

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

LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS 227 Syllabus

Spring 2013

Professor G. Richard Shell

THE LITERATURE OF SUCCESS:
ETHICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Classroom: XXX Huntsman Hall
Office: 643 Huntsman Hall
Class times: Thursdays 3:00 -- 6:00 PM
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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 include 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.

In addition to examining the readings from both critical and cultural perspectives, students will utilize web-based tools developed by Penn’s Positive Psychology Center and the Gallup Organization to examine their own personal character strengths, talents, and achievement orientations. Grading is based on overall class contribution and participation (20%), short reading response papers and personal journals on assigned topics (15%), and two papers: 1) a short paper (6-10 pages) on a “success theme” (to be announced) covered the course (25%), and 3) a “Final Project” (10-20 pages) presenting students’ current theories of success, additional readings on the subject, and treatments of the lives of two historical figures (not covered in the course) from business, the arts, science, politics, etc. that provide context and depth to their success theories (40%). More details on the grading events in the course are attached to this syllabus, together with a sample “Reading Response” paper. ***NOTE WELL: While reading response papers and personal journals will not be evaluated based on writing quality, the two formal papers will be graded with close attention to writing, editing, proofing, original thought, and imaginative research. In addition, class attendance is critical. Students may miss one class without any penalty, but beyond that a 10% grade penalty will be imposed for each class (or part of a class) missed unless the student provides a written medical excuse or evidence of a family emergency. Recruiting and extracurricular activities, while recognized as important student interests, are not valid excuses for missing this class.*** Please consider this very carefully when enrolling.

Readings include Study.Net course readings, a class-by-class Reading Guide and review questions (plus additional readings posted by the instructor), and these required books: Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates (3rd Edition, 2000, Grube and Cooper translation); Tom Rath, 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. **NOTE: Multiple copies of all these books are on Lippincott Reserve but a new copy of StrengthsFinder 2.0 is required to access the web-based profiler we will be using in the class. Used or reserve copies will not work to access the StrengthsFinder profiler, so you will need to buy StrengthsFinder 2.0 as a new book!**

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class 1 (1-10-12): Course Introduction: Defining Success – Happiness, Achievement, Fame, Service to Others, None of the Above, or All of the Above?

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

Read: Study.net #1-3 (to be handed out, read, and discussed during class):

Activity: Rate Profiled Lives; Debate Success vs. Happiness

Part I. The Character School

Class 2 (1-17-12): Character, Virtue, and the Self-Made Person: Benjamin Franklin

Read: Study.net #4-5; Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography (Part 1 written in 1771 and Part 2 written in 1784).

Activity: Group discussion of individual VIA Strengths profiler results for Top 5 and Bottom 5 virtues. See “Introduction to Class 2 Readings” on Study.net for directions on the VIA profiler. A complete list of all 24 VIA virtues can be found as item #39 on Study.net as well as on webCafé.

Class 3 (1-24-12): Practicing Character as a System for Success:
Seven Habits and One Elephant

***(Journal #1 Due – A Lesson in Character From a Personal Role Model in My Life)**

Read: Study.net #6-7; selections from Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989). Everyone should read pages 15-62 and 309-319 of 7 Habits. In addition, different students will be assigned to read and report on each of Covey’s “7 Habits.”

Activity: Groups discuss student character essays as well as their experiences trying to practice one of Franklin’s virtues on a daily basis for this past week.

Class 4 (1-31-12): Character’s Roots: Family and Role Models

Read: Study.net #8-11.

Activity: Group discussions of role models and the “rags to riches” paradigm. “Advantages” exercise. Discuss the role social class and social constraints on success.

Class 5 (2-7-12) Success, Family, and Literature: Death of a Salesman

Read: Study.net #12

Activity: Watch and discuss the original Broadway cast production of Death of a Salesman.

Class 6: (2-14-12) Character, Success and Social Influence

(Journal #2 Due – Practicing Self Mastery on One of Franklin’s Virtues: My Experiences So Far)

Read: Study.net # 13-15; Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People (1937) (Parts 1 and 2 only – roughly the first 100+ pages).

Activity: Group discussion on authenticity vs. social “technique.” Homework: practice one of Carnegie’s techniques during the coming week and report on your results in Class 7.

II. The Excellence School

Class 7 (2-21-12): Aptitudes, Talents, and Work-as-a-Calling

Read: Study.net #16-20

Activity: Group discussion of Aristotle’s classifications of friendship; the concept of “flow” (have ever experienced it?); survey and talk about class StrengthFinder results

Class 8 (2-28-12): The Problem of Purpose

***Paper #1 Due – Shorter Paper on Topic To Be Announced**

Read: Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates; Study.net # 21-22

Activity: Discuss Short Papers and Purpose Readings. Also – “virtue practice” checkup!

SPRING BREAK WEEK (March 2-10)

III. The Mind Power School

Class 9 (3-14-12): Success through Beliefs, Mental Focus, and Positive Mental Attitudes

Read: Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich (1937) Introduction and Chapters 1-4, 6, 9, & 15 in (feel free to look into some of the parts we are skipping – some of it is repetitive but some is very strange). Study.net #23-24.

Activity: Group discussion of gratitude exercise, Napoleon Hill, other readings. Watch Byrne video -- The Secret.

Class 10 (3-21-12): Group Work on Final Projects (in class)

***Journal # 3 Due – Expressing Gratitude in My Life (Turn papers in at the Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department at or before 3 pm – discuss with Project Groups)**

Class 11 (3-28-12): Mind Power’s Roots: Roman Philosophy

Read: Study.net #25-29.

Activity: Students bring most and least favorite quotes from Stoic philosophers and be ready to discuss selections.

Class 12 (4-4-12): Mind Power’s Tools – Goals, Models, Self-Talk, GRIT, Rituals

***Journal #4 Due – My Virtues, Vices, Strengths and Weaknesses, with Comments from My Circle of Friends and Family**

Read: Study.net #30-34.

Activity: Group discussion on Journal #4 -- virtues, vices, strengths and weaknesses. Discuss Mind Power Tools – what works? What does not?

Class 13 (4-11-12): Success Case Studies: Charles Lindbergh and Mary Kay Ash

Read: BP#35-37

Activity: Group activities on review questions in Reading Guide. Also, each student should be prepared to present information on at least one of the people he or she intends to use as a success model in the Final Project.

Class 14 (4-18-12): Class Wrap-up

Read: Study.net #38.

Activity: Bring these things: 1) a final report on your virtue practice for the semester, 2) a story – what would you like to be able to tell your group at your 25th Penn reunion about what you have done in your life since graduation? No story is too crazy, ambitious, or modest! and 3) a favorite, “signature quotation” from the readings to share with the class – come prepared to explain why you picked that passage.

FINAL PROJECTS DUE: Deadline to be announced. No extensions and penalties will be imposed for late papers! I have to submit grades for graduation.

NOTE: This is a course that is graded based on writing and research originality and excellence, though there may be much to be gained from the course on a personal level even if you are not a great writer. Please keep this in mind when registering.

Class participation and contribution (20 points): This score is a combination of professor and student ratings. Students will peer-rate each other at the end of the term on a 1-10 scale based on perceptions of each classmate's overall contribution to the class learning experience. The professor will also rate each member of the class in terms of overall effort on all the assignments and insights displayed in class and written work. The final allocation of the 20 points will be given by the professor by combining both inputs and identifying the top, middle, and lower groups in terms of overall class contribution. Note that class contributions are not measured solely by the amount people talk in class (although people who do not say anything will have trouble excelling on this aspect of the grade). Class contributions are occasions when students trigger lively, informed debate and discussion by what they say – either in class or in small group discussions. People who speak up simply to reinforce or restate something someone else just said are not contributing as much as people who raise new points, deepen areas of discussion with relevant personal experiences, or challenge points of conventional wisdom that everyone else has assumed to be true. You will be mixed in small groups with different classmates to give everyone a chance to engage with lots of other people.

Reading Response Papers (7 points) (sample provided): All students are expected to do the readings for every class. But to assure that there will be in-depth discussions, each student will turn in six 1-2 page (single-spaced) reading response papers during the semester that will include reactions and responses to the assigned readings as well as a proposed debate/discussion topic for the class's consideration springing from one or more of the assigned readings. There will be five groups (randomly assigned) and reading response paper assignments for each group are as follows (papers are due at the beginning of the relevant class):

Group 1: Classes 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13

Group 2: Classes 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13

Group 3: Classes 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13

Group 4: Classes 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13

Group 5: Classes 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 13

One point will be awarded for each paper turned in that meets the standard indicated by the sample. A “bonus point” will be awarded for truly exemplary, consistent effort on all of the papers. Three (3) points will be deducted for each paper turned in late. Reading Response Papers turned in late can earn back one of the three lost points if they meet the quality standard.

Personal Journal Entries (8 points). There will be four (4) Personal Journal Entries, each worth 2 points. Length: 1-2 pages, single-spaced. They due on dates noted in **bold** the syllabus.

Personal Journal Topics:

1. A True Role Model of Character. Identify and write about a key person in your life so far who taught you or modeled for you what it means to be a person of character – someone who seemed to have or practice a true “virtue” (as Benjamin Franklin used that word in his Autobiography). Tell some stories/give examples about this person that explains why you picked him or her. It could be anyone (parent, teacher, coach, tutor, lover, friend, etc.), but it must be someone you have known personally and who made a deep impression on you.
2. Experience Report #1 – Self Control. Write a report on your successes and failures exercising self control and practicing one of Benjamin Franklin’s 13 virtues from his Autobiography.
3. Experience Report #2 – Gratitude or Apology. Write about your real-time experience (this must be done during the semester) expressing gratitude, an apology, regret, or remorse to someone in your life who deserves to be acknowledged or apologized to and who might be surprised to find that you were thinking of them and wanted to be sure he or she knew you appreciated them or regretted some wrong you have done in the past.
4. Capability Assessment – What Can You Do Better Than Most? Write an essay on your VIA “virtues” (including the “vices” at the bottom of your list that you need to work the hardest on improving), your Top 5 StrengthFinder “talents,” and your SAME personality profiler results -- with maximum feedback and comments from your social circle of family, friends, and working associates (people you associate with in jobs, clubs, classes, etc.). The goal: come to some conclusions about what your virtues, vices, and talents actually are based on assessment, self-evaluation, and feedback from your network of social relationships. What innate talents and strengths do you have – the things you can do and be “better than most” without feeling like it is “work.

Two points will be awarded for each Personal Journal turned in. ***However, the penalty for not turning in a personal journal on time is five (5) points.*** Journal papers turned in late can earn back 2 of the 5 lost points.

Two Research Papers: Short (25 points) and Long (40 points)

1. Short Paper (6-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times Roman) (25 points): Topic to be announced -- *Here is a topic I used in the past. This year will be different, but it gives you the idea:* What is “self confidence” and how, if at all, does it relate to success? Many success writers extol the need for self confidence as an essential element in getting ahead in life. Rev. Norman Vincent Peale in *The Power of Positive Thinking* enjoined his readers, first and

foremost, to “Believe in yourself!” Stanford Professor Albert Bandura made his career in psychology studying and showing the benefits of “self efficacy”, a concept closely related to self confidence. Self confidence seems to be associated with the ability to overcome failure and stay on the path to accomplish long-term goals. Confidence is also associated with being persuasive. As former U.S. President Lyndon Johnson once said: “What convinces in conviction.” On the other hand, some think that self confidence is a form of mere “positive illusion” – and that self confidence often escalates to “over confidence” and even arrogance, traits that can sabotage rather than support success. Write a paper on self confidence and its relationship (if any) to the idea of “success.” Motivate the paper using your own personal experience as a reference point, but understand that this will be primarily graded as a research paper. Thus, illustrate your thesis and deepen your own understanding of the topic using as many research sources as appear to you to be relevant: from social science, literature, history, philosophy and/or hard science (i.e. neuroscience, genetics, medicine, etc.). Papers will be graded on the basis of depth and originality of research from materials outside the course readings, original thesis development, clear organization, illuminating case and personal examples, careful editing, and outstanding writing.

2. Final Project -- “What is Success?” (Paper #2): (10-20 pages, doubled-spaced, 12-point Times Roman) (40 points). (Sample papers from past classes will be provided)

Paper title: “My 2012 Theory of What Success Is and How I Will Achieve It.”

Write a paper that presents your current theory about what the word “success” means for you and how you intend to go about fulfilling your success concept in your life. These ideas and plans should be expressed through mastery of the course readings, at least one major additional ‘reading’ (see note below) that inspires you, additional relevant research that sustains and supports your success theories, and illustrations/stories/examples drawn from the lives of two people you admire (no longer living and not treated in the course) from business, social, arts, religious, sports, or political history. You will form groups and meet throughout the semester to discuss your evolving ideas on how to write this Final Project.

Note on grading the Final Project: I cannot grade the papers in this course based on sincerity – though my hope is to inspire sincere reflection. Thus, please be aware that the Final Project is both a personal statement and a research paper that expresses your personal philosophy. The best papers treat the lives of the role models as complex rather than simple narratives. They avoid “cherry-picking” selected facts about a person to support their thesis while ignoring facets of the life that contradict or complicate the thesis. Nobody is perfect! The “additional reading” can be any form of personal or artistic expression – a poem, painting, short story, film, success book, religious writing, play, comic book, photograph – you name it. The more original and thoughtful the paper and examples, the better. Hence, someone who picks the famous “Serenity Prayer” (“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”) or Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem “If” as his or her original reading may not get as much credit as someone who finds a lesser-known but equally powerful reading or other expression that delivers the same

wisdom. And someone who chooses to use the person who founded his or her country or religion as a biographical example may not get as much credit as someone who researches and discovers a lesser-known but equally inspiring figure. The best papers also typically go beyond course concepts (or outside course concepts altogether) in defining what success means for the writer. Writers who simply survey the “success schools” studied in class and pick bits and pieces from each will not do as well as those who find novel ways to expand, deepen, or invent new ways to think about and/or measure success and connect these ideas to both the lives of their role models and their own lives. Overall, in the best papers, the two lives, the extra reading, and the success theories combine to form a well-integrated whole that expresses an understanding about the complexity of life and what it takes to make one’s way in it.

SAMPLE READING RESPONSE PAPER – LGST 227

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading: Mary Kay Ash, Miracles Happen

Class # _____

Class Debate Question: Is Mary Kay's success philosophy dated? Would it sell to this generation of women or is it limited to an era when women were more-or-less barred from pursuing conventional careers?

Response: Surprising book – I think I thought it would be more of a bio. A lot of the material was a how-to book on motivation. While I was put off by the tone of the book (as much as Mary Kay touted feminism she sounded a little too effeminate for me to take her seriously – although that is also probably a function of the changes in societal views over time) in general – her ideas on motivation were great – especially the concept of incremental rewards. For example, her “ladder of success” pins effectively motivated her employees to constantly compete against their past performance. Obviously more important than the actual jewel in the pin is the recognition of achievement that it affords the Consultant. Motivating the directors of my student organization is something I have been struggling with recently – there are several people who are not giving a desirable amount of time and attention to their committees and to our group in general. With the rest of the board, I have been trying to think of ways to incentivize them – and unfortunately, I don't think that a Mary Kay-esque recognition scheme (or even objects that symbolize recognition) will work. People are motivated by different things – I remember reading in a Consumer Behavior textbook about McClelland's achievement theories - that people are motivated by achievement, authority, or affiliation (or some combination of the three). Mary Kay's ladder pin is based on a need for achievement, while for example, one of the directors in my group is motivated by authority – and he has not been performing highly since he lost his election to by Chair.

I saw a lot of similarities between the messages found in this reading and that in Covey's book. One idea that particularly stood out was the need to prioritize with the greater end in mind. Ash writes “if you were going to drive to your vacation destination, you wouldn't start without a road map. The same should be true of your life. Without a plan – a road map – you will never get where you want to go. To accomplish anything significant, you must sit down and decide what you want from life.” Like Covey, she stresses the need to keep a manageable but important list of daily goals (the “\$35K list”), and also that this list should be shaped by a broader life plan (Covey's mission statement). (Mary Kay's message was conveyed with lots more exclamation points than Covey's... but same idea).

I had trouble taking some of this seriously. As hard as Mary Kay clearly worked, her excessively positive attitude made me discount some of what she had to say. This is something that I have experienced – one of my signature strengths was positivity – something I didn't need to take a personality assessment to notice – but there have been points where this has disadvantaged me. A lot of times when you constantly come off as happy, nice, enthusiastic, etc. people don't take you seriously and they think you are naïve, even if that is not the case. It is important to “manage” positivity – and use it to your advantage but to avoid letting it detract from your perceived professionalism. One has to find Aristotle's “mean” even for smiling if you are going to be

successful.