INSTRUCTOR:  
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TIME AND LOCATION:  
Tuesday and Thursday  
2:45 – 4:00 PM  
STARR Auditorium

FACULTY ASSISTANT:  
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OFFICE HOURS:  
Mondays, 3:00 – 5:00pm  
Sign up here

TEACHING FELLOWS:

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Section #6  
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Starr

Overview

This module builds on its prerequisite MLD 355, Public Narrative: Self, Us, Now. In MLD 355 you began learning the practice of public narrative: a way to exercise leadership by translating values into an emotional capacity for agentic action in response to challenge.

The practice of public narrative may be especially useful in responding strategically to moments of particularly challenging leadership: power inequality, difference, loss or change. Yet it is in just such moments that we are most likely to find ourselves in the midst of as many different stories as there are actors involved—each story rooted in a different self, building on a different us, urging action on a different now. In this module:

• First, you will learn to diagnose leadership challenges drawn from your own experience in terms of public narrative: what was the nature of the challenge, why was it a leadership challenge, and what public narratives were in play – informed by background reading, film clips, and critical reflection.

• Second, you will learn to analyze the narrative responses to the challenge: what was the strategic intent of the response, how did stories of self, us, and now play out, and how effective were they in – enabling the agency of the participants.

• Third, you will draw public narrative lessons from this analysis that you could put to work in your own practice?
Logistics

After two introductory classes we focus on one of four key leadership challenges each week: power inequality, loss, difference, and change. You will diagnose the leadership challenge, analyze the public narrative response, and draw lessons for practice. After the first week of class, when we meet together twice, we meet together on Tuesday and in sections on Thursday.

Each Thursday, by 12:00 PM, you will submit a two-page reflection paper in which you describe a case drawn from your own experience of that week’s leadership challenge, analyzing the narrative response, and drawing lessons from it.

- What exactly was the nature of the narrative leadership challenge? Who were the key actors? What different stories were in play? How does it illustrate this week’s focus?

- What was the public narrative response to that challenge? Who responded? What was their intent? What “self” did they draw on? What “now” did they call for? How did they bring a sense of “us” alive? Around what values? Did they strengthen the agency of the participants?

- What public narrative lessons did you learn by analyzing that challenge? What worked? What didn’t? What could those responsible have done differently? What might you do differently in the future?

Each week 3 or 4 students will also make an oral presentation of their case to the section as a focal point for discussion. When it is your turn, to prepare for your presentation, you must:

1. Meet with your TF during office hours that week prior to your presentation.
2. Submit your reflection paper to your TF by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, the day before section,
3. Share a one paragraph case summary with your section by 5:00 PM on Wednesday.

Your final assignment is a five-page paper in which you choose a leadership challenge in which you were – or are – an actor, diagnose it, analyze it, and draw lessons from it. Using specific examples, consider how you could use narrative tools to address the challenge. Assess what you have learned in the course of the module about how you could use public narrative strategically.

Grading is based on class attendance, participation and presentation (35%), reflection papers (25%), and final paper (40%)

All course materials are available on the MLD 356 Course Website. You will also be asked to review passages from two books required for MLD 356, which are on reserve in the Kennedy School Library:


**INTRODUCTION**: **COMMON CHALLENGES, COMPETING STORIES, ALTERNATE FUTURES**

**W E E K 1 | UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE NOW’S**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2015**

We often tell different stories about the same event, moment, or challenge, depending on variations in our stories of self, how we define our story of us, and the story of now we have mind. Stories also vary along with the values to which they give expression. Adichie points to the hazard of believing that a single story can capture the “whole truth.” Bruner and Amsterdam explain why this is so: we shape and are shaped by the world. Callahan shows how policy differences can grow out of different narratives rooted in different values. Westen spells out the values differences that drive partisan narratives. In the videos, two political leaders try to mobilize “agency” in the face of uncertainty based on different stories of self, story’s of us rooted in different values, and in “now’s” that hold very different meanings.

**Required Reading:**
1. ***Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of the Single Story", TED, 7/09 found at: [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html) [18 min.]

**Class Work:**
1. Introduction: Public Narrative, Narrative Dialectic; Organization of Course.
2. Lecture/Discussion: Overview of Module.

**Thursday, October 22, 2015**

Conflict and collaboration are distinct, but essential, forms of social, political, and economic interaction. Although we often focus on the desirability of collaboration (except for market based competition), under what conditions is conflict not only unavoidable, but also desirable? And what is the role of narrative in managing constructive conflict? Coser specifies the value of social conflict. Eisenhardt, et al, show a way those conditions can be created. Marcus and McKee point to the emotional work required to sustain constructive conflict, a key role for public narrative. The video of Sen. Robert Kennedy delivering the news of Dr. M.L. King’s assassination to an African-American rally in 1968 offers a look at how self, us, and now can interact to strengthen agency at very challenging moment.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Class Work:**
1. Lecture/Discussion: Conflict, Continuity, and Change.

**WEEK 2 | POWER INEQUALITY**

**Tuesday, October 27, 2015**

This week we focus on public narrative responses to the leadership challenge of unequal power. Scott argues that at any moment of unequal power four narratives or “transcripts” are in play: subordinate narratives (hidden and public) dominant narratives (hidden and public). The leadership question is how one can strengthen the agency of the “us” for whom one is responsible when challenged in this way: always with a public story of now motivating resistance? What about a hidden story of resistance and public story of compliance? Does one ever tell a story of resistance from a dominant position - hidden or public? Cuoto shows how individual hidden resistance narratives can be a source of shared public resistance narratives. My paper shows how a public resistance narrative was articulated among California farm workers. *North Country* allows us to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of diverse leadership responses to the complex interplay of hidden and public narratives under conditions of gender and class based power inequality in Northern Minnesota mines.

**Required Reading:**

**Class Work:**
1. Lecture/Discussion: Power Inequality, Resistance, Compliance
2. Debrief: North Country

**Reflection Paper (2 pages, 12:00 PM Thursday):** analyze a leadership challenge of unequal power drawn from your own experience, the public narrative response, and the leadership lessons.

**SECTION: Thursday, October 29, 2015**

How you can use public narrative to respond to the challenge of unequal power. Based on analysis of student cases, consideration of responses, and evaluation of effectiveness, what are the lessons for leadership practice, how can you put them to work?
**WEEK 3 | DIFFERENCE**

**Tuesday, November 3, 2015**

This week we focus on public narrative responses to the leadership challenge of difference. When confronted with the challenge of difference, is an inclusive narrative always the most effective leadership response? When might an exclusive narrative, a narrower “story of us”, be more effective? What if the difference is in the content of the narratives themselves? In this case, Stone and Winslade argue, developing a third story, different from either of the two in contention, may be a wiser path. Bozzoli shows a way different private narrative can be woven into a shared public narrative, contributing a healing process, integrating individual loss the solidarity of community. *Mean Girls* shows a way we can use almost any marker of difference to create exclusive stories of us. The Milk movie suggests when it can create more agency to exclude and when it may create more agency to include. And Sesame Street makes a strong case for the possibilities of inclusion.

**Required Reading:**


**Class Work:**

1. Lecture/Discussion: Difference, Inclusion, and Exclusion.
2. Debrief: Mean Girls, Sesame Street, Harvey Milk

**Reflection Paper (2 pages, 12:00 PM Thursday):** analyze a leadership challenge of difference drawn from your own experience, the public narrative response, and the leadership lessons.

**SECTION: Thursday, November 5, 2015**

How you can use public narrative to respond to the challenge of difference. Based on analysis of student cases, consideration of responses, and evaluation of effectiveness, what are the lessons for leadership practice, how can you put them to work?

**WEEK 4 | LOSS**

**Tuesday, November 10, 2015**

In our private lives we have all had to learn to deal with the challenge of loss at some point. McAdams argues that it makes a big difference how. Do we tell a story of loss as inevitable, what always happens to “us”, what he calls a “contamination” narrative? Or do we tell a story in which loss, as painful as it is, may be the cost of growth, learning, and change? What can we learn from our private experiences of loss that can prepare us for moments when we must exercise public leadership in response to loss? How can we tell an authentically “redemptive” public narrative as opposed to a “contaminating” one? How can we enable others to respond to loss in similar fashion? Polletta shows how some people have learned to turn a “victim” story into one of agency. Voss explains the role redemptive narrative can play in enabling organizational resilience in the face of loss – and what happens when it is missing. The Joy Luck Club shows how a redemptive narrative of loss can be passed across three
generations, from mother to daughter, enabling greater agency. The video shows how Renata Teodoro, one of the leaders of the Dreamers, was able to tell a redemptive narrative following defeat in the Senate two years ago.

Required Reading:

Class Work:
1. Lecture/Discussion: Loss, Contamination, and Redemption
2. Debrief: The Joy Luck Club
3. Debrief: The Dreamers

Reflection Paper (2 pages, 12:00 PM Thursday): analyze a leadership challenge of loss drawn from your own experience, the public narrative response, and the leadership lessons.

SECTION: Thursday, November 12, 2015
How you can use public narrative to respond to the challenge of loss. Based on analysis of student cases, consideration of responses, and evaluation of effectiveness, what are the lessons for leadership practice, how can you put them to work?

WEEK 5 | CHANGE

Tuesday, November 17, 2015
How can we exercise narrative leadership in response to change? One response we can make it that of rejection: no change for us. Another could be that of radical embrace: out with the old story, in with the new one. We may also find a way to accommodate enough change within our old story to assure continuity. On the other hand, we may also find away to adapt enough of our old story to the new one, to facilitate real change.

Required Reading:

Class Work:
1. Lecture/Discussion: Change: Rejection, Conservation, Reform or Revolution.
2. Debrief: Immigration Reform
Reflection Paper (2 pages, 12:00 PM Thursday): analyze a leadership challenge of change drawn from your own experience, the public narrative response, and the leadership lessons.

SECTION: Thursday, November 19, 2015
How you can use public narrative to respond to the challenge of change. Based on analysis of student cases, consideration of responses, and evaluation of effectiveness, what are the lessons for leadership practice, how can you put them to work?

WEEK 6 | CATCHING OUR BREATH: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Tuesday, November 24, 2015
This week, you will step back and reflect on what you have been learning about how you can use public narrative to deal with four major leadership challenges. What new insights have you gained? What are you still struggling with?

Thursday, November 26, 2015
THANKSGIVING: no section meetings

WEEK 7 | CONCLUSION: CONFLICT, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE

Section: Tuesday, December 1, 2015
In your last section meeting you have the opportunity to reflect on what you have learned, what has facilitated your learning, what improvements you would make. It is also an opportunity to articulate appreciation for the contribution section members have made to each other’s learning.

Thursday, December 3, 2015
What did you learn about how to use public narrative in response to major leadership challenges? What did you learn about how to diagnose the challenge? What about how to strategize a narrative response? What does it really mean to enable others to act with agency in response to challenge? How can you tell if you succeeded?

Final Assignment

5 PAGE PAPER (double-spaced, 12-point type) analyzing a leadership in which you were an actor, the public narrative responses, and leadership lessons learned. Due THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time, submitted to your TF via e-mail.