GLBL252 COURAGE IN THEORY & PRACTICE
Exploring the theory & practice of courage to maximise personal effectiveness & impact

Syllabus Overview

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Course description:
An exploration of the concept of courage from philosophical, historical, and psychological perspectives, with a view to creating greater awareness and embodiment of courage in the current and future lives of the students.

The course starts by looking at definitions of courage, a task that has challenged philosophers for more than two millennia. We will look at research that has sought to define courage by identifying its essential constituent parts.

We then move on to the essential skill of critical thinking, which will inform the remainder of the course and, it is envisaged, the quality of students’ participation in their other courses.

After an overview of the classic hero’s tale (per Joseph Campbell) and what perspectives it lends to the study of courage, we examine psychological perspectives on how courage can be enhanced by finding intrinsic motivation and a sense of purpose and developing the right kind of mindset.

We then move to explore the practical application of courage in various contexts: decision-making, truth-telling, nonconformity, corporate management, the military, and politics.

In the final two weeks, we examine how we can promote courage in ourselves and others, and what the near future may demand of us in terms of courageous thought, speech, and action.

The course will be both theoretical and practical, and participants will be encouraged to embody the learning so as to take a more courageous approach to their future life and work. Specifically, the intended outcome of the course is to equip participants with the self-awareness and skills to live courageously, where "courageously" means a bold, visionary outlook, grounded in integrity, principles, and a strong sense of purpose.

Format:
This course will be primarily a moderated discussion, following on from some introductory remarks (and sometimes a short video) from the instructor. The discussion will cover thoughts arising from the prescribed reading, insights and feedback from the journaling exercises, and collaborative development of models of courage for the various topics outlined above.
**Evaluation Criteria/Requirements:**

**Weekly Reaction Papers**
Each week you will use a journal to record your thoughts and reflections inspired by the reading materials. You will summarise your key learnings into no more than 10 bullet points, taking up no more than two pages, and email to me in advance of our class. Each of the 13 assignments counts for 4% of your final grade (52%).

**Contributions to class discussion:**
Much of the value of this class will derive from lively class discussion, so everybody is expected to participate fully. If you are usually shy, this is a very appropriate opportunity to develop your courage. Useful tips [here](#). My evaluation of your level of contribution counts for 18% of your final grade.

**Mid term submission:** Outline (3 pages max) for your intended end term paper. I will review these and, if need be, discuss with you to ensure you are on track to do your best work, but they will not count towards your final grade. At mid term I will also give you feedback on your level of contribution to class discussion, so that you have the opportunity to improve your performance if required.

**End term paper:** Drawing on the reading materials you have studied during the course, summarise what you have learned about the theory of courage. Then describe why you believe courage to be important in the world today and/or in the near future, and how you intend to embody courage in your own life and work. Between 12 and 15 pages in length (double spaced, Times Roman 12 point font, with 1” margins). This will be evaluated for intellectual coherence, personal passion, insight, originality, actionability, and relevance. 30% of your final grade.

**Film screenings:** There will be 4 or 5 film screenings throughout the term, to explore representations of courage in popular culture. Each will be followed by a half hour discussion session. Attendance is strongly encouraged.

**Principal Readings:**
McGilchrist, Iain. “*The Divided Brain and the Search for Meaning*”. Yale University Press, 2012. ($1.26)
Academic Integrity

The concepts of integrity, authenticity, and honesty are central to the ethos of this course. The intention is that you develop the courage of your convictions, with the emphasis on "your". I am not interested in you having the courage of somebody else's convictions.

Any of the following will be regarded as a grievous attempt to undermine the integrity of both the course and yourself, and to devalue your contribution to your own learning and that of your classmates: misrepresentation of others’ work as your own, such as unacknowledged paraphrasing or quoting, use of another student’s material, incomplete acknowledgment of sources (including internet sources), or submission of the same work to complete the requirements of more than one course.

Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. The most common penalty is suspension from the university, but students caught plagiarizing are also subject to lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of expulsion. Please be sure to review Yale's Academic Integrity Policy.

WEEKLY READINGS

[Scholarly readings are marked with an asterisk; 57 out of 77 readings]

Week 1: Definitions of Courage (PLEASE READ BEFORE FIRST CLASS)

(READING: 198 pages)


Week 2: The Hero’s Tale

(READING: 159 pages)

Week 3: Intellectual Courage

(READING: 156 pages)

- “Chapter 3: Becoming a Fair-Minded Thinker”, and “Chapter 4: Self-Understanding”. Thinking Tools to Improve Your Life. Westside Toastmasters. (11 pages)

Week 4: Motivation and Purpose

(READING: 147 pages)


Week 5: The Courageous Mindset

(READING: 151 pages)

Week 6: Courageous Decision-making
(READING: 178 pages)

Week 7: Courage and Truth
(READING: 136 pages)

Week 8: Managerial Courage
(READING: 129 pages)
Understanding the Structure and Role of Emotions in Organizational Behavior.
Pfeiffer, 2002. (19 pages)
  Academy of Management Journal, 2014. (31 pages)
  Proceedings of the 9th Annual NZACE Conference, Queenstown, 2006. pp. 116-120. (6 pages)

Week 9: Nonconformity
(READING: 161 pages)
- *Samuelson, W., and Zeckhauser, Richard. “Status Quo Bias in Decision Making”.
- *Lumbert, Samantha P. “Conformity and Group Mentality: Why We Comply”.
  Rochester Institute of Technology, 2005. (4 pages)
- Deterline, Brooke. “How to Cultivate Ethical Courage”. 2016. (2 pages)

Week 10: Military Courage
(READING: 188 pages)
  The Psychology of Courage: Modern Research on an Ancient Virtue (First edition.).

Week 11: Political Courage
(READING: 181 pages)
- Boyson, Rhodes, and Martino, Antonio. “What We Can Learn from Margaret Thatcher”. The Heritage Foundation. (10 pages)

Week 12: Nurturing Courage in Self and Others
(READING: 126 pages)
Week 13: Courage and the Future

(READING: 165 pages)