

HDO 382 Approaches to Leadership

Human Dimensions of Organizations
University of Texas at Austin

Instructor: Professor Jeremi Suri

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Spring 2024

OBJECTIVES, OVERVIEW, AND COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This advanced course for students in the HDO program will examine how leaders formulate coherent and effective strategies for policy-making in a complex and unpredictable environment. Readings and discussions will concentrate on planning, organization, persuasion, and adaptation to changing local, national, and international pressures. The course will focus on case studies in leadership, as well as broader studies of strategic decision-making in the modern world. Students should gain a greater appreciation for what it means to be an effective strategist, policy-maker, and agenda-setter. They should also acquire a certain humility about the difficulties involved with fulfilling these often inhuman tasks.

STUDENT COURSEWORK RESPONSIBILITIES

Reading Assignments:

This course includes a significant, but reasonable reading assignment each week (usually between 200 and 250 pages.) Students are expected to read all of the assigned materials carefully and critically *before each seminar meeting*. Focus on each author's key arguments and how they relate to larger concerns and debates – how is the author trying to change the way we think about strategy, leadership, and decision-making? Interrogate narrative strategies – how does the author assemble his or her argument for the purpose of convincing the reader? Pay close attention to sources – how does the author “prove” his or her point? Most important, as the semester progresses think about how the assigned readings relate to one another – how is each author responding to other leaders and observers?

“This is Democracy” Podcast Assignments:

Most weeks include an assigned podcast episode that is designed to supplement the assigned readings. The podcasts offer a further discussion of the week's theme, and an application to contemporary leadership challenges. The podcast episodes are available for free on [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and the [Web](#).

You can listen to new episodes of the podcast each week on the same platforms.

Assigned Books:

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). **Be sure to buy this exact version!**

Leuchtenburg, William. *Herbert Hoover*.

Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*.

Marton, Kati. *The Chancellor: The Remarkable Odyssey of Angela Merkel*.

Obama, Michelle. *Becoming*.

Rauchway, Eric. *Why the New Deal Matters*.

Suri, Jeremi. *Civil War By Other Means: America's Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy*.

Suri, Jeremi. *The Impossible Presidency: The Rise and Fall of America's Highest Office*.

Weekly Response Essays:

Each week by **9:AM** on the **Thursday before class**, all students should post a short response essay on the course website (available through UT's Canvas Course Management Website): <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>.

This response essay should include 3 basic paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the key arguments in the readings and their significance. The second paragraph should analyze how the week's readings relate to other course topics and course discussions. The third paragraph should offer the student's critical assessment of the week's readings: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention? What kind of new activities do the readings inspire?

Students are expected to read each other's weekly essays *before class*. They are also expected to comment substantively on each other's essays. The weekly essays and comments will provide a starting point for each week's class discussion.

Final Project – Group Leadership Briefings:

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to become strategic leaders, ready to advise and lead large global organizations. This difficult task requires analytical sophistication, historical knowledge, and current awareness. It calls for effective teamwork and persuasion of principals.

With this core purpose in mind, students will be responsible at the end of the semester for preparing a leadership briefing on the future of American national economic and security policy. Here are the guidelines:

1. Students will work in teams, arranged by the middle of the semester.

2. Each team will prepare a strictly **15-minute presentation**.
3. The presentation will address the **president of the United States**.
4. The presentation will answer the following questions:
 - a. **What are the strategic priorities for American prosperity during the next 4 years?**
 - b. How can the president bring a deeply divided country together and encourage more cooperation and respect across various divisions?
 - c. How can the president improve living standards, broadly defined, for the majority of Americans?
 - d. How can the president help Americans to feel more secure, confident, and optimistic?
 - e. What can the president realistically expect to achieve in the course of four years?
5. The teams will present their briefings in class during the last seminar meeting.
6. Based on the presentations and feedback, each team will submit a final 15-page written briefing by **Tuesday, May 7 at 5:pm**. Please submit final written briefings by email to: suri@austin.utexas.edu

The policy briefings will be judged by the following criteria:

1. Professionalism.
2. Attention to the requirements and demands of the assignment.
3. Quality of information.
4. Accuracy.
5. Coherence.
6. Analytical insight.
7. Usefulness.
8. Strategic wisdom.
9. Creativity.
10. Strategic leadership.

STUDENT EVALUATION:

Weekly Response Essays and Comments	30%
Weekly Class Discussion Participation	35%
Final Project	35%

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to respect the university's standards regarding academic dishonesty. You owe it to yourself, your fellow students, and the institution to maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior. A discussion of academic integrity, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, as well as helpful information on citations, note taking, and paraphrasing, can be found at the web page of the Office of the Dean of Students (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php) and the Office of Graduate Studies (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/ethics/transcripts/academic.html>). The University has also established disciplinary procedures and penalty guidelines for academic dishonesty, especially Sec. 11.304 in Appendix C of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities section in UT's General Information Catalog.

Students with Disabilities:

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), at (512) 471-6259 [voice] or (866) 329-3986 [video phone].

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Seminar Week 1.

January 20, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: Why Does History Matter for Leadership?

Reading: Suri, *Civil War By Other Means*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episodes 213 and 214.

Seminar Week 2.

February 3, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: What is Power?

Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 210.

Seminar Week 3.

February 17, 8:30am-11:30am

What is Strategy?

Reading: Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, pages 75-169, 379-89, 566-73, 617-37.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 230.

Seminar Week 4.

March 2, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: How Does Gender Matter?

Reading: Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 249.

Seminar Week 5.

March 9, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: Herbert Hoover, Genius and Failed Leader

Reading: William Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 128.

Seminar Week 6.

March 23, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: FDR as Visionary and Father Figure

Reading: Eric Rauchway, *Why the New Deal Matters*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 145.

Seminar Week 7.

April 6, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: The Postwar German Miracle

Reading: Kati Marton, *The Chancellor*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 220.

Seminar Week 8

April 20, 8:30am-11:30am

Topic: How Can Leaders Do the Impossible?

Reading: Suri, *The Impossible Presidency*, all.

“This is Democracy” Podcast, Episode 84.

Seminar Week 9

May 4, 8:30am-11:30am

Final Group Presentations

Final Group Papers due **Tuesday, May 7 at 5:00pm.**

Please email papers to: suri@austin.utexas.edu.