This course is the product of my decades-long work on leadership and followership, which expanded over time to include context. It is not a how-to course, a course on how to be a leader, at least not directly. Rather it provides a new and different way of looking at leadership that is more inclusive and integrative. Implicit is the assumption that an expanded conception of how change is created is not only of theoretical interest, but of practical import. Implicit is the assumption that when people come to understand that leadership is, inevitably, also about followership, and that leadership is, inevitably, also about the contexts within which leaders and follower are situated, they will be far better equipped to lead wisely and well.

This course is, then, intended to correct for our bias toward leaders and away from followers. It is equally intended to correct for our bias toward individuals and away from other variables that equally pertain – for example, the impact of technology on authority. This course is, in short, intended to correct for the leader-centrism that, in my view, plagues the leadership industry.
Leadership turns out not to be about single individuals astride groups and organizations, countries and communities. Rather leadership is a system with three variables, each of which is equally important. The first is the leader. The second is the follower - the other. And the third is the context – or, better, contexts, plural, some proximate, others distal.

In fact, leadership has never been about one person perched at the top. It has always been more complex a process than the leader-centric leadership literature would seem to suggest. However, it is also true that times change – and that leaders in the present are less important than leaders in the past, and that followers are more important than they used to be. Changes in culture and technology especially have accelerated in this century, which explains why the balance of power between leaders and followers has shifted dramatically. The voice of the people has become, of itself, a determinant, not only in groups and organizations that are democratic, but also in those that are autocratic.

Similarly, leaders and followers are set in certain contexts, all of which impinge on how they think and on what they do. Some contexts are proximate, such as the small groups and large organizations within which most of us work. Other contexts are distal – for example, nation states. These spaces and places are not incidental. Contextual intelligence is as important to good leadership as is emotional intelligence. Contextual awareness as important as is self-awareness.

In keeping with the systemic approach that is the hallmark of this course, the term is divided into three approximately equal parts. The sessions on leaders will focus primarily though not exclusively on the classics of the leadership literature. The sessions on followers will focus primarily though not exclusively on how ordinary people determine collective outcomes. And the sessions on context will focus primarily though not exclusively on circumstances that students determine consequential or even critical to their own leadership experience.

**Course Format**

I like a lively classroom. Most of our classes will, then, be a mix – first content delivered informally by me, then group discussions, all of which will involve inclusive participation. My expectation is that students will learn from the content of the course materials, and from me, and from each other.

**Course Requirements**

First, every student is expected to participate actively in class discussions. To “participate” means to contribute, in class, orally, to the collective conversation. This mandates that every reading be completed in advance of the class for which it was assigned.

Second, every student will be a member of a small group that will be responsible for leading one half of one class.

Third, every student will, toward the end of the term, give brief oral comments on their final papers.
Fourth, every student is expected to submit to me, in hard copy, two short papers, each 4 to 6 pages in length (typed, double spaced). Each of these papers should address a single question or issue that was raised either by the class readings and/or the class discussions. The first of these papers should be submitted to me in hard copy, in class, on **Tuesday, September 26th**. The second of these papers should be submitted to me in hard copy, in class, on **Thursday, October 19th**. Guidelines will be provided for both papers. They will clarify the parameters of the assignment, and indicate what a good short paper for this class should look like.

Fifth, every student is expected to submit to me, in hard copy, a final paper between 8 and 10 pages in length (typed, double-spaced). This last paper is due on the last day of class, **Thursday, November 30th**. Unlike your first two papers, this third longer paper should grow out of your own expertise and experience. Think of it as a case study that uses the **systemic approach to leadership** to analyze a situation with which you personally are familiar. Guidelines for this paper will also be provided.

*All three papers should include either endnotes or a brief bibliography, to make it clear to the reader, that is, to me, which sources were in any way used.*

Finally, please note that, as indicated in the syllabus, there are two evening sessions, each dedicated to film that is directly on point. The first will be shown from 6 to 8 pm on the evening of Wednesday, October 4; the second will be shown from 6 to 8:15 pm on the evening of Wednesday, November 1. In October, we will see Leni Riefenstahl’s classic documentary of Hitler’s first Nazi Party rally (1934), “Triumph of the Will.” In November, we will see “Spotlight,” which won the Oscar for best picture in 2016. If you are unable to attend either of these evening sessions, please be certain to see the film on your own time before the next day’s class. (“Triumph of the Will” runs two hours. “Spotlight” runs two hours and nine minutes. Pizza and drinks are part of the deal – they will be available immediately before both films are shown.)

**Course Grading**

Students will be graded on:

- The effectiveness of their oral participations
- The excellence of their written submissions

Grades will be determined in approximate accord with these percentages:

- Participation – 30%
- Papers – 70% (first paper 20%; second paper 20%; third paper 30%)

**Additional Notes**

1. The use of all electronic devices is prohibited during class. Moreover, all electronic devices are to be turned off for the duration of each class session.
2. If you must come to class late, or leave class early, please inform me in advance of the session. Consider each class a professional commitment - and treat it as such. This implies regular attendance and reliable punctuality.
3. On the remote chance that you are obliged to miss more than two classes, please explain your situation to me.
4. The syllabus that follows is essentially final. It is not, however, engraved in stone. It can be changed if, for some reason, such as an external event, change is deemed desirable.
5. Be aware that you are expected to abide by the University policies on academic honesty and integrity as indicated in the Student Handbook. Among other things this means that any paper submitted by you is presumed to be your own original work that has not been submitted anywhere else, for any other purpose. Words written or ideas employed by others may be used to a limited extent, presuming proper attribution.
6. Feel free to contact me at any time with any questions or comments. I can be reached by e-mail and, or, we can set up a time to meet.

Course Readings

You might wish to purchase one or more of the following books. You are not required to purchase any of the following books; all readings are otherwise available. The books are available at the Coop.


Note 1: All readings marked “Canvas” are available on the course web site.
Note 2: All books are also on reserve at the HKS library.
Note 3: For my own running commentary on leaders, followers, and context, see my blog at: http://barbarakellerman.com/
Weekly Assignments

Note: There are two class sessions – both titled “Pedagogical Pause” – for which no readings are assigned. To repeat, all other readings are to be completed before class meets.

Thursday, August 31: The Leadership Industry


Tuesday, September 5: The Leadership System


Thursday, September 7: The History of Leadership


Tuesday, September 12: The Question of Historical Causation

- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic, 2010), pp. vii-xix; and 1-20 (Canvas).

Thursday, September 14: About Leadership

Tuesday, September 19: The Exercise of Leadership


Thursday, September 21: The Leader

- Read in some depth about any leader of your choice – leader however defined, in any area of endeavor, in any part of the world. Only criterion: Leader is living, as opposed to dead.

Tuesday, September 26: About Followership

- Frans de Waal, *Our Inner Ape* (Riverhead, 2005), pp. 51-84 (Canvas).

Note: YOUR FIRST PAPER IS DUE.

Thursday, September 28: Leadership System – The Case of Nazi Germany


Tuesday, October 3: Followers in Nazi Germany

- Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the*

Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (HarperPerennial, 1998), 159-189. (Canvas).


WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, at 6 PM - FILM: “Triumph of the Will”

- Time: 6 to 8 pm
- Place: Littauer 332
- With… Pizza and Drinks ….

Thursday, October 5: “Triumph of the Will” – A Systemic Analysis


Tuesday, October 10: Relations between Leaders and Followers

- Kellerman, Followership, pp. 49-74 (HKS Reserve Desk).
- Ira Chaleff, The Courageous Follower: Standing Up to and for Our Leaders (Berrett-Koehler, 2009), 1-33 (HKS Reserve Desk).

Thursday, October 12: Obedience to Authority

- Stanley Milgram, Obedience to Authority (HarperPerennial, 1974), 1-12; 135-152. (Canvas). Note: Before starting this reading, familiarize yourself (online) with Milgram’s famous/infamous obedience experiment.
- Philip Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil (Random House, 2007), 3-22; 195-228. Note: Before starting this reading, familiarize yourself (online) with Zimbardo’s famous/infamous prison Experiment (Canvas).
- Kellerman, Bad Leadership, 119-146. (HKS Reserve Desk).

Tuesday, October 17: Bad Leadership/Bad Followership

- Sidney Finkelstein, Why Smart Executives Fail (Portfolio, 2003), 1-18; 52-76; 213-238. (HKS Reserve Desk).

Thursday, October 19: The Exercise of Followership
• Albert O. Hirschman, Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Declines in Firms, Organizations, and States (Harvard University Press, 1970), 1-20 (Canvas).
• Kellerman, Followership, 49-74; and 213-261 (HKS Reserve Desk).
• Chaleff, Courageous Follower, 57-83 (HKS Reserve Desk).
• Ira Chaleff, Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When What You’re Told to Do is Wrong (Berrett-Koehler, 2015), pp. 13-36 (HKS Reserve Desk).

NOTE: YOUR SECOND PAPER IS DUE.

Tuesday, October 24: Pedagogical Pause – The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Thursday, October 26: Conceptions of Context


Tuesday, October 31: Specifics of Context - The Decline of Authority in the Catholic Church

• Kellerman, The End of Leadership, pp. 69-95(HKS Reserve Desk)
• Kellerman, Followership, pp. 151-177 (HKS Reserve Desk).

Wednesday, November 1, at 6 pm – Film: “Spotlight”

• Time: 6 to 8:10.
• Place: Littauer 332
• With … Pizza and Drinks….

Thursday, November 2: “Spotlight” – A Systemic Analysis

• http://www.firstthings.com/article/2016/01/a-crisis-of-conservative-catholicism

Tuesday, November 7: Specifics of Context – The U.S. in the Second Decade of the 21st Century

• Historical: Kellerman, Hard Times, 13-35 (HKS Reserve Desk).
• Contemporaneous: Kellerman, Hard Times: 39-61; and 74-153; and 177-219 (HKS Reserve Desk).

Thursday, November 9: Contexts Change - The Decline of Authority

• Naim, Mois, End of Power, pp. 76-128 (HKS Reserve Desk).
• Seyla Benhabib, et al, “The Democratic Disconnect: Citizenship and Accountability in the Transatlantic Community” published by Transatlantic Academy, May 2013, pp. vii-31 (Canvas.)

**Tuesday, November 14: Contexts Change - The Rise of Authority**

• Eugene Huskey, “Authoritarian Leadership in the Post-Communist World” in Daedalus, Summer, 2016 (See Canvas 9/6 for link to journal).
• Select one of the four following countries and read a sufficient number of recent articles to comment intelligently on what transpired there during approximately the last five years: Russia, China, Egypt, Turkey.

**Thursday, November 16: Contexts Change - Economies and Technologies**

• Nannerl Keohane, “Leadership, Equality and Democracy” in Daedalus, Summer, 2016 (See Canvas 9/6 for link to journal).
• Daniela Rus, “The Robots Are Coming: How Technological Breakthroughs Will Transform Everyday Life” in Foreign Affairs, July/August 2015 (Canvas).
• Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, “Will Humans Go the Way of Horses? Labor in the Second Machine Age” in Foreign Affairs, July/August 2015 (Canvas).

**Tuesday, November 21: Pedagogical Pause – Changing Times: VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity)**

**Tuesday, November 28: Leadership Systems in Large Organizations**

• Barbara Kellerman, Blogs: 1) “Year End Top 10 List – Why the Decline of the CEO?” (12/21/15); 2) “Beating Up on Boards” (2/2/16); 3) “The Decline of the CEO Continued” (4/16/16); 4) “Norway – Yes, Norway! – Takes the Lead” (5/5/16); and 5) “Shareholder Activism – New Incarnation” (5/15/16) (See barbaarakellerman.com); “Emperors With No Clothes” (7/15/17).

**Thursday, November 30: Leadership System in the International System**

• Naim, Mois The End of Power, pp. 129-158. (HKS Reserve Desk).
• Richard Haass, The World in Disarray (Penguin, 2017), pp.103-150. (Canvas)
• Farhad Manjoo, “The Future Toffler Saw is Already Upon Us.”


**NOTE: THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON THIS LAST DAY OF CLASS.**