

Teaching the Module: Understanding Leadership¹

The module can be taught in one to three sessions. Irrespective of the number of sessions, we recommend beginning the module with the Concept Map In-class Exercise in which students engage with the ideas, values and examples they associate with ethical leadership and following up with discussions of behavioral ethics, which helps us understand why people do not act as ethically as they intend. Behavioral ethics is a theme in multiple modules in the curriculum.

Two-session approach

Session One: Leadership in Journalism

Advance Assignment:

- “We Have a Leadership Problem” by Jennifer L. Jones Barbour
- “Building a Toolkit for Newsroom Leaders” by Kathleen McElroy
- [“Colleges Can’t Wait for Newsrooms to Fix Themselves,”](#) by Minette E. Drumwright, Kathleen McElroy and Carolyn McGourty Supple, Poynter Institute, Sept. 3, 2020, is an op-ed that explains the premises upon which the curriculum is based.
- [“Shattering the glass screen”](#) by Lucas Beard, Jonathan Dunn, Jess Huang and Alexis Krivokovich, 2020, uses data from McKinsey and LeanIn.org’s 2019 Women in the Workplace Study to present the challenges that women working in media and entertainment face.
- [“Decades of failure: 17% of U.S. newsroom staff is not white.”](#) by Gabriel Arana, Columbia Journalism Review, 2018, focuses on the challenges that nonwhite journalists face.
- [“10 charts about America’s Newsrooms.”](#) Pew Research Center, documents trends that create leadership and management challenges for news organization leaders.

The Concept Map In-class Exercise is a great way to get students thinking about what leadership entails. See the Teaching Note for the Concept Map In-class Exercise. As students discuss their concept maps, instructors make a number of points to dispel some of the myths related to leadership such as the myth that leaders are born, not made; the myth that all leaders need to be extroverts; the myth that leadership skills are masculine skills such as aggressiveness and competitiveness. Instructors also can prompt students to think specifically about ethical leadership in journalism — what it entails and why it is important.

Instructors can then lead a discussion of the assigned readings. Afterward, instructors can play the video “Why Ethical Leadership in Newsrooms Matters,” in which news leaders and experts explain why they think leadership is a crucial skill for journalists to develop. Instructors can ask students to identify the themes that they discern from the comments of the journalists. For example, multiple journalists highlight the importance of transparency in dealing with teams, listening effectively, creating newsrooms that are safe and inclusive, and providing a level playing field in which all journalists can do their best work.

Session Two: Leadership and Behavioral Ethics

Advance assignments:

- [“What Leaders Really Do” by John Kotter](#)
- [“What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers” by Barbara Kellerman](#)
- “Introduction to Behavioral Ethics” video by Robert Prentice
- Chapter 3, “Making Meaning of Bad Leadership,” from “Bad Leadership: What It Is, What It Happens, Why It Matters” by Barbara Kellerman, Harvard Business School Press, 2004
- Have students post on a class discussion board examples on of good or bad leadership in journalism or other industries and explain what they learned from them.

Instructors can begin the session with a discussion of “What Leaders Really Do” and “What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers.” Afterward, instructors can explain that just as doctors have to study sickness and health, we have to study both good leadership and bad leadership. Then instructors can call on students to share their discussion board posts.

The instructor can then lead a discussion of Kellerman’s typology of bad leadership. The discussion can then turn to behavioral ethics. Instructors can play several of the [Ethics Unwrapped Videos](#) to preview concepts that will be discussed in future modules (such as the [self-serving](#) bias, the [obedience to authority](#) bias, the [conformity bias](#)). Instructors can ask students to identify times when they experienced or witnessed some of these biases. Students are likely to have observed these biases in a variety of contexts in high school and college including the newsrooms of student publications and student organizations such as sororities and fraternities.

Three-session approach

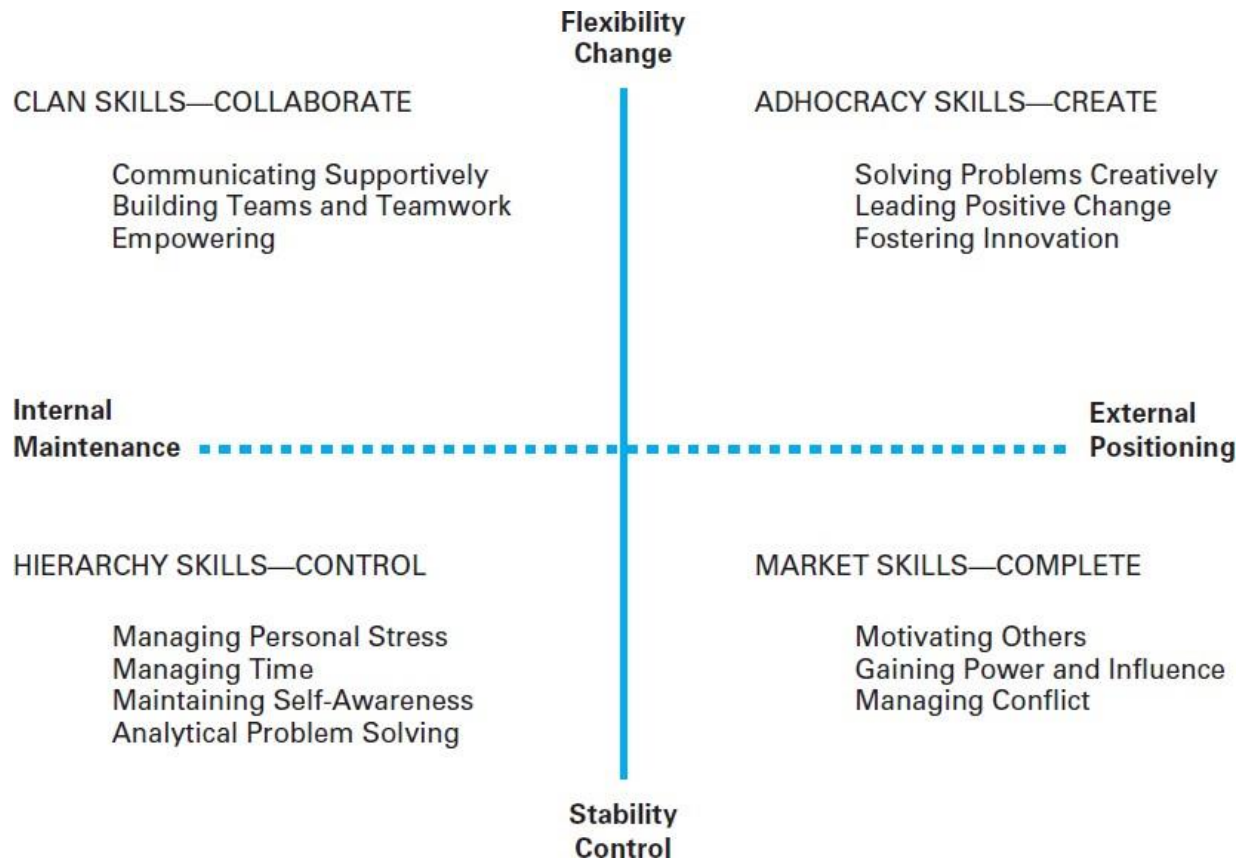
The first session focuses on ethical leadership more generally, and the second session focuses on ethical leadership in journalism specifically. The third session focuses on behavioral ethics.

Session One: Ethical Leadership

Advance assignments:

- “We Have a Leadership Problem” by Jennifer L. Jones Barbour
- [“What Leaders Really Do” by John Kotter](#)
- Introduction, “Developing Management Skills,” by David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron. Ninth edition, Pearson Education Inc., 2016²
- [“What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers” by Barbara Kellerman](#)
- Have students post on a class discussion board examples of good or bad leadership in fields other than journalism and explain what you learned from them

The Concept Map In-class Exercise on Ethical Leadership is the centerpiece of this session. After students present their concept maps, students can be prompted to share their discussion board posts. Instructors can then lead a discussion and/or give a short lecture on the assigned readings. Kotter’s article makes the point that management is about coping with complexity, while leadership is about coping with change. Kotter argues that the two types of skills are different but complementary. Whetten and Cameron identify the types of skills that leaders and managers need to develop such as personal skills, interpersonal skills and group skills. They argue that great leaders need skill sets that enable them to exercise control in times of stability and flexibility in times of change and also need to be able to focus internally and externally. See their helpful 2 X 2 matrix below:³



Thinking about and studying good followership is as important as thinking and studying good leadership. Also, good followers are likely to become good leaders, yet followers and followership are often neglected topics. Kellerman’s article describes four types of followership and makes a distinction between good and bad followership.

Session Two: Ethical Leadership in Journalism

Advance assignments:

- “Building a Toolkit for Newsroom Leaders” by Kathleen McElroy
- [“Colleges Can’t Wait for Newsrooms to Fix Themselves”](#) by Minette E. Drumwright, Kathleen McElroy and Carolyn McGourty Supple

- “Why Ethical Leadership in Newsrooms Matters” video in which Carolyn McGourty Supple interviews news leaders and experts
- Video from KVUE journalist Kristie Gonzales
- [“Shattering the glass screen”](#) by Lucas Beard, Jonathan Dunn, Jess Huang and Alexis Krivokovich, 2020
- [“Decades of failure: 17% of U.S. newsroom staff is not white.”](#) by Gabriel Arana, Columbia Journalism Review, 2018
- [“10 charts about America’s newsrooms.”](#) Pew Research Center
- Have students post on class discussion board examples of good leadership in journalism or other industries and explain what they learned from them.

This session focuses on ethical leadership in journalism and why it matters. The professor can begin by calling on some students to present their discussion board posts. Instructors can then ask students to identify themes they observed in the video “Why Ethical Leadership in Newsrooms Matters.” For example, multiple journalists highlight the importance of transparency in dealing with teams, listening effectively, creating newsrooms that are safe and inclusive, and providing a level playing field in which all journalists can do their best work. Instructors can then lead a discussion of the three readings that present current trends in journalism (“Shattering the glass screen,” “Decades of failure,” “10 charts about America’s newsrooms”). They can prompt students to think about the leadership and management challenges these trends create and the skills and capabilities young journalists need to develop to prepare to lead news organizations.

Session Three: Behavioral Ethics

Advance assignments:

- “Introduction to Behavioral Ethics” video by Robert Prentice
- Chapter 3, “Making Meaning of Bad Leadership” from “Bad Leadership: What It Is, What It Happens, Why It Matters” by Barbara Kellerman, Harvard Business School Press, 2004
- Have students post on class discussion board examples of bad leadership in journalism or other industries and explain what they learned from them

Instructors can begin the class by explaining that just as doctors have to study sickness and health, we have to study both good leadership and bad leadership. Then instructors can call on students to share their discussion board posts. Afterward, the instructor can lead a discussion of Kellerman’s typology of bad leadership, which makes a distinction between bad leadership that is incompetent and bad leadership that is unethical. The discussion can then turn to behavioral ethics. Instructors can play several of the [Ethics Unwrapped Videos](#) to preview concepts that will be discussed in future modules (such as the [self-serving](#) bias, the [obedience to authority](#) bias, the [conformity bias](#)). Instructors can ask students to identify times when they experienced or witnessed some of these biases. Students are likely to have observed these biases in a variety of contexts in high school and college including the newsrooms of student publications and student organizations such as sororities and fraternities.

¹This teaching note was prepared by Dr. Minette E. Drumwright for the purposes of facilitating the teaching of the module Understanding Leadership.

²The introduction is largely the same in the eighth, ninth, and 10th editions of “Developing Management Skills.”

³David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron, “Developing Management Skills,” ninth edition, Pearson Education, Inc., 2016.