SELF MANAGEMENT

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Introduction

Managers – and EMBA candidates - tend to be action-oriented people; otherwise, they would have taken a different professional path. EMBA programs probably accentuate such predisposition towards action, achievement and tangible results, a predisposition that normally helps people to succeed in business. However, while a practical orientation may be necessary in that context, it is not enough to achieve long-term success.

Eugene O'Kelly, CEO of KPMG, said that "the very busy-ness of business militates against reflection." Reacting against standard management training which they described as a 'boot camp,' Gosling and Mintzberg (HBR 2003) insightfully described the reflective mindset that leaders should possess: "These days, what managers desperately need is to stop and think, to step back and reflect thoughtfully on their experiences. Reflect means to refold, which suggests that attention turns inward so that it can be turned outward."

To develop good judgment in leading others, one must first learn to lead oneself. Many voices have described the recent financial meltdown as a leadership crisis requiring a radical change in management education. Some of those voices asking for a change actually preceded the financial meltdown. According to Professor Badaracco from Harvard Business School, "EMBA students perhaps need a little less in the way of quantitative tools and a little more in the way of good judgment and self-knowledge, as well as a deeper understanding of human nature. [...] Leaders should learn more about themselves if they want to succeed. In other words, before you set out to manage other people, you should look inside yourself and reflect on how well you can manage yourself. That takes time, and it is an unnatural act for action-oriented people. And you may not like what you see." (HBR, 2006)

To stop and think about your own character, assumptions, beliefs, values, and goals is the goal of this course. Readings, exercises, lectures, and case-studies presented in this course are meant to stimulate reflection to help you be authentic and to take the long view in your career. In today´s turbulent career environment, self-discovery is more important than ever for business professionals to formulate their own agendas, carve out their own places, and develop the right skills and support networks. They must start there if they want to make a lasting professional contribution. In the words of management pundit Peter Drucker, managers today must be, first and foremost, "their own chief executive officers." (HBR, 1999)

2. Objectives

We will study different aspects of self-management, building on the foundation of (i) self-awareness and (ii) self-regulation, and especially in the context of interpersonal relationships, character strengths or virtues, and personal values and purpose.

3. Learning Outcomes

- Explore and increase awareness of how people and critical incidents in their life story have shaped their own personal values
- Understand the role of character and virtues for a successful and meaningful life and increase awareness of their own personal character strengths
- Increase awareness of personal values by exploring their balance of life priorities, their strategy for life, and their intended long-term goals
- Improve capacity for setting and following up on a personal development goal with the help of a peer coach
- Practice peer coaching skills
- Improve capacity for communicating their life story and strategy for life
- Increase capacity for self-questioning and discovering their own biases

4. Competences

This course builds and reinforces the following competences:

- Students should know how to apply the knowledge acquired and their problem-solving capacity in new and little-known settings within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.
- Students should be able to integrate knowledge and deal with the complexity of making judgements based on information that is incomplete or limited, but includes considerations of the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of the students' knowledge and judgements.
- Students should know how to communicate their conclusions and knowledge and the ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and unspecialized audiences in a clear, unambiguous way.
- Students should have the learning skills that enable them to continue studying in a largely self-directed, independent manner.
- Diagnosing, dealing with and resolving interpersonal conflicts quickly and deeply, without damaging personal relations (Conflict Management).
- Promoting an atmosphere of collaboration, communication and trust among team members (Teamwork).
- Displaying an entrepreneurial spirit and making the necessary changes with decisiveness and personal responsibility (Initiative).
- Maintaining personal balance in situations of special tension (Stress Management).
- Helping develop each person's potential (Coaching).
- Understanding oneself and how one reacts in different circumstances in personal and professional settings (Self-Awareness).

- Reacting with emotions and states of mind that are appropriate in each situation. (Personal Balance).
- Being upright and behaving in an honorable fashion in any situation (Integrity).
- Accepting personal limitations and errors (Being Self-Critical).
- Bolstering the leadership skills of teams and companies by starting with self-awareness and understanding the different temperaments and how they interact. Being familiar with the state of the art of empirical research in this field.

5. Content and Methodology

The content of the course covers four themes:

- Self-discovery: self-awareness and self-regulation. Explore your biases, values, assumptions, emotions, habits, and reflect on how well you govern yourself to pursue your goals.
- Other-discovery: empathy and social skills. Reflect on the quality of your connections with others and of your support networks.
- Context: cultural and political skills. Reflect on your understanding of the context, different societal mores, and the impact of peer pressure and business culture.
- Strategy for life: purpose and values. Explore how you can find meaning in your career and how you can project your future in a compelling manner.
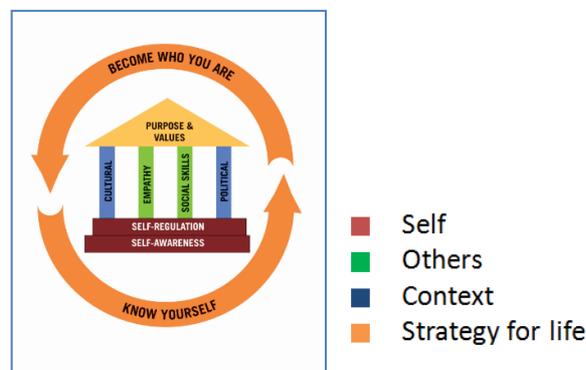
The course is a combination of case discussions (70%), lectures (10%), and in class exercises (20%).

6. Evaluation

Grading is based on contribution to in-class learning (30%), and class assignments (70%).

Learning outcomes will be measured in the following way:

- Your Life Story Exercise

- Development goal
- VIA inventory exercise
- Learning logs
- Best self exercise
- Projecting your future
- Peer-coaching assignment (
- Class participation
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