

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CEHD PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM
EDUC 802 (SECTION 001) LEADERSHIP SEMINAR (3 CREDITS)
Fall 2004

Instructor: Professor S. David Brazer
Phone: (703) 993-3634
Fax: (703) 993-2013
E-mail: sbrazer@gmu.edu
Website: <http://blackboard.gmu.edu>
Mailing Address:

George Mason University
4400 University Dr., MSN 4B3
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 3:00, Robinson A306

“Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss nature leads, or you shall learn nothing.” (T.H. Huxley as quoted in Bennis, 1989, p. 80)

Schedule Information

Meeting Times: Tuesdays, August 31 – December 7, 4:30 – 7:10 p.m. with the exception of October 12, a university holiday. All students are expected to attend every class session. If you have a personal problem that will prevent you from attending class, please contact me by telephone or e-mail.

Location: West Building, 258

Student Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. demonstrate their understanding of theoretical and practical perspectives on leadership and decision making, with a particular emphasis on education, through discussion and papers;
2. read and evaluate critically leadership and organizational behavior literature;
3. develop their own definition of effective leadership; and
4. write Ph.D.-level papers.

In addition to the student outcomes stated above, I have the following process goals for this course:

Teaching and Learning:

1. Each class will reflect sound academic process to the greatest extent possible. I expect the class to:
 - start and end on time;
 - maintain and follow a written agenda for each session;
 - listen first to understand, then seek to be understood;
 - commit ourselves to developing new perspectives; and
 - work toward common goals in a professional and cordial manner.
2. Every student product will as closely as possible reflect what is expected from scholars. Consequently, students will:
 - write papers that are well constructed and conform to APA requirements;
 - lead discussions in a manner that draws out the best thinking in the class; and
 - participate thoughtfully and actively in discussions led by others.
3. Writing is a vital activity for any scholar. Therefore, I emphasize the process of writing so that students will achieve the following objectives:
 - Students will develop greater confidence in their ability to write expository, analytical and persuasive prose.
 - Students will learn how to review their own work to eliminate errors and maximize clarity.
 - Students will produce written products that will pass muster with dissertation committees.

Classroom Climate:

Our classroom must be a place in which we can try out new ideas and take risks free from the fear of embarrassment. We must be able to look at each other's

thinking critically so that we may all receive valuable feedback that will help us to improve our scholarship. Therefore, I expect a commitment from everyone to:

1. be fully prepared for each class session;
2. respect and care about one another as human beings;
3. work toward a common purpose;
4. persevere through common challenges; and
5. affirm one another's successes and help one another overcome weaknesses.

Course Materials

Required Texts

The following books are required readings:

Allison, G. & Zelikow, P. (1999). *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban missile crisis*. New York: Longman.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. (2001). *Leading with soul*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

March, J.G. (1994). *A primer on decision making: How decisions happen*. New York: The Free Press.

Required Articles on Electronic Reserve

Cohen, M. D., March, J.G., Olsen, J.P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17, pp. 1 – 25.

Langley, A. et al. (1995). Opening up decision making: the view from the black stool. *Organization Science* 6, pp. 260 –279.

Simon, H. (1993). Decision making: rational, nonrational, and irrational. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 29, pp. 329 – 411.

Weick, K.E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, pp. 1 – 19.

Recommended Text

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (most recent edition).

All of the books are available in the GMU bookstore in the Johnson Center.

Electronic reserve articles are available at no charge. To retrieve articles, go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRgen.cgi> and enter either my name or EDUC 802, section 001. You will need the password “people” (no quotation marks, spaces, or caps) to gain access to the material.

Classroom Materials

I expect all students to maintain a binder that contains all reading notes, class notes, student products, and class handouts. The binder will probably need to have at least 2-inch rings.

Outside-of-Class Resources

I expect all students to have access to a personal computer and the ability to use basic word processing, e-mail and Web browser programs. Use of Blackboard, an online educational tool, is required.

Grading

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course. Students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily my judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Classroom participation	30 points
Discussion leadership	10 points
Writing assignments	60 points

Participation

Students are expected to participate actively in the course by engaging in one or more of the following activities: large group discussions; small group discussions; other classroom activities; and online discussions via Blackboard. Ideally, all students would participate actively in all areas to create the richest possible learning environment.

Writing

You are required to turn in three writing assignments during the semester. Students may revise and re-submit graded work to improve their performance. I may re-consider an assignment grade, but I will not negotiate grades with students.

Grading Scale

A	=	95 – 100 percent
A-	=	90 – 94 percent
B+	=	85 – 89 percent
B	=	80 – 84 percent
C	=	75 – 79 percent
F	=	74 percent or below

Absence From Class

Students are expected to attend every class for its entirety. Emergencies and scheduling conflicts sometimes arise, however. If you must be absent from class, I expect you to notify me in advance by telephone or e-mail. If you miss more than one class, you will lose participation points. If you come to class more than 30 minutes late or leave more than 30 minutes early, you will lose participation points. Papers due on a day you are absent **must be submitted via e-mail by the due date.**

Late Work

I expect students to submit their work on time. **I will not accept any work later than 48 hours after it is due.** Any attempt to submit work past the 48-hour deadline will result in no credit for the assignment.

CEHD/GSE Expectations for All Students

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and the Graduate School of Education (GSE) expect that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Reading and Writing Assignments

<u>Book/Article/Paper</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Fullan, Intro – ch. 4	9/7
Fullan, ch. 5 – end	9/14
Allison & Zelikow, Intro. – ch. 2	9/21
Simon, Decision making (e-reserve)	9/21
Allison & Zelikow, chs. 3 – 4	9/28
Allison & Zelikow, chs. 5 – 7	10/5
A Bounded Decision Paper Due	10/12
No class (University holiday causes Monday classes to move to Tuesday. Tuesday classes don't meet.)	10/12
March, <i>A primer</i> , Preface – ch. 1	10/19
March, <i>A primer</i> , chs. 2 – 3	10/26
March, <i>A primer</i> , chs. 4 & 5	11/2
Leadership Hurdles Paper Due	11/9
Weick, Educational organizations as loosely-coupled systems (e-reserve)	11/16
Cohen, March, and Olsen, A garbage can model of organizational choice (e-reserve)	11/16
March, <i>A primer</i> , ch. 6	11/23
Langley, et al. Opening up decision making (e-reserve)	11/30
Your Definition of Effective Leadership Paper Due	12/7
Bolman & Deal, <i>Leading with soul</i> , whole book	12/7

All writing assignments are to be submitted as Word or Word Perfect attachments via e-mail. Assignments must be time stamped prior to midnight on the date due if they are to be considered submitted on time. If you have a problem meeting this requirement, please let me know.

Assignment # 1—A Bounded Decision (20 points)
Due Tuesday, October 12

Rationale

The purpose of this paper is for you to put the concept of bounded rationality to use as a tool for examining an organizational decision you have experienced. Although some description is required, keep in mind that the paper is intended to be primarily analytical. Your thesis must be analytical and must be demonstrated through the body of your paper.

Specific Requirements

1. Introduce the paper by briefly describing a decision made in your school or organization that had an impact—either positive or negative. Your thesis must explain your perspective on how the rationality (or reasonableness) of that decision was limited under the circumstances.
2. In the body of the paper, provide enough narrative description of the decision for the reader to understand its most important features. **DO NOT GO INTO EXCESSIVE DETAIL.** Subsequent to the description, demonstrate the validity of your thesis by using bounded rationality and related concepts (from Allison and Zelikow, the Simon paper, and our classroom discussions of organizational perspectives thus far) to construct logical arguments that show the limitations of human reasoning in the decision-making process. Your task is to demonstrate how the concept of bounded rationality helps to explain why the decision you chose came out as it did. For example, one could argue (not without controversy) that President Bush chose to go to war in Iraq based on false or exaggerated intelligence reports of that country's possession and deployment of weapons of mass destruction. The President's rationality in this decision was bounded or limited by the quality of information he received.
3. Conclude by re-stating your thesis and explaining how decision makers and organizations might cope with or mitigate the effects of bounded rationality.

Your paper should not exceed six pages.

A BOUNDED DECISION ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<p><u>Thesis (6 points)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.</p>	<p>The thesis is clear and analytical. It deals directly with the concept of bounded rationality and requires demonstration through coherent arguments and support based on what the author has read, class sessions, the author's experience, or sound reasoning.</p>	<p>The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. It may be more descriptive than analytical. The thesis may not include bounded rationality.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Developing Arguments (6 points)</u> The author must develop arguments in support of the thesis. These should be both logical and supported by evidence from published material, class sessions, or personal experience.</p>	<p>The author presents arguments that are clear, logical, and easy to follow. Each argument relates directly to the thesis. Any debatable assertions are supported with evidence. Quotations or citations may be used judiciously to make especially difficult or powerful points.</p>	<p>Arguments are presented, but they may be unrelated to one another and/or to the thesis. Assertions and opinions are left largely unsupported.</p>	<p>Clear arguments in support of or related to the thesis are not made.</p>
<p><u>Conclusions (6 points)</u> It is important to conclude your paper in a manner that is persuasive to the reader and that leads to broader thinking on the topic.</p>	<p>The conclusions drawn at the end follow logically from the body of the paper, and begin with a re-worded statement of the thesis. The author explains how a leader could mitigate or better cope with the effects of bounded rationality in the decision examined.</p>	<p>Conclusions are related to the thesis but are not compelling. The conclusions may not consistently follow from the body of the paper. Mitigation and coping are not adequately discussed.</p>	<p>The conclusions drawn do not appear to be related to the thesis or supported by logical arguments.</p>
<p><u>Grammar and Mechanics (2 points)</u> Students use APA style and standard English.</p>	<p>The paper is nearly free of errors.</p>	<p>The paper has some errors.</p>	<p>The paper has numerous errors.</p>

Assignment # 2—Leadership Hurdles (20 points)
Due Tuesday, November 9

Rationale

The purpose of this assignment is to help you think about how to adapt a complex organization in ways that mitigate problems created by non-rational responses to situations. The results are intended to be greater insight into how problems occur in complex organizations and practical experience solving organizational problems.

The Problem

You have just been hired as a special consultant to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to help in a re-organization effort following the Columbia re-entry disintegration. You are required to demonstrate that you have analyzed NASA's organizational problems sufficiently that the probability of another space shuttle disaster can be greatly reduced if your advice is followed.

Your Task

Write a paper that explains the steps you advise NASA to take over the short- and long-term to address organizational pathologies at the micro (mission management) and macro (overall organization) levels in NASA. To complete this task successfully, you are required to:

1. Read the series of articles from the *Washington Post* and *Atlantic Monthly* to give you background information you need to analyze the situation at NASA.
2. Write a unifying thesis that captures the main arguments you wish to make.
3. Use **two or more** analytical perspectives from your reading and/or from class to explain how it is possible that NASA did not learn sufficiently from the Challenger disaster in 1986 to avoid the Columbia disaster in 2002. Analyze possible organizational failures (at both the micro and macro levels) that occurred using the perspectives you have chosen. Define the organizational problem or problems as you perceive them.
4. Explain whether or not and how organizational failures could be prevented or mitigated in the future under the unusually high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty that occur during space shuttle missions. Be sure to give a realistic perspective on the ability to remedy the organization's past failures.
5. Conclude with a re-statement of the thesis and major arguments and explain the challenges or problems that remain for the future.

You are not expected to understand and explain the intricacies of space shuttle technology. The situation presented is merely a vehicle for you to demonstrate your understanding of how organizational leaders might analyze organizational weaknesses.

Your paper should not exceed ten pages.

LEADERSHIP HURDLES ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<p><u>Thesis (6 points)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.</p>	<p>The thesis is analytical and encompasses all aspects of the analysis and remedies presented in the paper.</p>	<p>The thesis is somewhat analytical, is not inclusive enough. Alternatively, the thesis may be comprehensive, but is insufficiently analytical.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Analyses and Explanations (8 points)</u> The author must provide analyses and explanations that support the persuasively. Citations must be included as appropriate. Arguments must be logical.</p>	<p>Each point in the assignment is well covered. Analysis and remedies provided are logical and persuasive. Each paragraph leads to the next or follows from the one before, and each paragraph relates directly to the thesis. Organizational perspectives from readings and/or from class are used appropriately and persuasively.</p>	<p>Connections among points made are not as clear as they could be. There are holes in the reasoning. Organizational perspectives are presented, but they may be somewhat inaccurate or they are not used in coherent arguments to support the thesis.</p>	<p>Clear arguments in support of or related to the thesis are not made.</p>
<p><u>Conclusions (4 points)</u> It is important to conclude your paper in a manner that is persuasive to the reader and that leads to broader thinking on the topic.</p>	<p>The conclusions drawn at the end follow obviously from the body of the paper and begin with a re-worded statement of the thesis. Remaining challenges or problems are clearly identified.</p>	<p>Conclusions are related to the thesis but are not compelling. The conclusions may not consistently follow from the body of the paper. Remaining challenges or problems are not clear.</p>	<p>The conclusions drawn do not appear to be related to the thesis or the body of the paper.</p>
<p><u>Grammar and Mechanics (2 points)</u> Students use APA style and standard English.</p>	<p>The paper is nearly free of errors.</p>	<p>The paper has some errors.</p>	<p>The paper has numerous errors.</p>

Assignment # 3—Your Definition of Effective Leadership (20 points)
Due Tuesday, December 7

Rationale

Leadership is, in many ways, a difficult concept to pin down. There is a great deal of literature that advocates for certain types of leadership, but there is very little truly research-based literature on leadership. One reason may be that leadership remains poorly conceptualized. The main purpose of your final paper is for you to draw upon concepts we have wrestled with in class to come up with your own definition of effective leadership.

Your Task

In an effort to draw together what you have learned about decision making in this course with your personal definition of effective leadership, this final paper requires you to be both reflective and analytical. Your task is to justify your definition of effective leadership using **more than one** analytical perspective presented through readings and class activities. As always, your paper must have a clear thesis and must use appropriate citations in APA format.

1. In no more than 10 pages, write a paper that describes your definition of an effective leader and explains persuasively why this definition is valid. You must construct arguments in favor of this definition that use your own experience, readings, and/or classroom experiences for support. You must be explicit about the sources of the arguments (e.g., if literature is a source, you must provide the appropriate citation).
2. In addition to re-stating your thesis, your conclusion must include a discussion of the gaps in your understanding about leadership and how you might develop a deeper understanding in the future.

YOUR DEFINITION OF AN EFFECTIVE LEADER ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<u>Thesis (3 points)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.	The thesis is clear and analytical. It deals directly with your definition of an effective leader and requires demonstration through coherent arguments and support based on what the author has read, class sessions, and/or the author's experience.	The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. It may be more descriptive than analytical. The thesis may not relate directly to the author's definition of effective leadership.	The paper lacks a clear thesis.
<u>Developing Arguments (8 points)</u> The author must develop arguments in support of the thesis. These should be both logical and supported by evidence from published material, class sessions, and/or personal experience.	The author presents arguments that are clear, logical, and easy to follow. Each argument relates directly to the thesis. Any debatable assertions are supported with evidence. Quotations or citations may be used judiciously to make especially difficult or powerful points.	Arguments are presented, but they may be unrelated to one another and/or to the thesis. Assertions and opinions are left largely unsupported.	Clear arguments in support of or related to the thesis are not made.
<u>Conclusions (7 points)</u> It is important to conclude your paper in a manner that is persuasive to the reader and that leads to broader thinking on the topic.	The conclusions drawn at the end are clear, logical, and reflective. The author is thoughtful about additional study of leadership that ought to be pursued for a fuller understanding.	Conclusions are related to the thesis but are not compelling. The conclusions may not consistently follow from the body of the paper. The conclusion section may not be sufficiently reflective.	The conclusions drawn do not appear to be related to the thesis or supported by logical arguments.
<u>Grammar and Mechanics (2 point)</u> Students use APA style and standard English.	The paper is nearly free of errors.	The paper has some errors.	The paper has numerous errors.