Power and Glory in Turbulent Times: The History of Leadership From Henry V to Steve Jobs

Spring 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the effectiveness of individual leaders who lived and worked in moments of great turbulence. The class aims to understand the choices they made, including the strategies they used, the values they lived by, and the tradeoffs they accepted as they created widespread power in companies, communities, and nations. It also focuses on the impact, immediate and long-term, that each of these individuals had, and how this impact was related to their animating missions. Particular attention is paid to what it means to lead forcefully, toward a worthy end, in times of ongoing turmoil and to the relevant lessons that these leaders offer for our own moment, in the early 21st century. Finally, the course strives to draw credible inspiration from these individuals and the contexts in which they acted.

This course offers students the opportunity to explore the lives of a range of men and women—from business, government, and other realms—during widespread disruption. It covers the individual journeys of these people, the changes in the nature of the organizations they led, and the dynamic environments in which they each lived and worked. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to examine the choices each leader made, the path he or she traveled, the values and objectives he or she nurtured, and the larger stage on which that person acted. This perspective provides a broad understanding of the long-term impact of leadership and innovation on business, government, and society. In looking closely at the agency of other individuals who have exerted lasting influence, students are challenged to consider their own agency, along with their ambitions and ideas about leadership.

The course will draw on a range of materials from the humanities and social sciences, including case studies, articles, book chapters, plays, and multimedia offerings.

There is a significant writing component to the course. Students are required to write five short critical essays during the term and one longer integrative essay due right before exam period. Regular, detailed feedback is provided on all these papers, providing students an important opportunity to hone their critical writing skills.

Class attendance is mandatory and will be a component of each student’s final grade.

The leaders studied are:

1. Henry V
2. Winston Churchill
3. Josiah Wedgwood
4. Alexander Hamilton
5. Frederick Douglass
6. Abraham Lincoln
7. Madam C.J. Walker
8. Milton Hershey
9. Henry Heinz
10. John Rockefeller
11. Estée Lauder
12. Gloria Steinem
13. Dietrich Bonhoeffer
14. Martin Luther King, Jr.
15. Rachel Carson and Gary Hirshberg
16. Katherine Graham
17. Oprah Winfrey
18. Bono
19. Howard Schultz
20. Ernest Shackleton
21. Mark Zuckerberg
22. Steve Jobs

Core Questions:

1. How did leaders create the authority they wielded? How did they acknowledge and exercise the responsibilities that accompanied such authority?

2. Towards what end did these leaders work? How did they come to terms with their work?

3. The American philosopher Mortimer Adler, drawing on Aristotle, noted that a good leader must have three qualities: *Logos, Pathos, and Ethos*. Logos is a capacity to move the minds of people and to give consistent, unwavering motivation for action. Pathos is the ability to affect the emotional hearts of people. Ethos is one’s moral core and the base from which a speaker persuades others. How did each individual leader evidence these qualities and to what extent?

4. David Foster Wallace, the American novelist, once wrote that true leaders are people "who help us overcome the limitations of our own laziness and selfishness and weakness and fear and get us to do better, harder things than we can get ourselves to do on our own." How has this concept of leadership changed over time? What have we learned from these shifts?

5. To what extent have these leaders been driven by ethical values? How have they come to terms with themselves and with the missions of their organizations? How important was a “clean” business or organization to them?

6. How do we learn from effective leaders—both those with whom we have direct experience and those whom we know indirectly—through reputation or impact?

7. What qualities are most important for effective leaders, here and now?
MBA Program Honor Code

The mission of Harvard Business School is to educate leaders who make a difference in the world. The MBA Program does this through a learning model in which students and faculty teach and learn from one another. This process of active participation and shared learning – crucial in any academic community, and the very foundation on which the HBS MBA Program rests – depends on individual preparation of all materials, small-group discussions to explore and expand on this initial work, consistent attendance in class and full engagement in class discussions, and post-class reflection. The Honor Code supplements the School’s statement of Community Values and reflects the commitment students and faculty make as members of the community to participate in, foster, and uphold this learning model.

It is a commitment of the students, individually and collectively, to prepare for and participate fully in classroom and academic activities; refrain from giving or receiving unauthorized aid in class preparation or classwork, during examinations, or in any other work that is to be used by an instructor as part of a course or as a basis of grading; and act as stewards of the Honor Code in upholding its spirit and letter and encouraging others to do so as well. It is a commitment of the faculty, individually and collectively, to demonstrate confidence in the honor of their students; act as stewards of the Honor Code in upholding its spirit and letter and encouraging others to do so as well.

Additionally, while the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work. Any activity that violates the spirit or letter of the learning model is a violation of the Honor Code and Harvard Business School’s Community Values.

Source: [http://www.hbs.edu/mba/student-life/Pages/community-values.aspx](http://www.hbs.edu/mba/student-life/Pages/community-values.aspx)
Power and Glory in Turbulent Times

Outline of the Course

1. Monday, January 26  
   Warrior Kings: Henry V

2. Wednesday, January 28  
   Warrior Kings: Winston Churchill

3. Monday, February 2  
   Path Breakers to Modernity: Josiah Wedgwood

4. Tuesday, February 3  
   Path Breakers to Modernity: Alexander Hamilton

5. Tuesday, February 17  
   Servants to a Mighty Cause: Frederick Douglass

6. Wednesday, February 18  
   Servants to a Mighty Cause: Abraham Lincoln

7. Monday, February 23  
   Passing It Forward: Madam C.J. Walker

8. Tuesday, February 24  
   Passing It Forward: Milton Hershey

9. Monday, March 2  
   Market Leaders: Henry Heinz

10. Tuesday, March 3  
    Market Leaders: John D. Rockefeller

11. Monday, March 9  
    Breaking through Boundaries: Estee Lauder

12. Tuesday, March 10  
    Breaking through Boundaries: Gloria Steinem

13. Monday, March 23  
    The Cost of Commitment: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

14. Tuesday, March 24  
    The Cost of Commitment: Martin Luther King, Jr.

15. Wednesday, March 25  
    Stewards of Sustainability: Rachel Carson and Gary Hirshberg

16. Monday, March 30  
    My Life is My Message: Katherine Graham

17. Tuesday, March 31  
    My Life is My Message: Oprah Winfrey

18. Monday, April 6  
    Entrepreneurial Success and Social Impact: Bono

19. Tuesday, April 7  
    Entrepreneurial Success and Social Impact: Howard Schultz

20. Wednesday, April 8  
    The Quest for Fame: Ernest Shackleton

21. Monday, April 13  
    Power and Responsibility in Turbulent Times: Mark Zuckerberg

22. Tuesday, April 14  
    Power and Responsibility in Turbulent Times: Steve Jobs
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List of Materials

Books:


Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself with Related Documents*, edited and with an introduction by David W. Blight (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003).


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Online Supplied Readings:


**Optional information on Mr. Jobs:**


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Professor’s Note: The course is organized by themes, with two leaders generally grouped together under each theme. Every week—with two exceptions—we will cover one theme and thus two leaders. We will devote our class time to a discussion of these leaders, frequently comparing them within units and—as we get to know the individuals we are studying—across time periods and themes. In this context, it is strongly recommended that you do the week’s readings before the first class of each week. This will allow more comparative discussion, more incisive understanding of the broader connections among these people, and a much richer appreciation of who these individuals were (and are) and how they matter—not only in the times in which they lived but also in relation to our own moment. As important, the study of these leaders and their respective journeys will enrich your thinking about your own leadership path.

Warrior Kings

Monday, January 26 and Wednesday, January 28

LEADERS: Henry V
Winston Churchill


Selection of Churchill’s Speeches, taken from Graham Stewart. His Finest Hours: The War Speeches of Winston Churchill (London: Quercus, 2007). [In the Course Packet].

1. Pages 10-14: “A hush over Europe,” Broadcast to the American People (August 8, 1939).
Professor's Note: William Shakespeare wrote *Henry V* in the late 1590s. It forms part of a series of history plays (along with *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, parts I and II) about the civil unrest of the War of the Roses. *Henry V* and the other plays in this series deal with the first two decades of the struggle: from 1399 to about 1415 (another series of history plays, which includes *Henry VI*, parts I, II and III, and *Richard III*, take up the remaining decades of the struggle: from about 1422 to 1485). In *Henry V*, Shakespeare explores the making of a warrior king and the larger stage on which he acts, contrasting his actions and motivations as ruler with those of his younger, “wilder days” as the prodigal son and heir of Henry IV. The playwright also examines the source and maintenance of Henry V’s authority in the midst of upheaval at home and abroad.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How did both Henry V and Churchill create the authority they wielded? How did they acknowledge and exercise the responsibilities that accompanied such authority?

2. How do leaders evidence *logos*, or the capacity to move the minds of people and give consistent motivation for action? How did Churchill and Henry V move the British people to resolute action? How did they convince others to accept great personal risk?

3. As early as his teens, Churchill felt impatient to enter the greater stage of politics. As one biographer, Roy Jenkins, put it, Churchill “was never one to confine his eyes to the narrow ground beneath his feet. He always looked up to the high trees.” How important is this ability to see the larger picture – and envision oneself within it? What, if any, costs are entailed in such a line of sight (and the personal ambition accompanying it)?

4. If war is a crucible that tests individual purpose and character, how does it help us understand a leader’s best qualities? How are leaders themselves shaped by the crisis of war? Are wartime leaders potentially less effective in peacetime?

**Path Breakers to Modernity**

*Monday, February 2 and Tuesday, February 3*

**LEADERS:** Josiah Wedgwood

Alexander Hamilton


The Strategic Vision of Alexander Hamilton 795-075
Discussion Questions:

1. A managerial scholar has defined entrepreneurship as “the relentless pursuit of opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled.” With this definition in mind, was Wedgwood an entrepreneur? If so, what opportunities did he pursue?

2. What were the key drivers of Josiah Wedgwood’s success?

3. As Thomas McCraw writes, “Hamilton always thought strategically. He dwelled on the big picture.” In the case of Hamilton, what did it mean to “think continentally?”

4. What was the essence of Hamilton’s vision? What did Hamilton see that Jefferson did not and why is the difference in these two visions important?

Servants to a Mighty Cause

Tuesday, February 17 and Wednesday, February 18

LEADERS: Frederick Douglass
Abraham Lincoln

READINGS: Slavery 792-001
Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War 805-115

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself with Related Documents, edited and with an introduction by David W. Blight (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003), pp. 29-30; 41-125.


Discussion Questions:

1. What was the institutional failure that Frederick Douglass set out to address? What failure did Lincoln try to right? How did each leader motivate others to join them in their respective endeavors?

2. How, if at all, did these two leaders draw on personal lessons learned early on in their lives to weather and manage crisis?

3. How did they maintain their dedication and purpose to a greater cause through the bloodshed and the turbulence of the Civil War?

4. How did each of these men deal with the obstacles in their path? How, if at all, did they transform crises into opportunities for growth and renewal?

5. What were the most important attributes of each man that allowed them to be effective leaders? What were some of the weaknesses that you see in each of these men that made them less effective?

Passing It Forward

Monday, February 23 and Tuesday, February 24

LEADERS:    Madame C.J. Walker

Milton Hershey

READINGS:    Madame C.J. Walker: Entrepreneur, Leader and Philanthropist 807-145

Candy Land: The Utopian Vision of Milton Hershey 805-066

Discussion Questions:

1. Madame C.J. Walker and Milton Hershey each came from humble beginnings. Nonetheless, they both built successful companies that only led their respective markets, but also had real social impact. What were the most important drivers of these achievements? How did Madam Walker and Milton Hershey come to terms with their success—monetary and otherwise?

2. Madame C.J. Walker saw the social and educational progress of young African-Americans as one of her primary objectives. Even as her fortune grew, she stayed connected to the issues facing black society. How is a business leader’s commitment to a larger social agenda compatible with the economic imperative for growth? How can it be detrimental?

3. What do you make of Milton Hershey’s repeated failures both before and after he started the chocolate company? What can we learn about leadership in the 21st century from the life and work of Milton Hershey?
4. How were Walker and Hershey driven by ethical values? How important was a “clean” business or organization to them? What do you learn about your own journey from examining how they came to terms with both themselves and the missions of their respective organizations?

Market Leaders

Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3

LEADERS: H.J. Heinz

John D. Rockefeller


John D. Rockefeller and the Creation of Standard Oil 807-110

Discussion Questions:

1. How did each of these entrepreneurs come to create a new market and then lead it so effectively?

2. How did each of these individuals define success?

3. What drove Henry Heinz? What drove John D. Rockefeller? How do your answers to these questions affect your understanding of how they achieved their success?

4. Were there weaknesses in Heinz and Rockefeller that potentially made them less effective?

5. How important is the specific path an individual takes towards his or her goal?

Breaking Through Boundaries

Monday, March 9 and Tuesday, March 10

LEADERS: Estée Lauder

Gloria Steinem


Discussion Questions:

1. How did Estée Lauder’s upbringing and experience affect her chances of success in the 1930s and 1940s? On which stage was she most effective? To which values and principles did Lauder hold fast during the course of her career?

2. Compare and contrast the opportunities open to Estée Lauder with those of Gloria Steinem in the 1960s and 1970s.

3. What could Lauder and Steinem see that others could not? How did Lauder’s vision for women differ from that of Steinem? How do you assess the ambition of each of these women and how did this affect their evolving visions?

4. In November 2013, President Barack Obama awarded Gloria Steinem the Presidential Medal of Freedom, one of two highest civilian awards in the United States. In your mind, what has Steinem accomplished and how do these achievements stack up against her broader mission?

5. How would you compare Estée Lauder and Gloria Steinem as leaders? How influential have their views and work been for modern women?

The Cost of Commitment

Monday, March 23 and Tuesday, March 24

LEADERS: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Martin Luther King, Jr.

READINGS:

Professor’s note: You have before you a range of primary and secondary source readings from and about Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr. The readings are intended to provide you a sense of the broad context in which each of these leaders worked and grew. The excerpts from Parting the Waters are often dense with details about the myriad of people and organizations that lit the early fires of civil rights activism. Do not worry about parsing out the different people and groups too closely. Instead focus on the larger picture of King trying to organize effective, nonviolent action in the face of all kinds of significant obstacles.


Discussion Questions:

1. Both Bonhoeffer and King were freedom fighters who put their lives in danger. Both spent time in prison. Political and civic leaders often risk personal safety and security, persecution, jail time, and, in some cases, death in the pursuit of their higher goals. How do they change accepted culture mores and rigid institutional practices by embracing these risks?

2. How did the personal lives of these leaders suffer because of the relentless pursuit of their causes? Were their missions compatible with fulfilling personal lives? What concessions did they have to make?

3. To what extent must an effective leader have a sense of a mission beyond him or herself? Beyond his or her time? Where and when did this sense of duty develop for Bonhoeffer and King? How was it honed or sharpened over time? Is it a type of obsession?

4. How did King and Bonhoeffer transform early failure and missteps into opportunity?

Stewards of Sustainability

Wednesday, March 25

LEADERS:  Rachel Carson

          Gary Hirshberg

READINGS:  Gary Hirshberg and Stonyfield Farm 811-096


Discussion Questions:

1. What drove Rachel Carson? How do you assess her leadership? How does she compare with other men and women of impact whom we have studied?

2. What drove Gary Hirshberg? How do you assess his leadership? How does he compare with other individuals whom we have studied?

3. What do you learn about the entrepreneurial journey from Hirshberg’s story? Are you more or less inclined toward starting your own business after reading this case?

4. How difficult was it for Carson and Hirshberg to realize their dreams, practically and emotionally, given the obstacles in their respective paths? What lessons do you take away for yourself from considering each of these leader’s paths?

“My Life is My Message”

Monday, March 30 and Tuesday, March 31

LEADERS: Katherine Graham

Oprah Winfrey

CASE: Oprah Winfrey 809-068


Discussion Questions:

1. A New Yorker writer asserted recently, “Winfrey is all about truth.” Do you agree or disagree? If it is not truth, what is Winfrey all about? How is Winfrey’s truth different from Katharine Graham’s conception of the truth?

2. Compare and contrast how Winfrey and Graham used their respective media platforms. Which leader was more effective in relation to her particular goals?

3. Consider each of these individuals’ journeys up to the point when they assumed real authority. What insights do you draw about the “making of a leader” from these very distinct paths?

4. Both Winfrey and Graham have exercised great control over the distribution of information. Toward which ends has each of these leaders used such control?

Entrepreneurial Success and Social Impact

Monday, April 6 and Tuesday, April 7

LEADERS: Bono

Howard Schultz

READINGS: Bono and U2 809-148

Starbucks Coffee Company: Transformation and Renewal 314-068

Discussion Questions:

1. According to Forbes, the members of U2 earned almost $200 million in 12 months on their 360 degree tour. Four years earlier, the members of the band and their manager took home $250 million without releasing a new album or creating any new offerings. What business strategy stands behind this consistent wealth creation and how has this strategy evolved since the band’s early days? What are the band’s key assets and liabilities in managing the business model they have created?

2. How do you assess U2’s humanitarian work, particularly Bono’s activism and philanthropy? How has his role as an activist been affected by his artistic and an entrepreneurial work? What challenges arise from the nexus between the two “day jobs” of rock star and devoted humanitarian?

3. What is U2’s mission?

4. How did Starbucks lose its way beginning in 2007? What were the most important decisions Schultz and his team made beginning in 2008 to try to turn Starbucks around?

5. How would you assess Schultz’s leadership style? How did the transformation period hone his leadership skills and abilities? How did the challenges the company faced help him become more adept as a leader?

6. How do you assess Schultz’s vision of businesses effecting or catalyzing political change? How much potential does this idea have?
The Quest for Fame

Wednesday, April 8

LEADER: Ernest Shackleton

READINGS: Leadership in Crisis: Ernest Shackleton and the Epic Voyage of the *Endurance*

803-127


Discussion Questions:

1. What drove Ernest Shackleton? How does an understanding of his ambition inform your perspective on his leadership during the crisis of the *Endurance* expedition?

2. How would you assess Shackleton’s actions on the ice, once the game had changed so suddenly and completely for the expedition? What were his key strengths and weaknesses throughout the 20-month ordeal?

3. What are the most important lessons of the Shackleton story for leaders today working in the midst of great turbulence?

4. Read Robert Kennedy’s Cape Town speech carefully. What do you learn about leadership in the 21st century from his remarks delivered more than 45 years ago? How is the gauntlet Kennedy drops relevant to your own journey?

5. If you could have one public figure today read Kennedy’s speech and put it into action, who would this be and how would you have him or her make something tangible of it?

Power and Responsibility in Turbulent Times

Monday, April 13 and Tuesday, April 14

LEADERS: Mark Zuckerberg

Steve Jobs
Professor's Note: For this class, we will take up the work and impact of Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs, arguably two of the most important individuals in the technology sector in the early 21st century. As background for your reflection and our class discussion, I have assigned a variety of articles, a video clip and pages from the bestselling biography on Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson. All of the materials are easy to read (or watch; several are gripping). As you absorb these fascinating stories, bear in mind that this is history in the making and that, as such, we do not have the perspective that time and distance provide. A second aspect to keep in your mind's eye is that as exciting and powerful as both these men's lives have been, the success, influence and money are not the whole story. What lies underneath these aspects of Zuckerberg and Jobs as we have come to know them? What tradeoffs has each leader made as he relentlessly pursued his goals? How do these tradeoffs and the undersides of each story matter?

**READINGS:**


Optional Information on Mr. Jobs:


Discussion Questions:

1. What do you make of Mark Zuckerberg, one of the wealthiest and most powerful people in the world? At almost every turn, he says he co-founded Facebook in order to make the world more open and connected. How do you assess this mission in relation to Zuckerberg himself and in relation to how his company makes money? What synergies and conflicts do you see between Facebook’s overarching goal and what it actually does day to day? (Pay special attention to the readings from the SEC S1 document as you think about this question).

2. How do you assess Facebook’s impact on social relationships—on and offline? Have our social relations and the quality of our connections improved through a platform like Facebook? Does more “connectivity” enrich the quality of our lives? What difference has Facebook made in your life? How do the answers to this question inform your assessment of Mark Zuckerberg as a leader?

3. Do you trust Facebook to adequately safeguard your privacy? Whose responsibility is it to mind the “privacy store”?

4. In the late 1970s, during the early years of the Information Revolution (which was then called the Computer Revolution), many people were counting a lot of basketballs around this new technology. What was the gorilla that Steve Jobs saw in the midst of the bouncing basketballs? How did this vision affect his path going forward? How did it affect his impact today?

5. Ousted from Apple in 1985, Jobs spent many years in what he would later call the wilderness before returning to the company in 1997. What role did this wilderness period play in Jobs’s evolution as a leader? As a human being?

6. Several of the readings compare Steve Jobs to historical entrepreneurs such as Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie or Thomas Edison. Certainly Jobs was an entrepreneur who relentlessly pursued opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled. How do you assess him as a leader? What were his greatest strengths and weaknesses? With which other figures in our course would you compare him?

7. In the last assigned chapter in biography of Jobs, Walter Isaacson writes about Job’s relationships with his family and others. How do these snapshots of Jobs inform your broader understanding of him as a leader?