

CEPY0946: "Leading with Empathy in the 21st Century" Course Syllabus

July 6 – July 17, 2015

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: CIT 227

Course website: <https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/974041>

Instructor: Xuan Zhao

Email: xuan_zhao@brown.edu

Cell Phone: (401) 654-1256

Office: Metcalf 402

Office hours: By appointment

Leader Fellow: Avery Hymel

Email: hymelam@dukes.jmu.edu

Address: Perkins 215

"Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives." – Oprah Winfrey

"... to put yourself in other people's shoes - to see the world from their eyes. Empathy is a quality of character that can change the world." – Barack Obama

Course Description

There is a recent groundswell of interest in empathy; CEOs, best-selling authors, and international leaders have identified empathy as one of the most important leadership skills of the 21st century. Generally understood as "the ability to understand and share the feelings of another," empathy will play an increasingly important role in our interdependent and hyper-connected world. Whether your challenge is to build a collaborative team, become a skilled professional, or advocate effectively for social justice, empathy is a vital leadership capacity. Empathy is not just about being "nice" and this unique course will delve into cutting-edge research from social psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

You will examine case studies of recent world events to develop an appreciation for empathy as a critical component of effective leadership. Additionally, you will examine scientific research on the role empathy plays in our day-to-day interactions and how empathy connects to sympathy, prosocial behaviors, stereotype reductions and morality. Furthermore, this innovative course will incorporate acting, improvisation, and design-thinking to support your cultivation of your own empathetic awareness and interpersonal sensitivity. The course will culminate with the development of an Action Plan that will promote empathy, compassion, and social harmony in your local communities, providing you with ample opportunity to further develop your empathy "muscle."

The only prerequisite for this course is a commitment to supporting an open-minded, responsive, and collaborative learning environment. This course is ideal for students who have interest in psychology, cognitive science, and/or any career that requires intercultural competence, people skills, and ethical leadership.

Materials

- No textbook is required. All reading materials are listed in Appendix II and are available through Canvas or the Internet.
- It is not required to print the readings out, but if you prefer reading hard copies, it might be wise to print them at home before you come to the program. This will avoid potential clumsiness and expensive charges of on-campus printing.

- Action plan instructions, course slides, and additional reading materials will be provided as class handouts.
- Please keep all class materials together using a ring binder or a folder.
- Other recommended resources are listed in Appendix III. You are highly encouraged to read books that intrigue you and continue the learning process after completing our course, and share with others what you have learned about empathy!

Student Learning Objectives/Expectations

By the end of this course, you should have achieved considerable advancement on the following aspects:

- A. Knowledge:
 - “Empathy” as a multifaceted concept.
 - The underlying cognitive processes and neural structures related to cognitive empathy and affective empathy.
 - Measurement of empathy-related constructs.
 - The influence of individual difference, motivation, and situational contexts on empathy.
 - The relationships between empathy, compassion, helping, and moral issues.
- B. Awareness:
 - Appreciation of empathy as a skill spells success for the individual “I” and the collective “we” in our interdependent society.
 - Recognition of common cognitive errors and biases in interpersonal interaction and a conscious effort to correct such mental habits.
 - Conscious effort to cultivate and utilize empathy in personal, academic, and professional life.
- C. Skills and abilities:
 - Active listening.
 - Public speaking.
 - Empathetic interpersonal communication.
 - Perspective taking.
 - Critically assessing arguments related to empathy in mass media.
- D. Actions:
 - An agenda to apply knowledge, awareness, and skills obtained in the course to implement social change at your school or community through an Action Plan Proposal.

Course Format

Most classes will follow the following schedule unless otherwise stated in the calendar:

9:00 – 11:30 am Class
 11:30 – 1:00 pm Lunch
 1:00 – 3:00 pm Class

In addition, there are several evening activities where your attendance and participation are required. They are noted in the Course Schedule below, along with the times and locations.

Learning Community Guidelines

The following guidelines will be used in class to facilitate an inclusive learning environment and respectful discussion:

Be ON time and IN time

Class begins promptly at the designated time. Mobile devices should be turned off. Texting, tweeting and/or inappropriate use of laptops, iPads, and any other electronic devices are not tolerated. Preparing to leave prior to the instructor's class dismissal is also unacceptable. Practice self-care by using the bathroom beforehand and during the break.

Be fully present: speak up and jump in

When you are in an activity, *be present*. Pay attention and absorb with the full spirit of learning. Your voice and active participation in class activities are essential components to your own and other students' learning experience; therefore, please engage in the activities and also be generous with sharing your thoughts so that all of us may learn from one another. Be open to new experiences! Our class provides a safe and supportive environment to expand your comfort zone. Diverse perspectives are welcomed and honored.

Seek first to understand; then be understood

It is likely that you may encounter new and/or controversial ideas presented in course materials and class discussions. Demonstrate a clear understanding of these ideas before formulating arguments for or against them. Critique ideas rather than individuals when offering different points of view. In addition, if you notice yourself talking significantly more than other students, please step back for a moment and encourage other students to participate – this is an opportunity for you to practice your listening skills and seek better understanding of other minds.

Pay attention, participate actively, and practice mutual respect – you will find this course exciting, stretching, personally satisfying, and fun!

Certificate of Completion

All students receive a Course Performance Report after the conclusion of the class. Students who successfully complete all course requirements earn a grade of "S" (i.e., Satisfactory) and receive a Certificate of Completion signed by the Dean of Continuing Education. Students who do not successfully complete the course requirements earn a grade of "NC" (i.e., No Credit) and do not receive a certificate.

Course Requirement

- A. Participation - Attendance is taken at each session. Excused, verifiable absences (e.g., family/ medical emergency, religious observance) must be approved and documented by the instructor prior to the class meeting. Major violation of learning community guideline will be noted and will influence the student's record.
- B. Readings - **Come to each session with all required readings completed.** If time permits, you should also skim through optional readings, however briefly.

C. Assignments - **All assignments should be submitted electronically on Canvas by 11:00pm on the designated due dates according to the course calendar.** There are four homework assignments for this class: Personal Empathy Inventory, Action Plan Sketches, Action Plan Paper, and Action Plan Presentation.

- a. **Personal Empathy Inventory** (due July 7) – The purpose of this assignment is for you to identify how empathy is relevant to you as a leader. You will also reflect on your learning goals in this course. This assignment is a fun self-reflection to warm you up for this two-week course. You can start this assignment on or before Day 1. Please expect to spend 1.5-2 hours on this assignment.

WRITING PROMPTS: Provide a 100 to 250-word answer to each of the following questions.

- What do you think empathy is about? How would you describe your current relationship to empathy?
- Think about someone you admire, who you think has excellent social intelligence skills. Why do you think so? What have you learned from observing this person? Please provide concrete examples.
- Think about someone you do not admire, who fails to exhibit sufficient social intelligence skills. Why do you think so? What have you learned from observing this person? Please provide concrete examples.
- Reflect on the syllabus and what we have discussed on the first day(s), what do you hope to be able to do at the end of the course? How do you think this might be useful in your personal, academic, and professional life in the long run?

Your answers are reviewed for depth and clarity. You will earn maximum credit if your answers reflect your original thinking as a unique being with a unique history and outlook. View this assignment as an opportunity to have a conversation with your inner self. Make sure to support your arguments with concrete examples.

Your answers should be typed, double-spaced, in a 12pt. standard font (e.g., Times New Roman) with one-inch margins on all sides. It should arrive before the deadline and is free of spelling and grammatical errors. This also applies to the Action Plan Paper.

- b. **Action Plan sketches** (due at various points marked with * marked on the calendar) – These are a series of written assignments to help you develop a full-fledged Action Plan and think from multiple angles along the way. Forms will be handed out during class sessions that are labeled with “Action Plan Step X”. You will have limited time working on them in class and substantial time outside class on your own. Although the forms handed out in class will be hard copies, you need to type your answers in the Word files accessible on Canvas and submit electronically. Alternatively, you can take photos of your hard copy and submit electronically.

Use these forms to facilitate the designing of your own Action Plan. Feel free

to write as many or as little below each question. These sketches will not be reviewed for content but only for completion.

- c. **Action Plan paper** (due July 15) - This assignment will provide you with an opportunity to practice your research and writing skills. Each of you will be required to turn in a 3-5 page typed, double spaced paper that contains much of the same content as your Action Plan presentation. You do not need to follow the exact order of this outline, but you should address all of these topics.

A. Define Your Issue

- What issue or concern are you trying to address?
- Who is affected by this issue? In what ways?
- Why is this topic important to you?
- Why should other people care? How do you know this is a need?

B. Background

- What is some brief history/background on this topic? (This section should be at least one page long)

C. Describing the Action Plan and its Goals

- Describe your Action Plan and the goals of your project. What are you trying to achieve through your Action Plan?

D. Action Steps

- What is your project timeline?
- Who will help?
- Who is the target audience? Yourself, family, school, community, organization?

E. Constraints and Challenges

- What challenges will you face in trying to implement this action plan?
- How will you deal with these challenges?

F. Resources

- What resources (e.g., individuals, organizations, money, space, materials) do you need?
- How will you obtain these resources?

G. Assessment

- How will you define success? How will evaluate or assess your work?

Action Plan Papers are reviewed for creativity, content, and mechanics. Your paper should be 3-5 pages in length (excluding the reference list), typed, double-spaced, in a 12pt. standard font (e.g., Times New Roman) with one-inch margins on all sides. Citations and bibliography should also follow the APA style guide. You will earn maximum credit for this assignment if:

- you include all seven components of the paper
- you use at least four sources of information (e.g., articles, books)
- you include a bibliography and use APA citation practices (If you do not know how to correctly use citations, please ask your leader fellows or classmates for help and/or refer to the following sites for helpful information on citations and avoiding plagiarism:
http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center/resources_writers/citing_sources.html, <http://www.easybib.com/>)
- your analysis is well-organized and free of spelling and grammatical

errors

- d. **Action Plan Presentation** (due July 17) - You will give a brief (3-4 minute) presentation on your action plan to peers and family on the last day of the program. You do not need to address every element of the plan but make sure to provide the audience with enough information to educate them on your particular issue and proposed actions. You are encouraged to be creative and interactive, and have fun! You will have time in class to prepare and practice your presentation.

All assignments should be written in a clear and coherent manner and display original, in-depth reflection on the topics. For more detailed information on Action Plan, please refer to Appendix IV and assignment pages on Canvas.

Assessment

- In-class participation: 50%
- Personal Empathy Inventory: 10%
- Action Plan paper: 20%
- Action Plan presentation: 20%

Academic Support

- A. **You are required to schedule with the Leader Fellow to meet for at least once throughout the course.** Feel free to discuss anything related to the course – your action plans, positive or negative experiences inside or outside the classroom, what you have learned, what you hope to learn more... We would love to hear your feedback!
- B. If additional support is needed on class materials, or if you just want to stop by and have a chat, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (xuan_zhao@brown.edu) and schedule a time to meet.
- C. You can also schedule with our guest speakers to learn more about topics they present in the classroom. Just a heads-up that our guest speaker on ASD is likely to be extremely busy during this summer.
- D. Learn from your peers!

All members of the learning community are valued. Please notify me immediately if you need accommodations to fulfill course requirements (e.g., students with an emotional, learning, physical, and/or psychological disability; ESL learners). Every effort will be made to provide appropriate learning accommodations.

Respect for the Integrity of the Academic Process

The rights and responsibilities that accompany academic freedom are at the heart of the intellectual purposes of the University. Our conduct as community members should protect and promote the University's pursuit of its academic mission. We are all, therefore, expected to conduct ourselves with integrity in our learning, teaching, and research, and in the ways in which we support those endeavors

Course Calendar

| Unit 1: Empathy – What is it and Why it Matters | | |
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| M. July 6 | <p>Morning – Introductions and Course Overview Class meets at 8:30am.</p> <p>Afternoon – Empathy: What Is It and Why It Matters</p> <p>Evening - North, South, East, West: Leadership Styles 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Location: Josiah’s</p> | <p>Reading: Paul Anderson & Sara Konrath. Why Should We Care? Daniel Goleman. What Makes a Leader?</p> |
| T. July 7 | <p>Morning – Listening Skills 9:30 – 11:30 am. Location: Salomon 001</p> <p>Afternoon – Living in an Interconnected World (Action Plan Step 1)</p> | <p>Assignment due: Personal Empathy Inventory</p> <p>Assignment due*: Action Plan Step 1</p> |
| W. July 8 | <p>Full day – Challenge Course 8:00 am – 4:30 pm at Haffenreffer Estate Meet at 144 Thayer Street (behind Sharpe Refectory)</p> <p>*Wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, comfortable clothes, and rain gear (if applicable). Also bring bottled water to stay hydrated.</p> | <p>Reading: Nick Epley. Your Real Sixth Sense.</p> |
| Unit 2: The Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Empathy | | |
| Th. July 9 | <p>Morning – Public Speaking Workshop 9:30 – 11:30 am. Location: Wilson 101</p> <p>Afternoon – Walking in Another Person’s Shoes: Is it possible? How? (1) (Action Plan Step 2)</p> <p>Evening – Diversity Workshop 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Location: Underground</p> | <p>Assignment due* : Action Plan Step 2</p> <p>Reading: Bertram Malle. Theory of Mind.</p> <p>Optional reading: Roman Krznaric. Make the Imaginative Leap. (pp. 46-54)</p> |
| F. July 10 | <p>Morning – How Do We Perceive and Read Other Minds? The Cognitive Aspect of Empathy</p> <p>Afternoon – Walking in Another Person’s Shoes: Is it possible? How? (2) (Action Plan Step 3)</p> | <p>Assignment due*: Action Plan Step 3</p> <p>Reading: Tania Singer, et al. Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but not Sensory Components of Pain.</p> <p>Optional Reading: Daniel Goleman. The Emotional Economy.</p> |

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| Su. July 12 | Action Plan Panel & Community Meeting 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Location: BH 166 | |
| M. July 13 | Morning – How Are We Emotionally Connected? The Affective Aspect of Empathy Afternoon – Measuring Empathy (Action Plan Step 4) Evening – Leadership Workshops (choose 1 of 5 options) 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Locations: Smith B Lobby, Josiah’s, Petteruti, Underground, Crystal Room | Assignment due*: Action Plan Step 4 Reading: Roman Krznaric. Make the Imaginative Leap. (pp. 46-60) |
| T. July 14 | Morning – Why Do We Misunderstand Each Other and Fail to Empathize? Afternoon – Perspective, Perspective: Getting over the Self (Action Plan Step 5) | Assignment due*: Action Plan Step 5 Reading: Temple Grandin. Thinking in Pictures. |
| Unit 3: Empathy in Broader Contexts | | |
| W. July 15 | Morning 1 – Guest lecture on Autism Spectrum Disorder Morning 2 – Being empathetic: Is there an Individual Difference? Afternoon – The Power of Situation and Motivation (Action Plan Step 6) | Reading: Paul Bloom. Against Empathy. Assignment due*: Action Plan Paper |
| Th. July 16 | Morning – Empathy as a Panacea for the World’s Woes? Benefits and Limitations Afternoon – Presentation Practice Evening – Community Meeting: Final Meeting & Reflection 7:00 – 9:00 pm. Location: BH 166 | Reading: Simon Baron-Cohen. Response to Paul Bloom. |
| F. July 17 | Morning – Empathy Revisited & Closing Activities and Evaluation Afternoon – Closing Event and Action Plan Presentations 1:00 - 1:30 pm. Location: MacMill 117 1:30 - 3:00 pm. Location: assigned breakout room | Action Plan Presentations* |

Appendix I: Background Information about the Instructor, Leader Fellow, and Guests

Xuan Zhao (*instructor*) is a PhD candidate at Brown University. She received her M.Sc. in psychology from Brown University and B.Sc. in psychology from Zhejiang University in China. She visited the Department of Psychology at Stanford University as an Exchange Scholar during Winter & Spring 2015. Xuan studies perspective taking and empathy, and her research also covers topics such as nonverbal behaviors, social cognitive development, cooperative communication, competition, and human-robot interaction. In addition, Xuan took courses on acting, persuasion, and negotiation at Brown and Stanford, which she integrates into her understanding of empathy, communication, and interpersonal dynamics.

Xuan served as a teaching assistant for Brown undergraduate courses on cognitive science, social psychology, statistics, and personality assessment. She also served as a TA for a highly acclaimed MBA course on power and leadership with a unique acting approach at Stanford Graduate School of Business. Besides research and teaching, Xuan is interested in social innovation and has co-founded or served with several non-profit educational organizations in the past. Her passion for social innovation is largely cultivated by her circumnavigation around the world with Semester At Sea.

Avery Hymel (*leader fellow*) recently graduated from James Madison University, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where he studied Biology and Secondary Education. While he grew up in Virginia, he has most recently lived in New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. Throughout his undergraduate experience he was involved in Admissions, Orientation, and Student Activities and Involvement, fueling his interest in leadership theories and implementation, and resulting in the pursuit of a career in student affairs. He is with us this summer through a higher education internship program and is excited to see how he can both share his own experiences and learn from others in relation to empathy and leadership processes.

Joanna Korman (*guest speaker on Autism Spectrum Disorder*) is a PhD candidate in psychology at Brown University. She holds an MPhil in History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University and an Msc in psychology from Brown. Through the study of typically developing individuals and those on the autism spectrum, her research examines the fundamental concepts and processes underlying how people discover and solve social puzzles.

Chi Ling Chan (*guest speaker on Action Plan*) recently graduated from Stanford University with a Masters in Symbolic Systems and B.A in Political Science. Growing up, she had lived in Hong Kong and Singapore, and spent time studying abroad in Moscow, Russia. At Stanford, she led the Stanford Roundtable for Science, Technology, and Society where she facilitated regular roundtable discussions on a range of science and technology-related issues. Her past teaching experience has included a six-month long stint at her alma mater in Singapore where she taught literature, language arts and philosophy classes for high school students. During her time at Stanford, she assisted Prof. Paul Milgrom as course assistant and Prof. Condoleezza Rice as teaching assistant. Following this summer, she will return to Singapore to begin a career in public service at the Prime Minister's Office.

Appendix II: Reading Bibliography

(Readings are listed in the order they appeared on the course calendar. Optional readings are included below. Reading tips are in a lighter font color in parentheses.)

1. Anderson, P. & Konrath, S. (2011, July 31). *Why should we care? —What to do about declining student empathy*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Should-We-Care-What/128420/>
2. Goleman, D. (1998). "What makes a leader". *Harvard Business Review*, 76, 93-102.
(Note: read the "empathy" session in details and only skim the rest)
3. Epley, N. (2014). *Mindwise: How we understand what others think, believe, feel, and want*. New York: Knopf.
(Note: read the preface: Your Real Sixth Sense)
4. Malle, B. F. (2013). Theory of Mind. In R. Biswas-Diener and E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF Publishers.
(Note: read pp. 1-10 and pp. 13-14)
5. Krznaric, R. (2014). *Empathy: Why it matters, and how to get it*.
(Note: read pp. 46-60 in Chapter 2: Make the Imaginative Leap)
6. Singer, T., Seymour, B., O'Doherty, J., Kaube, H., Dolan, R. J., & Frith, C. D. (2004). Empathy for pain involves the affective but not sensory components of pain. *Science*, 303(5661), 1157-1162.
7. Goleman, D. (2006). *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*. New York, NY: Bantam.
(Note: read "Chapter 1: The Emotional Economy")
8. Grandin, T. (1995). *Thinking in pictures: and other reports from my life with autism*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
(Note: read "Chapter 1: Thinking in Picture: Autism and Visual Thought")
9. Bloom, P. (2014, September 10). *Against Empathy*. Retrieved from <http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/paul-bloom-against-empathy>
10. Baron-Cohen, S. (2014, August 26). *Reply: Paul Bloom*. Retrieved from <http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/against-empathy/simon-baron-cohen-response-against-empathy-baron-cohen>

Appendix III: Recommended Resources

The following books and movies will allow you to keep making progress on the subjects of empathy, social interaction, and human relationships after the completion of our course. Materials with * are highly recommended.

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| Psychology/cognitive neuroscience: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Nicholas Epley. <i>Mindwise: Why We Misunderstand What Others Think, Believe, Feel, and Want</i> *– Matthew D. Lieberman. <i>Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect</i>– Michael Tomasello. <i>Why We Cooperate</i>– Daniel Goleman. <i>Social intelligence: the New Science of Human Relationships.</i> *– Simon Baron-Cohen. <i>The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty</i>– Steven Pinker. <i>The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined</i> |
| Policy-oriented: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– J. D. Trout. <i>The Empathy Gap: Building Bridges to the Good Life and the Good Society</i> |
| Business/Social entrepreneurship-oriented: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Blake Mycoskie. <i>Start something that matters</i> |
| Arts/Design-oriented: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Seung Chan Lim. <i>Realizing Empathy: An Inquiry Into the Meaning of Making</i> |
| Education-oriented: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Mary Gordon. <i>Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child*</i> |
| Fun and light readings for everyone: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Daniel H. Pink. <i>A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future</i>– Roman Krznaric. <i>Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It</i> *– Karen Armstrong. <i>Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life</i> |
| Movies! |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">– <i>Schindler's List</i> (1993) *– <i>The Intouchables</i> (2011) *– <i>Gandhi</i> (1982)– <i>Inside Out</i> (2015)– <i>Love, Hate and Everything in Between</i> (2012)– <i>I Am</i> (2010) |