

EDLPS 520 Education as a Moral Endeavor

Summer 2007 8:30 - 11:30

Miller 112

Masters in Education in Instructional Leadership Program

Instructor:

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Please note:

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for class.

Intent

We will consider the following propositions, and we will consider in practical detail the implications of these propositions for the conduct of good (i.e., ethical *and* effective) leadership.

1. Schooling in and for a democracy is necessarily different than schooling in and for other kinds of political regimes. As Montesquieu reminds us, monarchies demand honor, and that is what schools should teach. Despotism demand servility, and that is what schools should teach. But it is in republican governments, Montesquieu argues, that the “full power of education is needed” to teach the virtues of responsible citizenship.
2. Given these differential functions of schooling, educational leadership in a democracy is necessarily different than educational leadership in and for other kinds of political regimes.
3. A fundamental task of leadership is not only the creation of a persuaded audience, but the development of a more thoughtful public, a public capable of rising above itself.

4. A more thoughtful public must be created. Moreover, it must be sustained over time—perhaps a more difficult task than one of creation. And, moreover, given that things inevitably fall apart, a more thoughtful public must be recovered and reconstituted - perhaps the most difficult task.
5. Creation and sustaining and recovery/reconstitution demand different kinds or aspects of leadership.
6. Effective leadership involves ongoing reflection as to how we locate ourselves in relation to ourselves and others.
7. Good leadership necessarily involves information seeking. A leader must have knowledge of what must be done, knowledge of what it takes to persuade others of what must be done (and, in persuading, creating a more thoughtful public), and knowledge of how an audience/public will respond. Only with a thorough understanding of the principles, strategies, and costs of information seeking will one be able to engage in ethical and effective leadership.

We will address these and related propositions through a series of directed readings, group discussion (entire class and small groups), and individual writing assignments.

Expectations

You are expected to be at all seven class sessions in their entirety and be an active participant. Absences which result in not participating in a specific class session will result in lost of participation points contributing to your grade. These points can be made up through submission of an additional short paper or papers developed in consultation with me.

You are expected to read the readings assigned for each session, and to have something to say about what you have read. To aid in developing your understanding, you will be asked to write a one-page analytical summary of each of the readings and to submit each summary *prior to or during the relevant class session*. Each paper should include a brief summary of what you take to be the main points or arguments plus a short paragraph dealing with either a particular insight that excited you or a question that provoked you. For grading purposes, each paper is worth three points.

You are also asked to write a reflective letter. The letter should not be shorter than six pages and not longer than ten pages. I expect you to write about reactions to the readings, but these reactions might well be combined with other observations regarding problems, progress, satisfactions, dilemmas, and personal growth. The letter is not to be a straight rehash of your analytical papers. Try to include some syntheses of the readings to date, plus a description of aha! insights along with a discussion of question or questions that the readings (and in-class discussions) have provoked. Formal citations are not necessary. The letter is due Friday, July 20.

Papers and the letter may be submitted as hard copy (word processed or handwritten) or as email attachments.

Unavoidable circumstances sometimes result in loss of paper/letter points; points can be made up in consultation with me.

Grading

The class is offered on a credit/no credit basis. Credit will be awarded on the basis of points earned as follows. It will be noted that the cutoff point for earning a credit grade is 91 points (i.e., the equivalent of a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale).

Grades will be based on points earned as follows:

<i>Class participation</i>	40 points
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Unmade-up absences resulting
in lack of participation:

1 absence	5 points
2+	0

One-page analytical papers

10 papers @ 3 points each	30 points
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<i>Reflective Letter</i>	30 points
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TOTAL	100 points
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+97	4.0
94-96	3.5
91-93	3.0
88-90	2.5
85-87	2.0

Readings

The one textbook we will be using—Soder’s *The Language of Leadership*—is available through the University Book Store or through the usual web sources. The other readings are available via my web page: <http://faculty.washington.edu/rsoder/>

Basic Learning Approach

Our task involves consideration of the seven central propositions and their practical implications. Such consideration involves close reading of selected texts. But more than reading matters here. Our consideration involves collective discussion of what we have read. As an ancient invitation puts it, “come, let us study together.” It’s the *together* that matters here. One helps another and in helping others, we all gain further understanding.

But learning together involves a further set of complexities. Learning together does not mean that we all learn the same way. We need to recognize different approaches and make necessary accommodations—without losing sight of the perennial issues at hand. Nor does learning together mean that we come to a common conclusion or even a common understanding. For example, it is surely possible to read carefully and discuss carefully Chapter 23 of Machiavelli’s *Prince* and come away with different views of what he was saying and the implications for us of what he said. But for all that, an ethics of readership and discussion will suggest, I trust, that our first obligation is to take seriously the author’s understanding of what he or she is trying to say. That ethics of readership and discussion, then, involves being critical and skeptical in our careful reading and discussion, to be sure, but it also involves, in the end, a generosity of spirit.

Calendar of Sessions and Our Work Together

July 2

Leadership and Persuasion

Topics

Discussion of the course; syllabus; context
 Nature of leadership
 Nature of persuasion
 Difference between “good” and “bad” persuasion

Readings

Paper 1 Soder, “Persuasion: A Critical Function of Leadership,” *The Language of Leadership*, chapter 1.

July 6

Leadership, persuasion, more thoughtful public, political context and schooling

Topics

Ethics and ecology of rhetoric and persuasion
 Education, schools and democracy
 Conditions for democracy and good political regime
 More thoughtful public
 Leadership in a democracy; leadership in an autocracy
 Leadership: initiating; sustaining; recovering

Readings

Paper 2 Soder, “The Ethics and Ecology of Persuasion,” *The Language of Leadership*, Chapter 3.

July 9 Schools, Democracy, and Leadership: moral and political dimensions

Topics

Moral and political context of teaching and schooling
 Role of schools in reflecting or changing the social order
 Tension between liberty and order in society and in schools
 Tension between liberty and equality in society and in schools

Readings

Paper 3 Roger Soder, "The Political Context of Leadership," in *The Language of Leadership*, Chapter 4.

Paper 4 Plutarch, selections from life of Lycurgus, pp. 28-34, sections 17-21).

Time Magazine, "Is Singapore a Model for the West?"
 "Young Singaporeans Challenge Lee," *New York Times*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, "What Kind of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear," (pp. 690-695).

Deborah Stone, "Equality," from *Policy Paradox*.

July 11 Ethics and politics of information seeking; path dependence

Topics

Principles, strategies, costs of seeking information
 The exchange principle of information seeking/provision
 Information seeking and the newly arrived leader

Readings

Paper 5 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter XXIII, "In What Mode Flatterers Are to Be Avoided."

Lord Chesterfield, "Letter to His Son," January 15, 1753.

Paper 6 Soder, "Information Seeking: Principles, Strategies, Costs," in *The Language of Leadership*, Chapter 2.

July 13

How we locate ourselves in relation to ourselves and others

Topics

Who we are; how we center ourselves, how we talk about who we are
Culture of leadership succession

Readings

- Paper 7 Roger Soder, "The Ethics of the Rhetoric of Teacher Professionalization."
- Paper 8 James March, "Yo se quien soy," in *The Beat of a Different Drummer: Essays in Honor of John I. Goodlad*.

July 16

Leadership, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Reconstitution

Topics

Error and forgiveness
Reconciliation and reconstitution

Readings

Sophocles, *Philoctetes*

- Paper 9 Roger Soder, "Leadership, Reconciliation, and Reconstitution," in *The Language of Leadership*, chapter 5, pp. 117-149.

July 18

Historical context and wrapup reflections

Topics

Fundamental issues of American schooling (and thus leadership) in context
Wrapup reflections

Readings

Paper 10 Roger Soder, "Reflections and Directions," in *The Language of Leadership*, Chapter 6, pp. 151-169.