



Dr. David L. Harkins

Assistant Professor of Social Entrepreneurship
Jack C. Massey College of Business

COURSE SYLLABUS

Radical Champions: Leading Change for Social Impact

Course Number(s): SET3200.01 / MGT 3895.02

Credit: 3 hours

Day/Time: MWF 12:00 – 12:50 PM

Semester: Fall 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Dr. David L. Harkins, D.ODC

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Office Hours:

MW: 10–11:00 AM (BMR), 1–4 PM (JCMC)

Other hours: By appointment | [Schedule a time](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

To lead Social Change, leaders must understand the complexities of institutions, society, culture, and individual and group behavior, and develop a collaborative planned approach to transform systems and the social structure.

This course examines the concepts, methods, and practices of leadership within communities and organizations through the lens of service, servant leadership, and the Social Change Model of Leadership development.

It also examines the theoretical and practical approaches leaders can use to help organizations, companies, and communities navigate the challenges and barriers to social improvement and impact.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a course for those interested in learning leadership approaches for change facilitation in systems (corporations, social enterprises, communities) as it applies to social issues in our world(s). This course will give you the fundamental skills to evaluate, frame, and lead change. Specific learning objectives are:

- Develop your understanding of applied methods and theoretical models of change and the core challenges associated with creating social impact
- Provide the knowledge and skills to identify how stakeholders, systems, and external environments facilitate/restrain change
- Examine leadership frameworks and approaches in effective collaborative social action
- Demonstrate how systems-thinking approaches provide a foundation for strategic campaign development for complex social issues
- Equip you with foundational tools to design, implement, and reflect on social change campaigns

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Analyze social issues using systems thinking frameworks to identify relationships, feedback loops, and potential leverage points for creating change
- Design and implement strategic campaigns through research, stakeholder analysis, collaborative planning, and execution of public-facing actions
- Apply leadership frameworks including the Social Change Model and Use-of-Self principles to develop your personal approach to social action
- Demonstrate effective collaboration and communication by working in teams, managing conflict, creating compelling narratives, and mobilizing others around shared causes
- Evaluate and articulate your personal theory of change through critical reflection on the relationship between strategy, systems, and outcomes in social action campaigns

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required:

- Myers-Lipton, S. (2023). *CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action* (2nd Edition). Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-032-41802-5
- Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (D. Wright, Ed.). Chelsea Green.

Recommended:

- Komives, S. R. (2016). *Leadership for a Better World: Understanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development*. Jossey-Bass
- Beerel, A. (Ed.). (2022). *Leadership and Change Management*. Harvard Business Review Press
- Stroh, D. P. (2015). *Systems Thinking For Social Change*. Chelsea Green

Note: These books are available as e-books in Bruin Books/Canvas.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Method of Instruction:

This class combines a mix of discussion, individual reflection, video/audio presentations, teamwork, and projects. This is a participatory learning course – you will learn by doing, actively participating, deliberating, writing, exchanging ideas, and getting feedback.

Teamwork is Mandatory:

This course involves significant teamwork. The course culminates with a final team project, so the course is front-loaded with the necessary concepts to help you succeed.

Reading Requirements:

You will need to do substantial reading at the beginning of this class to inform your in-class discussions and team projects. Read assigned chapters before the class day they are assigned and be prepared for discussion.

ASSIGNMENTS

Individual Assignments

- **Introduction Video:** Share background, interests, and initial thoughts on leadership and social change
- **Issue Pitch:** Identify and present a social issue you care about
- **Personal Working Definition of Social Change:** Reflective essay connecting personal values with course concepts
- **Photovoice: Perspective-Taking:** Use photography and interviews to explore different perspectives on a social issue
- **Impact and Insight Journal + Reflection:** Maintain weekly handwritten journal entries throughout the semester
- **Personal Theory of Leading Change Portfolio:** Comprehensive portfolio synthesizing your leadership development
- **Reading Checks (6):** Assess reading comprehension of course materials

Team Assignments

- **Issue Selection + Team Formation:** Form teams and develop a team charter
- **Systems Mapping Project:** Create a visual systems map exploring factors influencing your chosen issue
- **Decision-Maker Power Map + Target & Demand:** Identify stakeholders and develop strategic targets
- **Campaign Plan Outline:** Design a concrete campaign strategy
- **Kickoff Plan + Media Assets:** Develop campaign launch strategy and materials
- **Campaign Action:** Implement off-campus campaign action with community partner
- **Campaign Summary Report:** Document the complete campaign journey
- **Final Campaign Presentation:** Present campaign story and lessons learned

GRADING SYSTEM

This course uses contract grading; you choose your target grade and commit to meeting specific requirements for that level.

Contract Options:

- **A Contract (Exemplary):** Complete all assignments satisfactorily, maintain 15+ journal entries, 90%+ attendance, demonstrate leadership, average 95%+ on reading assessments, earn 4.25+ peer assessment average
- **B Contract (Proficient):** Complete 5/6 individual assignments, contribute to all team assignments, maintain 12+ journal entries, 86%+ attendance, average 85%+ on reading assessments, earn 3.5+ peer assessment average
- **C Contract (Developing):** Complete 4/6 individual assignments, contribute to all team assignments, maintain 12+ journal entries, 80%+ attendance, average 75%+ on reading assessments, earn 3.0+ peer assessment average

More details are available in the Contracts Requirement Document in Canvas.

Note: *Your final grade is determined by the contract requirements you actually fulfill, not the contract you initially selected.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1: Social Problems and Change Leadership Foundations

Week 1 (August 20-22)

- Wednesday, August 20: Course Introduction
- Friday, August 22: Syllabus Review and Campaign Project overview

Week 2 (August 25-29)

- Monday, August 25: What is a social problem? (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 1)
- Wednesday, August 27: From problem to issue (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 2)
- Friday, August 29: SCM Values and Leadership

Week 3 (September 1-5)

- Monday, September 1: *NO CLASS - Labor Day*
- Wednesday, September 3: Issue Pitches & Voting
- Friday, September 5: Teaming

Module 2: Systems Thinking & Change

Week 4 (September 8-12)

- Monday, September 8: Intro to Systems Thinking (Meadows: Ch. 1-2)
- Wednesday, September 10: Causal Loops (Meadows: Ch. 3)
- Friday, September 12: Systems Mapping Workshop (Meadows: Ch. 4)

Week 5 (September 15-19)

- Monday, September 15: Leverage Points (Meadows: Ch. 6)
- Wednesday, September 17: Change Theory: Macro vs. Community (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 3)
- Friday, September 19: Systems Mapping Workshop (Meadows: Ch. 5)

Week 6 (September 22-26)

- Monday, September 22: Relationships and Trust (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 4)
- Wednesday, September 24: Leadership & Identity
- Friday, September 26: Decision Mapping Workshop

Week 7 (September 29-October 3)

- Monday, September 29: Research: History and Context (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 5)
- Wednesday, October 1: Who can say yes?
- Friday, October 3: *NO CLASS* (Work on Campaign Plans)

Module 3: Campaign Activities & Planning

Week 8 (October 6-10)

- Monday, October 6: Peer Review Workshop (Campaign Plan)
- Wednesday, October 8: Strategy vs. Tactics (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 7)
- Friday, October 10: Case Studies in Action

Week 9 (October 13-17)

- Monday, October 13: *NO CLASS - Fall Break*
- Wednesday, October 15: Kickoff Planning Messaging & Visuals (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 8)
- Friday, October 17: Media Strategy & Outreach

Week 10 (October 20-24)

- Monday, October 20: Peer Review Workshop (Kickoff Plan)
- Wednesday, October 22: Adaptive leadership & resistance (Meadows: Ch. 7)
- Friday, October 24: *NO CLASS - Sullivan Foundation Ignite Retreat*

Week 11 (October 27-31)

- Monday, October 27: Group Process & Planning (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 6, 9)
- Wednesday, October 29: *NO CLASS* (Work on Campaign Plans)
- Friday, October 31: Final Campaign Plan Check-in

Module 4: The Social Action Campaign**Week 12 (November 3-7)**

- Monday, November 3: Campaign Action Implementation Begins!
- Wednesday, November 5: In-class work: Outreach and Media
- Friday, November 7: In-class work + I&I Journal Check-in

Week 13 (November 10-14)

- Monday, November 10: Campaign in progress: Peer Coaching
- Wednesday, November 12: Troubleshooting & Adaptation
- Friday, November 14: In-class work

Week 14 (November 17-21)

- Monday, November 17: Campaign Wrap-up: Storytelling & Documentation (Myers-Lipton: Ch. 11)
- Wednesday, November 19: Reflection Writing Workshop
- Friday, November 21: TBD

Week 15 (November 24-28)

- Monday, November 24: Course Synthesis & Spring Preparation
- Wednesday, November 26: *NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break*
- Friday, November 28: *NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break*

Week 16 (December 1)

- Monday, December 1: Course Debrief

Finals Week

- Thursday, December 11: Campaign Presentations