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Syllabus: MGMT 546

SEMINAR: SPIRITUALITY AND BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

An important development at the beginning of the new millennium is the up welling of interest in spirituality within management. Academic conferences, scholarly journals, and management book lists are filled with titles incorporating the words “spirituality” and “spirit” in association with work place spirituality.

This seminar explores the relationship between business as a pivotal societal institution and spirituality, with a particular focus on the challenges of business leadership. Questions the course will explore will include: How is business leadership related to the idea of a calling? Why do successful leaders often derail if they lack personal integration? How is spirituality related to the achievement of personal integration? How do turbulent business environments affect leadership spirituality? What special challenges are posed for spirituality by power and wealth that accompany successful business leadership? How can spiritual disciplines and meditation practices be tailored for the time-pressured life of business professionals and leaders? What are the benefits of a more intense spiritual journey for the organizational leader and the organizations they manage?

The seminar will anchor the exploration of the relationship between business leadership and spirituality in the proliferating contemporary literature and research on this subject as well as through classical wisdom writing. Readings will include psychological and biographical studies of transformational leadership. We will also read from literature on spirituality, interpreting it in light of the challenges facing contemporary business management. The course will reference both Eastern and Western Spiritual traditions.

This seminar will inevitably touch on the lived experience of each participant’s quest for full personal integration in his/her business and organizational activities. The course will be respectful of the particular religious traditions (or non-tradition) and personal history of each participant. A sensitive response to the experience of others is expected. Full participation in all aspects of the course is required: class attendance, discussion, reading, and appropriate meditation exercises. Because each Saturday is the equivalent of three

class meetings, **absences are not allowed**. In exceptional circumstances, the removal of an incomplete due to an absence will require attendance of the module missed in a future quarter when the seminar is offered.

Because the seminar touches on such a wide range of literatures, willingness to engage the reading list in the spirit of a “great books” seminar is required. This is not “text book” reading but rather tasting the readings and pausing when they speak to the heart.

Topic List

1. Course Introduction
2. Integrating Business Leadership as a Calling into a Spiritual Journey.
3. Listening to the Inner Voice in the Midst of Turbulent Business Environments
4. Business Leadership Challenges and the Need for Self Integration
5. Discernment. Strategic Decision Making, and Business Leadership.
6. Approaches to Prayer and Meditation in the Life of the Leader.
7. The Special Challenges of Leadership Power.
8. The Challenges of Wealth vs. Poverty of Spirit in the Business Leader’s Life.
9. Contemplative Practice in the Hectic Space of leadership.
- 10.11. Group Retreat.
12. Field Experience Involving Segments of Society Outside Contemporary Business Life.
13. Significant Trials of Transformational Leaders.
14. Individual study reports on a selected spiritual master and insights for leadership.
15. Bringing it all together.

Grading Norms

Journal Reflections (60%)

Two essay assignments are due one class meeting after the conclusion of each Saturday gathering integrating the readings, lessons from the seminar lectures discussions, and meditation assignments with participant’s current leadership challenges.

Seminar Participation (20%)

Seminar participation including attendance. *Because the seminar meets infrequently, with each Saturday meeting incorporating what would normally be three class sessions (or more), attendance is mandatory.*

Final Papers (20%)

A formal paper reflecting on the lessons of a personally chosen spiritual master for contemporary business leadership and the participant’s personal leadership journey; and a paper summarizing a compassionate visit with someone experiencing unavoidable suffering will be due at the final class meeting.

An orientation to these assignments will be provided at the first class meeting.

Additional Fees: *A \$150.00 fee is payable at the first class meeting to cover the cost of lunches, retreat facilities, and handouts.*

Overarching Learning Objectives – Mgmt 546

Understand how the spiritual traditions conceive of “vocation” or “calling” as an outward manifestation of the inner spiritual journey.

Understand under what conditions business leadership fulfills this expression of calling.

Be introduced to secular and religious forms of spiritual disciplines critical to self-integration as means to avoid the inner distortions that often preclude effective transformational leadership.

Understand the benefit of linking spiritual “discernment” with a variety of strategic organizational decision challenges.

Disability Accommodations

"To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disabilities Resources located on the second floor of Benson. Phone numbers are (408) 554-4111; TTY (408)554-5445.

Students must register and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations."