DPLS 772fa13 The Tao of Leadership

Fall 2013      Credits: 3

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Class dates: Sept 5, 19, Oct 3, 17, 24, Nov 14, 21, Dec 5—Thursday, 6-10 pm, Tilford #105

Course Overview

The Tao, a 5000-year-old wisdom, has relentlessly invoked paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1970) and stimulated new thinking. That wisdom, as a concept, enables rethinking leadership and offers a process model for guiding transformation and a tool for assessing the at-the-moment being in individuals and/or in local/global entities. This course delves into the theoretical premises evinced in Tao philosophy, the laws of nature as explained in cosmology and modern physics. The amalgamation yields an energy-flow conceptual scheme for leadership practice to understand, and unfold, the evolving meanings of leadership and enfold new theory for leadership practice and decision making.

This course introduces a Tao model for transforming leadership (Fu, 2008). The model provides energy-flow as a theoretical basis for deconstructing leadership theories and reconstructing a practice for leading transformation. The model consists of a conceptual scheme enabling us to explore how to perceive leadership transformation phenomena as a process of energy-flow within a spatiotemporal energy field of relationships. Observations of a concrete event are captured in thought retained as energy-flow abstractions in observers. Energy-flow abstractions can be used to represent manifestations of an entity’s wellbeing in an event. The premise is that being can be assessed using a Tao complexity tool to understand how the activating forces are manifested as energy-flow of an entity.

In this course, we explore the ancient works of Lau-Tze (the Book of Tao), Chuang-Tze (mystic moralist), Confucius (Confucianism), Mencius, (Mencius Sacred books) and Sun-tze (the art of war) and how their aspirations tie to current prevalent leadership theories. By mimicking how the ancients applying the Tao concept to their works, we embrace the same Tao concept as a frame of reference and delve into the thoughts disclosed about human affairs in the works of six
polymathic thinkers/theorists of different traditions provide a theoretical foundation for the model:

- Alfred North Whitehead's philosophical views of thought and science in *The concept of Nature*;
- Ralph H.G. Siu's science and art of leadership, *The Tao of science*;
- Ilya Prigogine's nature/sustainability, *The end of certainty, time, chaos, and the new laws of nature*;
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's optimal leadership experience, *Flow*;
- Richard Gerber's physiological energy-flow and vibrational medicine, and

Their works corroborate to the conception of a Tao model of Leadership as Energy-Flow for *Transformation* (Fu, 2008; Fu & Bergeon, 2011) and a Tao Complexity Tool for assessing *Being* (Fu & Bergeon, 2012) and for *Policy-Making* (Fu & Bergeon, 2013). An intention of this course is to cross the divide between Eastern and Western thoughts about leadership.

As in a Tao sense, what is meaningful naturally reveals itself as you peruse the texts. While perusing, please extract from the texts what is most meaningful to you. Engage in virtual-dialogues (Bohm, 1985) with those thoughts that speak to you and posit those thoughts that stimulate your imagination.

In class, we explicate our thoughts in dialogues around the works of each theorist/ancient philosopher and apply the Tao concept to decipher prevailing leadership theories and look into their practice implications in human affairs. We use the conceptual scheme in the Tao model as a framework to explore ways and to extend the readings of those polymaths' works inspire our comprehension of leadership phenomena and incite inquiry into old paradigms and enfold new ones.

By perceiving leadership from a reference point of a united energy-spiritual base in social life (Whitehead, 1953/1970) rather than from a material base, one might make a paradigm shift in perspective. New perspective invokes ideas for viewing human affairs as dynamic energy-flows and manifestations of spirituality, or some other unobservable formless elements. Consciously discounting discrete material based thinking enables one to unblock one's sense perception (Einstein, 1956) to discern the complex non-linear dynamics underlying leadership phenomena and find new meanings.

**Course Objectives**

Whether you are searching for a dissertation topic or deep in the throes of writing one, this course will expose you to several paradigms that could help you bridle divergence or unleash new beliefs. At the end of this course, the expectation is you have a general understanding of the Tao philosophical concepts and are open to the paradoxical effect of Nature on leadership. You will:
• Obtain insights into the dynamics of followership-leadership polarity as yin-yang energy-flow and transformation observed in nature and learn how to appreciate paradoxes and conflicts as complementarities.

• Gain various perspectives on leadership as energy-flow, energy conservation and transformation, reverse entropy, and other spatial and temporal attributes.

• Be able to philosophize and theorize about leadership phenomena in a space Whitehead calls the "specious present" and Siu, "virtual presence;" and to unfold new meanings of leadership in a way Maslow describes as having an "unconscious impulse" and Prigogine/Wilhelm/Jung, a "chance" or an "observed moment."

• Learn to view reality from the non-obvious realm: Whitehead's insight in displacing material based thinking with energy-spiritual based thinking in social life.

• Comprehend Siu's concept of how quantum theory reflects Tao-time philosophy and apply his wisdom of subsuming and resonating with the Tao of leadership.

• Fathom Prigogine's dissipative structure model to perceive leadership in a high-order complexity, nature's spontaneity, and sustainability.

• Become conversant with Gerber's vibrational medicine, dissipative structure of human physiology, yin-yang energy balance, and humans as energy beings.

• Be familiar with Csikszentmihalyi's research on psychic energy-flow, dissipative structure of the mind, and leadership as energy-flow in a web of meanings.

• Apply Maslow's notions on human potential, motivation, need hierarchy, unconscious impulse, and management theory to effect meaningful leadership.

• Demonstrate differentiation between transactional, transformational, and transforming leadership from a Tao transencionc and energy-flow perspective; and channel leadership attention to purposeful intention.

Reading Assignments

Please complete the required reading assignments, listed in Table 1: Outline of Class Sessions. You might peruse the whole book in general then read areas of special interest in detail. Beyond the required readings, you might want to venture into additional works pertain to your interests individually. Please write thoughts and learning in your reflection journals. Post your points and inquires to dialogue with peers in the Discussions Board area on the Blackboard.

Writing Assignments

Please email writing assignments (in ms-Word, APA style), except the Reflection Journals, to me at fu@gonzaga.edu before or on the due date specified in Table 1. They are:

• Pre-class paper is due at our 1st class meeting: a 3-page (max.) paper reflecting on two readings, Spirited leading and learning: Process wisdom for a new age (Vaill, 1998), The Tao of leadership: Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching adapted for a new age (Heider, 1956), and postings in the Content Class #1 folder on the Blackboard. Please include a statement about a leadership theory of your interest for going deeper in thought (10-30 words).
• Reflection Journals/reading notes are due at each class sessions: each is a 1-page (text, graphic, and/or sound) learning reflection on class discussions, presentations, and/or thoughts on next reading assignments.

• Special interest project proposal is due at our 4th class session: a 2-page (max.) paper that ideates the nature of your proposed leadership theory or theory-in-use. The proposal could be about modifying an existing theory to address a gap in explaining some leadership phenomenon or conceptualizing a new theory. A new theory could be a major modification of an existing theory or a combination of numerous disciplines and existing theories formulated into a new concept. Please include your thought on how the proposed concept will benefit and contribute to the leadership studies to better address, analyze, and/or explain the complexity of leadership phenomena.

• Special interest project final paper is due five days after our last class meeting—a 10-page (max.) paper that describes your proposed concept, theorizes, philosophizes, and suggests a method for confirming/validating the concept. Please include presentation slides, your reflections, revelations, and epiphanies on project experience, learning in this course, possible future extended learning, and any modifications made to your original special interest proposal.

Writing Criteria

APA-6 style is required—1-inch margins-top, bottom, left, and right; 12 point Times New Roman font. Please refer to APA guidelines and academic paper template on DPLS program website.

Grading

The grading conveys your individual learning achievement in this course, a before-after comparison of self, not a bell-curve competition with others. Point/Grade correspondence:

- 95 - 100% = A;
- 90 - 94.99% = A-;
- 85 - 90% = B;
- 80 - 84.99% = B-
## Table 1: Outline of Class Sessions

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<th>Class</th>
<th>Pre-class Readings</th>
<th>Writing due</th>
<th>Class Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>8(^{th}) 12/5</td>
<td>Reflection journal</td>
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<td>Harvest products of learning Presentations on special interest projects (all)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>Capstone special interest paper</td>
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* Journal articles or book chapters posted in Blackboard Course Document folders
**Required Books**


**Required Web-based Texts (available on Blackboard)**


**Suggested Special Interest Readings**


