



Engineering Education

Learning to make a difference

Gender and Leadership: the Creation of a Graduate Course

Gender Summit - North America

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Outline



Content
Assessment



Course Goal

- Challenge graduate students to consciously build on their previous experiences and understandings, and
- explore one facet of diversity (gender) in depth and
- its effects on the majority and non-majority populations with respect to leadership positions,
- particularly within an engineering professional context.



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Course Objectives

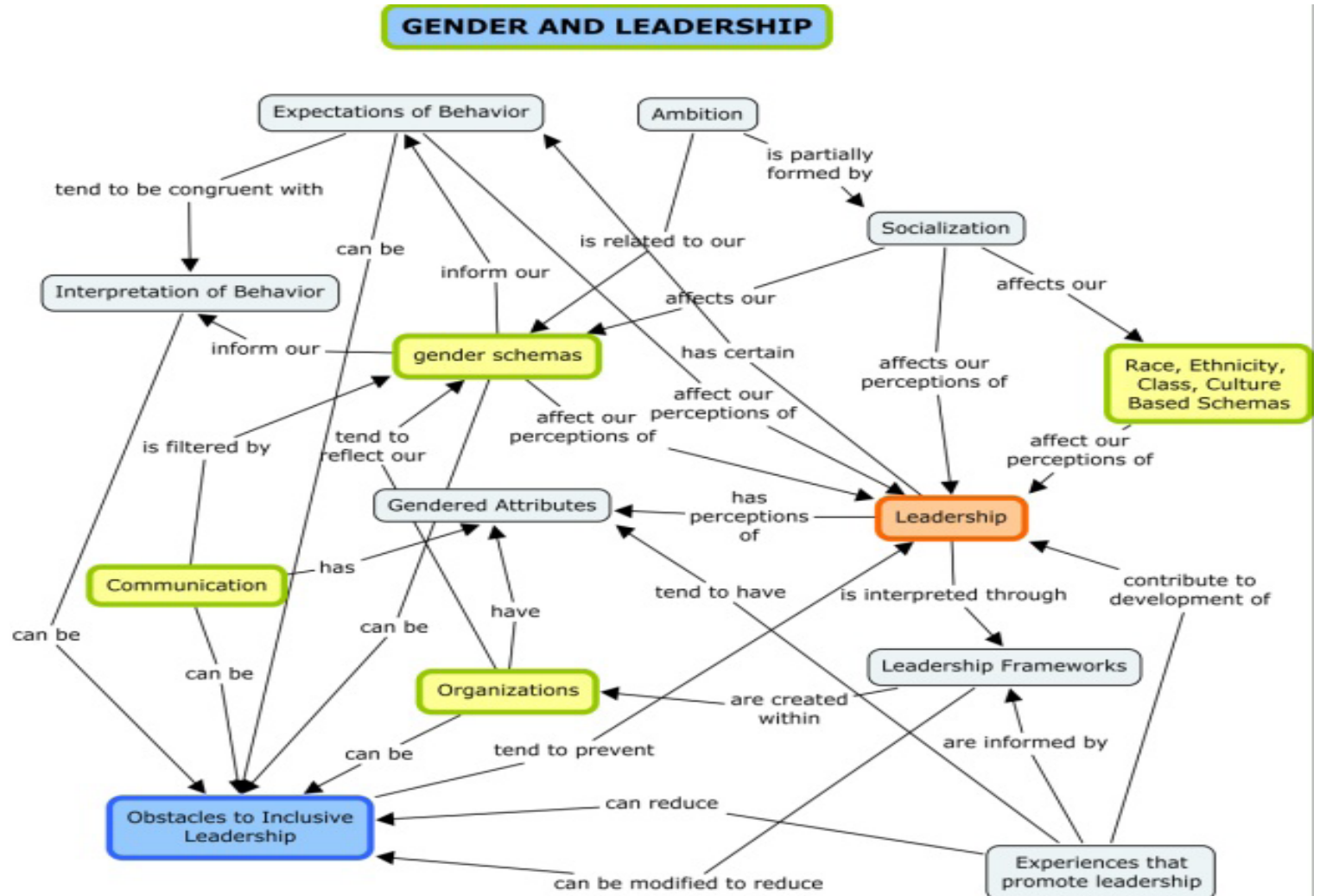
Students will:

- examine the context of gender in society and work.
 - understand and appreciate people's subconscious beliefs about gender, referred to as schema.
 - discuss the effects of schema on others' perceptions of us, and our perceptions of others.
 - explain the intersections of gender with leadership and other diversity characteristics (i.e. race/ethnicity/class/etc.).
 - understand the role of gender in the workplace, in organizations, and in communication.
 - critically think about the role of gender in leadership styles.
 - be able to define and identify inclusive leadership.
 - critically reflect on the obstacles to inclusive leadership.
 - be able to discuss a framework for gender equity in leadership.
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Concept Map





Informed by three areas of research

The areas of research that inform our understandings of behaviors related to the intersection of gender and leadership;

- gender schemas,
- gendered organizations, and
- gendered communication.



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Gendered Schemas

- Definition: how people see others through lenses created from their experiences and socialization.
- When people see a man, they automatically and unconsciously impose a set of expected characteristics, behaviors, and personality traits on that person. They do the same when they see a woman.
- Schemas in general are more inclusive than stereotypes, and can be positive, negative or neutral.
- People have schemas for many things in addition to gender, such as, race, culture, socioeconomic status, age, etc.



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Gendered Schemas

- The same gender schemas are held by both men and women.
- These schemas lead to our biased expectations and interpretations of behavior, characteristics, and accomplishments of men and women.
 - “We expect men to be capable of independent action, and that men do things for a reason (in contrast with women). We expect women to be more nurturing, expressive and caring about the group or community than men”.
- Our schemas for men fit better with our expectations of leaders than our schemas for women.

Valian, V., *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, 1999.

Sevo, R. and Chubin, D.E., *Bias Literacy: A Review of concepts and research on discrimination*, Retrieved April 22, 2008 from the World Wide Web: <http://momox.org/BiasLiteracy.pdf>.



Gendered Organizations

- Because organizations historically have been created and staffed by men, organizational norms and behaviors are typically masculine.
- Organizational expectations, such as expecting committed employees to work long hours and expecting careers to follow linear, full-time patterns are male perspective expectations.



Gendered Organizations

- Formal and informal policies and practices, developed over time without explicit thought as to their effects on women and non-majority males, tend to conform to white, heterosexual male behavioral norms.
- Women and non-majority males tend to have a more difficult time navigating these organizations, which decreases their likelihood of obtaining leadership positions.

Wood, J.T., *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*, 2009.



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Gendered Communication

- Women and men who practice feminine speech patterns tend to regard communication as a primary way to establish and maintain relationships with others.
- Feminine speech patterns have distinctively different qualities than masculine speech patterns, which are practiced by most men and some women.



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Gendered Communication

- Our expectations for leaders are more in line with masculine speech patterns than feminine ones, and because of our gender schemas, we see women who communicate with masculine speech patterns negatively.
- Therefore, gendered communication practices, and our interpretations of them, are an obstacle to leadership for those that practice feminine speech patterns.

Wood, J.T., *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*, 2009.



Three Frameworks for Inclusive Leadership

- **Personal Strategies**
 - adapt to maximize potential within the set constraints, which are not questioned. This framework is most reflected in popular literature, in books like *“It’s Not a Glass Ceiling, It’s a Sticky Floor”*.
- **Organizational Strategies**
 - revising policies, practices, and/or wholesale organizational expectations, creating educational programs or training, and mentoring or forming affinity groups. Interesting reference is *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders*.
- **Governmental Strategies**
 - Equal Pay Act, Affirmative Action, and Title IX.



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Assessment



Assessment

Student Assessment

- Reflection papers on previously discussed topics are required bi-weekly.
- Students are required to read a general leadership book/paper or watch a movie with leadership themes and complete a critical reflection of the work using a gender lens.
- The culminating assessment is a research paper relevant to course topics.



Assessment

Student + Course Assessment

- Implicit Association Test (IAT)
- Student's concept maps are compared to the instructors' map.



Discussion and Q&A

