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# PRLC 2820 MULTILEVEL ISSUES IN LEADERSHIP (3 CREDITS)

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**INSTRUCTOR:**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

**E-MAIL:**

**C.U. BOULDER APPROVED Course Description FOR PRLC 2820:** *Multi-level issues & Leadership: Studies multilevel issues that originate in organizational settings but carry community and global implications. Encourages students to fully explore the complexity and interrelatedness of issues with a special emphasis on leadership and ethical implications. Same as LDSP 2820.*

## ROLE OF THIS COURSE IN THE PLC CURRICULUM

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Leadership is a multilevel phenomenon. Accordingly, levels-of-analysis issues should be considered and addressed in theoretical and empirical studies of leadership. In this course, students learn an approach to the multi-level analysis of complex social issues, and such issues are examined by discussing those topics and conducting in depth research on one topic of the student's choice so that the student may identify leadership gaps and suggest possible courses of action. In essence, this course in *Multi-Level Issues in Leadership* asks students to think critically about an issue affecting their community and by extension, the world--- which is done by conducting comprehensive research, drawing novel conclusions from that research, and communicating those conclusions effectively and efficiently. This course teaches PLC students independent research and writing skills, how to function as part of a peer-editing team providing peer feedback, and emphasizes the importance of a leadership philosophy that values the utilization of research and critical thinking skills prior to proposing ethical actions or solutions.

Core Skills and Content Taught: (1) Research methods and modes of writing, (2) information literacy and critical thinking skills, (3) persuasive writing and speaking skills, (4) peer-editing and skill in providing peer feedback, (5) leadership's role in proactive engagement with and respect for diverse communities so that future leaders can effectively lead in a diverse society, (6) a leadership philosophy that values the utilization of research and critical thinking skills prior to proposing ethical actions or solutions.

Traditions Associated with the Course:

- Each students selects their own individual "complex social problem" to independently research throughout the entire semester and produces a portfolio of writing.

- PRLC 2820 moves at a challenging pace with weekly research, analysis, writing, speaking. *Multi Level Issues* demands that students complete one assignment per week on a topic of their choice. These assignments vary in structure and content, but each one demands new research and each mode of writing, and each lens, a new way of “seeing” the topic and thinking through writing. This fast-paced research and writing process teaches students to find an abundance of information and respond quickly but with quality on a given topic efficiently and effectively and develops the academic version of what Colorado folks call “grit”. Additionally, leaders must always work to think critically and to understand the complexity of their issue and the impact of their actions, but must often attain this understanding under time constraints. This process teaches students how to streamline their research process and make it as efficient as possible
- Student workshop/peer editing occurs each week in recitations run by Class Advisors. Students become adept at providing actionable peer feedback.
- Leadership is taught through the application of weekly “lenses” or ways of seeing the same topic from a multitude of perspectives. Leaders must learn to look at a topic from a number of perspectives and truly grasp the depth of the challenges they face to find effective solutions. The “lenses” approach seeks to move beyond initial judgments by forcing them to look at their chosen topic from perspectives not of their own choosing. Those perspectives examine....
  - The Individual Lens(micro analysis): how the topic manifests at the individual level. This approach has students examine how their topics influence an individual person. The focus is on individual people, individual experience, the “self”
  - The Interpersonal Lens (mezzo/meso analysis): How the topic affects relationships between individuals. This approach has students examine the importance of relationships and interactions within the context of the topic at the level of neighborhoods, communities, groups, and roles within groups as individuals interact and socialize in peer groups, companies, organizations, clubs.
  - The Institutional Lens (macro analysis): How the topic manifests at the institutional level. This approach has students examine how society and culture “institutionalize” norms through institutional actions or policies that affect their topic. The lens looks at systems and what creates, maintains or changes systems. Culture, laws, ideologies, nations--- this is the lens that looks at the big picture.

## ROLE OF THIS COURSE WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP STUDIES MINOR

To achieve a Leadership Studies Minor from CU-Boulder, students take 16 Credit Hours of Leadership Studies Coursework through one of eight approved pathways, of which, the

Presidents Leadership Class (PLC) is one. This course fulfills the Leadership Foundations requirement.

#### LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Leadership foundations recognizes that effective leadership, and followership, requires positive self-awareness, positive self-discipline, positive self-esteem, and a deep sense of integrity and moral reasoning.*

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- Evaluate multiple ethical and moral reasoning theoretical perspectives
- Construct an intrapersonal dialogue evaluating one's intellectual, social, and emotional strengths and weaknesses
- Hypothesize one's likely response to challenging moral and ethical dilemmas
- Evaluate and choose appropriate self-regulatory behaviors that enhance and improve one's life

#### PLC COURSE OUTCOMES

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To achieve its mission, *Multi-Level Issues* will cultivate four skill sets in its students: critical thinking and analysis of research materials, creativity, excellent communication, and ethical and moral reasoning.

#### CRITICAL THINKING & ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH MATERIALS

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It's easy to form opinions without first achieving understanding —making snap judgments is one of our most basic psychological tendencies. Leaders, however, don't have that luxury. People of influence disservice their followers when they make ill-informed judgments about complicated issues without understanding the underlying complexity. Leaders must learn to look at a topic from a number of perspectives and truly grasp the depth of the challenges they face to find effective solutions. The heavy research aspect of *Multi Level Issues* seeks to teach students to unravel complexity and move beyond initial judgments.

*Multi Level Issues* demands that students complete one writing assignment per week on a topic of their choice. These assignments vary in structure and content, but each one demands an extraordinary amount of research. Students face the challenge of finding new information on a new aspect of their topic every week for twelve weeks. This grueling research process teaches students to find an abundance of information on any given topic efficiently and effectively and develops grit. Leaders must always understand the complexity of their issue and the impact of their actions, but must often attain this understanding under time constraints. This process teaches students how to streamline their research process and make it as efficient as possible.

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## CREATIVITY

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Leaders often face disruptions or challenges that require new ideas and innovation. It is important for leaders to be able to synthesize the information gathered in research into valuable news idea that can be applied both to old problems that have never been adequately solved and new problems that no one has ever tackled. This skill, the ability to assimilate information into novel conclusions, is incredibly valuable. It allows you to find causes of problems that others have missed, to navigate and explain complexity, and ultimately to find effective solutions to multi-level issues.

*Multi Level Issues* cultivates analytic creativity by demanding novel conclusions, derived through research, on different aspects of a topic. Students will view their topic through a new lens every week, and will become experts in their topic over the semester. At the end of the semester, the weeks of research will inform a novel and creative final project.

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## COMMUNICATION

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Elegant solutions to complex problems are worthless if they are not effectively communicated to others. Leaders must be able to explain the solutions they derive to people of influence in order to garner support, and to followers in order to inspire action. They must be able to persuade audiences through writing, presentation, and visuals, as different circumstances require different forms of communication.

*Multi Level Issues* gives students the opportunity to develop all three of these communication styles on a weekly basis. It demands that students present information in a variety of ways and allows them to improve their skills over time by revising their work and assimilating feedback into the revisions. Growth over time is a large component of the multi experience, and students will be given a chance to improve all of the weekly assignments. See the “Weekly Assignment Revisions” section below for more specific logistical information.

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## ETHICAL AND MORAL REASONING

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Students look at a complex social issue from three perspectives: Individual, Interpersonal, and Institutional. These perspectives ask students to understand complex moral and ethical issues from every angle, but they also have a special significance for leaders. These three lenses are tools that allow leaders to reason through the causes of an issue and consequences of an action quickly and effectively. The individual lens forces the leaders to think about how an issue manifests at the smallest level and how a possible solution would impact followers or target populations positively or negatively. Thinking through the intangible interpersonal lens forces leaders to consider how issues or their actions impact relationships, and can often yield unexpected insights. Thinking through the institutional lens allows leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of organization or government actions, and see how top level decisions bleed down into the individual and interpersonal realms. *Multi Level Issues* relies asks students to look

at an issue through a variety of lenses and while the ability to see through each one is valuable, the ability to think through all three at the same time empowers leaders to make rational, ethical well-informed decisions designed to address highly complex issues.

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## WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

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*Multi Level Issues* stresses the importance of growth over time. Each weekly assignment turned in on Fridays will be evaluated by both the course professor and the students' CA, and feedback designed to improve the piece and develop the student will be offered. After the student receives this feedback they will have the opportunity to revise, edit, and rework their assignment. The updated assignment can be returned to the course professor for reevaluation. This iterative process is integral to personal growth. Challenging students to revisit their work and improve upon it over time gives students the ability to evaluate and choose appropriate self-regulatory behaviors that enhance and improve their research, critical thinking, and writing skills over time.

### Rules of Iteration:

1. All iterations must be completed and handed to the professor within two weeks of receiving the graded assignment.
2. The iterated assignment will be re-graded upon completion. The grade may go up or down, but the new grade will completely replace the old one.
  - a. *Ex.* If an iteration receives a 90% and the original graded paper received a 40%, only the 90% will be entered into the final gradebook.
3. Papers may be revised again for the final course portfolio but are not individually re-graded a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. The final portfolio, however, does receive a grade.

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## GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

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There is no required textbook for this course. Course readings are posted to D2L. Please see the Week-By-Week Course schedule for assigned readings, expanded versions of the assignments listed below, and the grading rubrics for each assignment.

### UNIT ONE: THE INDIVIDUAL LENS

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1. Narrative Fictional Vignette: 500-550-word paper. Write a compelling 1<sup>st</sup>-person story that illustrates how the topic affects an individual.
2. Persuasive Essay: 500-550-word paper. Explain the importance of your topic at the individual level and persuade the CA and your peers that this topic warrants 15 weeks of attention.
3. Interview Presentation: 4-6-minute presentation. Interview a contemporary leader on your topic and present the insights you glean from the encounter on both your topic and leadership in general.

4. The Individual Lens: 1450-1550-word paper. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an individual leader in the field related to your topic.

## UNIT TWO: THE INTERPERSONAL LENS

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1. Human Differences: 500-550-word paper. Explore how two groups of people within the same culture experience your topic differently.
  2. Human Differences and Leadership: 500-550-word paper. Expand on last week's paper. Explore how leaders influence and are influenced by these different experiences
  3. Ethics Presentation: 4-6-minute presentation. Explain an ethical dilemma associated with your topic and an historical example of how leaders addressed the dilemma in the past
- The Interpersonal Lens: 1450-1550-word paper. Explore how your topic affects human relationships and the broader importance of those relationships by considering yourself as an individual impacted by this topic. As part of this paper, construct an intrapersonal dialogue evaluating one's intellectual, social, and emotional strengths and weaknesses as a potential leader involved with this topic.

## UNIT THREE: THE INSTITUTIONAL LENS

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1. Underrepresented Perspectives: 500-550-word paper. Explore a perspective that is not represented by the institutions involved in your topic. What factors contribute to this view's marginalization?
2. Visual Communication: One page (paper, slide or poster). Many of us are more comfortable communicating in words than in pictures, but visual communication is an important cognitive tool as well. Read "Visual Methods of Communication" and select one method to communicate information about a leadership gap/opportunity related to your topic.
3. The Institutional Lens: 1450-1550-word paper. How have institutional factors helped or hindered social change related to your topic? Explain what leaders could have been done differently to achieve a different outcome.

## FINAL COURSE ASSESSMENTS

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1. Final Project with Oral Presentation: The final project and oral presentation is the culmination of the semester and is the place where each student offers a solution and a call to action related to the complex social issue they have researched all semester. The final project and presentation is a proposal for action related to your semester's research that can be of use to a target community. Argue for a particular course of action to be taken that will make a difference in the lives of a target community. There is a great deal of latitude with this final project. The proposal can take the form of a power-point presentation, a TED-talk style video, a business plan, a music video, a one-act play, a grant proposal, etc. Your purpose is to persuade your classmates to embrace your solution and take action.

2. Portfolio with Reflection Essay: All of your papers should be revised and organized into a final portfolio that is submitted as one complete word or pdf document uploaded as an artifact to the student's LSM e-portfolio. A 500-word Reflection Essay should also be submitted via the LSM e-portfolio as the course reflection. The prompt asks the student to reflect upon their semester's work and growth through the lens of leadership (how the course—with its focus on looking at topics from multiple points of view and doing intense amounts of research before recommending action --- has impacted your growth as a leader). Your reflection should reveal which lenses you found most useful, what you learned about yourself as a writer, a thinker, and how leaders use research, and how what you've learned about yourself and about the value of looking at leadership challenges through a variety of lenses will impact how you respond to real world leadership challenges in the future. Both the portfolio and the reflection essay should be uploaded to the LSM e-portfolio and the link to your portfolio sent to both your CA and the course instructor.

**SEE CLASS-BY-CLASS SCHEDULE FOR WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS AND DATES.**

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GRADE BREAKDOWN – 100 AVAILABLE POINTS

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Component	Worth
Narrative Vignette	5%
Persuasive Essay	5%
Interview Presentation	5%
The Individual Lens	10%
Human Differences	5%
Human Differences and Leadership	5%
Ethics Presentation	5%
The Interpersonal lens	10%
Underrepresented Perspectives	5%
Visual Communication	5%
The Institutional Lens	10%
Final Project & Presentation	15%
Final Class Portfolio & LSM Portfolio	10%
Recitation & workshop Participation	5%

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO POLICIES

**Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class

rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The CAs and the instructor will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to the class records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

**Discrimination and Harassment:** The University of Colorado at Boulder Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, the University of Colorado Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships policy apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

**Honor Code:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

**Disability:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to the instructor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see the guidelines at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html>.

Disability Services' letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated reasonable accommodations. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

**Religious Observances:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, the student is responsible to inform their CA and the instructor, Dr. Zabel, at least two weeks in advance of the conflict to request special accommodation. Note, in order to accommodate the student, assignments or exams might be required to be due in advance of the dates listed in this syllabus. See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

**Desire2Learn:** There are assigned readings posted to Desire2Learn (“D2L”). D2L also will be updated periodically throughout the semester with important information regarding this course. As a result, students are expected to log-on to D2L each week with the week commencing on Sunday afternoon. Written assignments will be submitted using D2L’s Dropbox feature. Note, the D2L Dropbox automatically submits your papers to an anti-plagiarism program. Instructor may also advise students to check D2L at specific times, as the course requires. A link to D2L may be found within your “myCUInfo” homepage: <http://mycuinfo.colorado.edu>.

**CU Learning Resources:** CU Boulder has world-class learning resources available to its students such as writing and math labs, academic strategy seminars, etc. Please feel free to approach the PLC program staff, or your CA if you are struggling in this class or in any other class on campus, and we will help you identify the appropriate learning resources. Even high-achieving and successful PLC students sometimes need assistance, so lean on us and give us the chance to help.

### DAY-BY-DAY CLASS SCHEDULE FOR MULTI

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Sunday
1	08/22 Introduction to the course	08/24 Lecture: What is a Complex Social Issue? Discuss Week 1 Reading	08/26 Lecture: What is Meant by Individual, Interpersonal and Institutional Levels as Relates to Complex Social Issues Discuss Week 1 Readings	What's Due to Your CA: Select a Complex Social Issue to be Your topic for the semester
2	08/29 CA-run workshop/recitation	08/31 Lecture: The Value of Stories Discuss: Week 2 Readings	09/02 Lecture: Interviews and Autobiography Discuss: Week 2 Readings	What's Due to Your CA: Narrative Story Draft to D2L
3	09/05 NO CLASS	09/07  LIBRARY INSTRUCTION (How to Use the Databases, Guest Expert from the Library)	09/09  Writing Instruction: Writing the Persuasive Essay  [STEVE DINAUER, DIRECTOR OF PLC AND PLC STAFF TO SPEAK TO CLASS/WELCOME BACK STUDENTS]  <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Narrative Story</i>	What's Due to Your CA: Persuasion Essay Draft to D2L
4	09/12 CA-run workshop/recitation	09/14 Oral Presentation Instruction: What an Ideal 5-minute Presentation Does and Doesn't	09/16 Lecture: Individual Lens Wrap Up Discuss Readings <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Persuasion Essay</i>	Be prepared for oral presentations
5	09/19 Interview Oral Presentations	09/21 Interview Oral Presentations	09/24 Interview Oral Presentations	What's Due to Your CA: Individual Lens Draft to D2L
6	09/26 CA-run workshop/recitation	09/28 Lecture: Human Differences  Discuss Week 6 Readings	09/30 Lecture: Human Differences  Discuss Week 6 Readings  <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Individual Lens</i>	What's Due to Your CA: Human Difference Draft to D2L
7	10/03 CA-run workshop/recitation	10/05 Lecture: Leadership and Cultural Conflict  Discuss Week 7 Readings	10/07 <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Human Difference</i> Lecture: Leadership and Cultural Conflict	What's Due to Your CA: Leadership Draft to D2L

			Discuss Week 7 Readings	
8	10/10 NO CLASS	10/12 Lecture: Ethical Dilemmas  Discuss Week 8 Readings	10/14 <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Leadership</i> Lecture: Ethical Dilemmas  Discuss Week 8 Readings	Prepare for Ethics Oral Presentations
9	10/17 Ethics Oral Presentations	10/19 Ethics Oral Presentations	10/21 Ethics Oral Presentations	What's Due to Your CA: Interpersonal Lens Draft to D2L
10	10/24 CA-run workshop/recitation	10/26 Lecture: Voices from the Margins Discuss Week 10 Readings	10/28 <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Interpersonal Lens</i>  Lecture: Voices from the Margins Discuss Week 10 Readings	What's Due to Your CA: Underrepresented Lens Draft to D2L
11	10/31 CA-run workshop/recitation	11/02 Lecture: Visual Communication  Discuss Week 11 Readings	11/04 Lecture: The Institutional Lens  Discuss Week 11 Readings  <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Underrepresented Lens</i>	Prepare for Oral Presentations
12	11/07 Visual Communication Oral Presentations	11/09 Visual Communication Oral Presentations	11/11 Visual Communication Oral Presentations	What's Due to Your CA: Institutional Lens Draft to D2L
13	11/14 FINAL CA-run workshop/recitation	11/16 Lecture: The Institutional Lens Continued  Discuss Week 13 Readings	11/18 LSM E-Portfolio and Writing the Final Reflection for this Course <i>Due to Instructor for Grading: Institutional Lens</i>	
	THANKSGIVING			
14	11/28 4 Final Presentations	11/31 4 Final Presentations	12/02 4 Final Presentations	
15	12/05 4 Final Presentations	12/07 4 Final Presentations	12/09 4 Final Presentations  ALL FINAL COURSE	

			PORTFOLIOS WITH REFLECTION PAPERS DUE – SUBMITTED AS AN LSM PORTFOLIO LINK ARTIFACT	
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