Resilient Leadership Preliminary Syllabus

Course Code: BUS 175  
Quarter: Spring 2020  
Schedule: Mondays from 7:00 pm – 8:50 pm, April 6 – June 1, 2020 (8 weeks) (no class on May 25)  
Instructor: Frieda K. Edgette, MSc, PCC, CPCC  
Novos Consulting

Course Summary

How do you respond to the unpredictable? What happens when obstacles emerge? Do you tend to fight, flee, freeze, or fire up? At its core, resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. For some people, competing demands, challenging interpersonal dynamics, personal and professional setbacks, and infinite to-do lists are an equation for burnout or withdrawal. For the resilient, these factors ignite motivation, optimism, and creativity. To stay focused amid the storm, resilient leaders develop “strong backs” of mental determination and hardiness. They also cultivate “soft fronts” comprising emotional intelligence and agility. If these qualities do not describe you right now, there is good news: resiliency can be taught and learned.

This course draws from organizational, health, and sports psychology to build mindset and tactical skill. We will:

- Establish an understanding of the neurological, biological, and behavioral components of resilience.
- Master five pillars that build and strengthen resiliency: self-awareness, self-management, focused attention, leveraged strengths, and vision-oriented action.
- Develop and practice strategies, visualizations, real-time scenarios, and drills related to each area.
- Engage in weekly assignments that build resilient muscles and apply them in your day-to-day life.
- Create personalized action plans to further growth.

Credits and Grade Requirements

This is an action learning course. As such, attendance and active participation are expected. Classes follow a 25-50-30 instructional design: 25 minutes of direct instruction, 50 minutes of in-class application (e.g., personal reflection, case studies, role play and small group discussion), and 30 minutes of reports and debriefs. There will be a 5 minute break.

For credit, you have three options:

- **No grade requested (NGR):** Attend class and actively participate. This is the default option. No credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

- **Credit/No Credit:** Attend no less than six of our eight classes. Participate fully in in-class exercises and discussions. Complete and submit five of the seven weekly assignments to demonstrate your understanding of the science and principles, and the effects in practice. Details will be distributed weekly in-class. All submissions are treated as confidential. I will delete all copies, including electronic files, upon the course’s completion.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305  
continuingstudies@stanford.edu  
650-725-2650
- **Letter grade:** Students must complete the Credit requirements (listed above), and write a five page self-reflection paper on your own resilient leadership or create a resilient leadership goal and report regarding a real-time challenge you are facing (i.e., how you will lead through it and its impacts on you and your team/organization), to be identified with the instructor by Week 2. Details will be distributed in Week 1. The final paper or goal report is due in Week 8 prior to our final class. This is not a research paper, though you are expected to apply course content. Grade will be 70% based on class participation and assignments (70%) and 30% on final paper/goal report. All papers are treated as confidential. I will delete all copies, including electronic files, upon the course’s completion.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

**Tentative Weekly Outline**

(Note: Due dates and assignments are subject to change. All assignments are due the following week unless otherwise noted. Please bring completed assignments to class to reference for in-class exercises.)

**Week 1 – Introductions & Overview**

- Resiliency: What is it? What are its impacts?
- Unpack the science stuff: neurological, biological and behavioral components of resiliency
- Review implications of resiliency on leader performance
- Visualize your “A Game”
- Outline course calendar, readings and assignments

**Assignment:** Establish resilient leader pillars. Do daily skill drills.

**Week 2 – Build Self-Awareness**

- Understand the neuroscience of uncertainty on physical, mental and emotional states
- Identify “go to” response when under perceived threat: fight, flight, freeze or fire up
- Build awareness of response indicators and variances based on situations and stakeholders
- Develop a personal leadership compass, inclusive of baseline resiliency reserves and “A Game”

**Assignment:** Complete daily log of interferences, stress responses and observations.

**Week 3 – Manage Yourself**

- Identify and code internal and external interferences, and how they affect leading at your best
- Match self-management techniques with stress inducers to build emotional agility
- Create a self-management plan that “balances out” your sympathetic nervous system and mental state, and optimizes self-compassion, strategic focus, decision-making and communication

**Assignment:** Apply self-management plan and track impacts.
**Week 4 – Focus Attention**

- Understand how to [re]build resiliency neuropathways through concentration
- Build attentional focus through breathing exercises, visualizations and skill drills that cultivate the presence, motivation and determination of “mental strength”
- Reframe to reclaim control for effective problem solving, greater openness and physical health

**Assignment:** Practice daily attention focus exercises and log observations.

**Week 5 – Leverage Strengths**

- Understand the 3:1 positivity ratio to offset negativity and foster a growth mindset
- Deconstruct past challenges for hidden strength-based data to leverage in real-time
- Mind map strengths (e.g., knowledge, people, time, resources) to accelerate bouncing back
- Apply strategies to case scenarios that activate the brain’s reward system and prefrontal cortex to access creativity, motivation and executive function to lead through complexity

**Assignment:** Log three strengths daily. Choose one and commit to for the week.

**Week 6 – Take Vision-Inspired Action**

- Explore the neuroscience behind and key elements of effective action planning
- Enhance your ability to align decisions and actions with the long-game while remaining agile
- Translate vision into compelling, measurable and achievable strategic actions

**Assignment:** Put strategies into practice and evaluate (due Week 8).

**Week 7 – Fireside Chat (guest speakers announced at beginning of class)**

**Assignment:** Put strategies into practice and evaluate (due Week 8) and complete final papers.

**Week 8 – Create a Sustainable Action Plan**

- Create sustainability action plan for ongoing growth, agency and impact
- Celebrate successes
- Course takeaways & reflections

**Letter grade papers due.**