

## Gender and Leadership

A Course Syllabus by Alice Eagly and Linda Carli

### OVERVIEW

This course considers the experiences of men and women leaders by answering two questions: Why have women now gained more access to powerful leadership positions? Why do men continue to have far more access than women do? To address these questions, the course reviews research from a variety of social science disciplines, including social psychology, sociology, economics, political science, management and organizational science, and anthropology.

The course is organized by the chapters in the following book:

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

### COURSE OPPORTUNITIES

The book can be used as a primary or supplemental text in courses in Management, Organizational Behavior, Leadership Studies, Gender Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Anthropology, and Political Science. The book is based on research but is written in an accessible style with examples that illustrate the principles established in research. Thus, the book can be used as a text at the undergraduate or graduate level. The readings listed here would be most appropriate for graduate level or advanced undergraduate courses.

### MODULES

#### Unit One: Is there still a glass ceiling? Where are the women leaders? (Chapters 1 and 2)

These chapters demonstrate that, although women remain relatively rare at the highest levels of leadership, more women hold these positions now than at any earlier time. In fact, when all organizations in the United States are considered, about one quarter of CEOs are women. The presence of women leaders in elite leadership positions calls for a new metaphor to replace the *glass ceiling*. An appropriate metaphor should reflect the obstacles and diversions that women face on their path to leadership and also suggest that the path to top can be negotiated. These chapters introduce the metaphor of the *labyrinth* to convey women's current situation as leaders.

#### Readings

Hymowitz, C., & Schellhardt, T. C. (1986). The glass ceiling: Why women can't seem to break the invisible barrier that blocks them from top jobs. *Wall Street Journal*, March 24, special supplement, 1, 4.

Hymowitz, C. (2006). In the lead: Women tell women: Life in the top jobs is worth the effort. *Wall Street Journal*, November 20, B1.

de Zárate, R. O. (2007). *Women rulers currently in office*.  
<http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women5.htm>.

Dunn-Jensen, L. M., & Stroh, L. K. (2007). Myths in the media: How the news media portray women in the workforce. In D. Bilimoria & S. K. Piderit (Eds.), *Handbook of women in business and management* (pp. 13–33). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

#### Unit Two: Are men natural leaders? (Chapter 3)

This chapter examines research testing evolutionary psychology's claims that biological and personality differences between men and women account for the dearth of women leaders. Counter to these claims, men's personalities do not place them at an advantage as leaders. The blend of traits most associated

with leadership—sociability, assertiveness, conscientiousness, being open to new ideas, trustworthiness, and intelligence—occur overall as much in women as men.

#### Readings

Browne, K. R. (2002). *Biology at work: Rethinking sexual equality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Chapter 4 (Once one breaks the glass ceiling, does it still exist?)

Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. W. 2002. Personality and leadership: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 765–780.

Costa, P. T., Jr., Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: Robust and surprising findings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81: 322–331.

#### **Unit Three: Do family responsibilities hold women back? (Chapter 4)**

This chapter documents a shift toward greater gender equality in housework and increases in men's childcare. Nevertheless, women continue to have greater domestic responsibility than men. Although employed women's family responsibilities do not undermine their desire for leadership or preference for challenging employment, women, more than men, work part-time, and take breaks in employment to care for children. These employment patterns do contribute to women's lack of advancement and lesser pay.

#### Readings

Bianchi, S. M., Robinson, J. P., & Milkie, M. A.. (2006). *Changing rhythms of American family life*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

England, P. (2005). Gender inequality in labor markets: The role of motherhood and segregation. *Social Politics*, 12, 264–288.

Roth, L. M. (2006). *Selling women short: Gender and money on Wall Street*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 6, Having it all? Workplace culture and work-family conflict.)

#### **Unit Four: Is discrimination still a problem? (Chapter 5)**

The authors examine research testing whether discrimination contributes to women's lesser advancement and pay. Although women have less job experience than men on the average (as indicated in Chapter 4), controlling for this and other human capital variables reduces but does not eliminate the gender gap in pay and promotion. This remaining gap suggests discrimination against women. The chapter also reviews further evidence of discrimination in experiments showing that when men and women have identical qualifications, men still are evaluated more favorably than women except in distinctively feminine settings.

#### Readings

Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2007). The gender pay gap: Have women gone as far as they can? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21, 7–23.

Baxter, J., & Wright, W. O. (2000). The glass ceiling hypothesis: A comparative study of the United States, Sweden, and Australia. *Gender & Society*, 14, 275–294.

Davison, H. K., & Burke, M. J. (2000). Sex discrimination in simulated employment contexts: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56, 225–248.

#### Case discussion: Wal-Mart:

Featherstone, L. 2004. *Selling women short: The landmark battle for workers' rights at Wal-Mart*. New York: Basic Books.

### **Unit Five: What is the psychology of prejudice toward women leaders? (Chapter 6)**

This chapter explores research on the psychology underlying discrimination against women leaders. The research demonstrates that people unconsciously and automatically form different associations when thinking about men compared with women. These stereotypes characterize women as warm, nice, and considerate, and men as directive, competent, and competitive. Because people's stereotypes about leaders are more similar to their stereotypes about men than those about women, people assume that women are less qualified than men for leadership, especially in male-dominated roles. Also, people not only think that women are warmer and nicer than men but also think that it is more important for women to be warm and nice.

Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109, 573-598.

Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 657-674.

Schein, V. E. (2001). A global look at psychological barriers to women's progress in management. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 675-688.

Rudman, L. A. (2004). Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias. *Social Justice Research*, 17, 129-142.

#### Case discussion: Marilyn Bush:

Bielby, W. T. (1983). The impact of gender stereotypes on the treatment of Marilyn Bush at California Institute of Technology Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Unpublished manuscript (available from Professor William T. Bielby: [wbielby@uic.edu](mailto:wbielby@uic.edu)).

### **Unit Six: Do people resist women's leadership? (Chapter 7)**

This chapter reviews evidence that stereotypes place special burdens on women leaders and potential leaders. Because people have generally assumed that women have less leadership ability than men, women have the burden of proving themselves by performing exceptionally well. Because they are expected to be warm and nice, women are often penalized for behavior that seems too forceful, dominant, or assertive—such behaviors are not very nice. These pressures create a double bind. Women who display a decisive, agentic style of leadership may be seen as competent but tend to be disliked and lack influence because they are perceived to lack warmth. Women who display a warm and supportive style of leadership may lack influence because they are perceived as lacking competence. This double bind can produce resistance to women's leadership.

Carli, L. L. (2006). Gender issues in workplace groups: Effects of gender and communication style on social influence. In M. Barrett & M. J. Davidson, *Gender and communication at work* (pp. 69–83). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (1999). Feminized management and backlash towards agentic women: The hidden costs to women of a kinder, gentler image of middle managers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 1004–1010.

#### Case discussion: Ann Hopkins v. Price-Waterhouse:

Bersoff, D. (1988). Brief for Amicus Curiae American Psychological Association in Support of Respondent. PRICE WATERHOUSE, Petitioner, v. ANN B.HOPKINS, Respondent.

Fiske, S. T., Bersoff, D. N., Borgida, E., Deaux, K., & others. (1991). Social science research on trial: Use of sex stereotyping research in Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins. *American Psychologist*, 46, 1049-1060.

### **Unit Seven: Do women lead differently from men? (Chapter 8)**

Given the double bind and other challenges facing women leaders, it would be surprising if women did not lead somewhat differently from men. This chapter examines research on differences in the way men and women lead. Although the differences are modest and depend on the context of leadership, women leaders typically display a style that is more democratic, whereas men have a more autocratic, command-and-control style. Compared with men, women also display more transformational leadership and rely more on rewards and less on punishment to motivate subordinates. Women's leadership styles do not undermine women's ability to lead, but is generally associated with greater effectiveness than men's. Women's styles also resolve some of the conflict created by the double bind because they are relatively androgynous and combine assertive competence with supportive mentoring and warmth.

Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 233-256.

Eagly, A. J., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & van Engen, M. L. 2003. Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 569–591.

Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. G. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89, 901–910.

Cohen, F., Solomon, S. Maxfield, M., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2004). Fatal attraction: The effects of mortality salience on evaluations of charismatic, task-oriented, and relationship-oriented leaders. *Psychological Science*, 15, 846–851.

#### Case discussion: Coach K:

Sokolove, M. (2006). Follow me. *New York Times Sports Magazine*, February, 96–101, 116–117.

### **Unit Eight: Do organizations compromise women's leadership? (Chapter 9)**

This chapter addresses the challenges that women face when they confront traditional organizational culture. Organizations generally require long hours of their fast-track employees, hours that can conflict with family responsibilities. Also, advancement depends on connections with powerful networks to establish social capital within and beyond the organization, yet women have more difficulty entering these networks. In addition, the tendency for people to prefer to work with those who are similar to themselves gives men an advantage because it is men who continue to hold the more powerful positions and determine who advances. And some organizations may evince a culture that overtly rewards machismo behavior hostile to women.

Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity polities. *American Sociological Review*, 71, 589–617.

Konrad, A. M. (2007). The effectiveness of human resource management practices for promoting women's careers. In D. Bilimoria & S. K. Piderit (Eds.), *Handbook of women in business and management* (pp. 254-276). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Hewlett, S. A., & Luce, C. B. (2005). [Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 38(3), 43–46, 48, 50–54.

#### Case discussion: Enron:

McLean, B., & Elkind, P. (2004). *The smartest guys in the room: The amazing rise and scandalous fall of Enron*. New York: Portfolio. (Chapter 5: Guys with spikes. Browse remainder of book.)

### **Unit Nine: How do some women find their way through the labyrinth? (Chapter 10)**

In this chapter, the authors provide advice to women seeking leadership. First, in many settings, women leaders can transcend the labyrinth's double bind by combining competence with warmth. One way to accomplish this is through the aspects of leadership style that are in fact more typical of women than men—participative, transformational, and positive managerial behavior. Women seeking advancement can also profit from creating social capital—joining networks, finding mentors, and developing relationships with colleagues within and outside their organizations. The chapter further reviews research showing the benefits of combining employment with having a family, despite its challenges. In general, employed women report higher levels of health and well-being than women without employment.

Eagly, A. H. (2005). Achieving relational authenticity in leadership: Does gender matter? *Leadership Quarterly*, 16, 459–474.

Luthans, F. (1988). Successful vs. effective real managers. *Academy of Management Executive* 2(2), 127–132.

Timberlake, S. (2005). Social capital and gender in the workplace. *Journal of Management Development*, 24, 34–44.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 72–92.

#### Case discussion: Women in police leadership:

Silvestri, M. (2003). *Women in charge: Policing, gender and leadership*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing. (Chapter 5: Doing leadership)

### **Unit Ten: How good are women leaders and what does their future hold? (Chapter 11)**

This chapter summarizes findings from the book. It also examines the effect of women leaders on organizational outcomes and discusses what changes in women's leadership are likely in the future. Its review of research on the effectiveness of individual managers demonstrates that women are especially effective in settings that have more women and are culturally feminine; men are especially effective in settings that have few women and are culturally masculine. Male-dominated roles are challenging for women because of the doubts that people have about women's competence in such roles. Despite the impediments that women often face as leaders in such roles, business organizations with a higher percentage of women in positions of authority have better financial performance than organizations with fewer women. Finally, there has been a favorable change in people's attitudes about women leaders and, in general, an increased willingness to accept women leaders in business and politics. In addition, the model of what constitutes good leadership has shifted over time away from more hierarchical, command-and-control models of leadership to models that are more participatory and transformational. These changes and the increasing need for effective leadership as a result of global competition should continue to facilitate women's leadership opportunities.

Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 125–145.

Krishnan, H. A., Park, D. (2005). A few good women—on top management teams. *Journal of Business Research*, 58, 1712–1720.

Hunt, S. (2007). Let women rule. *Foreign Affairs*, 86(3, May/June), 109-120.



Diekman, A. M., & Goodfriend, W. (2006). Rolling with the changes: A role congruity perspective on gender norms. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 30: 369–383.