



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Course title:	Executive Leadership
Course #/term:	SW799-6-SS-2019
Time and place:	Wednesday 9-5 [Room #3752]
Credit hours:	1
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	John Tropman
Pronouns:	He
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Office hours:	by appointment

1. Course Statement [This mini-course focuses on the characteristics and competencies of the executive leader. After introductions and a brief overview on elements of leadership as conceptualized by different authors, we will look at a number of essays which will help the individual student compile her or his own profile. These essays will include "temperament" assessments such as the Myers Briggs and the Emotional Intelligence Assay, on the characteristics side, and managerial assessments and Executive profile mapping from the competency sets. The interaction between characteristic sets and competency sets will be discussed. We will also explore the social psychology and sociology of leadership-in-action, Various readings from the Harvard Business Review, including one from Manfred Kets DE Vries, an organizational thinker and trained psychoanalyst will be explored. The assignment will be to develop a personal learning/development plan.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will have the opportunity for self knowledge through reflections on their characteristics and competencies in the management and leadership areas through a variety of self-administered essays.
2. Students will have the opportunity for self knowledge through discussing the views of themselves as reflected by others on similar essay instruments. While not a "360" approach, it does balance one's own perceptions with those of others.
3. Students will then have the chance to build their own personal kaleidoscope from these materials.
4. Learning is reinforced and expanded through the use of reading materials on the social psychological elements of the executive

[Click here to search the course catalog to locate a course statement.](#)

See above

[Competencies and Practice Behaviors](#)

See Above

- a. Course description
 - a. [Click here to search the course catalog to locate a course statement.](#)
 - b. See above
- b.
 - a. [Competencies and Practice Behaviors](#)
 - i. **Leading from anywhere on the stage**
 - ii. **Branding your leadership stage**
 - iii. Sharpening and Honing your Strengths
 - iv. Knowing your shadow side
- c. Course objectives and competencies
See above
- d. Curricular themes
See Above
- e. Relationship to social work ethics and values
The Code of Ethics of Course ; but ALSO PERSUING SOCIAL GOOD
- f. Intensive focus on PODS
Working to assist in the advancement of excluded populations to leadership posts

2. Class Requirements

Participation

- a. Text and class materials

Rcommended

Vic Strecher [Life on Purpose](#)

John Tropman [Team Impact](#)

Jean East [Transformational Leadership for the Helping Professions](#)

[Materials on Canvas for your review and thought](#)

- b. Class schedule

Two Wednesdays – 9-5

c. Assignments

Develop a personal development plan

1. A Better Me
2. A Better You
3. A Better Us

d. Attendance and class participation **Two Wednesdays.. let me know if there are any issues assignments if that is applicable.]**

e. Grading

- Satisfactory S
- Unsatisfactory U

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*

Is The MSW The New MBA?

Recent corporate failures demonstrate the need for the very skills that social workers bring. Now a few schools are recognizing this and offering joint tracks that merge the interests of businesses and the communities they work in.

[Photo: Flickr user [John Walker](#)]

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By [Christine Bader](#) 6 minute Read

The MBA is now the most popular master's degree in the U.S., making up one quarter of all such degrees conferred. But a few schools are recognizing that a different course of study might better serve both aspiring business leaders and the world at large: a master's in social work.

The [University of Southern California's School of Social Work](#) just launched a business concentration for its students, and a number of universities now offer joint MBA-MSW degrees.

The cynical might assume that social workers are simply trying to make more money as government and social service budgets continue to shrink. (And why shouldn't MSWs be able to pay off their student loans like everyone else?)

Businesses affect not only their employees and their families, but also the communities that depend on them.

But a number of corporate failures demonstrate the need for the very skills that social workers are trained in. At the same time, the MBA has come under fire for producing some of the leaders that brought on those failures—former Enron CEO and Harvard Business School grad Jeffrey Skilling comes to mind—and perpetuating the shareholder primacy mantra that has pushed the interests of business and the interests of society so far apart.

The USC program aims to produce “system thinkers who focus on the big picture, keeping in mind that businesses affect not only their employees and their families, but also the communities that depend on them.” All companies—and society at large—could benefit from that mindset. In addition to foundational courses and a field practicum, students in the business concentration can take classes focused on translating social work theories and skills to corporate environments.

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In numerous industries, the costs of fumbling community relationships are all too obvious. Walmart scaled back plans to come to New York City in the face of significant [community opposition](#). Freeport-McMoran's Grasberg copper and gold mine in Indonesia has managed decades of violence and unrest among its workforce and neighbors, forcing the company to spend nearly \$30 million a year on security alone. Liesel Filgueiras, manager of human rights and indigenous relations for Vale, the Brazilian mining company, told me that a few disgruntled community members can block the railway leading in and out of a mine: "The social license to operate is an ethereal and tangible concept for most companies. For us it is extremely tangible: it means stopping our operations."

Companies are trying to move beyond auditing to analyzing root causes and context—another skill that social workers possess.

[I joined BP](#) in 2000 after earning my MBA, and moved to Indonesia to crunch numbers on the assets BP had just acquired with its takeover of Arco. But I ended up focusing on a liquefied natural gas plant with a myriad of what we euphemistically referred to as "non-technical" risks, including the resettlement of 127 households; a notoriously violent and corrupt military that would be "protecting" our facilities; endemic corruption and a lack of social services.

My job quickly became less about spreadsheets and more about engaging with local communities to understand their needs, bringing in human rights experts to advise us, finding NGOs to partner with, working with every level of government, and developing policies and training modules for BP staff and contractors.

That sounds a lot like the National Association of Social Workers' definition of its profession: "Social workers help people increase their capacities for problem solving and coping, and they help them obtain needed resources, facilitate interactions between individuals and between people and their environments, make organizations responsible to people, and influence social policies."

In the area of supply chain management, companies are trying to move beyond auditing to analyzing root causes and context—another skill that social workers possess. The 2013 collapse of the [Rana Plaza](#) building in Bangladesh in which over 1,100 garment workers died was a tragic example of how the prevailing model of employing auditors to run through checklists is sorely lacking.

When I tried to limit working hours for the contractor building a BP chemicals plant in China, I didn't understand why there was so much resistance from both the supplier and the migrant workers whose safety I was trying to ensure—until I figured out that they had left their families behind and wanted to maximize their earnings while they were away. (I still insisted on international standards because I wanted them to go home alive, but I learned how to make my case.)

I might have been helped by the social worker's "person-in-environment" approach, which sensibly stipulates that "an individual and his or her behavior cannot be understood adequately without consideration of the various aspects of that individual's environment (social, political, familial, temporal, spiritual, economic, and physical)."

Yes, business schools have courses in the so-called "soft skills" (a phrase whose time has clearly passed) of management, leadership, and organizational behavior. But even at Yale, my MBA alma mater that was founded as the School of Organization and Management, I wrongly viewed those classes as a gentle respite from finance and operations rather than the reason I was there.

Social workers help people increase their capacities for problem solving and coping.

When Robin Eastman was working as a case manager for people with developmental disabilities, the inefficiency of the nonprofit sector led her to seek an MBA alongside her MSW at the University of Maryland.

In her summer internship with Hilton Worldwide this year, she worked on a program to reward high-performing employees. Her social work training led her to propose that managers conduct "stay" interviews, as opposed to the exit interviews companies conduct once employees are already on their way out. These "stay" interviews would try to understand what it would take to retain an employee, strengthen the manager-employee relationship, and acknowledge that not everyone is motivated by cash alone.

"That was a key point that maybe a business person would think of," Eastman admits, "but it's a much more social work-y thing to do."

Of course, companies cannot be full of social workers. Ex-BP CEO Tony Hayward was widely derided after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill for having said one year earlier that BP "had too many people that were working to save the world" and "makes its money by someone somewhere every day putting on boots, coveralls, a hard hat and glasses and going out and turning valves. ... We've sort of lost track of that."

He was right, to an extent: Companies obviously need people trained in the technical skills of their core business. But I saw from my firsthand experience in Indonesia and China that BP could not make its money without a bit of world-saving.

Interns and alumni from the USC program have worked at Target liaising with local government agencies; at Pan American Bank conducting community needs assessments; and at Wells Fargo Life Management Services vetting service providers for high net-worth clients. These are all essential functions that serve not just the companies' bottom lines but its external stakeholders as well.

Tomorrow's CEOs will be working in an environment that demands proactive empathy with the needs of an ever-changing workforce, and innovative collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders on the most pressing issues that face our global society. That sounds to me like a

job for a social worker who might be able to help not just the world's companies, but its people and environment as well.

About the author

Christine Bader (Yale MBA '00) is author of *The Evolution of a Corporate Idealist: When Girl Meets Oil* and a visiting scholar at Columbia University. She worked for BP from 2000-08.

[More](#)

Warren Buffett to MBA students: This is what 'sets apart a big winner from the rest of the pack'



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[Tom Popomaronis, Contributor@tpopomaronis](#)

Philanthropist Warren Buffett is joined onstage by 24 other philanthropist and influential business people featured on the Forbes list of 100 Greatest Business Minds during the Forbes Media Centennial Celebration at Pier 60 on September 19, 2017

Daniel Zuchnik | Contributor | Getty Images

At 88, [Warren Buffett](#) has a lot of wisdom — and [sharing it with students](#) is one of the many wonderful things he’s known for.

One lesson the Berkshire Hathaway CEO loves to teach is the importance of developing good personal qualities at a young age.

Establishing good habits — even the little ones, like saying “please” and “thank you” — is a major key to success, he told [Yahoo Finance’s editor-in-chief](#) last year.

A high IQ won’t make you stand out

Buffett elaborated on the topic [in a talk to MBA students](#) from the University of Florida in 1998.

The legendary investor started his speech with a little game: “Think for a moment that I granted you a right — you can buy 10% of one of your classmate’s earnings for the rest of their lifetime.”

The decision should be based on merit, Buffett advised, so it’d be unwise to pick the person with the highest IQ, the richest parents or the most energy.

“There’s nothing wrong with getting the highest grades in the class, but that isn’t going to be the quality that sets apart a big winner from the rest of the pack,” said Buffett.

He continued: “You’d probably pick the person who has leadership qualities, who is able to get others to carry out their interests. That would be the person who is generous, honest and gave credit to other people for their own ideas.”

And here comes the hooker: In addition to this person, Buffett told the students they had to sell short another one of their classmates and pay 10% of what they do.

“You wouldn’t pick the person with the lowest IQ,” he said. “You’d think about the person who turned you off, the person who is egotistical, who is greedy, who cuts corners, who is slightly dishonest.”

If you see any of those qualities in yourself, you can get rid of them. “It’s simply a question of which you decide,” he said.

There’s nothing wrong with getting the highest grades in the class, but that isn’t going to be the quality that sets apart a big winner from the rest of the pack.

Warren Buffett

CEO, Berkshire Hathaway

“If you write the good qualities down and make them habitual, *you* will be the one you want to buy 10% of when you’re all through,” said Buffett. “The beauty of this is that you already own 100% of yourself, and you’re stuck with it. So you might as well be that person, that somebody else.”

Buffett said he sees people his age — or even 20 years younger — with “self-destructive behavior patterns,” and they’re entrapped by them.

Essentially, integrity — honesty, virtue and morality — can make or break you in the professional world. And if you choose not to make it a priority, you risk getting stuck with a reputation for deceit.

What Buffett looks for in a good hire

All of this goes back to what Buffett himself looks for when deciding who to [hire](#) or invest in. His decision isn’t based on business metrics, test scores or degrees. Instead, it’s all about one’s personal qualities.

“There was a guy, Pete Kiewit in Omaha, who used to say he looked for three things in hiring people: integrity, intelligence and energy,” Buffett said. “If they didn’t have the first, the other two would kill them, because if they don’t have integrity, you want them dumb and lazy.”

It makes sense — if you can’t trust someone to act with integrity in a situation that demands it, then should they really be allowed anywhere near you or your brand?

The answer seems like a resounding “no,” but it also raises another, more difficult question: How do you know who to trust?

At Berkshire Hathaway’s [annual meeting in 2007](#), an attendee asked Buffett that exact question.

The billionaire dipped into his store of wisdom and offered this sage perspective: “People give themselves away fairly often. When someone comes to me with a business, the very things they talk about, what they regard as important — there are a lot of clues that come as to subsequent behavior.”

Don’t be someone who turns people off

The big takeaway here is that if you want to be the person who is successful, who everyone wants to hire, you need to build habits of integrity.

There are a handful of ways to do that:

- Fulfill your promises
- Be honest
- Be trustworthy
- Give credit where credit is due
- Be mindful and emotionally intuitive
- Manifest humility
- Be willing to admit you're wrong
- Offer help when it's needed
- Treat others with respect
- Be charitable
- Be patient

Intelligence and ambition are valuable traits, but even so, a lack of integrity won't make you stand apart from the others — nor will it get you hired, at least not by Buffett.

Tom Popomaronis is a commerce expert and proud Baltimore native. Currently, he is the Senior Director of Product Innovation at the [Hawkins Group](#). His work has been featured in Forbes, Fast Company and The Washington Post. In 2014, he was named one of the "40 Under 40" by the Baltimore Business Journal.

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