answer.

Read **Boylan (1995)**, then review the following video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgWCdqKYY-k> where **General Norman Schwarzkopf** talks about leadership.

Discuss the following questions:

What is the challenge of leadership? What does it take to be a leader? Share your thoughts related to leadership failures General Schwarzkopf explained in the video. Where the rewards of leadership come from? Comment on the old rules and "new rules" of leadership for the XXI century. List what are the most important similarities and differences between Boylan (1995) and General Schwarzkopf?

**Points available: 80 points**

**3) 10 page final paper on team leadership (based on a case study)**

### **Case Study of General Rebecca S. Halstead's Leadership**

This assignment requires you to read the case study provided retired General Rebecca S. Halstead. Your paper should summarize the case and address the following leadership topics: **a) Leadership and Gender** (note: Sex is biological, gender is psychological. However, the more popular term is gender). One theme that surfaces in Gen. Halstead's case is the important role that gender plays in the armed forces. In fact, on January 24, 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that the Pentagon would soon create new opportunities for women to serve in frontline roles during combat. Thus, the



role of gender must now be addressed by the military in a direct fashion. How did General Halstead deal with the issue of gender in the military? What can your group tell us about sexism, discrimination, and how leadership teams in the military can address this complex issue? What can leaders do to help promote a culture supportive of women in the armed forces at the various levels of leadership in the service? **b) Leadership and Broken Organizations/Organizational Units.** As leaders most of us will at some point be asked to rescue or fix a broken team. What can your group tell us about BOTH, fixing a broken team and sustaining a successful team that is being pushed to its limits? Link your comments to General Halstead's experiences and strategies, as well as to the group's collective experiences. Provide information that would be useful to other Soldiers at or near the same rank, with or at similar levels of responsibility and to civilians. **c) Leadership Philosophy.** One theme that surfaces in Gen. Halstead's case is the important role that leadership philosophy played in her success in the armed forces. In fact, Gen. Halstead's personal and leadership philosophies, in many ways the same thing, allowed her to set many "firsts" throughout her career. We have all had colleagues with this type of "can do" spirit and love for what they do. Regrettably, we have also likely encountered colleagues with antithetical spirits and who are a drain on our group. What can your group tell us about BOTH, using or developing one's personal philosophy to excel in the workplace, as well as how can leadership teams transfer such philosophies or attitudes to subordinates? To other units? To the organization? One idea would be for your group to discuss this phenomenon at a level that reflects the sphere of influence you have each experienced or anticipate after your training at USASMA

Link your answers to the case study and to your own experiences dealing with this topic. Your assignment must be in Calibri, using 11 point font, or in Times New Roman, using 12 point font. It must be double-spaced. You need to use at least 3 academic references other than those assigned in class and you must properly cite them in the text and on an APA-style reference page. Your writing must conform to APA style in that you must use formal terms, avoid contractions, and present the information in a clear, easy to read style.

**Points available: 15 points**

*\*\*All assignments will be assessed in relation to the depth and thoughtfulness of your work, the quality of your participation, preparation, and completion of all activities, and the quality and clarity of your writing.*

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience at [achaconsilva@utep.edu](mailto:achaconsilva@utep.edu)

Wishing you the best,

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