CAPSTONE: GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

Professor Judy Clair

Syllabus

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Inspiration for the Course:

A generation gap has formed between you and your parents with regard to gender, leadership, and the world of work. When your parents were growing up, the women’s equality movement was underway. At the time, women were rarely found in the professions and even fewer women ascended into the ranks of formal leadership. In comparison, men could readily be found in formal leadership, but they had fewer choices when it came to involvement in their families because they were expected to be breadwinners, not homemakers.

Fast-forward to your own life. You have grown up in a world where women and working-mothers can be widely found in the workplace. You are surrounded by social media in which you can daily see and virtually interact with women who serve in prominent leadership roles – Sheryl Sandberg, Hilary Clinton, Malala Yousafzai, Michelle Obama, Angela Merkel are all familiar names. Yet, young women, who were told by their own parents that they could “have it all,” still experience considerable barriers to leadership advancement and to full workplace participation. Women of color face even greater barriers, and remain deeply under-represented in professions and formal leadership roles. Men increasingly express that they want to have it all too – success in work and leadership but not at the expense of family life. And yet men still face cultural and practical barriers to pursuing all of their dreams.

As your time at BC winds down, you must take stock of things you’ve learned and where you are going before you enter into post-college adulthood. How will you make choices to lead, work, love, and play? What role will your own gender play in your story of leadership, work, and life? For that matter, what role has your gender already played in your choices and experiences as you have taken your educational pathway, explored vocational choices, got involved in formal and informal leadership, and anticipated a transition to post-college life? Can you determine your future or will cultural and institutional forces beyond your control
shape the options that you will have and the choices you make based on your gender? Will you do something different than the rest or follow the lead of those who came before you?

In this course we will explore these enduring questions. While we focus on gender broadly speaking, I reserve a significant part of our time to focus specifically on women and leadership because women have faced special challenges in navigating into top organizational and leadership roles. The lessons built through the class aspire to provide you with an opportunity for reflection as you edge ever closer to being a BC graduate. More broadly, the course seeks to help women and men to design and lead organizations so that all employees, regardless of gender or other differences, are able to reach their full potential. We rely on a variety of learning methods, including discussion and reflection, critique of readings, experiential exercises, and when available, connections with guest speakers who seek to inspire our learning and own leadership development.

**The Capstone Experience:**

Welcome to the Capstone Program. We hope you'll discover why so many students find Capstone a dynamic and meaningful conclusion to their college experience.

The Capstone Program at Boston College is a unique opportunity for seniors and second-semester juniors to review their educations and to preview their upcoming long-term commitments in life. Unlike Capstone courses at most other schools, the BC Capstone does not serve as a final course in one’s major. Instead, we focus on the student’s personal development—in relationships, in society, in academics, in spirituality, in career, and in personal skills.

A Capstone seminar is an intensely personal experience for seniors. Yet it is just as intensely a shared experience with their peers and professor. The seminar is kept to about 15-20 students to promote that sharing. The format of the seminar combines a deep exploration of the self, with a disciplined academic exercise in substantive reading, writing, and discussion.

Each seminar prompts the student to look both backward and forward. It asks, "What have you made of your Boston College education? What has it made of you?" It also inquires, "How will you carry out the lifelong commitments you have begun to envision?" These questions go to the heart of the seniors' concerns. Thus Capstone seminars provide a place where students can ponder ultimate questions within a community of discourse.

The continuing success of the Capstone seminars demonstrates that the senior year is truly a "teachable moment." The seminars speak to the needs of that moment but also to the universal human need for reflection and spiritual development. The depth of this need may explain why students have made these among the most popular courses within the University.
The ground rules for Capstone are simple: you take it as a senior or second-semester junior. You take only one before graduation. You cannot take any Capstone class pass/fail; you must take it for a grade. Courses are kept small to provide great discussions. Some courses even serve as electives for some majors.

http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/capstone/about.html

**Goals of this Capstone Course:**

This Capstone Course seeks to bring together two broad goals by fulfilling the ideals set out for elective courses for the Management & Leadership Concentration/Minor and also the Capstone mission. My hopes for you in this class are shaped by these diverse interests. I hope that:

…you leave the class with a deepened understanding of gender and leadership dynamics and an informed perspective based on evidence built from systematic research on these topics;

…you have moments of discernment in which you gain clarity about your own personal development as a current or future leader and as someone of your sex/gender;

…you have an opportunity to explore the road behind you and the road ahead at this important turning point in your life in which you will soon transition from student to young professional, and from young person to emerging adult;

…you will feel more empowered to pursue your future, while at the same time you will be better educated about some of the challenges and hurdles you are likely to face down the road.

I think it is vital for you to identify several goals of your own for this course (even if they may be as simple as “finish this final chapter of my education without too much struggle!”). Here is a place for you to indicate your own goal(s):

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___________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

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Class Time and the Student’s Role:

Most of our time together will be spent in discussions within small groups and as a class. We will discuss issues raised in our readings and participate in learning exercises. We will also periodically benefit from movies and, when available, guest speakers who will visit to enrich our learning about particular issues.

Individual grade performance is directly linked to demonstrated learning, effort, and class participation in each facet of the class. Further, regular attendance in class is necessary to create a trusting environment. In the case that you have an unavoidable and excusable conflict, such as a job interview, I encourage you to submit information (i.e., the letter confirming your interview time and date) so that I can take note of this conflict in
my files. While highly unusual, I have had students who miss many class sessions over a semester. In such cases where absences are extensive, I reserve the option to give this student a failing grade in the course.

As you can see, your active participation is vital to the success of this class. This is YOUR class and the quality of your experience will depend on the vitality that you bring to it! At the end of the semester, students will be evaluated as to the quality and degree of their participation during class sessions over the full semester using the guidelines appearing later in the syllabus. Please take a close look at these guidelines so that you are aware of my expectations. In addition to in-class participation, you will be given several opportunities to earn participation points by turning in brief participation exercises. You may additionally be asked to participate in Canvas discussions, in which I ask you to reflect on particular readings, activities, guest speakers or other issues that come up in class that we weren't able to process there. I will email you about these opportunities and/or mention them in class. I can only give participation credit for written participation exercises or Canvas discussions within the specified time limit.

Confidentiality

We take a solemn vow of confidentiality to assure that the classroom environment is a safe space in which peers can share their experiences and perspectives without worrying about the information being shared with others. While you are welcomed to share general lessons learned and insights gained with others, please do not share information that others can link to individuals in the classroom.

Technology in the Classroom

Technologies such as laptops and handheld devices give us many opportunities to be more productive and efficient. However, I have found that their use in the classroom is a distraction because students tend to use them to multitask during class time (i.e., surf the web, answer email, etc.). Not only is this practice disrespectful to others it also depresses your own learning. For that reason, my classroom has a “no laptop, phone, ipad etc” rule. Also, please turn off your cell phone or place your phone on silent/buzz during class. We can see you when you are sneaking a peek at your phone etc. - so, don't be tempted. You can access it on break if you'd like. Periodically, we may use our computers to do in-class research. I will let you know ahead of time if this is part of my plan for a specific class day.

Students with Disabilities

Please let me know if you have a documented disability through Boston College that I can accommodate.

Course Materials

a. Sandberg, S. Lean In for Graduates

d. Chodron, P. *Fail, fail Again, Fail better: Wise Advice for Leaning Into the Unknown*

d. Brown, B. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*

e. Other readings and exercises linked directly through Canvas

**Potential In-Class Videos**

Hunting Ground

The Mask You Live In

(Mis)Representation

Killing Us Softly 4

Makers PBS Documentary Series

Ted.Com, Meg Jay: Why 30 is not the new 20

**Paper Formatting Requirements**

MLA style should be followed for all papers. You can access information on MLA style through the BC Library resource system at [http://libguides.bc.edu/mla-style](http://libguides.bc.edu/mla-style).

**Late Assignments**

All papers are due at the beginning of the class session on their due date. Students who come to class late that day and turn a paper in after the start of class will have their papers marked 1 day late. Often, your paper will be the topic of class discussions on their due date. Students receive no credit when a paper is not turned in or when it is judged to be unacceptable. Late papers will be downgraded by 5% for each day late. Participation assignments will only be given credit if turned in during class on its due date. No credit will be assigned to participation assignments that are turned in after that time.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Boston College places great value on academic integrity. All students are expected to understand the University’s rules and guidelines on plagiarism, colluding, cheating and other breaches of the policy and are encouraged to read the guidelines at: [http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/ integrity.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/ integrity.html) (Links to an external site.).
I take the University’s policy very seriously. Students who violate the policy should expect to be penalized according to the University procedures. Penalties may include: grading penalties with dean notification, university probation, suspension, or expulsion, all of which become part of a student’s academic record and are reportable to graduate/professional schools and outside agencies. I unfortunately have had the misfortune of penalizing students in the past – please know that I will pursue such violations.

The Internet has caused many cases of plagiarism and insufficient credit attribution to arise. Students using the Internet for research must be very clear when citing their sources. Please go to the following website at the University of Indiana to learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it:

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml (Links to an external site.).

Students, faculty and deans are all expected to promote the academic integrity of members of the University community. If there is any confusion about what is expected of you, please address the issue with your professor or dean prior to turning in an assignment.

**Typical Course Requirements**

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Worth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (Including Discussion Leadership)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Response Papers (RRP) (x4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Industry Profile Assignment</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Learning Portfolio</td>
<td>35%</td>
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You can learn more about each of these requirements by reading the Canvas folder called: Assignments. You will also be given a written copy of the guidelines for each assignment at the beginning of the semester.
### COURSE OVERVIEW  
*(TENTATIVE)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPLORING THE TERRAIN OF GENDER AND LEADERSHIP</strong></td>
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<td>How do You Define “Leadership” and What Role Does Gender Play?</td>
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<td>How Has My Sex/Gender Shaped Who I’ve Become?</td>
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<td>How Does Gender Influence Leadership Style?</td>
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<td>Will Gender Influence How Others’ React to My Attempts to Lead?</td>
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<td>Gender Distribution in the Professions and in Leadership: What’s Going on Here?</td>
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<td>Can I Do It All: Family, Work and Leadership?</td>
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<td>What’s Sex Got to Do With It? Is “Netflix and Chill” A Path to Happiness, Career and Leadership…Or Not So Much?</td>
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<td><strong>PAVING YOUR LEADERSHIP PATH FORWARD</strong></td>
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<td>Own Your Story</td>
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<td>Fail, Fail Again, Fail Better</td>
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<td>Be Courageous, Dare Greatly</td>
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<td>Negotiate for What You Want</td>
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<td>Sow the Seeds of Success On the Job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sow the Seeds of Success Off the Job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding the Will to Lead…Or to Follow</td>
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