

**Commerce IBH4BA3, Leadership  
Effectiveness: Building Personal and Organizational  
Winter 2025 Course Outline**

**Human Resources and Management Area  
DeGroote School of Business  
McMaster University**

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***COURSE OBJECTIVE***

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The central objective of this course is to provide a familiarity with the field of leadership development (both theory and practice) as well as to take part in a transformative learning experience. By applying models and concepts from established leadership development literature within experiential exercises, skill development exercises and the transformative learning experience, students will become adept at analyzing, interpreting, and appropriately responding to situations that call for leadership interventions. In addition to becoming critical consumers of the popular press on leadership, students will gain insights into how their own leadership styles and approaches may either facilitate or impede their leadership effectiveness.

**Specific Objectives are to:**

- Expose students to the key concepts, approaches, models and theories of leadership development
- Equip students with the basic knowledge and skills to be able to evaluate critically, in an informed way, the popular press on leadership development.
- Provide opportunities for self-assessment of leadership potential and give direction on how the leadership development literature can be used to enhance this leadership potential.
- Engage students in problem identification, critical-analytical thinking and problem solving.
- Provide opportunities for students to improve their skills in emotional intelligence, positive thinking styles, conflict and stress management, time management, values-driven decision-making, CSR management, communication management, team management, transition management, fitness and mindfulness management, and overall performance management through on-going assessments, experiences and discussions.
- Allow students to pull out of their comfort zones and learn resiliency in the face of uncertainty. In so doing, students will be better prepared to face today's complex work and non-work environments.

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***INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

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**Section 1: Friday 11:30 AM –  
2:20 PM**

**Thanuja Thananayagam**

Instructor

[thananat@mcmaster.ca](mailto:thananat@mcmaster.ca)

degroote.mcmaster.ca

**Student TA**

Javid Nafari  
[nafarij@mcmaster.ca](mailto:nafarij@mcmaster.ca)

Office Location/Hours: Zoom, by appointment

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***COURSE ELEMENTS***

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Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: No	Global view: Yes
A2L: Yes	Ethics: No	Numeracy: Yes	Written skills: No
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: No	Final Exam: No	Guest speaker(s): Yes

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***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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This course offers students a transformative journey, enabling them to critically explore and refine their personal and professional approaches to leadership. Through an examination of diverse leadership theories viewed through social and Indigenous perspectives, students are encouraged to engage with a variety of leadership frameworks and consider their own paths as leaders. The course design, rich in multifaceted methodologies, supports students in understanding who they aspire to be as leaders and community members. This process involves examining and reshaping one's assumptions, habits, and established behaviours, fostering an openness to vulnerability, and encouraging risk-taking in personal growth. By the end of the course, students will gain a greater capacity to recognize emerging opportunities, effectively navigate challenges, and lead themselves and others through transformative experiences.

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***IMPORTANT LINKS***

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- [Mosaic](#)
  - [Avenue to Learn](#)
  - [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
  - [McMaster University Library](#)
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***COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize leadership thinking and behaviour styles (self and others) and know how they are likely to either facilitate or impede leadership effectiveness.
- Use their improved skills/capabilities in emotional intelligence, positive thinking styles, conflict and stress management, time management, values-driven decision-making, CSR management, communication management, team management, transition management, fitness and mindfulness management, and overall performance management
- Develop knowledge of the established leadership literature, and apply the models, concepts and critical learnings from this literature
- Identify effective leadership responses to suit varying situational circumstances.

### ***REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS***

**Check A2L for Reading List**

### ***CLASS FORMAT***

Our in-person class offers a dynamic and immersive learning experience that goes beyond traditional lectures. Our classes typically consist of interactive discussions, group activities, case studies, and hands-on exercises. This format encourages active participation, fosters meaningful peer-to-peer interactions, and allows for immediate feedback and clarification. This format is designed to create a vibrant and collaborative atmosphere where students can deepen their understanding of the subject matter and develop essential interpersonal skills crucial for success in both academic and professional settings.

### ***COURSE EVALUATION***

In Winter 2025, you will spend at least three hours a week on self-study of the reading posted on A2L and attending and taking notes during the lecture. The combination of these two sources of information should prepare you for the class assignments.

<b><i>Grade Component</i></b>	<b><i>Weight</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>
<i>Class participation and Engagement</i>	10%	In the form of active and informed participation in class discussions and exercises, including reading all assigned material before class
<i>Discussion Board</i>	10%	Active participation in the discussion board by posting an original post (responding to the reading and weekly class content) and replying to colleague's post (at least 2)
<i>Book Club (group project)</i>	20%	I will provide a list of leadership books. The class will be divided into 8 - 10 clusters, each cluster will be assigned a book

<i>Leadership Interview &amp; Self-reflection Paper</i>	20%	Pick someone and conduct an interview. Write a self-reflection paper, using learnings from the interview, reflecting Top 5 Clifton Strengths and your leadership style. Who are you as a leader? What do you want to be when you grow up? What did you learn from the interview and how do you plan on incorporating some of your learning into practice
<i>Project Proposal (group project)</i>	10%	Submit a project proposal based on the project theme assigned to your team
<i>Final Project Report and Presentations (group project)</i>	30%	Group Project Report – 20% Group Presentation – 10%

### **COURSE DELIVERABLES**

#### ***Class Participation and Engagement – 10%***

Class participation is worth **10%** of your final grade. Students are expected to attend class, to have read the assigned material before class, discuss the material and participate in discussions/ exercises in an active and informed manner. High levels of participation include consistent and active contributions in class discussions and activities. Each student must take an active role in creating a collaborative learning environment. Students are expected to demonstrate leadership skills with thoughtful contributions that support their own learning process, along with those of their peers.

#### ***Discussion Board – 10%***

Weekly "discussion posts" are designed to help you delve more deeply into the topic of the week. In many sessions, students will be assigned one brief article or video referring to a key issue and/or case on Leadership. On each day an "article for discussion" has been assigned, the teaching assistant and/or professor will post at least one question relating to that reading. For periods of one week (see the course calendar below for the opening and closing times of each discussion), students will post comments on the discussion board. The teaching assistant (or professor) may make further posts to facilitate further discussion. In addition, students are expected to engage by replying to their colleagues (at least two responses is a must).

Both the quantity and the quality of these posts will be evaluated. On the whole, students who post many comments that are thoughtful, demonstrate knowledge of the assigned reading material (including both the discussion article(s) and the textbook), and which make significant efforts to engage with others on the board (e.g. by commenting on peers' posts) will receive the highest grade on this component.

#### ***Book Club (group project) – 20%***

This is a group assignment, and the instructor will select the group members. Each team will select and read a book focused on leadership, chosen from a provided list or selected with instructor approval. Together, the group will discuss the book's key themes, leadership theories, and examples provided.

After completing the reading, each team will write a group reflection (2000 words) based on the following criteria:

1. Core Leadership Principles: Describe the main leadership principles highlighted in the book and how they apply to real-world situations.
2. Impact on Leadership Perspective: Reflect on how the book has influenced or shifted your group's views on effective leadership.
3. Personal and Team Insights: Share individual and collective insights about applying these principles within a team setting, especially any challenges or new understandings gained through the reading.
4. Connections to Course Material: Link the book's ideas to key concepts or frameworks discussed in class.

The goal is to encourage critical thinking and collaborative reflection on leadership, fostering a deeper understanding of leadership in action.

More information and details of the project will be posted on A2L.

Sign-up needed.

- The First, the Few, the Only: How Women of Color Can Redefine Power in Corporate America - by Deepa Purushothaman
- Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons, by Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
- Dare to Lead – by Brené Brown
- Indian in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power – by Jody Wilson-Raybould (Indigenous Canadian; First Nations; Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl); Musgamagw Tsawataineuk; Ligwilda'wx (Laich-kwiltach); Wei Wai Kai Nation;)
- Inclusion on Purpose: An Intersectional Approach to Creating a Culture of Belonging at Work – by Ruchika T. Malhotra
- Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things Hardcover – by Adam Grant
- Atomic Habits – An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones – by James Clear
- Drive – The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us – by Daniel H. Pink
- We've Got This: Unlocking the Beauty of Belonging –by Ritu Bhasin
- The Let Them Theory – by Mel Robbins
- Illogical: Saying Yes to a Life Without Limits – by Emmanuel Acho

### **Leadership Interview and Self-Reflection – 20%**

In this assignment, you will select an individual to interview, focusing on their insights, experiences, and approaches to leadership. Drawing from this conversation, you will write a 7-page self-reflection paper that examines the lessons you've gained and how they connect with your personal leadership journey. Begin by reflecting on your Top 5 Clifton Strengths, considering how they shape your leadership style and impact your aspirations for growth. Who are you as a leader today, and what kind of leader do you aspire to become in the future? Using the interviewee's perspectives as a catalyst, analyze how their insights align with your strengths and future goals, identifying key takeaways and actionable strategies. Conclude by outlining specific ways you can incorporate these new learnings into your personal and professional practices, emphasizing the steps you'll take to evolve as a thoughtful and effective leader.

More information and details of the project will be posted on A2L.

### **Project Proposal – 10%**

Early in the class, you will be assigned to a group of 4 – 5 people. This group assignment provides you with an opportunity to investigate, reflect and learn about a topic/ theme from the list below (one topic per group – selected on a first come first serve basis). As a group, you can pick one of the topics below to investigate and learn through various research.

#### **Theme/ Topic**

- Women in Leadership
- Indigenous Leadership Lessons
- Role of a Corporate Leader in Environmental Activism
- Emerging Trends of Dark Leadership and Ethical Dilemma
- Is Empathy a Critical Skill for Leaders of today?
- Evolution of Technology, Leadership and Social Change
- Good Followership Skills – a Missed Opportunity in Leadership
- Global Leadership and How Culture Impacts Leaders
- Generational Divide in Leadership

This is a two-part project. The first part is to submit a 7-page proposal introducing the topic you chose, an overview of the theme or topic chosen, a 1-page work plan and distribution of labour across team members and a 1-page group contract. The paper needs to be grounded on academic research (peer-reviewed articles) and popular articles (HBR). More information and details of the project will be posted on A2L.

### ***Group Project Report and Presentation – 30%***

The final product is a 8 - 10-minute in-class presentation and a 2500 – 3000 word report.

More information and details of the project will be posted on A2L.

**For Group Work** When working as a team, students are reminded of the following expectations with respect to their behaviour and contributions to the project. Each team member is expected to:

- Treat other members with courtesy and respect.
- Establish a positive and productive team dynamic.
- Contribute substantially and proportionally to the final project.
- Ensure enough familiarity with the entire contents of the group project/assignment so as to be able to sign off on it as original work.
- Meet the project timeline as established by the team.

Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. Project work is often new to students; conflicts can - and do - occur. Teams are



collectively expected to resolve disputes or misunderstandings as soon as they arise. In cases where teams are unable to reach a mutually agreeable solution, the entire team must meet with the Professor as soon as possible. The Professor will listen to the team and help the team develop options for improving the team process. All members of the project team must commit to and utilize their action plans. If you notice problems in your group (e.g., not all group members are contributing equally), please tell me immediately. There will be zero tolerance for free-riding. If you only tell me about a problem at the end of the term, there is nothing I can do to solve the problem. If you tell me about a problem early on, we'll work together to solve it.

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### ***LATE ASSIGNMENTS***

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No late assignments will be accepted.

If you anticipate missing an assignment deadline due to uncontrollable circumstances, you should contact the course instructor as early as possible, but within at least 24 hours to explain the situation.

The reallocation of grades, if any, for assignment deadlines missed for legitimate reasons will be made at the discretion of the instructor.

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### ***COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK***

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Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

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### ***REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK***

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In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar [“Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”](#) and the link below\*;

<http://ug.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

\* Non-Commerce students must follow the Missed coursework protocols outlined by their home faculty and Program Office.

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### ***COURSE MODIFICATION***

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From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or the delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

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### ***GENERATIVE AI***

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#### **SOME USE PERMITTED**

Students may use generative AI for [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc] their work throughout the course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside the stated use of [editing/translating/outlining/brainstorming/revising/etc] without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

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### ***ACADEMIC INTEGRITY***

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You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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### ***AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION***

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**Some courses may** use a web-based service

(Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work.

For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to

[www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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### ***COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT***

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**Some courses may** use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

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### ***ONLINE PROCTORING***

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**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

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### ***CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS***

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As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

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## ***ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES***

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Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

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## ***ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)***

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Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

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## ***COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING***

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Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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## ***EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES***

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The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

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## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES***

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Your enrolment in Commerce IBH4BA3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

A lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Commerce IBH4BA3, Leadership Effectiveness: Building Personal and Organizational  
Winter 2025 Course Schedule**

Week	Date	
Week 1	January 10, 2025	Introduction – Course overview and expectations  Who is a leader? Who are you as a leader? Leadership Vision Exercise  <b>Introduction Video</b>
Week 2	January 17, 2025	Mindful Leadership, Leadership Decision Making  H/W – Top 5 Clifton Strengths  <b>Discussion Board #2</b>
Week 3	January 24, 2025	Strength Based Leadership – What is your strength?  Book Club Meeting  <b>Discussion Board #3</b>
Week 4	January 31, 2025	Indigenous Leadership  Indigenous Guest Speaker  <b>Discussion Board #4</b>
Week 5	February 7, 2025	Emerging Leadership  Leaders Role in Change Management  <b>Discussion Board #5</b>
Week 6	February 14, 2025	Dark leadership and investigating the origin of dark leaders  X formerly Twitter Case Study – Did Elon do the right thing?  <b>Discussion Board #6</b>

		<b>Reflection Assignment Due @ 11:00 am</b>
Week 7	February 17 - 21, 2025	Reading week – no class
Week 8	February 28, 2025	Followership – what is followership, why we need to talk about followership – emerging trend  Guest Speaker  <b>Discussion Board #7</b>
Week 9	March 7, 2025	Leadership and Human Connection  Guest Speaker  <b>Discussion Board #8</b>  <b>Group proposal due @ 11:00 am</b>
Week 9	March 14, 2025	Inclusive Leadership – Who is an inclusive leader?  <b>Discussion Board #9</b>  <b>Book Club report due @ 11:00 am</b>
Week 10	March 21, 2025	Leadership and Sustainability  Guest Speaker  <b>Discussion Board #10</b>
Week 11	March 28, 2025	Leadership, Ethics and Technology  Guest Speaker  <b>Discussion Board #11</b>
Week 12	April 4, 2025	Project report and presentation due @ 11:00 am  In-class presentations