

Leadership Electives 2019-2020

As part of the MBA degree requirement students must take one leadership elective from this list during their time at MIT Sloan.

Fall 2019

15.269 Leadership Stories: Literature, Ethics and Authority

Instructor: Leigh Hafrey

Full semester course, 50 students

9 units

This course first explores critical dimensions of leadership: exercising formal authority, leading people and institutions, distributing leadership, leading in opposition, and leading outside formal frameworks. The balance of the course explores factors that complicate but also enhance leadership: professionalism; the apparent relativity of values; the search for a good society; and the need to confirm our humanity in the relation of leader to follower. Story-telling emerges as a constant, universal method of communicating leaders' values.

15.318 Discovering your Leadership Signature

Instructor: Deborah Ancona

Full semester course (capped at 35 students)

9 units

This course address key challenges faced when attempting to lead a group, of any size, where authority to make decisions may be constrained or limited. It explores the distinction between leadership and authority and helps individuals to critically examine their willingness and capability to guide and make decisions when working in project teams, (such as on action learning projects) organizational groups or other business or community contexts. Students will use systems thinking tools to look at the complex leadership dynamics that can arise and will explore options for making decisions when dealing with the unexpected or when faced with potentially uncomfortable situations.

15.321 Improvisational Leadership: In the Moment Leadership Skills

Instructor: Daena Giardella

Half-semester course - H2, 30 students

6 units

Designed to provide a practical understanding of the skills of improvisation and their application to leadership. Examines the essential elements of successful leadership, including creativity, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and the capacity to develop effective influence strategies and build strong teams. Cultivates students' ability to respond to the unexpected with confidence and agility. Each class offers a highly experiential learning laboratory where students practice a wide variety of improvised business scenarios, interactive exercises, and simulations.

15.671 U-Lab: Transforming Self, Business and Society

Instructor: Otto Scharmer

Half-semester course - H1, capped at 60 students

6 units

This interactive and experiential class is about leading profound innovation for pioneering a more sustainable economy and society. It focuses on the intertwined relationship of the following three questions:

- Transformation of Capitalism: How can capitalism and society evolve from its current forms to an emerging future form that creates well-being for all (society 4.0)?
- Multi-stakeholder innovation: What leadership does it take to create profound innovation at the scale of the whole eco-system of stakeholders and partners?
- Presencing: How can people access their authentic self — their highest future possibility — and “act from” that heightened state of awareness in the now?

The class facilitates a journey of profound self-knowing and change and is organized around personal reflection practices, relational practices, and well-being economies.

15.674 Leading Creative Teams

Instructor: David Niño

Full-semester course

9 units

Prepares students to lead teams charged with developing creative solutions in engineering and technical environments. Grounded in research but practical in focus, equips students with leadership competencies such as building self-awareness, motivating and developing others, creative problem solving, influencing without authority, managing conflict, and communicating effectively. Teamwork skills include how to convene, launch, and develop various types of teams, including project teams. Learning methods emphasize personalized and professional skill development.

15.941 Leadership in Real Estate

Instructor: Gloria Schuck

Half-semester course – H1, 15 students

6 units

Designed to help students deepen their understanding of leadership and increase self-awareness. They examine authentic leadership styles and create goals and a learning plan to develop their capabilities. They also participate in activities to strengthen their "leadership presence" - the ability to authentically connect with people's hearts and minds. Students converse with leaders to learn from their insights, experiences, and advice.

IAP 2020

15.309 Leadership Lessons Learned from the Military

Instructor: Leigh Hafrey and Deborah Ancona
3 day workshop, 80-100 students
6 units

What is it about the military that so frequently produces adaptable and well-rounded leaders in a variety of civilian settings? How can we leverage military leadership principles to plan for our own leadership development here at MIT Sloan? In this seminar, military, government, and industry leaders, along with MIT Sloan faculty, will address the skills and leadership qualities that can help prepare you to lead in the 21st Century. The purpose of this seminar is to teach students the leadership practices, traits, and mindset that have been successfully used by military leaders and to show how those tools can be applied to civilian leadership and management challenges. Teaching will be done through a combination of methods including lectures, interactive case studies, guest speakers and training exercises.

15.339 Developing Leadership Capabilities

Instructors: Tom Malone and Wanda Orlikowski
3 day workshops offered in 3 sections of 40-50
6-units

The three-day 4 Capabilities Leadership Workshop introduces students to the four capabilities central to effective leadership:

- Visioning
- Sensemaking
- Relating
- Inventing new ways of organizing

Dynamic, personal and interactive, each 4 Capabilities Leadership Workshop features role playing, case studies and group work. Participants learn more about their own values, goals and vision through introspective exercises. They engage one another, practice new skills and reflect deeply on leadership and life.

Spring 2020

15.S03 Leading the Way: Individual and Organizational Perspectives on Advancing Equity and Inclusion

Instructors: Erin Kelly and Kara Blackburn
Full-semester course – capped at 35.
9 units

Leading in culturally and demographically diverse groups is a critical skill for executives and entrepreneurs today. But leveraging diversity is not easy or automatic. This course will address both individual skills and organizational strategies for advancing equity and inclusion. We will critically review social science and behavioral research and will provide multiple opportunities for students to reflect on their own lives and how they can be effective leaders.

All are welcome. We hope to encourage learning and dialogue among students with a variety of social identities and backgrounds and we expect to hear different views on how firms can and should address diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are foregrounding race and gender dynamics and inequities and the U.S. context, but we welcome discussion of other dimensions of difference (e.g., class background, nationality, LGBTQ identity, religion, disability, and more) and reflections on these topics in other countries and cultural contexts.

15.270 Ethical Practice: Leading Through Professionalism, Social Responsibility, and System Design

Instructor: Leigh Hafrey

Half-semester course – H4 (capped at 67 students)

6 units

“Professionalism, Social Responsibility, and the Purpose of the Corporation” is designed as an introduction to ethics in business, with a focus on business management. Over 13 sessions, students will have the opportunity to explore theoretical concepts in business ethics, as well as cases that represent the challenges they will likely face as managers; they will also have the opportunity to work with guest faculty and business and other professional practitioners. Individual sessions will take the form of moderated discussion, with occasional short lectures from the instructor.

15.281 Advanced Leadership Communications

Instructors: Neal Hartman, Kara Blackburn, Ginny Healy-Tangney

Full Semester course. Offered in 4 sections of 30 each.

9 units

This advanced course both builds on the basic oral and written managerial communication skills (covered in 15.280) and goes well beyond them. The goals of this class are to provide opportunities for you to continue polishing your communication skills in different contexts, and particularly to provide practice in and feedback on the interactive communication skills essential to successful leaders. You will give various types of presentations, including impromptu presentations and a longer (12-15 min.) presentation. In addition, we will practice interactive communication (e.g., role play with hostile client, interactive presentation to a hostile audience) and communication in groups (e.g., running meetings, participating in group decision making). Writing assignments include self-analyses (including one individual self-analysis and one team self-analysis of your team project), a leadership analysis, and one short business document (see discussion of individual project, below). The course will be highly participative, with most class time being spent in hands-on communication exercises.

15.282 EnActing Leadership: Shakespeare and Performance

Instructor: Chris Kelly

Full semester course, 20 students

9 units

Acting on stage is a superb exercise for exploring the personal and professional skills involved in becoming an effective leader. In this course, in addition to exploring leadership through diverse readings, students will stage a condensed version of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, a classic play about powerful leaders and their relationships. This interactive and experiential class focuses on how leaders

lead that promote both the organization and the individual. The course is organized around these activities:

- Collaboration: Students hone leadership skills through the collaborative effort of creating a public performance.
- Discussion and analysis: Through critical analysis and close reading of Shakespeare and leadership literature students explore qualities that are essential to leadership.
- Sense-making: Personal and group reflection on enacting change through theatre arts.
- Creating and exploring: Through theatre exercises and rehearsal, students practice skills actors use as they prepare for stage performance, techniques actors employ to hold an audience's attention.

The class will meet for three hours a week. The syllabus brings together readings from leadership, Shakespeare and current business topics. The readings allow us to explore in depth the character of leadership and organization. We will balance rehearsing--speaking the text, practicing stage movement and using the voice and body to project character—with discussion and analysis.

15.304 Being Effective: Power and Influence

Instructor: Paul Osterman

Full-semester course.

9 units

This is a course about power and influence. As we will discuss, all organizations are fundamentally political. Players (people, organizational units) have different self-interests and different perspectives and objectives. The players also differ in the power or resources that they bring to bear in order to advance their perspective. If you are to be effective, both with respect to the goals of the organization and with respect to your personal goals, you need to be able to map these differences, understand your own interests and objectives, and understand how operate in the environment. In addition to being able to think strategically you also need a set of skills that can be summarized via the word “persuasion.” This course aims help you improve upon your mapping, strategic, tactical, and persuasion skills. We will use a variety of material, drawn from the business and public worlds, to do this.

15.321 Improvisational Leadership: In the Moment Leadership Skills

Instructor: Daena Giardella

Half-semester course – H4. 30 students

6 units

Designed to provide a practical understanding of the skills of improvisation and their application to leadership. Examines the essential elements of successful leadership, including creativity, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and the capacity to develop effective influence strategies and build strong teams. Cultivates students' ability to respond to the unexpected with confidence and agility. Each class offers a highly experiential learning laboratory where students practice a wide variety of improvised business scenarios, interactive exercises, and simulations.

15.324 Practical Leadership

Instructor: Pat Bentley

Half-semester course – H4. Offered in 2 sections of 11 each.
6 units.

Leadership is the ability to influence a group of people towards a goal. In this course students will increase their own leadership capacities through feedback, reflection and practice. Even though all of us have had leadership opportunities, we all too rarely receive candid, insightful feedback on our actual performance that then allows us to think, act and speak more effectively in the next situation. The heart of this course is the repeated coaching and real-time feedback the students will receive on their own leadership activities from their peers and the instructor. Students will use readings, role plays, experiential exercises, and self-reflection, as well as focused coaching and feedback, to optimize their own leadership capabilities. You need not be in a position of authority to take this course. Course deliverables include: active participation in your own leadership growth during the semester and a written packet that summarizes your reflections and experiences around leadership during the course.

15.394 Entrepreneurial Founding and Teams

Instructors: Erin Scott and Kit Hickey

Full semester course, 70 students
9 units.

Explores key organizational and strategic decisions in founding and building a new venture. Through a series of cases, readings, and activities, students examine the trade-offs and consequences of early founder decisions: whom to include in the founding team, how to allocate equity among co-founders, how to determine founder roles, how to hire and motivate early-employees, and whether to involve external investors. Aims to equip students with tools and frameworks to help them understand the implications of early decisions, and to build enduring resources that enable the venture to execute even if the original plan changes substantially. Meets with 15.3941 when offered concurrently. Expectations and evaluation criteria differ for students taking graduate version; consult syllabus or instructor for specific details.

15.661 Building Successful Careers and Organizations

Instructor: Emilio Castilla

Half-semester course – H3.
6 units

This course is specifically designed to help you learn more about your individual strengths, and how you can utilize these strengths to manage your own career and professional growth. We will draw on the latest research and practices, experiential exercises, and cases studies – all with the goal of helping you deepen your understanding of the forces and dynamics that shape careers. In so doing, we will cover the most important aspects of talent (and career) management. We start the course by covering the basic tools and principles to help you learn about who you are, where you are going, and how to successfully decide what to do career-wise. We next focus on how to apply those basic tools and principles to the process of job searching and to designing and developing your career. Finally, we examine how by building a successful career, you can also contribute to managing successful teams and organizations.