

**LEADING WITH GRIT:
HOW TO INSPIRE PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE FOR LONG-TERM GOALS**

Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania OIDD 705

**Professor Angela Duckworth
Rosa Lee and Egbert Chang Professor**

In-person, interactive classes: WEDNESDAYS 3:30PM to 6:30PM ET, Room SHDH 351.

Class email to which you can email all questions, both substantive and procedural:
leadingwithgrit@gmail.com

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The aims of Leading with Grit are two-fold: (1) to equip you with generalizable knowledge about the science of passion and perseverance; (2) to help you apply these insights as a leader.

At the heart of this course are cutting-edge scientific discoveries about how to foster passion and perseverance for long-term goals, in yourself, in others, and in organizations.

Attendance is essential except in the case of religious or secular holidays, as long as you contact the teaching team **within the first 2 weeks of class**. Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

To ensure students and the professor have a good understanding of the semester ahead, staying enrolled in this course is contingent upon registering in advance, attending the first class

on Wednesday, January 19 and completing a 250-word statement of interest by Sunday, January 23 at midnight.

TYPICAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE

When	What
By Wednesday at 2:00PM EST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the assigned activity and suggested readings
On varied dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Essay due by 2:00pm (see below for details) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essay #1: February 16 (500 - 750 words) ○ Essay #2: April 6 ○ Essay #3: April 20 (500 - 750 words)
Wednesday, 3:30PM to 6:20PM EST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-person lecture, discussion, and group activities ● 15-minute break (4:45 to 5:00PM) ● Grit Lab Guest interview (5:15PM to 5:45PM) ● 45-minute discussion, summary, preview of next week’s activities, and kaizen
Thursday, 6PM to 7PM	Office hours with Professor (sign up via google calendar)

CLASS FAQ

WHAT WILL CLASSES BE LIKE?

We will meet in-person for three hours each week. The first two hours (3:30 to 5:15pm) are devoted to an interactive lecture and discussion. We have invited paragons of grit to share their personal stories with our class. In the last hour, Angela will moderate a live interview with a Grit Guest (5:15pm to 5:45pm) and wrap up the class with a summary (5:45 to 6:20pm).

See the schedule of topics section for a list of guest speakers. If you have a question for the guest, you can submit it by Monday at 11:59PM Eastern via the provided google doc, and you need to be present so you can ask your question directly.

WHAT DO WE DO OUTSIDE OF CLASS?

Each week, you will try out an activity aimed to help cultivate passion or perseverance. Several of these activities will capture data that will be included in your personalized end-of-semester report (see below).

There are three essays, each between 500 to 750 words, asking you to integrate what you’ve learned and to think ahead to how you can apply to your future role as leader. Refer to Canvas for the specific prompts.

There are office hours which we hope all of you will sign up for (either 5 min 1:1 or a 20-minute period shared with other students). Finally, there will be time to talk to Dr. Duckworth immediately after each Wednesday class.

WHY SHOULDN'T I TAKE THIS CLASS?

This is a pass-fail elective for MBA students with a special interest in how to create and lead a gritty organization. If you don't think you will prioritize this class over your many other responsibilities and interests, it's best if you do not enroll. After all, you may be taking the spot of a more intrinsically motivated student and failing to complete assignments or attend class will result in failing the class.

WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGY POLICY?

The quality of this class depends on your participation. Please have your cell phone on mute and face down—but close by for periodic Poll Everywhere activities.

Laptops are not allowed in class. If you need to use a laptop or an electronic device for accessibility reasons, please write a brief email to penngritlab@gmail.com specifying the required accommodation.

HOW DOES GRADING WORK?

Passing this class requires on-time completion of essays and active in-class engagement. It is possible to fail this course (e.g., by submitting subpar or late work, by missing more than 2 lectures).

In case of a medical or personal emergency, please email leadingwithgrit@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations can go [here](#) for Penn resources and can contact leadingwithgrit@gmail.com.

Penn's Code of [Academic Integrity](#) applies to Leading with Grit.

WHAT SPECIFIC FEEDBACK WILL I GET ON MY OWN INTERESTS, VALUES, STRENGTHS, ETC.?

Throughout the semester, we will be using Poll Everywhere and Qualtrics software to administer surveys which collectively contribute to a personalized report which you (and only you) will have access to at the end of the course. For this reason, it is important to [register](#) on Poll Everywhere. Otherwise, we cannot merge your data into your report. Please register in advance by going to pollev.com/gritlab. Follow the registration prompt to create a Poll Everywhere student account right there. If you encounter problems, please email penngritlab@gmail.com.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

1. Welcome to Leading With Grit, January 19

a. Suggested readings:

- i. [Grit Preface and Chapter 1: Showing Up](#)
- ii. Lee, T.H., & Duckworth, A. L. (2018). Organizational grit. *Harvard Business Review*, 96(5), 98-105.

b. Topics: Why do some people and some organizations pursue long-term goals with sustained passion and perseverance? What is the opposite of gritty culture? How is grit different from talent? What are contrary perspectives to “grit is good”?

c. Grit guest: TBD.

Statement of interest due on Sunday, January 23 at midnight (250 words): What life experiences have led you to be interested in grit? Reviewing the syllabus, what are you most excited about?

CHOOSE EASY

2. Exploring your interests, January 26

a. Pre-class activity: Take the O*NET interest profiler linked in Canvas (10 minutes).

b. Suggested readings:

- i. [Grit Chapter 6: Interest](#).

c. Topics: How do you develop interest, and how do you foster it for members of your team/organization? Bloom’s three stages of development, sampling, and the science of curiosity.

a. Grit guest webinar: Shalinee Sharma, Founder and CEO of Zearn

3. Affirming your values, February 2

a. Pre-class activity: 10-minute values affirmation exercise

b. Suggested readings:

- i. [Grit Chapter 8: Purpose](#).

- c. Topics: What priorities orient us as a leader? Values, values affirmation, and purpose.
 - d. Grit guest webinar on February 2: Erika James, Dean of the Wharton School.
4. Racing your strengths, February 9
- a. Pre-class activity: Have a 20-minute curiosity conversation (also known as a reverse interview) with a leader whose character and talents you admire
 - b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 2: Distracted by Talent
 - ii. Grit Chapter 4: How Gritty Are You?
 - iii. HBR article <https://hbr.org/2005/01/how-to-play-to-your-strengths>
 - c. Topics: What is talent and why does it matter? What are character strengths and why do they matter? When to quit and when to grit?
 - d. Grit guest webinar: Ryan Smith, Founder and CEO of Qualtrics

Essay #1 due February 16: Write a “As a Leader, This I Believe” essay (500 words or fewer)

WORK SMART

5. Goal setting and planning, February 16
- a. Pre-class activity: Write your This I Believe essay (see above)
 - b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 5: Grit Grows
 - ii. Oettingen, G. (2014). Stop being so positive. *Harvard Business Review*, 92(10), 9299.
 - c. Topics: How do I get from intentions to results? What are the best practices for goal setting and planning? How do I build a goal hierarchy for myself and my organization?
 - d. Grit guest webinar: Jennifer Hyman, Founder and CEO of Rent the Runway
6. Deliberate practice, February 23

- a. Pre-class activity: Record yourself giving a 60-second “pitch for an idea” or “introduction.”
- b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 7: Practice
- c. Topics: How do you practice like an expert? How do you build an organization that fosters deliberate practice?
- d. Grit guest webinar: Cristina Martizez, Executive Chef and Owner, South Philly Barbacoa

No class on March 2 and on March 9

7. Feedback, March 16

- a. Pre-class activity: Using the IWEW and NTT prompts on Canvas, give feedback to your assigned partner. When you get your IWEW and NTT feedback, re-record your video. How many times can the two of you complete this feedback loop? Who else can you ask? How much can you improve?
- b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 3: Effort Counts Twice.
 - ii. How to love criticism. [Apple](#) | [Other devices](#)
 - iii. Maybe failure is not the best [teacher](#)
- c. Topics: How can I receive feedback optimally? How can I give feedback optimally?
- d. Grit guest webinar: Michael Elliot, screenwriter and producer

8. Rethinking failure and stress, March 23

- a. Pre-class activity: Make a copy of your current resume, then turn it into a failure resume (10 minutes)
- b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 9: Hope
- c. Topics: What is the stress response, and how can you help people you’re leading deal with it? Coping with failure and how that relates to purpose, perseverance and goal hierarchies

- d. Grit guest webinar: Mar Hershenson, co-founder and managing partner at Pear Ventures
9. Rules, rituals, and habits; March 30
- a. Pre-class activity: Design a 2-minute opening ritual that a team in your organization might open their meeting with on a regular basis. On a single google slide, include the (1) name for your ritual, (2) description of structure/content/activities, (3) beliefs or values it symbolizes or relates to, and (4) practical function(s) and/or what makes ritual this immediately rewarding. As inspiration, check out this rugby team's opening ritual <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3A4Ya0Ur5gU>
 - b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 11: The Playing Fields Of Grit
 - c. Topics: How do you scaffold grit? The process model of behavior, your brain on autopilot, why immediate temptation beats long-term goals, and turning personal rules into habits.
 - d. Grit guest webinar: TBD

Essay #2 due April 6: As a google slide deck (or google doc or any other format of your choice), create a Culture Book for a present or future organization. For inspiration, see:

- https://characterlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Culture-Book_Digital_01-11-2021.pdf
- <https://jobs.netflix.com/culture>
- https://www.valvesoftware.com/company/Valve_Handbook_LowRes.pdf
<https://blog.hrpartner.io/best-employee-handbooks/>

PAY IT FORWARD

10. Learning from and leaning on other people, April 6
- a. Pre-class activity: Culture book (see above)
 - b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 10: Parenting for Grit
 - ii. Grit Chapter 12: A Culture of Grit
 - c. Topics: How do you grow grit with and for other people? Role models, mentoring styles, and cultures of grit.

d. Grit guest webinar: Night Shmyalan, filmmaker and actor.

11. Paying it forward, April 13

- a. Pre-class activity: Send a gratitude letter to someone you've never properly thanked. If possible, record a video of you reading it and send it to them or read it to them in person.
- b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 12: A Culture of Grit
- c. Topics: For what and for whom? The basic human need to contribute, self-actualization, and self-transcendence.
- d. Grit guest: Paul Nevin, West Ham United first team coach and member of the England national team coaching staff.

Essay #3 due April 20: Your choice: Write the tribute speech that will be delivered at the end of your illustrious career as a leader, your WSJ or NYT [obituary](#), or write a letter to your future self about what you learned in Leading With Grit and what you hope you'll remember and apply. In addition to posting on Canvas, you can—if you want to—register it on www.futureme.org (500 to 750 words).

12. Concluding Lecture, April 20

- a. Pre-class activity: Write the tribute speech or obituary (see above)
- b. Suggested readings:
 - i. Grit Chapter 13: Conclusion
- c. Topic: Highlight reel of Leading With Grit.