

**OBTC 2017 at Providence College**

**June 14th – 17th, 2017**

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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| **Submission Template for the**  **2017 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators** |

1. Title, Abstract & Keywords

*In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

**Business Education Needs Great Literature: Teaching Leadership Through Literature**

Learn how to use literature, both fiction and nonfiction, as a way to delve into the complexity of leadership, enabling learners to move beyond thinking of leaders as “heroic” and into a paradigm that understands leaders as dynamic, human and fallible. Literature can be used as a once-off project or drawn on to create an entire course on leadership. By using novels and biographies students are able to step into the lives of a diverse set of leaders, think through difficult decisions and reflect on what it means to be a leader.

Keywords: leadership, pedagogy, critical-leadership-studies

1. Teaching Implications:

*What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

**Pedagogy**

Leadership through literature helps answer the pedagogical criticism laid out by Collinson and Tourish (2015), who claimed that leadership courses all too often portray leaders as “great men performing miraculous deeds.” By analyzing and critiquing leaders in literature, students are able to embrace complexity and avoid reductionism. Further, literature allows the learner to understand the context in which the leader operates. This enables students to move beyond attributing success or failure entirely to a leader and to better appreciate circumstances (business, economic, political, etc.) that led to given outcomes. Because literature provides depth of character and context, learners have the opportunity to grapple with more sophisticated dynamics that are inherent in leadership (power, influence, aspirations, values, etc.).

**Learning Objectives**

In this session attendees will:

* Be able to explain the ways in which literature can be used in the classroom to enhance course material on leadership
* Walk away with a few specific class activities that can be immediately integrated into the classroom
* Articulate how literature provides depth to learning about leadership
* Think of a few leaders in particular who might be compelling cases to draw on as literature in the classroom.
* Evaluate the pros and cons of literature verses more traditional case-based learning

**Relevant leaching topics**

* Critical leadership
* Leadership
* Case-based learning

**Theoretical foundations**

Drawing on the work of Alvesson and Spicer (2012) who suggested that leadership courses ought to move beyond simplistic explanations of leadership types and into the complexities of power dynamics and influence tactics, teaching leadership through literature allows students to critically evaluate leaders as full humans, not simply as prototypes. Moreover, literature enables learners to understand the complex environment in which leaders operate. When Collinson and Tourish (2015) bemoan that the “teaching of leadership needs to go beyond a ‘rotten apple’ theory of dysfunctionality and corruption to examine the barrel within which the apples have soured” they imply that the leaders must be understood more broadly. Finally, because literature by its nature explains both sides of leadership, that is, the leader and his or her followers, such a course is able to to integrate theories of followership into the discussion of what it means to lead (Chaleff, 2009).

1. Session Description and Plan:

*What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you’d like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session’s goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.*

Session 60 min

Interactive introduction- participants will think of a compelling leader from fiction or nonfiction. They will jot down quick bullet point concerning the leaders use of power, influence, personal aspirations, ethics and what helped them succeed and/or fail in their endeavors. 8min

Theoretical underpinnings- Present the pedagogical perspective of critical leadership studies and how it intends to move the discussion beyond leadership as prototype. Discuss the differences between traditional leadership courses verses leadership through literature. 12 min

Connect to literature- discuss my course “Leadership Through Literature” and how it addresses some of the concerns in critical leadership studies. 10 min

Activities- go through a couple activities that I use in the classroom in teaching Leadership Through Literature. 10 min

Books- briefly outline a few books that can be used for such a course. 5min

Breakout group activity- splitting up the session into groups, have small groups brainstorm ways in which they can integrate literature into their business curriculum. Rejoin group and have larger discussion- 13min

Conclusion- 2 min

1. Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

Today more than ever, business education should reflect the complexity of the business world itself—a dynamic, ever-changing environment that cannot be captured in a single equation or a pithy quote on a leadership poster. Literature is replete with examples of leaders who face challenges in which there are no clear, easy answers. By grappling with the difficult decisions that leaders face, students are better prepared themselves to emerge from the safety of the classroom to tackle an ambiguous and uncertain world that rewards those who can think critically under pressure. Hopefully, this session will encourage other business educators to use literature in the classroom, as a unique pedagogical tool to teach leadership.

1. Unique Contribution to OBTC:

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

I have not presented this work before.

This proposal is not under review anywhere else.

**Citations**

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). Critical leadership studies: The case for critical performativity. *Human Relations*, 65, 367–390.

Chaleff, I. (2009). *The courageous foll*ower, (3rd ed.), San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Collinson, D., Tourish, D. (2015). Teaching leadership critically: New directions for leadership pedagogy. *Academy of Management Learning and Education.* 14(4), 576-594.