DPLS 773 Leadership & Systems of Influence

Summer 2011 3 Credits
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Course Organization, Schedule and Flow
The class will meet face-to-face on June 21, June 28, July 5, July 8, July 12, July 19, and July 26 from 6-10pm. Location to be determined.

Defining Systems of Influence
Let me begin this syllabus by telling you want I mean by "System of Influence." My work, as you'll see in the next section, is about Leadership for Change. The kinds of change I am most interested in are changes that occur in specific local systems. Nothing really changes until it shows up in specific changes in people's lives and in particular organizations and communities. Transformational change occurs when lots of local actions connect with each other and create a system of influence. Suddenly many people are engaging in new behavior without even thinking about it very much.

The local foods movement is one example of a system of influence. For year and years people all around the world have been practicing a new relationship with food. In the last several years, local foods have suddenly become a desired norm. No national policies where passed. This didn't happen by some mandate. It happened because many, many people who believed in local foods connected with each other, shared learning and experience, and supported each other in doing new work.

For years now the common vocabulary around change has been "replicable models" or "going to scale." This mindset comes from a regimented, mechanical view of the universe where something that works well in one place at one time can simply be enforced on another system in a different locale.

My work for the last decade has been with The Berkana Institute. At Berkana we've looked at the question of how do loose networks begin to coalesce and evolve into systems of influence. In some cases this happens because networks become communities of practice which then lead to systems of influence. But they happen in other ways as well:

• In Sao Paulo, a more than 600 civil society organizations came together to create Nosa Sao Paulo which means, literally, "Sao Paulo for all of us." They were able to pass legislation which required local government to define and publicize their indicators of success. The legislation passed, and the government asked the civil society organizations for assistance in developing the indicators. A system of influence has been created in Sao Paulo by making these indicators visible
• In South Africa in 2009 the Dinokeng Scenarios project called civil society together to create scenarios for the countries future, much like what was done in 1994 that led to the
end of apartheid. The scenarios - walking apart, walking behind and walking together - became a rallying point for conversations about the future of South Africa with the walking together scenario being the one that attracted the most interest.

- In Johannesburg in 2009 a reality TV show was created which worked in six townships in South Africa to use a strengths based approach to improving the communities. Communities were challenged to use what they already had available to improve people's lives. This televised work in 6 townships began to create a system of influence around new ways to build communities.

Several of us are working to better understand and articulate this systems of influence approach. This class will be part of that exploration.

If you are considering taking this course, please, even now while reading the rest of this syllabus, think about what is the system you want to influence? A course requirement is that you have in mind a system you want to influence. It might be a personal system, like your family. It might be your current work system. It might be something larger like health care in the US. It might be whatever brought you into the doctoral program in the first place.

**Personal Introduction**
This course grows out of my work to lead change, in Spokane and around the world. I'd like to context the course with a little personal background. Since 2000 much of my work has been based in The Berkana Institute ([http://www.berkana.org](http://www.berkana.org)), co-founded in 1992 by Margaret Wheatley just after she wrote Leadership and the New Science. From 2005-2009 I was Berkana's Co-President. My own personal base on the Internet is [www.resilientcommunities.org](http://www.resilientcommunities.org).

I came to Spokane in 1973, when I was 24, to be the Program Director for the EXPO '74 Environmental Symposium Series. I thought I was moving here for one year... When the World's Fair ended in the fall of '74 some of us who had been staff and advisors created Northwest Regional Facilitators (NRF) as a new nonprofit corporation to help people in Spokane and other Northwest communities think about what sort of future they wanted, and how they were going to co-create that future. For the next 25 years I served as NRF's Executive Director. We evolved into a community development corporation that has had a significant impact in Spokane and around the Northwest.

In the mid-nineties I read David Whyte's *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America*. I was pretty shocked to learn that my heart wasn't aroused anymore! I was caught in a cycle of endless "good work," with no time for deeper reflection or learning. My shock led me, within a couple of years, into a doctoral program in Learning and Change in Human Systems at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS).

As many of you have noticed, doctoral programs of this sort quickly lead into fundamental questions about how we're living our lives. That happened to me, and at the end of 1999 I stepped down as NRF's Executive Director.

Looking back, I believe I left because I no longer believed the work I was doing was making enough of a difference to make a difference. To be sure, the many individuals were able to live
their lives better because of our work. However, I believed that we, as people living on this small planet and in the country that consumes the greatest amount of the world's resources, were racing to a precipice. What would change our course? I needed to go out into the world to see what else was possible. I needed to go and learn about how people in different cultures - especially those we consider impoverished - were living life on this planet.

I've been on a pilgrimage for the last ten years. You'll read about it in one of our texts for the course - Stilger, R. (2005). *Enspirited Leadership: Creating a Future of Possibilities*. Spokane, WA: Berkana Institute. This text is actually my 2004 PhD dissertation at CIIS. It forms part of the foundation for our work at Berkana.

**Course Background**

This course is about the work and the change that comes from new forms of leadership and the possibilities that inspire that leadership. We'll begin the course with a book to be published in April, 2011 called *Walk Out Walk On* by my colleagues Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze. They tell the stories of many people we have worked with around the world who have stepped forward to create new possibilities. The other book we will all read is my book on *Enspirited Leadership* which describes the new forms of leadership I saw emerging in different parts of the world in the early part of this century.

Much of my work focuses on spaces and places around the world whose primary, underlying purpose is to invite others to discover and use their own *enspirited* leadership.

Around the world these activists are stepping into their local work, and into relationship with each other. They come from many places. In Santos, Brazil the Institute Elos works in favelas which are materially impoverished, but where the human spirit is still strong. They always begin their work by asking the elders to talk about their lives and look for the patterns of possibilities in their stories. At Kufunda Learning Village in Zimbabwe, people live the lives they want tomorrow, today and help others in Zimbabwe create a more desirable future. In Johannesburg, South Africa, Joubert Park has been reclaimed as a place of life by a cluster of nonprofits working with people from the surrounding community. You'll read stories about this work in *Walk Out Walk On*.

This new activism is arising in many places, and is linked by common questions:

- 4 How do I practice from abundance, self-reliance, interdependence, multi-culture, when I am confronted by dominant cultural thought and action patterns which emphasize scarcity, dependence and monoculture?
- 4 How do I share what I know beyond my community and how do I bring what others know into my community?
- 4 How do I sustain my reflective practices when so much work feels urgent?
- 4 How do I continued to ground myself as a leader who sees and acts on possibilities through an approach which is enspirited, appreciative and emergent?

In order for this activism to actually produce systems of influence which show up in the form of new behaviors and actions, I believe we need to be attending to four streams of work, simultaneously:
1. The personal stream is the domain of self - one's own gifts and contributions, my leadership: clarity, courage capacity and commitment.

2. The social stream is the domain of our collective knowledge, wisdom and resources -- accessed through deep conversation and through processes like ABCD - Asset Based Community Development

3. The planetary stream is where we deepen our work, connecting with each other in systems and connecting systems to use emergence with rigor with tools like change lab, theory "U", most significant change, developmental evaluation

4. The subtle stream is the spiritual and non-material which surrounds all the rest and in which we find guidance, synchronicity and support for our work.

In this course, we will be exploring the first three of these streams as they relate to the system you want to influence.

**Required Texts**

You will be researching and using a number of texts for this course. The two which we will all read are:

Stilger, R. (2005). *Enspirited Leadership: Creating a Future of Possibilities*. Spokane, WA: Berkana Institute. I began my exploration of what I've come to call *Enspirited* Leadership in 2000 as part of co-creating a global leadership initiative called From the Four Directions. I became fascinated with what I saw as a social movement, and a form of leadership that was quite different than the social movements of the last century. We will be using the lens of *enspirited* leadership as a foundation for the course. My research was a cooperative inquiry conducted with many people around the world and I invite you, in this course, to join me in this continuing inquiry about new forms and patterns of leadership that are emerging.


Wheatley, M. and Frieze, D. (2011). *Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey Into Communities Daring To Live The Future Now*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler. Deborah Frieze and I followed Margaret Wheatley as Co-Presidents of The Berkana Institute from 2005-2009. This new book is a delicious learning journey into the lives of people who have been making their own difference in the world. We'll start this course with these stories as I invite you into a learning journey to explore the system you want to influence now!

**Course Specifics and Schedule**

**June 21**

Reading: *Walk Out Walk On*. Read the entire book before our first class.

In this first class we will:

- raise and explore questions from this book
- explore the systems you want to influence
• begin to discuss the tools and processes which are helpful for work in the second and third streams I refer to above.
• Find two volunteers to host the June 28th class.

If their schedules permit, I'll also invite Deborah Frieze or Margaret Wheatley to join us for a while to talk about *Walk Out Walk On*.

**June 28**

Bring your laptops! I will not be with you for this class, but I will be available by Skype, or phone if we can't make Skype work, for part of the class. A prior commitment has me at the Shambhala Authentic Leadership In Action Institute ([www.aliainstitute.org](http://www.aliainstitute.org)) this week. If we're not having the Faculty Dinner at ALIA on June 28th, I will invite some of the Faculty to join us for an hour or so on Skype. Folks like Deborah and Meg, Adam Kahane, Bill Torbert, Arawana Hayashi will be present and it would be great to give you a chance to interact with them. ALIA is in Columbus, Ohio for the first time, and I am not sure how this might work - but I will give it a try!

You will be able to use the class time well. Here's the assignment for you to self-organize around.

At the first class we will have talked about two streams:

• The **social stream** is the domain of our collective knowledge, wisdom and resources -- accessed through deep conversation and through processes like ABCD - Asset Based Community Development
• The **planetary stream** is where we deepen our work, connecting with each other in systems and connecting systems to use emergence with rigor with tools like change lab, theory "U', most significant change, developmental evaluation

You will self-organize yourself into teams of no fewer than two and no more than three members. Your assignment in these teams will be to study, present and write about one set of tools and processes.

• If your interest is around conversational practices to access our collective knowledge and wisdom, you would explore resources on the Art of Hosting websites ([www.artofhosting.org](http://www.artofhosting.org) and [http://artofhosting.ning.com/](http://artofhosting.ning.com/)) and books like:


  • If your interest is around strength-based approaches to access the resources we already have, you would explore resources on the [www.abcdinstitute.org](http://www.abcdinstitute.org) website and books like:


• If your interest is around how we engage in reflective action, you would explore the Change Lab work featured on [http://www.reospartners.com/](http://www.reospartners.com/) as well as books like:

If your interest is in better ways of evaluating progress you would explore Most Significant Change (www.mostsignificantchange.org) as well as books like: Patton, M. Q. (2011). Developmental Evaluation: Apply Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. NYC, Guilford Press.

These references are not meant to be an exhaustive list, but just a sampling of what is out there. In this second class you will self-organize yourselves into 2-3 person teams to develop an in-depth understanding of tools and processes like these, above. My hope is that you will self-organize yourselves into teams which cover a variety of aspects of these two streams, meet in those teams during class time, begin to do your web-based research together, and to think about when you will be ready to present to the class.

These summer session classes go quickly. In just ten days, on July 8th, we need to have the first team presentations. The others will come quickly as well on July 12th and 19th.

Two of our three class assignments will flow from these teams. You'll be required to:

1. Create a learning process which will introduce other members of the class to the area you have specialized in. This might well include reading materials, in electronic form, that you want class members to read before the class which features your work. We'll sort out the length of these processes when we know how many are taking the course. They will be between 1 and 2 hours.
2. Write a detailed team paper which explores your area as a resource for members of the class. This paper will be shared with all members of the class for future reference. It does not need to be completed until the end of this course.

July 5
Reading: Read Enspirited Leadership in its entirety prior to class.
In class we will explore the first stream - accessing your own gifts, contributions and leadership in a variety of ways.

July 8, 12, 19
In these three classes, we will engage in one or more learning processes offered by the different teams.

As time allows, I will introduce other frameworks and concepts from my work at The Berkana Institute which relate to creating systems of influence.

July 26
We will return to the systems you have said you want to influence and we will use this final class in a variety of ways to help you in making specific plans for how you will move forward.
Assignments
There are three assignments in this course:

1. With your teammates, design an extraordinary learning process which helps us become familiar with the tools and process you review in your team.
2. A written team paper of 10-15 pages which further explains the tools and process you review in your team.
3. An individual paper which describes the system you wish to influence and how you will use the proceed, working with the ideas, tools and processes from this class. This paper is to be 8-10 pages.

Grading
This is a class that requires your full and timely participation in all activities. If you fall behind, you jeopardize your own learning as well as that of your classmates. This is a tight timeline for this summer course and we're all going to need to work together to make it work!

Your grade is based entirely on how you "show up" both in class and in writing. I expect full, enthusiastic, informed participation.

I realize that life intervenes. Things happen. Not everything can be anticipated. If something is happening in your life which makes it difficult to meet your obligations to me and your classmates, let me know right away and we will talk about alternatives. It is your responsibility to be responsible for your own participation.

At the conclusion to the class I'll ask you for your own evaluation of how you've done in the class and what you think your grade should be. And based on what you say, we'll have a discussion.