

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE WHARTON SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS**

**LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS 227 Syllabus
Spring 2008
Professor G. Richard Shell**

**THE LITERATURE OF SUCCESS:
ETHICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Classroom: F38 Huntsman Hall
Office: 643 Huntsman Hall
Class times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30 PM – 3 :00 PM
Office Hours: 3:00 – 4:30 PM Tuesdays or call/email me
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This course explores the history, literature, ethics, and philosophy of two age-old questions: what does it mean to be “successful” and how does one achieve this elusive goal? It surveys some of the classics of the “success” genre – from Epictetus’ (c. A.D. 50-130) classic “Handbook for Living” to Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography in the 18th century and Dale Carnegie’s How to Win Friends and Influence People in the 20th century. Case studies including Charles Lindbergh’s The Spirit of St. Louis (about the first successful solo flight across the Atlantic), Mary Kay Ash’s Miracles Happen (about the founding of Mary Kay Cosmetics company), and Arthur Miller’s play Death of a Salesman provide additional contexts within which to reflect on the questions at the center of the course.

In addition to analyzing this literature and its relationship to Western ideals of “the successful person,” students will use the readings to reflect on their own personal attitudes and beliefs about success. They will also utilize web-based tools developed by Penn’s Positive Psychology Center and the Gallup Organization to examine their character strengths, talents, and achievement orientations. Group projects and papers on the importance of such factors as moral virtues, goal-setting, the experience of failure, relationships, and family will help provide context for the readings. Grading is based on a number of elements: class attendance, preparation, short reading response papers, and participation (40%), occasional personal journals on assigned topics during the semester (20%), two short papers (5-6 pages) on themes in the course (20%), and a longer final paper (15 pages) presenting your current theories of success illustrated by the lives of two historical figures from business, the arts, science, politics, etc.. (20%).

Readings include a Bulk Pack and these required books: Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography and Other Writings; Marcus Buckingham & Donald Clifton, Now, Discover Your Strengths; Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People; Stephen R. Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People; and Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich.

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class 1 (1/17/08): Course Introduction, Overview, and Expectations

Discuss: Grading, Expectations, Reading Response Papers, Personal Journals, Class Session Discussion Leaders.

Class 2 (1/22): Opening Question: What is Success?

Read: BP #1 selections from George Gallup, Jr. & Alec M. Gallup, The Great American Success Story (1986); biographical profiles in BP #2 Studs Terkel, Working (1972); #3 Steve Young, Great Failures of the Extremely Successful (2002).

Part I. The Character School

Class 3 (1/24): The 18th Century

Read: BP #4 (Quick Biography of Benjamin Franklin and Timeline); Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography: Pages 1-40.

Class 4 (1/29): The 18th Century

Read: Franklin's Autobiography 40-75. This class will focus especially on Franklin's theory of the relationship between moral virtues and success in life.

Class 5 (1/31): Character's Roots: the Examined Life

Read: BP #5, Plato The Trial and Death of Socrates. Students will take the "VIA Signature Strengths Test," a virtue profiler developed by the Positive Psychology Center, and look at both the top and bottom five of their virtues. Go to www.authentichappiness.org. To display all of your strengths in order after completing the instrument, type: www.authentichappiness.org/all24.

Class 6 (2/5): Character's Roots: Family and Role Models

Read: BP #6, Joseph Wall, The Andrew Carnegie Reader; BP #7, from Sam Walton, Made in America (1992); BP #8, from John McCain, Character is Destiny (2005).

Class 7 (2/7): Character's Roots: Religion

Read: BP #9, from Cotton Mather, Essays to Do Good (1710); BP #10, from Gandhi, Autobiography (1957); BP #11, from Liebman, Peace of Mind (1946); BP#12, The Bhagavad Gita, "Two Paths."

Class 8 (2/12): Character in the Modern Literature of Success

Read: Everyone should read pages 15-62; 309-319 in Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989). Selected students from Group 3 will be assigned to report on each of Covey's 7 "habits" and everyone should visit and explore www.Franklincovey.com.

II. The Excellence School

Class 9 (2/14): Aptitudes and Talents

Read: Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, Now, Discover Your Strengths (2001); BP #13, "StrengthsFinder list of 34 Talents"; BP # 14, from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (1990).

Activity: Take the Gallup Organization Strengths Test (you need a **new copy** of Now, Discover Your Strengths or Strengths Finder 2.0 to access this on the web) and be prepared to discuss your signature aptitudes.

Class 10 (2/19): Talents and Excellence

Read: BP #15, from David Cooper, World Philosophies; BP #16, from Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.

Class 11 (2/21): Excellence vs. Happiness (Short Paper #1 Due)

Read: BP #17, from Martin Seligman, Authentic Happiness (2002); BP #18, from Robert Nozick, The Examined Life (1989); BP #19, from JimCollins.com, "The Hedgehog Concept"

Class 12 (2/26): Case Study: Mary Kay Ash

Read: BP #20, from Mary Kay Ash, Miracles Happen (1981).

III. The Mind Power School

Class 13 (2/28): Thoughts, Beliefs, Emotions and Success

Read: Introduction and Chapters 1-4 in Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich (1937).

Class 14 (3/4): Success Theories of the Subconscious Mind

Read: Chapters 6, 9, & 15 in Think and Grow Rich (feel free to skim the parts we skip – there is some interesting material here); BP #21, from William Brown, “Hypnosis and Suggestion” in Psychological Methods of Healing (1938); BP #22, Allen Salkin, “Shaking Riches Out of the Cosmos.”

Class 15 (3/6): Mind Power’s Roots: Roman Philosophy

Read: BP #23, “Stoicism”; BP #24, from Epictetus, Handbook for Living; BP #25, from Marcus Aurelius, Meditations.

SPRING BREAK 3/10 – 3/14

Class 16 (3/18): Modern Mind Power: Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept

Read: BP #26, Albert Bandura, “Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies,” in Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies (1985); and # 27, from David Burns, Feeling Good (2002).

Class 17: Class Canceled!

Class 18 (3/25): Modern Mind Power: Conditioning and Expectations

Read: BP #28, from Anthony Robbins, Awaken the Giant Within (1991); BP #29, from Dov Eden, Pygmalion in Management; BP #30, selection from Viktor Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning (1959).

Class 19 (3/27): Modern Mind Power: Goals, GRIT, and Persistence

Read: BP #31, Brian Tracy, “The Master Skill” in Maximum Achievement (1995); BP #32, “If Success is Your Goal, Don’t Consult These Gurus,”; BP #33, from Twyla Tharp, The Creative Habit; BP #34, *Newsweek*, “Mind Games” (9/25/00); BP #35, Doskoch, “The Winning Edge,” Psychology Today (11/3/05)

Class 20 (4/1): Case Study: Charles Lindbergh’s Flight from New York to Paris

Read: BP #36, from Charles Lindbergh, The Spirit of St. Louis (1954).

Class 21 (4/3): Mind Power and Spiritual Power

Read: BP #37, selection from Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (1952); BP #38, selections on Buddhism from The Dhammapadam; BP#39, from Hansard, The Tibetan Art of Positive Thinking (2003).

IV. The Social Influence School

Class 22 (4/8): Social Influence and Success

Read: BP #40, selections from Letters of Lord Chesterton to his Son; Pages 3-50 in Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People (1937).

Class 23 (4/10): Social Influence and Success

Read: Pages 53-112 in How to Win Friends and Influence People; BP # 41, “The Theory of the Bucket;” BP #42, Selection II from Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics;

Class 24 (4/15): Social Influence vs. Social Manipulation: the “Power School”

Read: BP # 43 selections from Machiavelli, The Prince; BP #44, selections from Green The 48 Laws of Power.

Case 25 (4/17): Case Study: Death of a Salesman (Short Paper #2 Due)

In Class: First half of Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman

Class 26 (4/22): Death of a Salesman

In Class: Complete Death of a Salesman and discuss.

V. Summary Perspectives

Class 27 (4/24): Success in Perspective: Social Constraints

Read: BP #45, selections from Jay MacLeod, Ain't No Making It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood (1987); BP#46, Brooks, “Marshmallows and Public Policy”; BP #47, Gallup, Jr. & Gallup, “Is There a Success Personality?”

Class 28 (4/29): Final Wrap-up and Summary