

USC Marshall School of Business

MOR-599: LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

Fall 2021

3 Units, Thursdays, 2:00-4:50pm, JKP 112

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the world continues to change, aspiring executives, consultants, entrepreneurs, investors, and others are all asking the same questions: “How can I become and stay relevant?” “What is my purpose?” “How can I recruit others to join me in the pursuit of goals that matter?” “What roles do new technologies play in all of this?” The aim of this class is to help you answer these questions while developing a personal roadmap for achieving success as an organizational and societal leader.

We live in what is perhaps the most exciting period in human history. Computers, smartphones, and AI-driven algorithms are reshaping the world, presenting major opportunities – but also challenges – for leaders as they seek to inspire and influence others. This course will explore both opportunities and challenges in depth, using a combination of intellectual and experiential learning methods designed to help you master the art and science of leadership in the 21st Century.

Although courses on technology have become popular in leading business schools, they typically fail to address how new technologies are shaping human psychology and, likewise, how psychology shapes workers’ adoption and use of new technologies. In order to attract, motivate, and retain human capital in a competitive environment, today’s leaders must develop a stronger understanding of both psychology and technology. Toward that end, we will examine scientific findings and best practices on topics such as: How is technology shaping leaders’ ability to manage their time? Which tools should executives use to most effectively coordinate and manage interpersonal interactions? How is human-machine interaction shaping factors such as psychological safety, individual/group identity, and organizational culture?

This course includes discussion of the latest research findings (in many cases, before they have been widely disseminated), experiential learning, conversations with guest speakers, and assignments to increase leadership effectiveness. You will also have the chance to develop a personal following on a platform of your choosing (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, Clubhouse, Substack, Instagram, Reddit, email lists, blogs, etc.) as well as support your fellow students’ efforts to do the same.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is not for everyone. We will be diving headfirst into a world of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity), so listen to yourself carefully and avoid the class if you feel the

need to avoid feelings of uncertainty and anxiety these topics might foster. Note that the course requires a high level of intellectual engagement, critical thinking, and reading, so take this into consideration as well when choosing your schedule of classes.

At the end of the day, successful leaders do four things: 1) connect with a sense of purpose and vision, 2) build and maintain a talented following, 3) inspire and motivate others to take collective action toward shared goals, and 4) manage the self (e.g., ego, time, decision making, strategic use of tools). Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Name the purpose and principles that guide you as a leader.
- Analyze the usefulness (and potential costs) of new technologies for your leadership.
- Use technology to build your network and reputation in a particular organization or industry.
- Choose the best technologies to motive and lead teams and organizations toward shared goals.
- Manage your own technology use wisely in order to enhance your work performance and protect your reputation.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Materials

- Book: *The Future is Faster Than You Think: How Converging Technologies Are Transforming Business, Industries, and Our Lives*, Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler, 2020 (may be purchased online or from the USC bookstore)
- Course Reader (purchase from the USC bookstore)

Course Notes: Additional class information is available through your Blackboard account.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the Blackboard Course Pages, please contact the Marshall HelpDesk at 213-740-3000 (option 2) or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu. Alternatively, (213) 740-5555 will get you the USC ITS Help Desk.

GRADING

Grading will consist of the following:

<u>Components</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (4 x 25 pts each)	100	20%
GROUP PROJECT	125	25%
INDIVIDUAL PROJECT	125	25%
CLASS PARTICIPATION	60	12%
FINAL EXAM	<u>90</u>	<u>18%</u>
TOTAL	500	100.0%

HOMEWORK

Writing Assignments (20%). Four individual 1-2 page writing assignments responding to assigned readings, exercises, and videos will be due throughout the semester. These assignments are an integral part of the course and designed to help you explore the content of the course in the context of your own plans, objectives, values, and experiences. Previous experience suggests that, if taken seriously, these assignments can elevate your leadership. The assignments are due on Blackboard before the start of the class for which they are assigned. Late papers (including those turned in after the start of class) will not be accepted. The schedule (and descriptions) of the assignments is listed in this syllabus.

GROUP PROJECT

Group Project (25%). Because of the fast pace of change in today's world, much of what we must learn as leaders cannot be found in the "textbooks." Learning by identifying key success stories and sources of information is paramount to staying up-to-date on best practices. This group project will involve selecting an individual who has succeeded in a leadership-related task through the use of a particular technology. Technologies may include software for building a network or raising money (e.g., Salesforce, HubSpot, Airtable), productivity or coordination apps (e.g., Notion, Slack, Trello, Discord), social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Clubhouse, Snapchat), newsletter services (e.g., Substack, Mailchimp, AWeber, Constant Contact), or blockchain applications (e.g., Ethereum, NFTs) to name a few. You may wish to use the group project to build relationships and expertise in sectors or industries where you want to work, as well as to learn more about interesting people and how they go about using technology to their advantage.

Group projects are due before the beginning of class on December 2. Late projects will not be graded and will earn zero credit. *Note: you may also wish to use your group as a study team throughout the semester, meeting to discuss case readings, compare notes, study for the final, etc. More details on the assignment are shown below:

- You will form a group consisting of 5 people. No later than Sep. 9, please let me know which leader/technology your group has chosen as its focus for the project. Do so by emailing me with the person's name and why he/she would be a good person to study.
- Your assignment is to do "field research" on how successful leaders use technology to achieve their goals, as a way of seeing how the material from the class is, or could be, put into use. Your "subject" should be someone who is relatively early in his or her career, perhaps 5-15 years down the road from where you are at, currently. Ideally, the person will be someone that you can interview in person and, even better, perhaps observe in action. If you have questions about whether or not a specific individual would be appropriate, please feel free to ask me after class or via email.
- In thinking about how to write the analysis and do the project, you can (but don't have to) use one or all of the organizing themes of the course as a guide. I'm flexible as to how the paper is written, but it should cover the following topics: 1) what is the person's purpose as a leader (and how did this purpose emerge?), 2) what goal, outcome, or set of outcomes did the leader pursue successfully, 3) how did the leader use the technology to achieve their goals, and 4) provide a detailed set of instructions on how to use the technology that you can share with the

rest of the class. In section 4, include potential downsides of the technology and/or warnings for what to avoid.

- Final written projects are due at the beginning of class on Dec 2.
- You must be prepared to present your findings to the class in an 8-10-minute presentation on Dec 2. Be creative in how you choose to present the lessons you learned (multimedia, short video clips, reenactments, etc.).
- The paper will be worth 70 points and graded based on the quality of description of the individual's use of technology and analysis of the costs and benefits of using the technology as a tool for leadership. The presentation will be worth 30 points and will be judged on the quality of analysis, clarity of presentation, and usefulness of the content to the rest of the class.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

Individual Project (25%). The individual project will be described in greater detail in class, but will include the following key components: 1) identify a purpose you would like to pursue, along with the people you will need to influence, 2) describe the reputation you will need to build in order to achieve this purpose, 3) identify a way to build this reputation along with a following (e.g., social media, blog, podcast, newsletter, etc.), 4) develop a strategy and present it to the class, and 5) write a 2-5 paper describing what you have learned. The paper is due at the beginning of class on 11/18.

FINAL EXAM

Final (18%). The final exam will be in class and will be closed book and closed notes. It will include both multiple choice and short essay questions. In order to be prepared, do all the assigned readings on time and keep notes on the readings and class discussions. The goal is for you to create a valuable set of notes you can return to again and again throughout your career.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class Participation (12%). You will only get out of this course as much as you put into it. Your class participation grade will reflect both class attendance and the quality of your involvement in the class's activities and discussions. Near-perfect, on-time attendance is expected. If you must miss a class session during the semester, please inform me ahead of time and explain the reason you must miss. Otherwise, you are expected to come to each class prepared for discussion, having completed that day's required reading and prepared insightful comments you plan to make in class. Since I frequently cold call, please avoid embarrassment by telling me before class if you are not prepared. For further guidelines on class participation, see Appendix II.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURSE EVALUATIONS

The student course evaluations are valuable. This course is continuously improved, based on feedback from students and instructor observations.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week & Date	Topics & Learning Objectives	Readings & Pre-Work	Assignments
Week 1 8/26	Introduction to the class; Looking back; origins of humanity and the history of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the course syllabus • Read “The new leadership playbook for the digital age: Reimagining what it takes to lead” 	Complete short online survey after reading “new leadership playbook” article (I will send link via email).
Week 2 9/2	Looking forward; the future of humanity and the critical role leaders will play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapter 1 • Watch video (28 min): The future of humanity 	
Week 3 9/9	Aligning with the present; Challenges and opportunities; Wicked problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapters 2-3 	Assignment #1 List and explain the ten most important skills you believe leaders will need in the coming 5-10 years. Include any sources that you use.
Week 4 9/16	Developing your leadership purpose and principles; Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “How an accounting firm convinced its employees they could change the world” • Read “Igniting individual purpose in times of crisis” 	Assignment #2 Of the nine types of purpose discussed in “Igniting individual purpose”, which 3 are most important to you? How do you plan to pursue them throughout your career?
Week 5 9/23	New power; hierarchies, technology, and networks; Systems thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Sadiq Gillani’s airline career takes off: Strategy in action” • Read “Understanding new power” (2014), <i>Harvard Business Review</i>. 	
Week 6 9/30	Managing the self; Personal habits and technology; Deep work, focus; Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapter 4 • Watch video (14 min): Cal Newport, Quit social media 	Assignment #3 List and describe ten strategies (habits, technologies, apps) you use for managing your time and productivity. After each strategy/tech reflect on the degree to which it is adaptive or maladaptive.
Week 7 10/7	Leadership ethics; AI Bias; Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapters 5 • Read “Using algorithms to understand the biases in your organization” • Read “Privacy matters... or does it: Algorithms, rationalization, and the erosion of concern for privacy” (provided on Blackboard) 	

Week 8 10/14	*No class; Fall Recess		
Week 9 10/21	Leading teams; Human-robot collaboration; Virtual assistants; WFH; Coordination tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapters 6-8 • Read “The implications of working without an office: Early research on how people are — and aren’t — adapting and how leaders can help” 	
Week 10 10/28	Resilience; Emotional intelligence; Mental health models; Organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Overloaded circuits” • Read “How resilience works” 	
Week 11 11/4	Algorithms and decision making; Psychological perspectives; Tech sentiment, identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapters 9-11 	Assignment #4 What are three especially inspiring ideas you came across in the first 11 chapters of the Diamandis & Kotler book? What are three dangers associated with new technologies discussed in the book that stand out to you?
Week 12 11/11	Building and maintaining your network; Leading innovation; Ambidextrous leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapters 12-13 	
Week 13 11/18	New findings in the psychology of technology; Gamification, VR, AR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Diamandis & Kotler, Chapter 14 	Individual paper due
Week 14 11/25	*No class; Holiday Thanksgiving		
Week 15 12/2	Group presentations	None	Group paper due
Final TBD	*Final Exam		

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255 suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298 equity.usc.edu, or titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710 uscsa.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, or emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 dps.usc.edu, ability@usc.edu.

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (dsp.usc.edu) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, the USC Emergency Information web site (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other information, including electronic means by which instructors will conduct class using a combination of USC's Blackboard learning management system (blackboard.usc.edu), teleconferencing, and other technologies.

International Student Language Support

The USC American Language Institute provides English language instruction, assessment, and resources to support the academic and professional success of non-native speakers of English pursuing degrees at USC. dornsife.usc.edu/ali

Appendix I

CLASS PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Class participation is an extremely important part of the learning experience in this course as the richness of the learning experience will be largely dependent upon the degree of preparation by *all* students prior to each class session.

A course that incorporates the frequent use of case analyses to illustrate the practical application of concepts and practices requires the student to diligently and thoroughly prepare cases and actively offer the results of the analyses and conclusions derived as well as recommendations during each class session. My expectation and that of your classmates are that you are prepared for *all* classes and will actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to class discussions.

In-class participation is also a critical part of this course's learning experience. Cold calling will take place to encourage active participation and to gain multiple perspectives and points of view, thus lending itself to the richness of the learning experience. In-class participation grading will be based on students' demonstrated willingness to participate and the quality of the comments expressed, rather than quantity. While some students are far more comfortable than others with class participation, *all* students should make an effort to contribute meaningfully.

Students will offer their opinions in group settings many times in their careers; thus, class participation serves to prepare students for this business experience.

The evaluating of in-class participation is based on the following:

- *Relevance* – Does the comment or question meaningfully bear on the subject at hand? Irrelevant or inappropriate comments can detract from the learning experience.
- *Responsiveness* – Does the comment or question connect to what someone else has said?
- *Analysis* – Is the reasoning employed consistent and logical? Has data from course materials, personal experience, or general knowledge been employed to support the assertions/findings?
- *Value* – Does the contribution further the understanding of the issues at hand?
- *Clarity* – Is the comment concise and understandable?

During class sessions, I frequently assume the role of a facilitator to encourage a discussion that includes perspectives from a variety of viewpoints and, secondly, to help pull together prevailing analyses and recommendations. The direction and quality of a discussion is the *collective responsibility of the class*.

For each in-class session two (2) points will be awarded to a student for relevant and meaningful participation, one (1) point for modest contributions to the class and zero (0) points for no participation or absence.

To underscore the importance of participation, 15 percent of the course grade is allocated to class participation.

Class Participation—Behavioral Anchor Rating Scale:

Excellent Performance

- Initiates information relative to topics discussed
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of assignment content
- Clarifies points that others may not understand
- Shares personal experiences or opinions related to topic
- Offers relevant / succinct input to class
- Actively participates in class exercises
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, evaluate & synthesize course material.
- Demonstrates willingness to attempt to answer unpopular questions
- Builds on other students' contributions

Average Performance

- Participates in group discussions when asked
- Demonstrates knowledge of course material
- Offers clear, concise, “good” information on class assignments
- Offers input, but tends to reiterate the intuitive
- Attends class regularly

Unacceptable Performance

- Fails to participate even when directly asked
- Gives no input to discussions
- Does not demonstrate knowledge of the readings
- Shows up to class: does nothing
- Distracts group / class
- Irrelevant discussion