

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

LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS 227 Syllabus

Fall 2008

Professor G. Richard Shell

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

Classroom: F38 Huntsman Hall
Office: 643 Huntsman Hall
Class times: Thursdays 3:00 -- 6:00 PM
Office Hours: 1:30 – 3:00 PM Thursday or call/email me
Office Phone: 215-898-9525; e-mail: shellric@wharton.upenn.edu

This student-driven, interactive 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 ideals of “the successful person,” students will use the readings to reflect on their own personal attitudes and beliefs about success. They will 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, religion, relationships, and family will help provide context for the readings. Grading is based on a number of elements: attendance, preparation, and class participation (33%), occasional short reading response papers and personal journals on assigned topics (17%), a short paper (8 pages) on a theme in the course (20%), and a longer final paper (15-20 pages) presenting your current theories of success illustrated by the lives of two historical figures not covered in the course from business, the arts, science, politics, etc. (30%). ***Because of the importance of class participation in this course and the fact that the class meets only once per week, class attendance is mandatory. Students may miss one class without any penalty, but beyond that a 10% grade penalty will be imposed for each class missed unless the student provides a written medical excuse or evidence of a family emergency. Recruiting and extracurricular activities are not valid excuses for missing class.***

Readings include a Bulk Pack and these required books (most are inexpensive paperbacks): Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography and Other Writings; Marcus Buckingham & Donald Clifton, StrengthsFinder 2.0; 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 (9-4-08): Course Introduction: Defining Success – Happiness, Achievement, Fame, Service to Others, None of the Above, or All of the Above?

Discuss: Grading, Expectations, Reading Response Papers, Personal Journals.

Readings (to be handed out, read, and discussed during class):

Biographical profiles from Studs Terkel, Working (1972); Steve Young, Great Failures of the Extremely Successful (2002); Martin Seligman, Authentic Happiness (2002) and Robert Nozick, The Examined Life (1989).

Part I. The Character School

Class 2 (9-11-08): Character, Virtue, and the Self-Made Person: Benjamin Franklin
***(Journal #1 Due – A Failure or Major Disappointment in My Life and Its Effect on Me)**

Read: Quick Biography of Benjamin Franklin and Timeline and selections from Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography.

Class 3 (9-18-08): Practicing Character as a System for Success:
Seven Habits and One Elephant.

Read: From Jonathan Haidt, The Happiness Hypothesis (2006); Brooks, “Marshmallows and Public Policy,”; Liebman, Peace of Mind (1946); Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989).

Class 4 (9-25-08): Character’s Roots: Family and Role Models
***(Journal #2 Due – Essay on a Personal Role Model in My Life)**

Read: From Joseph Wall, The Andrew Carnegie Reader; Sam Walton, Made in America (1992); John McCain, Character is Destiny (2005); Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father (2007).

Class 5 (10-2-08) Success, Family, and Literature: Death of a Salesman

Read: Introduction to Arthur Miller's, Death of a Salesman. Watch in class: Original Broadway Case production of Death of a Salesman.

II. The Excellence School

Class 6 (10-9-08): Aptitudes, Talents, and Work-as-a-Calling

Read: From David Cooper, World Philosophies;
Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics;
Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, StrengthsFinder 2.0 (2007);
"StrengthsFinder list of 34 Talents";
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (1990).
JimCollins.com, "The Hedgehog Concept."

Class 7 (10-16-08): The Problem of Purpose

Read: From Plato The Trial and Death of Socrates;
Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning;
The Bhagavad-Gita, "Two Paths";
Cotton Mather, Essays to Do Good (1710);
Warren, A Purpose-Driven Life;
Pirke Avot, Sayings of the Fathers

III. The Mind Power School

Class 8 (10-23-08): Success through Beliefs, Mental Focus, and Positive Mental Attitudes

Read: From Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich (1937).

Class 9 (10-30-08): Mind Power's Roots: Roman Philosophy
***(Journal # 3 Due – Correcting an "Errata")**

Read: From "Stoicism"; Epictetus, Handbook for Living; Marcus Aurelius, Meditations;
The Dammapadna.

Class 10 (11-6-08): Mind Power's Tools – Goals, Models, Self-Talk, GRIT, Rituals

Read: From Albert Bandura, Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies (1985); David Burns, Feeling Good (2002); Anthony Robbins, Awaken the Giant Within (1991); Brian Tracy, "The

Master Skill” in Maximum Achievement (1995); Twyla Tharp, The Creative Habit; The Winning Edge,” Psychology Today (11/3/05); Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (1952).

Class 11 (11-13-08): Success Case Studies: Charles Lindbergh and Mary Key Ash
***(Short Paper Due)**

Read: From Charles Lindbergh, The Spirit of St. Louis (1954); Mary Kay Ash, Miracles Happen (1981).

November 27 – THANKSGIVING

IV. The Social Influence School

Class 12 (11-20-08): Social Influence and Success
***(Journal #4 Due – Your Virtues, Strengths and Weaknesses, with Comments from Friends and Family)**

Read: From Letters of Lord Chesterson to his Son; Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People (1937); Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics.

Class 13 (12-4-08): Social Manipulation, Social Constraints, and Class Wrap-up
(Bring your favorite, “signature quotation” from the readings to share with the class)

Read: From Green The 48 Laws of Power; BP #45, Jay MacLeod, Ain’t No Making It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood (1987).

***(Final Papers Due 5 Days after Last Class)**