

Embodied Leadership

Course code

Level of studies

Graduate

Number of credits

6 ECTS; 28 (60 min.) class hours, 132 hours of self-study, 2 hours of consultation

Course coordinators (title and name)

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Prerequisites

Undergraduate diploma

Language of instruction

English

THE AIM OF THE COURSE

What is a body to a leader? In the age where most calculating, analysing, predicting and organizing can be performed by AI the significance of the quality of physical presence of a leader is becoming ever more relevant: the body is certainly not only the means to carry the talking head around and is not only the source of potential well-being or productivity, for leadership it is much more - it is the most primal and powerful means of communication, the source of tacit knowledge and a gateway to a mindful action.

In this course personal movement exploration as well as movement within the group becomes a powerful metaphor for leadership challenges we face today: rapid change in the context of work and life, increasing complexity of social relations and high level of contingency within the operating environment. Nowadays the success of individuals and organizations relies on the ability to establish a higher level of adaptive stability, enabling effective navigation through various pressures and facilitating continuous learning. Leaders are expected to continuously generate adaptive strategies and creative solutions. The search for stability needs to give way for finding joy rather than stress in a state of constant shift. Self – understanding, reading the environment “correctly” and versatility, are becoming the primary and key competences of a leader.

Many leaders confirm that bodily awareness while navigating complex situations and environments plays a huge role for them: while being “embodied” they are happier, make better judgements and create more sustainable relations. Non – linear problems often require non linear solutions – *giving voice to a body* might be just the right approach in search of a deeper sense making and authentic action. Embodied approach offers non-conventional yet highly effective solutions for self-regulation, sense and decision making in complex situations.

In this course we will merge the techniques of Social Presencing Theater (Presencing Institute), mindfulness and movement practices (MOVI practice) to facilitate conditions where leaders can discover the power of their embodied selves and move gracefully from knowing to acting.

PARTICIPATION

This course emphasizes practical engagement and physical participation to the best of each student's abilities. It involves movement, stillness, moments of discomfort and high concentration, however no previous training is required. Physical contact and partnering with others will be part of the process.

For each session, students are expected to wear movement-appropriate clothing, preferably loose long-sleeve clothes. Sports shoes are not allowed in the venue; bare feet or light socks are recommended.

LOCATION

The course will be held at Movement Vilnius, J.Jasinskio g. 12, second floor. www.movi.lt

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course learning outcomes (CLO)	Study methods	Assessment methods
CLO1. Navigate Complexity and Cultivate Adaptive Learning: Students will develop the ability to navigate and move within complex environments, honing their skills in adapting to new and unpredictable situations. They will learn how to learn, embracing a growth mindset and acquiring strategies to continually adapt their leadership approach. By cultivating adaptive learning, students will be better equipped to thrive in dynamic and ever-changing contexts.	Introductory lecture, participation in practical group work, guided reflections and discussions	Practical engagement evaluation, Essay

<p>CLO2. Gain Deeper Body Knowledge: Students will acquire in-depth knowledge about their bodies, including understanding how they function in response to diverse tasks. They will develop a heightened awareness of their personal limits and potential, enabling them to make informed decisions and take appropriate action. By gaining a deeper understanding of their bodies, students will maximize their personal effectiveness and harness their full potential as embodied leaders.</p>	<p>Introductory lecture, participation in practical group work, guided reflections and discussions</p>	<p>Practical engagement evaluation, Essay</p>
<p>CLO3. Utilize Self-Regulation Strategies in Crisis Situations: Students will employ self-regulation strategies to manage stress, maintain focus, and build resilience during times of crisis, enabling them to lead effectively and make sound decisions under pressure.</p>	<p>Lecture, reflections, individual study, home assignment</p>	<p>Practical engagement evaluation, Essay</p>
<p>CLO4. Build capacity to sense and act from a deeper source – the tacit knowledge. Students will cultivate a capacity for deeper social field awareness. Through individual and group practice, which is rooted in embodiment, mindfulness and systems thinking participants will learn to engage their physical and spatial intelligence for deeper understanding of complex social relations and will be invited to pursue more sincere and impactful action.</p>	<p>Lectures, practical exercises, group work, discussions</p>	<p>Practical engagement evaluation, Essay</p>
<p>CLO5 Gain tools for embodied sense and decision making. Students will use tools which are effective means for helping system sense and see themselves thus contributing to the more traditional <i>systems thinking</i> approach with that of a <i>systems sensing</i>. Students will be guided to access the wisdom present in the groups for a more engaging and informed complex problem solving.</p>	<p>Lectures, participation in practical group work, team presentations</p>	<p>Practical engagement evaluation, Essay</p>
<p>CLO5 Engage in Self-Reflection and Navigate Group Dynamics: Students will engage in self-reflection activities to deepen their self-awareness as embodied leaders, fostering an understanding of their strengths, limitations, and leadership style. They will also actively participate in group exercises, collaborating with partners and navigating different group dynamics by taking turns leading and following, providing constructive feedback, and adapting their approach to foster effective teamwork and synergy.</p>	<p>Engagement in practical group work, giving and receiving feedback, group reflections</p>	<p>Practical engagement evaluation, Essay</p>

COURSEa OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours	Recommended literature on the topic (exact pages to be given at the beginning of the course)
<p>Theme: "What is a body to a leader? Embodied mind"</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Seeing" check-in - Coming back to embodied "self": "20-minute dance" - Group rhythm: tuning in and out / 5 speeds - Creative composition: "25 gestures" - Standing practice 	<p>January 8th 18.00 – 21.00</p>	<p>Embodied Cognition by Karl Friston https://youtu.be/HW0JnjgCO3o?si=4_khMdupw-hKm9at</p> <p>George Lakoff and Mark Johnson on Embodied Metaphors https://youtu.be/IYcQcwUfo8c?si=mO68WPa11Ymm2s-n</p> <p>Varela, Francisco. "The Embodied Mind." Publisher: The MIT Press, Year: 2017.</p> <p>Johnson, Mark. "The Aesthetics of Meaning and Thought: The Bodily Roots of Philosophy, Science, Morality, and Art." Publisher: Northwestern University Press, Year: 2008.</p> <p>Johnson, Mark. "Embodied Mind, Meaning, and Reason: How Our Bodies Give Rise to Understanding." Publisher: University of Chicago Press, Year: 2017.</p> <p>Damasio, Antonio. <i>Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain</i>. Penguin Books, 1994.</p> <p>Justas Kučinskas on Standing Practice https://medium.com/@justas_8227/standing-as-practice-85519aad7ac9</p> <p>Hamilton, Pete. "Embodied Leadership." Publisher: Columbia University Press, Year: 2019.</p>
<p>Theme: Moving in complexity: constrained approach to human development. Repeating without repetition.</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring human movement territory - Figure 8 object manipulation and creative composition - Self-regulation through 5 fundamental movement qualities 	<p>January 10th 17.00-20.00</p>	<p>Bernstein, M.D. "On Dexterity and Its Development." Publisher: Routledge, Year: 1996.</p> <p>Gray, Rob. "How We Learn to Move." Publisher: Routledge, Year: 2018. https://youtu.be/5udt94Ry7lc?si=vQrDSyaEGnrHU90t</p> <p>Gibson, J.J. <i>The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception</i>. Houghton Mifflin, 1979.</p> <p>Feldenkrais, Moshe. "Awareness Through Movement." Publisher: HarperOne, Year: 2009.</p> <p>van der Kolk, Bessel. "The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain, and Body in the Transformation of Trauma." Publisher: Penguin Books, Year: 2015.</p>
<p>Theme: Theory U and "4 levels of listening"</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embodied listening practice - Embodied dialogues 	<p>January 15th 18.00-21.00</p>	<p>Otto Scharmer on 4 levels of listening https://youtu.be/eLFXpRkVZal?si=aHYHzhVv0U5tIO3a</p> <p>Scharmer, Otto. "Theory U." Publisher: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Year: 2007.</p> <p>Tolle, Eckhart. "The Power of Now." Publisher: New World Library, Year: 1999</p>

<p>Theme: Embodied communication: space, time, motion</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensing “the field”: “Dance of 5s” 	<p>January 17th 17.00-20.00</p>	<p>Senge, Peter. "Presence." Publisher: Currency, Year: 2005.</p>
<p>Theme: Social Presencing Theater – the Art of Making a True Move</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Village” - “Field dance” 	<p>January 22nd 18.00-21.00</p>	<p>Hayashi, Arawana. "Social Presencing Theater: The Art of Making a True Move." Publisher: Presencing Institute, Year: 2014.</p>
<p>Theme: From crisis to a possibility: working with the seeds of the future</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Stuck” 	<p>January 24th 17.00-20.00</p>	<p>https://www.u-school.org/stuck</p>
<p>Theme: Engaging and leading complex living systems, personal and collective sense making through embodied experience</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chaordic football - “4D Systems Mapping” 	<p>January 29th 17.00-20.00</p>	<p>Senge, Peter. "The Fifth Discipline." Publisher: Currency, Year: 2006.</p> <p>https://www.u-school.org/4d-mapping</p>
<p>Theme: Embodied peer coaching for innovative solutions</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Case clinic” 	<p>January 31st 17.00 – 20.00</p>	
<p>Theme: Envisioning an emerging future</p> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Field of the future exploration” 	<p>February 1st 10.00 – 14.00</p>	
	<p>Total: 28 astronomical hours</p>	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

The final score for the class will be determined by adding up the scores from each of the assignments.

Type of assignment	Maximum score
Attendance and physical participation in tasks	4
Participation in reflections and group discussions	3
Essay	3
Total:	10

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria:

- Attendance and physical participation in tasks:** Students are expected to attend the class and actively participate in the physical tasks to the best of their abilities. The level of commitment and participation will be evaluated as follows:
 - 0: Not attending
 - 2: Attending but not fully participating or committing to the task
 - 4: Present and fully committed to the task, actively trying and seeking solutions when facing challenges
- Participation in reflections and group discussions:** After each practical task, there will be guided reflections and group discussions. Students are expected to actively participate by sharing their insights and experiences. The level of participation will be evaluated as follows:
 - 0: Not attending
 - 1: Attending but not sharing insights
 - 2: Rarely sharing insights
 - 3: Actively listening and actively participating by sharing quality insights
- Essay (Approx. 1500 words):** Students are required to write a 1500-word essay on one of the course topics, discussing the related reading material and reflecting on their own experiences. The essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - 0: No essay submitted
 - 1: Essay is submitted but lacks coherence between theoretical ideas and personal experience
 - 2: Essay is written in a clear academic language, creatively elaborating on the reading material in relation to personal experience
 - 3: Essay is written in a clear academic language, creatively elaborating on the reading material in relation to personal experience, proposing novel ideas and asking thought-provoking questions

Note: The essay should be submitted electronically before the assigned due date.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics regarding cheating and plagiarism applies to this course. Any academic dishonesty or cheating will be strictly dealt with and may result in reporting to the ISM Committee of Ethics.

Class Conduct/Professional Behavior: Students are expected to behave professionally and in a manner suitable for an educational setting. It is important to prioritize personal safety as well as the safety of others. Inappropriate behavior may lead to the student being asked to leave the class. The use of smartphones, including video or audio recording, during class time is not allowed without permission from the instructors of the course.

Recommended Readings:

- Bernstein, M. D. (1996). *On dexterity and its development*. Routledge.
- Damasio, A. R. (1994). *Descartes' error: Emotion, reason, and the human brain*. Penguin Books.
- Feldenkrais, M. (2009). *Awareness through movement*. HarperOne.
- Gibson, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Gray, R. (2018). *How we learn to move*. Routledge.
- Hamilton, P. (2019). *Embodied leadership*. Columbia University Press.
- Hayashi, A. (2014). *Social presencing theater: The art of making a true move*. Presencing Institute.
- Johnson, M. (2008). *The aesthetics of meaning and thought: The bodily roots of philosophy, science, morality, and art*. Northwestern University Press.
- Johnson, M. (2017). *Embodied mind, meaning, and reason: How our bodies give rise to understanding*. University of Chicago Press.
- Scharmer, O. (2007). *Theory U*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Scharmer, O., & Pomeroy, E. (2024). Fourth person: The knowing of the field. *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change*, 4(1), 19–48. <https://doi.org/10.47061/jasc.v4i1.7909>
- Senge, P. (2005). *Presence*. Currency.
- Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline*. Currency.
- Tolle, E. (1999). *The power of now*. New World Library.
- Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. MIT Press.
- Van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The body keeps the score: Mind, brain, and body in the transformation of trauma*. Penguin Books.