
LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Dr. Tracy F. H. Chang

Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
School of Management and Labor Relations

COURSE FORMAT	WEEKLY RHYTHM
Asynchronous online • highly interactive • experiential	Tuesday 12:00 a.m. - Monday 11:59 p.m. Plan for 6-8 hours each week.

Leadership toward what ends, and for whom?

Rutgers University • School of Management and Labor Relations

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor	Dr. Tracy F. H. Chang
Title	Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
School	School of Management and Labor Relations
Email	Please email me through the Canvas Course Site. Do not email me through my Scarletmail address.
Office hours	By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in a world marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of Generative AI, and environmental challenges have intensified the need for leadership while raising an equally important question: Leadership toward what ends, and for whom? How can people exercise leadership amid uncertainty and change while helping individuals, organizations, and communities thrive?

Leadership in Organizations approaches leadership not simply as a body of knowledge to be learned, but as a practice to be developed. Throughout the course, you will examine conventional assumptions about leaders and leadership, explore the challenges of exercising leadership in complex organizational systems, and become more attentive to both the world around you and the inner conditions from which you act.

Rather than focusing solely on whether you can explain leadership theories, the course asks whether you can practice, reflect on, and continuously improve how you exercise leadership toward the common good. Through collaborative learning, self-assessment, reflection, peer coaching, conversations with leaders, and field-based leadership experiments, you will learn to observe more carefully, ask better questions, work with others, experiment with interventions, and learn from their consequences.

Although delivered asynchronously online, this is a highly interactive and experiential course. You will engage with classmates, peers, and people in real organizational settings as you undertake your own leadership journey.

By the end of the course, you will have developed a practical leadership toolkit to lead yourself and work with others in a rapidly changing world. More importantly, you will be better prepared to ask three questions throughout your leadership practice: Toward what ends? For whom? And from what inner condition am I acting?

The course also develops leadership-related career-readiness competencies identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), helping you recognize, articulate, and demonstrate what you have learned in ways that can transfer to the workplace and your continuing career development.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop self-awareness by examining assumptions, identity, values, motivations, and patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting.
- Cultivate the inner capacities for conscious leadership by working with mind, emotion, body, and energy to develop greater inclusiveness, insight, inspiration, and integrity.
- Analyze leadership challenges by applying leadership theories and integrating observation, inner experience, multiple perspectives, and external evidence.
- Exercise leadership in practice by expanding responsibility, envisioning possibilities, mobilizing others, acting with integrity, and learning from the consequences of leadership interventions.

- Develop and articulate a personal philosophy and ongoing practice of conscious leadership oriented toward the common good, lifelong learning, professional effectiveness, and human flourishing.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TOOLS

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. Required readings and learning materials are available online through Rutgers University Libraries, Canvas, or links provided in the course.

Core Readings and Materials

- Heifetz, R. A. (1994). *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press. Selected readings.
- Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press. Selected readings.
- Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. (2016). *Inner Engineering: A Yogi's Guide to Joy*. Spiegel & Grau. Selected readings.
- Chang, T. F. H. (2026). *Conscious Leadership*. Course materials available through Canvas.
- Additional articles, videos, podcasts, and other materials will be provided through Canvas as assigned.

Course Learning Tools

- Hypothesis - collaborative reading and annotation.
- Peer Coach Practice Simulator - an external learning tool for practicing peer coaching before working with classmates.
- Other digital tools may be introduced as needed for specific learning activities.

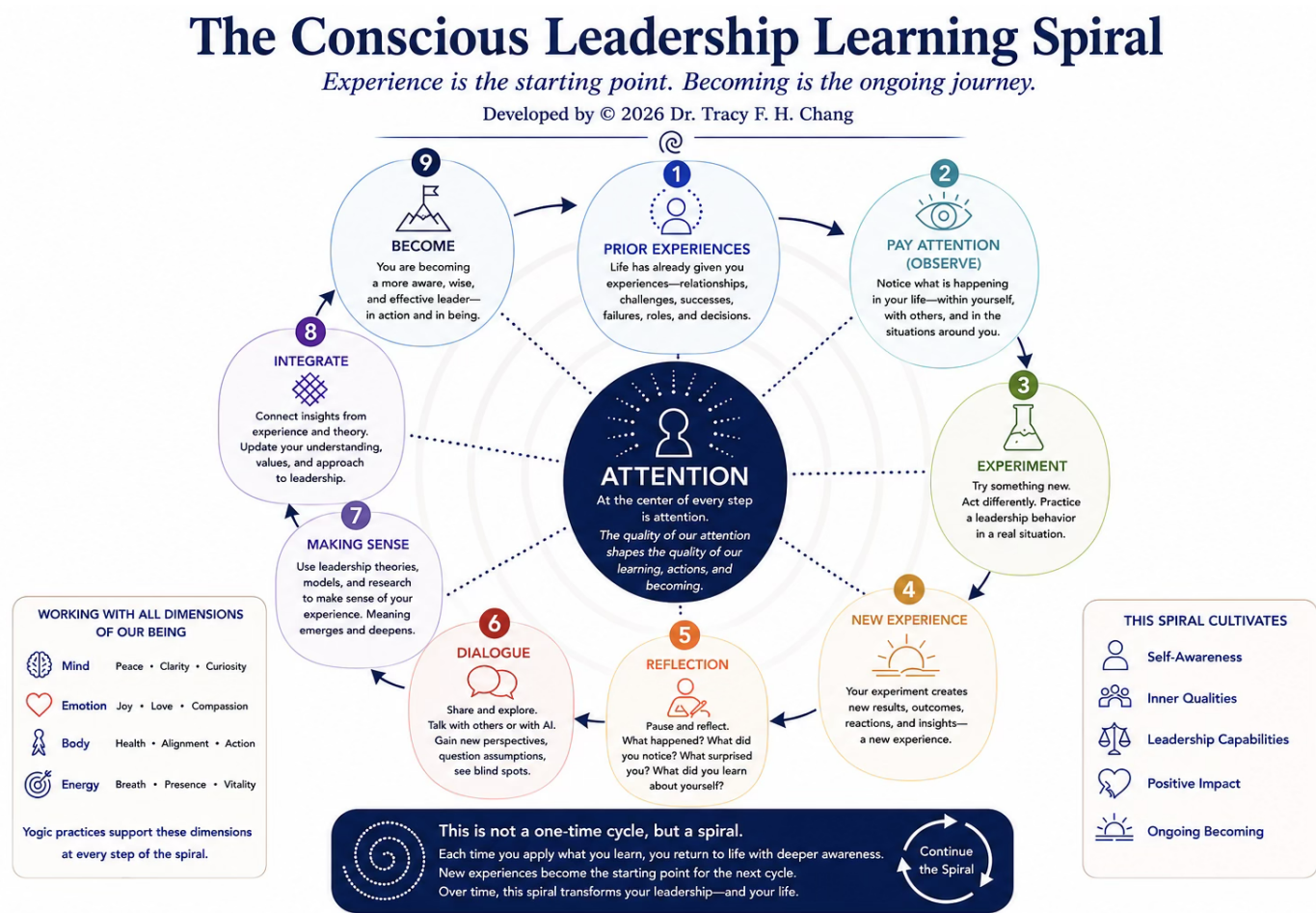
PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This course is designed around the Conscious Leadership Learning Spiral, developed by Dr. Tracy F. H. Chang (2026). Leadership development is approached as an ongoing process of learning, practicing, reflecting, receiving feedback, and trying again. Rather than simply moving through course content, you will revisit and deepen your learning as you apply it to yourself, your relationships, and real-world leadership challenges.

Throughout the semester, you will also learn within a small Leadership Pod. Your pod will provide a consistent community for collaborative learning, dialogue, peer coaching, feedback, and reflection as you move through the learning spiral together.

CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP LEARNING SPIRAL

The course learning design is organized around this ongoing spiral of experience, attention, practice, reflection, dialogue, and integration.



ASSESSMENT

Assessment in this course reflects the Conscious Leadership Learning Spiral. You will be assessed not only on what you know about leadership, but also on how you engage, practice, reflect, learn with others, and integrate your learning over time.

COMPONENT	FREQUENCY	WHAT YOU WILL DO	EVALUATION	WEIGHT
Collaborative Reading & Learning	Weekly	Read, annotate, discuss, and integrate course concepts with experience	Completion + Portfolio	30%
Leadership Labs & Integration	Alternate each	Experiment with leadership practices in the field, observe results, reflect, and integrate learning	Peer + Portfolio	30%
Peer Coaching	Coach once; coachee four times	Practice coaching and being coached within your Leadership Pod	Peer + Portfolio	20%
Leadership Challenge Portfolio	End of semester	Select and integrate evidence of your leadership development across the semester	Self + Peer + Instructor	20%

Collaborative Reading & Learning

Working within your Leadership Pod, you will collaboratively annotate readings and other course materials to understand, analyze, question, and evaluate leadership concepts and approaches. You will connect ideas from the course to real-world experiences and examples, and learn from your classmates' interpretations.

Weekly work is evaluated primarily for timely completion and meaningful engagement. Selected work will later provide evidence for your Leadership Challenge Portfolio.

Weekly assignments are opportunities to practice before being evaluated for quality. Credit is awarded based on three expectations:

1. Timeliness - submitted by the deadline.
2. Completion - substantially completes the assigned activity.
3. Engagement - meaningfully engages with the assigned task and course material.

The quality of the selected work will be evaluated in greater depth in the Leadership Challenge Portfolio at the end of the semester.

Because many weekly activities involve classmates and depend on everyone participating on schedule, late weekly assignments do not receive credit.

Post at least one annotation by Friday to give your classmates enough time to read and respond to your work. You are not responsible for whether a classmate chooses to respond, but you are responsible for posting early enough to make peer engagement possible. Consistently waiting until the last minute to post, and therefore limiting opportunities for peer interaction, will be considered a lack of engagement.

To provide flexibility when life intervenes, the lowest scores in designated weekly assignment categories will be dropped when your final grade is calculated. Completing additional eligible assignments may also be considered for bonus credit.

Leadership Labs & Integration

Leadership Labs move learning from concepts into practice. You will conduct field-based experiments involving observation, action, reflection, and conceptualization, then examine what happened and what you learned.

Short reflection and integration videos will help you connect your field experiences with current and cumulative course materials. You may use AI as a coach to question assumptions, consider alternative interpretations, and improve subsequent experiments.

You will submit authentic evidence of your fieldwork and reflection. Learning from an experiment that does not go as planned can be as valuable as learning from one that succeeds.

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching provides an opportunity to practice an essential leadership capacity: helping another person think, rather than simply giving them answers.

Working within your Leadership Pod, each student will serve once as the peer coach during a two-week coaching cycle.

The Peer Coaching Practice Simulator, developed by Dr. Tracy F. H. Chang and powered by generative AI, provides a practice environment for developing coaching skills before working with classmates. Do not enter sensitive, confidential, or personally identifying information about yourself or others. Additional instructions and privacy information are provided with the assignment.

As a coach, you will review and assess your coachees' relevant coursework and meet individually with each coachee for approximately 20 minutes via Zoom.

During other coaching cycles, you will participate as a coachee. Coachees are responsible for preparing for and attending the coaching session, engaging meaningfully in the conversation, and providing feedback to their coach.

Because coaching depends on another person's participation, responsiveness, and punctuality are part of the assignment. Missed coaching responsibilities cannot ordinarily be recreated through an individual make-up assignment.

Before the first human coaching cycle, you must complete practice with the Peer Coach Practice Simulator, an AI-powered learning tool designed for this course. Successful completion of the required simulator practice is a prerequisite for participating in human peer coaching.

Leadership Challenge Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will create a Leadership Challenge Portfolio that demonstrates how your leadership practice developed over time.

Rather than submitting everything you completed during the semester, you will select strong evidence from your Leadership Labs, reflections, collaborative learning, and peer coaching experiences. You will use this evidence to examine your progress, including experiments that succeeded, experiments that failed, feedback you received, assumptions you reconsidered, and changes you made to your practice.

The Portfolio will be evaluated using a rubric adapted from the NACE Competencies, aligned with course expectations for conscious and adaptive leadership. Strong portfolios will demonstrate not simply successful outcomes, but a meaningful process of practice, reflection, learning, adaptation, and impact.

Students will complete a baseline self-assessment at the beginning of the semester and a final assessment at the end of the semester.

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CLASS CYCLE, DEADLINES, AND TIME COMMITMENT

A course week begins at 12:00 a.m. Tuesday and ends at 11:59 p.m. the following Monday. Plan to reserve approximately 6-8 hours each week for your coursework.

At the beginning of each course week, preferably on Tuesday, review [START HERE](#) in the module to understand the week's activities and assignments, how much time they may require, the sequence in which they should be completed, and how to plan your week accordingly.

Ask questions early if anything is unclear rather than waiting until the day before an assignment is due. This will help you plan your week and give you enough time to complete each step successfully.

Most assignments are due Monday at 11:59 p.m., but that does not mean you can wait until Monday to begin. Many assignments are scaffolded or collaborative. You will need to complete certain activities during the week before you can move on to the next step, receive peer feedback, or complete the final assignment.

If you do not complete these earlier activities on time, you may not have enough time - or the peer input you need - to complete the remaining work by Monday's deadline.

Always check the Canvas assignment instructions for the required sequence and specific deadlines.

Course modules and assignments will normally open approximately two weeks in advance, allowing you to plan when you know you will have competing responsibilities.

PUNCTUALITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND FLEXIBILITY

Leadership practice involves working interdependently with other people. Meeting commitments and responding on time demonstrates respect for others and makes collaborative work possible. For that reason, timeliness is part of the learning and assessment in this course, particularly for activities involving Leadership Pods and peer coaching.

At the same time, unexpected circumstances arise. Rather than requiring students to document every illness, family responsibility, work conflict, travel disruption, or technology problem, the grading structure is flexible by allowing the dropping of designated low weekly scores.

Peer Coaching has less flexibility because one student's absence directly affects other students. Once the coaching schedule is finalized, coaching assignments ordinarily cannot be changed or made up individually. Therefore, missing the coach role has a substantial effect on the Peer Coaching grade.

If you anticipate an extended religious observance or university-sponsored travel, please notify me by the end of the add/drop period, when possible, and use the advance availability of course materials to plan accordingly.

The Leadership Challenge Portfolio deadline is firm. Late portfolios will receive reduced credit and will not be accepted more than five calendar days after the deadline.

AI POLICY: AI AS A LEARNING PARTNER

In this course, AI is treated as an enabler of learning and leadership development. You will use AI primarily as a tutor, coach, thinking partner, or source of feedback - not as a substitute for your own thinking, experience, or engagement with the course.

A Simple Principle

EXPERIENCE → REFLECT → ENGAGE AI → RECONSIDER → DECIDE

Begin with your own experience and thinking. Then use AI to help you examine them more carefully. You remain responsible for what you conclude and submit.

Appropriate Uses of AI

- ask questions about concepts you are trying to understand;
- act as a coach, interviewer, mirror, stakeholder, or devil's advocate;
- challenge your assumptions and surface possible blind spots;
- test alternative interpretations of a situation;
- receive feedback on your reasoning or communication; and
- support reflection and sense-making after engaging meaningfully with the course material or completing a field experience.

Inappropriate Uses of AI

- complete annotations, reflections, or other assignments in place of your own meaningful engagement;
- generate experiences, observations, conversations, fieldwork, or evidence that did not occur;
- represent AI-generated analysis or reflection as your own thinking; or
- bypass required engagement with readings, videos, classmates, coaching sessions, or Leadership Labs.

Transparency and Responsibility

Unless an assignment states otherwise, submitted work must represent your own experiences, observations, reasoning, reflection, and judgment. You are responsible for every idea and claim you submit, regardless of whether AI assisted you.

When AI contributes substantially to an assignment, briefly acknowledge how you used it. For example:

"I used AI to challenge my assumptions and provide feedback on the clarity of my reasoning. The experiences, analysis, conclusions, and final submission represent my own work and judgment."

AI Use and Conscious Leadership

Responsible use of AI is itself an opportunity to practice conscious leadership. One of the central ideas of this course is:

Leadership begins with paying attention.

AI can help you identify patterns, ask questions, consider alternatives, and see perspectives you may have missed. But AI cannot pay attention to your life, your relationships, or your organizational system for you.

The purpose of using AI in this course is therefore not to outsource thinking, but to deepen your capacity to pay attention, think critically, exercise judgment, and act responsibly.

GRADING SCALE

FINAL GRADE	RANGE	DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTOR
A	89.5 - 100	Growing
B+	84.5 - 89.49	Developing
B	79.5 - 84.49	
C+	74.5 - 79.49	Emerging
C	69.5 - 74.49	
D	69.5 - 74.49	Beginning
F	0 - 59.49	Potential yet to be realized

COURSE ROAD MAP

Course content and weekly activities are released through the Modules. New modules will open as the course progresses.

WELCOME TO THE COURSE

Module 1: Introduction to the Course	
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SETTING THE STAGE

Module 2: What Counts as Leadership?	
Module 3: How Do We Tackle Adaptive Challenges?	

STAGE 1: BECOMING AWARE OF SELF AND SYSTEM

Module 4: What Do We See?	Attention • Self • System
Module 5: Coaching & Integration	Reflect • Coach • Integrate

STAGE 2: EXPANDING CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP

Module 6: What Could Be?	Mind • Insight • Envision
Module 7: Coaching & Integration	Reflect • Coach • Integrate
Module 8: What Moves Us?	Emotion • Inspiration • Mobilize
Module 9: Coaching & Integration	Reflect • Coach • Integrate
Module 10: What Makes Us Trustworthy?	Body • Integrity • Build Trust
Module 11: Coaching & Integration	Reflect • Coach • Integrate
Module 12: What Will Continue Without Us?	Energy • Stewardship • Sustain
Module 14: Coaching & Integration	Reflect • Coach • Integrate
Module 15: Finalizing the Leadership Challenge Portfolio	

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Disability Services. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where they are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation in accordance with the documentation guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodation. Please share this letter with me and discuss your accommodations as early in the course as possible.

Academic Integrity. You are responsible for understanding and following Rutgers University's Academic Integrity Policy. Academic integrity is essential to learning and to the value of a Rutgers degree. All work submitted in this course must comply with the University's academic integrity standards and the course-specific AI policy described above.

EXTEND YOUR LEARNING

Interested in taking the ideas from this course into a global setting?

Leading with Wisdom in the Age of AI: Embedded Study Abroad - Taiwan, Spring 2027

This embedded study-abroad experience provides an opportunity to continue exploring leadership, wisdom, and human development in the age of AI through international and cross-cultural learning.