
Leadership When It Really Counts: An Action Practicum

Syllabus

Course Description

“Leadership When It Really Counts” will prepare students to act effectively and with integrity under pressure. The elective is based on a pioneering new approach—using pre-scripting and rehearsal—to prepare business managers/leaders for values-driven decision making and action. Rather than simply talking about these difficult decisions and conversations, students will have the opportunity to practice them.

The approach called “Giving Voice to Values” (GVV)¹ has been used in over 1,000 pilots (and growing) at schools and organizations on seven continents and has been featured in *McKinsey Quarterly*, *Harvard Business Review* (twice); *Financial Times*; *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, *BusinessWeek*; *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, and other publications. Leading corporations like Lockheed Martin, Unilever, and Prudential, among others, are using the approach.

Students will come away from this course with an expanded toolkit, as well as having gained practice in a variety of methods and techniques for voicing and enacting their own values and principles in the workplace. Students will develop and practice leadership skills in “peer coaching” by facilitating sessions with other students. They will also have the opportunity to share student-developed cases that meet GVV standards with business schools and businesses around the world via the GVV platform (<http://www.darden.virginia.edu/ibis/initiatives/giving-voice-to-values/>, <http://www.marygentile.com/>).

Drawing on both the actual experience of business practitioners as well as cutting-edge research, GVV fills a long-standing and critical gap in our understanding of how to enable emerging leaders to effectively enact

About Darden Course Syllabi

The Darden Graduate School of Business Administration is regularly recognized as having one of the world’s premier teaching faculties within business education. Darden Business Publishing is pleased to provide current Darden course syllabi for verified faculty members. These syllabi provide instructors with context as to how cases could be used in a particular sequence to achieve the learning outcomes of the teaching teams at the Darden School. Use the modules in these course syllabi as a reference for updating case materials within your school’s programs.

¹ The Giving Voice to Values (GVV) curriculum is based at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business: <http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>. The Yale School of Management was the founding partner, along with the Aspen Institute, which also served as the incubator for GVV. From 2009 to 2015, GVV was hosted and supported by Babson College.

their values. Rather than a focus on ethical *analysis*, GVV focuses on ethical *action* and asks the questions: “What if I were going to act on my values? What would I say and do? How could I be most effective?”

The practice-based course has three components:

1. **LEARN:** Students are introduced to the GVV rationale, process, and foundational exercises. They experience and practice the approach themselves, working in teams to engage in self-reflection and action-planning, scripting, and peer-coaching exercises.
2. **CREATE:** Students work in teams to identify, research, and write GVV-style case studies with teaching notes and analyses. Students focus their cases on the functional areas (marketing, finance, operations, etc.) and/or the industries where they are pursuing (or perhaps hope to pursue) their careers. These materials (provided that they meet quality standards) may then become part of the GVV Case Collection with appropriate credit to (and permission from) student authors and case subjects. (Cases are typically disguised.) Accepted cases receive global dissemination. And of course, as students connect with the appropriate functional faculty in developing the materials, the hope is that these same professors may be more disposed to use the cases in their own courses going forward.
3. **TEACH:** Students facilitate GVV case discussions and scripting exercises, based on their own case products, with the other members of the class. They have the opportunity to not only present their own work, but also to practice and refine their capability to engage in peer coaching and leadership around values-based issues.

Foundations of Giving Voice to Values

GVV enables managers and entrepreneurs to evaluate the importance of ethics with the goal of identifying and practicing actionable strategies for voicing and enacting values-driven leadership within today’s business context.

Most people want to bring their whole selves to work. Yet, experience and research demonstrate that values conflicts will occur during the course of a person’s career—those times when what we believe and want to accomplish seems in opposition to the demands of clients, peers, bosses and/or organizations. This course helps individuals build and practice the understanding and skills they need to recognize, speak, and act on their values when these conflicts arise. Participants will learn how to transform the foundational assumptions on which the teaching and practice of business ethics are based and importantly, how to equip emerging business leaders to not only know what is right—but how to make it happen.

Distinctive features of the GVV business curriculum include:

- A focus on *how* a manager raises values-based issues in an effective manner—what he or she needs to do to be heard and how to correct an existing course of action when necessary
- *Positive examples* of times when people have found ways to voice and thereby implement their values in the workplace
- An emphasis on self-assessment and a *focus on individual strengths* when looking for a way to align one’s individual sense of purpose with that of the organization
- Opportunities to *construct and practice responses* to frequently heard reasons and rationalizations for *not* acting on one’s values

- Practice in providing *peer feedback* and coaching

Learning Objectives

- *LEARN*: To master the key lessons of the GVV approach to values-driven leadership, for oneself and one's future colleagues:
 1. To reflect on one's previous experiences, both successful and not, at effectively voicing and acting on one's values in the workplace.
 2. To discover which conditions and problem definitions empower one to effectively voice one's values, and which tend to inhibit that action—and how to address them.
 3. To learn to unpack and reason through the most common and intractable of the arguments against ethical and responsible management.
 4. To learn the most effective strategies for creating “scripts” and action plans to influence others around values in the workplace.
 5. To practice voicing—and engaging in peer coaching around—these scripts and action plans.
- *CREATE*: Working in teams to generate timely and relevant GVV-style cases and teaching notes customized to the specific challenges one expects to face in one's chosen industry/functional area.
- *TEACH*: To further develop and practice one's newly developed values-driven leadership skills by:
 1. Leading peer discussions/workshops around one's own team's cases.
 2. Coaching discussion/workshop participants in their own skill development.

By means of this three-part approach, students will not only gain knowledge of values-driven leadership, but also will have the opportunity to practice its application and develop their abilities to foster these competencies in others.

Course Materials

Giving Voice to Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right by Mary C. Gentile, Yale University Press, 2010 (on reserve).

Cases, readings, and exercises posted on Learning Management System.

Course Outline

The Course Outline below is organized around a two-weekend intensive course structure. That is, the “Learn” module of the course takes place over two days; then the “Create” module of the course takes place over a break of several weeks during which student teams work on their Practicum assignments, with individual and/or team meetings with faculty to approve their projects and offer guidance; and finally, the “Teach” module of the course takes place in a second two-day session. However, if faculty prefer, this course can be organized using a more traditional course structure using [GVV Cases](#) and other course materials found at the Darden Business Publishing website. (Professor Mary C. Gentile is happy to answer questions on that: GentileM@darden.virginia.edu.)

Session One—"Learn"

Prior to this class session:

- Complete in writing and submit ["Exercise: A Tale of Two Stories" \(UVA-OB-1109\)](#)
- Read ["Starting Assumptions for Giving Voice to Values" \(UVA-OB-1108\)](#)
- Read ["Ways of Thinking About Our Values in the Workplace" \(UVA-OB-1126\)](#)
- Complete ["Personal-Professional Profile" \(UVA-OB-1118\)](#)

Read and reflect on the following cases:

[The cases below have been selected from the GVV Curriculum (<http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>), but there are many others to choose among. Faculty teaching this course may want to review the Annotated Table of Contents of GVV curricular materials to choose the cases they are most interested in using.]

["This Whole System Seems Wrong": Felipe Montez and Concerns about the Global Supply Chain" \(UVA-OB-1128\)](#)

["Not an Option to Even Consider": Contending with the Pressures to Compromise \(A\)" \(UVA-OB-1160\)](#)

["Soft Issues in the Software Industry \(A\)" \(UVA-OB-1172\)](#)

["To Say or Not To Say" \(UVA-OB-1181\)](#)

["Reasons and Rationalizations: An Exercise" \(UVA-OB-1119\)](#)

Interim Team Assignment—"Create"

(See "Appendix: Team Assignment" for details)

Students work in teams to identify, research, and write GVV-style cases with teaching notes and analyses. Students are encouraged to focus their cases on the functional areas (marketing, finance, operations, etc.) and/or the industries where they are pursuing their careers. Over the five weeks between Session One and Session Two student teams will submit project proposals to the professor for approval/feedback and, once approved, will produce written cases and a teaching note, as well as prepare presentation and facilitation for in-class sharing in Session Three. For detailed instructions on case and teaching note assignment, see the Appendix: Team Assignments, below.

Read and reflect on the following:

Read *Giving Voice to Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right* by Mary C. Gentile (Yale University Press, 2010).

The following articles and books can serve as a starting point for teaching note background research. Students are expected to read and reference at least three of these. In addition, students are expected to identify and use at least four other sources that are tailored to the case study, as described in the Appendix: Team Assignment, below.

David M. Messick and Max H. Bazerman, "Ethical Leadership and the Psychology of Decision-Making," *Sloan Management Review*, vol. 37, no. 2 Winter 1996, pp. 9–22.

Karl E. Weick, "Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Problems" *American Psychologist* (January 1984), pp. 40–49.

Amy C. Edmonson, "Speaking Up in the Operating Room: How Team Leaders Promote Learning in Interdisciplinary Action Teams," *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 40, no. 6 (September 2003), pp. 1419–1452.

M. H. Bazerman, G. Loewenstein, and D. A. Moore, "Why Good Accountants Do Bad Audits," *Harvard Business Review* (November 2002), pp. 96–102.

Robert Prentice, "Teaching Ethics, Heuristics, and Biases," *Journal of Business Ethics Education*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2004), pp. 57–74.

Joel Brockner, "Why It's So Hard To Be Fair," *Harvard Business Review*, March 2006, pp. 122–129.

Minette E. Drumwright and Patrick E. Murphy, "How Advertising Practitioners View Ethics: Moral Muteness, Moral Myopia, and Moral Imagination," *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 33, no. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 724.

Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*, New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011.

Robert Frank, *What Price the Moral High Ground? Ethical Dilemmas in Competitive Environments*, Princeton University Press, 2004.

Howard Gardner, *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People's Minds*, Harvard Business School Press, 2006.

Bill George and Peter Sims, *True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Back Bay Books, 2002.

Rakesh Khurana, *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands: The Social Transformation of American Business Schools and the Unfulfilled Promise of Management as a Profession*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

Rushworth Kidder, *Moral Courage: Taking Action When Your Values Are Put to the Test*, William Morrow, 2005.

Session Two—"Teach"

Students come prepared to lead peer discussions of their team's case and to participate as students in discussion of other teams' cases.

Appendix

Leadership When It Really Counts: An Action Practicum**Team Assignment (to be distributed to students)**

The assignment is to present a brief case scenario describing a specific workplace-values conflict from the student's own experience (that is, from your own experience or that of one of your team members with his or her permission), and to generate and share the analysis and action plan and "script" for voicing and acting on your values. Alternatively if necessary, you may use a situation that you have witnessed or read about, but if you go this route, you must obtain approval from the instructor in advance of preparing your case proposal.

The case proposal is to be submitted via e-mail to the instructor, who will either approve or provide feedback for revision before the assignment start date. The proposal is a brief one-to-two paragraph written description of the case itself and the type of analysis and action plan/script you envision. Include examples of the kinds of research sources you are targeting, the individuals you plan to interview, and the like. Include names of each member of the student team, along with their e-mail addresses.

Total Paper Length: 13–15 pages, 12 pt., double-spaced, normal margins.

The A case that lays out the situation should be two to four pages; the follow-up B case, explaining what actually happened, should be no more than one additional page; and the teaching note with case analysis and action plan and script for voicing and acting on your values should be 10 pages. (All lengths are 12 pt. font, double-spaced, one inch margins.) Use the format for cases discussed in the *Giving Voice To Values* curriculum as a guide to the structure of your case. The best of these final papers may be used as materials for future versions of the course and/or submitted for review and possible inclusion with appropriate credit in the *Giving Voice to Values* Case Collection, only provided authors and case subject give permission.

Assignment Guidelines**A and B Cases:**

The A case should be a brief description of an occasion when your (or one of your team member's) values conflicted with what you were asked (or implicitly expected) to do in the workplace or similar setting. You are also free to use other contexts, including internships, class working teams, summer jobs, or other situations relevant to emerging or current business professionals. Contact your instructor for advice as appropriate. The story must be based on a real situation. All names of individuals and of organizations should be disguised.

Remember to respect confidentiality for yourself and every individual involved in the situation discussed, as well as for the relevant organizations. Use disguised or generic names for the individuals and organizations, both in your product and in your group discussions. And remind your team regularly that their agreement to respect confidentiality is a condition for this project. And of course, remember to respect and honor all confidentiality agreements with the relevant organizations.

The A case should be brief (two to three pages) and should end at the point where the case protagonist knows what they believe is the right thing to do, but wonders how to get it done; what to say; to whom; in what sequence, and so forth. Include enough detail so that someone reading the case would be able to generate ideas and suggestions about how the protagonist might proceed effectively.

Include a B case (no more than one page) that describes what actually happened. If the protagonist found a way to voice and act on their values effectively, provide as much detail as you can about what they said and did and why/how it worked. If the protagonist did not find a way to voice and act on their values effectively, offer any insights you can into what they learned from the situation, and especially how they might have successfully enacted their values and how they might be able to change the outcome in the future. These insights might be suggested in the B case but they should be more fully developed in the teaching note.

Teaching Note—Analysis and Action Plan/“Script”

The teaching note should include:

- a brief introduction (no more than a page) to the issue at hand: what the challenge is; what is at stake; some lenses for looking at it, and the like
- identification of the courses for which this case is best suited and why
- a list of Learning Objectives for the case and Key Takeaways
- an annotated bibliography of several articles that will serve as useful background readings for students who wish to craft effective strategies and scripts for responding to the cases at hand. You should include and reference at least three of the articles or books from the course syllabus, but you must also include and reference at least four articles or books that you have identified on your own and
- a “discussion guide” for faculty or facilitators to use for debriefing the cases (details for this discussion guide follow below).

The case discussion guide (case analysis and action plan/script) should follow the outline from the *Giving Voice To Values* “scripting” exercises. It should provide answers to the following questions:

- What is the **values-driven position** of the case protagonist? What position is the protagonist trying to promote?
- What is **at stake or at risk** for the key parties, including those who disagree with the protagonist? What is at stake for the protagonist?
- What are the main arguments the protagonist is trying to counter? That is, what are the **reasons and rationalizations** he or she needs to address?
- What **levers** can the protagonist use to influence those who disagree and/or how can the protagonist **reframe** the decision so as to respond to expected objections and concerns?
- What are the most **powerful and persuasive responses** to the reasons and rationalizations the protagonist needs to address? To whom should the argument be made? When and in what context?
- Be sure to consider what information you may need to research in order to make the most well-reasoned and persuasive arguments. What data do you need to collect? What examples (negative or positive) will be useful to you? Consider whom the case protagonist is trying to persuade and what types of arguments and presentations will be most persuasive to them. Consider whether the protagonist needs to speak to people one-on-one or in groups, and in what sequence. Take a look at “Ways of Thinking about Our Values in the Workplace” and the “Scripts and Skills Readings” (<http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>) and at *Giving Voice To Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What’s Right* (Yale University Press 2010), for ideas about how to craft your

script and action plan. Consider what type of response the protagonist is likely to get to their first line of argument and then craft a sort of decision tree of arguments: that is, if someone says “this,” the protagonist will counter with “that.” You must also include a list of written references and interview data (see below).

Additional Requirements—Include written references and interview material

Students must reference relevant research to support the action plan and “script.” For example, you will wish to review some of the research on “framing” arguments; on negotiations and persuasion; on decision biases and heuristics; and of course, on the actual issue at stake. See the readings in *Giving Voice To Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What’s Right* (on reserve for this course) as a starting point. You will be required to go beyond these resources, however, to identify and review materials that are particularly relevant to the case topic (as noted above). You would do well to speak to faculty who teach on the case subject and/or to practitioners in the relevant industry. (For example, if the case is about earnings management, you may want to interview your Accounting professor.)

Students will need to provide references to the research applied to the scenario (e.g., social psychology; law; decision-making biases; industry trends; policy papers; the business press, etc.) and to the interviews with experienced practitioners in the industry or business function/department that is relevant to the scenario. (If the example takes place in a retail environment, you may want to talk to someone who manages the types of employees who are involved in the scenario.) If the challenge concerns a practice that is actually illegal, you will need to research precisely what the law says and include that information in your teaching note.

Facilitation of Your Case With Your Peers

In the last class, students will present cases orally to classmates and then engage them in a GVV-style discussion about how to address the situation. You will conclude by presenting your “solution” to the case, that is, the approach to voicing/enacting the values-based position that your research and deliberation have determined is most likely to be effective, with a summary of the data and research that led you to conclude this will work. The amount of time and the format you will have for these presentations will depend on the number of students in the class and will be clarified when enrollments are finalized. Take a look at “Guidelines for Peer Coaching” for some ideas about ways to facilitate the discussion (on the course Learning Management System site and at <http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>).