

Self-Management (2 ECTS)

Introduction

Managers tend to be action-oriented people and MBA programs probably accentuate such predisposition towards action, achievement, and tangible results. However, while a practical orientation may be necessary for business people, it is not enough.

Eugene O’Kelly, CEO of KPMG, said that “the very busy-ness of business militates against reflection,” which might create unexpected problems and difficulties. Reacting against standard management training which they described as a ‘boot camp,’ Gosling and Mintzberg have insightfully described the reflective mindset that leaders should possess: “These days, what managers desperately need is to stop and think, to step back and reflect thoughtfully on their experiences. Reflect means to refold, which suggests that attention turns inward so that it can be turned outward.”

Many voices have described the current financial meltdown as a leadership crisis requiring a radical change in management education. Some of those voices asking for a change actually preceded the financial meltdown. According to Professor Badaracco from Harvard Business School, “MBA students perhaps need a little less in the way of quantitative tools and a little more in the way of good judgment and self-knowledge, as well as a deeper understanding of human nature. [...] Leaders should learn more about themselves if they want to succeed. In other words, before you set out to manage other people, you should look inside yourself and reflect on how well you can manage yourself. That takes time, and it is an unnatural act for action-oriented people. And you may not like what you see.”

Readings, exercises, lectures, and cases presented in this course are meant to stimulate reflection about your own character, assumptions, beliefs, and values, which will inevitably impact your career. In today’s turbulent career environment, self-discovery is more important than ever for business professionals to develop their own agendas, carve out their own places, and develop the right skills and support networks. They must start there if they want to make a lasting professional contribution. In the words of management pundit Peter Drucker, managers today must be, first and foremost, “their own chief executive officers.”

Objectives

This course intends to help you achieve a greater understanding of several main areas to help you

advance in your never-ending process of self-development:

- yourself, including how your past has shaped your present and your goals;
- your character strengths and weaknesses;
- your relationship skills and attitudes.

Content

The content and purpose of the course follows four key building blocks:

1. Self-discovery: self-awareness and self-regulation. Explore your biases, values, assumptions, emotions, habits, and reflect on how well you govern yourself to pursue your goals.
2. Other discovery: empathy and social skills. Reflect on the quality of your connections with others and of your support networks.
3. Context: cultural and political skills. Reflect on your understanding of the context, different societal mores, and the impact of peer pressure and business culture.
4. Strategy for life: purpose and values. Explore how you can find meaning in your career and how you can project your future in a compelling manner.

Evaluation

The evaluation will be done with the participation of the student (30%) and through a written exam (70%).

Competences

Basic

CB6. Possess and understand knowledge that provides a basis or opportunity to be original in the development and / or application of ideas, often in a research context.

CB7. The students know how to apply the knowledge acquired and their ability to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

CB8. The students can integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

CB9. Students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

CB10. Students possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.

General

CG2. Identify, address, and resolve interpersonal conflicts promptly and deeply without damaging the personal relationship, both within the organization and in its immediate environment of stakeholders (shareholders, customers, suppliers, etc.)

CG8. Anticipate and assess situations of special tension to maintain personal balance and act objectively and consistently.

CG13. Develop and validate hypotheses about the reactions at a personal or company level to different decisions and circumstances to develop solid learning about oneself and the organization itself.

Specific

CE06. Compare management models and company cultures through the application of anthropological and sociological models provided by academic literature.

CE10. Strengthen the leadership skills of teams and companies, starting with self-knowledge and understanding the different types of temperaments and their way of interacting. Know the state of the art of empirical research in this field.