

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION**

**Organizational and Systems Thinking– FALL 2012(Cohort 11)
ALS 881, SECTION 001, Room Davis 121
Fridays (9/7, 9/21; 10/12; 11/2, 11/30) – 8:00am -2:00pm**

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Overall Objective

Students will construct rich frameworks for understanding and applying leadership theory in their on-the-job settings. During this seminar, students will explore their own beliefs in relation to cultural-political and multicultural perspectives. The aim of this course is to combine theory with application and to have students study the practice of leadership within the context of education policy and curriculum so that they can understand, critique, and reframe the contemporary and emerging challenges of education.

Course Objectives

- Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to
- ✓ Examine theories of school organizations and structures within a social and political environment (I.A.)
 - ✓ Identify and explain contemporary issues in public education (I.A.)
 - ✓ Supervise and evaluate non-instructional staff (I.B.)
 - ✓ Analyze the school organization and promote an educational environment that encourages change and conflict resolution (I.B.)
 - ✓ View the issue of “standards” and “high stakes testing” from various perspectives and the relevance of these issues to public education (I.C., I.E.)
 - ✓ Build positive public relationships with various stakeholders within the school and the community (I.E.)

- ✓ Utilize technology for effective school management (I.B.)
- ✓ Recognize the impact and importance of decision-making processes, ethical practices, and self-reflection on professional performance (III.E.)

Required Texts

Brynteson, R. (2006). *Once upon a complex time: Using stories to understand systems*. MN: Sparrow Media Group.

Jenkins, L. (2008). *From systems thinking to systematic action: 48 questions to guide the journey*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Phillips, Donald T. (1992). *Lincoln on leadership: Effective strategies for tough times*. New York: Warner Books.

Course Requirements: As always, you will be expected to be prepared for each class session, this includes making sure that you have read all materials in preparation for the day, actively participate in class discussions, and engage guest speakers with questions/comments that lead to deeper meaning, and/or discussion.

In summary, our work for this course will focus on leadership and systems. How do they work together, and what can we learn from exploring our own leadership ability/style as it relates to our organizational system? In addition, how should public schools be structured if we are to maximize the potential of our staff and students?

Attendance: Each class requires discussion and participation. Personal involvement in this class is essential to your success. Effective leaders are confident, knowledgeable, and able to appropriately express their viewpoints and opinions to others. You will develop and practice this skill through your participation in large and small group discussions. Class activities often involve a team or group effort to accomplish, so your presence is especially important. Effective schools require leaders skilled in collaboration and able to work well in teams. We will do a lot of collaborative work to help you develop and practice these skills. Your attendance is expected, required, and valued. This course is designed to help you achieve the skills and meet the standards of excellence for school leaders. Consequently, the concepts, activities, and content of each class period are an important part of your

education. Additionally, you expect your students to attend your classroom and it is never fair to ask students to meet standards unless we model appropriate behavior. ***Any absences must be communicated to the instructor prior to the absence, as soon as it becomes known to the student, and be for reasons that are legitimate, unavoidable, and compelling in nature.***

- Unexcused Absences, Lateness, Early Departure: No missed work can be made up in the case of an unexcused absence, lateness, or early departure. Missing over 10% of the course may result in lowering your grade by one letter.
- Excused Absences: Within one week of returning to class, students must submit a 3-5 page paper outlining the activities, major concepts, and content covered in the missed class. Your paper should include connections between class work and any assigned readings. While no class can be truly recreated, this assignment is a best attempt to ensure that you benefit fully from this course.

Students missing class for any reason remain responsible for all information given during the missed class. Please contact a colleague for copies of handouts, notes, and descriptions of activities.

Policy on Late Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on time unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructors and lateness is unavoidable due to an emergency situation. If you are unable to attend class, make arrangements to get your assignment to the instructors on the due date. Late submission of assignments will result in a deduction of points.

Students with Disabilities: Disability Support Services (a unit of the Advising and Testing Center) is the primary agent for the provision of access for IUP students with documented physical, learning, or other disabilities. Faculty and staff within the office serve to ensure IUP's program access compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities are urged to register with the office. Services provided include, but are not limited to: early registration (when the university needs to provide a service such as a classroom move or assisting with recorded books); equipment loan; test proctoring and reading; note taking; recording of books; NCR paper; liaison with faculty, OVR, and BVS; braille; and general advising and counseling. Further information may be obtained in 216 Pratt Hall, by

calling 724-357-4067 (V/TD), by e-mailing *Advising-Testing@iup.edu*, or on the website *www.iup.edu/advisingtesting* (use the Disability Support Services link).

Academic Integrity Policy: IUP is an academic community within the society at large. All members within this community are expected to accept the responsibility for academic integrity and honesty. Academic dishonesty seriously erodes the quality of educational pursuits and is unacceptable at IUP. The policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate School Catalog have been established to preserve the academic integrity of the university community, while also providing a process that protects the rights of students who allegedly violate these policies. (See Graduate Catalog)

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Tentative Class Schedule for Each Day (sessions may vary)

September 7th

- Read Introduction, Part I, and Part II of the Lincoln on Leadership text. Identify at least two of “Lincoln’s Principles” that reflect your beliefs on leadership. Choose one or two research articles (or book excerpts) that support these beliefs. Write a two-page paper that explains the principles, how they reflect your beliefs (demonstrate actions), and how they are supported by current research. Be prepared to share your insights with the class in about a 10 minute discussion. Also, in advance of this class, please read the book by Brynteson, Once Upon a Complex Time... This is a short read, and one that hopefully will start to give you a backdrop on systems thinking.

September 21th

- Read Parts III, IV, and the Epilogue of the Lincoln on Leadership text. Identify at least two of “Lincoln’s Principles” that reflect your beliefs on leadership. Choose one or two research articles (or book excerpts) that support these beliefs. Write a two-page paper that explains the principles, how they reflect your beliefs (demonstrate actions), and how they are supported by current research. Be prepared to share your insights with the class in about a 10 minute discussion.

October 12th

- For this class session, please read From Lee Jenkins' book, Systems thinking to systemic action, 48 questions to guide the journey. Each class member will be expected to report on one particular chapter that they read (**as per the assignment below**). Please feel free to provide a general overview of the chapter to run about 15-20 minutes. In addition, I would like you to provide all class members with a one page summary, which incorporates three sections: basic points, quotes, and points of interest/questions.

November 2nd

- **For this class session, you will not have a specific book to read, but instead will present on the topic of your choice. The project and presentation (which needs to be approved in advance) can take one of a couple of approaches: a book review, a paper on the topic of leadership or systems thinking, the analysis of an organizational system or a case study. These selections will need to be approved by me in advance to in part make sure that we do not have any duplication.**
- **A book review** will consist of a general summary, as well as your reaction. Finally, include a section on the meaning that the book has for you/your organization. If you wish to move in this direction, I will have some suggestions for you.
- **A paper** will consist of a topic of your choice, and focus on an issue that we have dealt with in class or covered through our reading.
- If you select **a case study**, the study would focus on a change initiative that was undertaken in your organization. In the first section, briefly describe your organization. In the second section, describe the change, and why and how it was initiated. Next, use research (a minimum of 5 sources) on change theories to analyze the case - offer reasons for the success or failure of the change, and finally, make prescriptive suggestions.
- If on the other hand, you select **an organizational system**, the system should consist of the major institution or organization (you will need a minimum of 5 sources as well). Examples to include a major sports team, religious organization, business organization, etc. How is it organized, administered, grow, stay ahead of the competition, reduce inefficiency, address short and long term issues...? What is the mission, how does the mission play out in daily routines. Finally, how does it compare/contrast with a typical public school as we know it? What can we learn from such a system? Each person will give a presentation on either Nov. 2nd or Nov. 30th. The presentation (25-30 minutes) must be based on research (a minimum of 5-10 resources) and utilize some form of technology. In addition, each person will write about a 5-7 page paper. The presentation and paper will consist of the common project/key assessment for the course, and will be similar to those that you have completed in previous courses with me.

Nov. 30th will be a continuation of the Nov. 2nd session.

Dr. Joseph Marcoline
Organizational and System Thinking- ALS 881
September 7, 2012

- 12:00-1:00pm- Working Lunch. Welcome and overview of course ALS 881. What does a school system look like, and why? - Dr. Marcoline
- 1:00-2:00pm- Review of articles on system thinking- Dr. Marcoline
- 2:00-2:45 pm- subgroup discussion on *Once Upon a Time: Using Stories to Understand Systems*, by Richard Brynteson
- 2:45 -3:00pm- break
- 3:00-4:00pm: It is easy to talk about how we would do things differently if we could reconstruct public schools, and another to actually try to do something about our current configuration. Dr. Michael Rowe will present his dissertation to you on how one state, Md., tried to take things off of the plate of building administrators. I thought that it would be beneficial for you to see how his dissertation unfolded. Please note that you will be sent a copy of this dissertation to read in advance of the class.
- 4:00-4:30pm- Q and A with Dr. Rowe
- 4:30-6:00pm- From the reading on Lincoln, select at least two excerpts from the Part I and II that reflect your beliefs on leadership. Choose one or two research articles (or book excerpts) that support these beliefs. Write a two-page paper that explains the principles, how they reflect your beliefs, and how they are supported by current

research. Finally, please be prepared to spend about 10-15 minutes speaking to the class about your findings.

- 6:00pm: Collect papers on Lincoln noted immediately above.

Dr. Joseph Marcoline
ALS 881
September 21, 2012

- 12:00-12:30: Welcome and overview of the day- Dr. Marcoline
- 12:30-1:30pm: Cpt. Justin Mullins, IUP ROTC, How the Army operates, and nurtures leadership.
- 1:30-2:00pm: Q and A
- 2:00pm-2:15pm: Break
- 2:15pm-3:00pm: How can public education learn from the banking industry?
- 3:00pm-5:00pm: From the reading on Lincoln, select at least two excerpts from the Part III, IV and epilogue that reflect your beliefs on leadership. Choose one or two research articles (or book excerpts) that support these beliefs. Write a two-page paper that explains the principles, how they reflect your beliefs, and how they are supported by current research. Finally, please be prepared to spend about 10-15 minutes speaking to the class about your findings.
- 5:00pm-5:15pm: Break
- **5:15-6:00pm:** Wrap up

Dr. Joseph Marcoline
ALS 881
October 12, 2012

- 12:00pm-12:30pm: Welcome and overview for the day- Dr. Marcoline
- 12:30pm-1:00pm: Dr. Marcoline
- 1:00-2:00pm: Mrs. Sue McMurdy, Recently retired from the First Commonwealth Corporation. Discussion on the structure of a regional banking system.
- 2:00pm-2:30pm: Q and A
- 2:30pm-2:45pm: Break
- 2:45 pm-5:45pm: From Systems Thinking to Systemic Action: 48 questions to guide the journey- although you will be expected to read the entire book, each student in the class will be assigned one chapter to read and report out to the entire group. The assignments are as follows:
 - Chapter 1. Values- Amy Burch
 - Chapter 2. Constancy of Purpose- Dennis Chakey
 - Chapter 3. Development of People-Tina Federico
 - Chapter 4. Communication- Brendan Hyland
 - Chapter 5 Safety – David Lehman
 - Chapter 6. Personnel Office- Tricia Murin
 - Chapter 7. Finance- Joe Peacock
 - Chapter 8. Operations and Buildings- JP Prager

- Chapter 9. Process (Formative) Data- sam Romesberg
- Chapter 10. Results (Summative) Data- Tain Schlesman
- Chapter 11. Curriculum- Bill Short
- Chapter 12. Instruction- Rick Walsh
- Afterword, The 48 Item Final, and The 48 Questions- Marilyn Walter
- **Phillip Woods will need to see me about this assignment**

November 2nd and November 30th will consist of student presentations and a format similar to earlier class sessions. Also, due to the early nature of this syllabus, you may be expected to read additional material not necessary noted above (articles, etc.). Finally, I am also considering other speakers for this course. These individuals may be included as their schedules permit.