

Introduction to Positive Leadership: A New Approach to High-performing Teams

13 July – 07 August 2026

CATEGORY Social Sciences

COURSE STRUCTURE

You will receive a total of **45 hours of academic lessons** (one lesson equals 45 minutes; 15 hours per week). Lessons will comprise lectures, group work, discussion sessions, and excursions.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

HUWISU courses are grouped into different time tracks. Your course will take place in **Track C**

Tuesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Wednesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Friday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 11.45 am

COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in **English**, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, a language-level of B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.

TARGET GROUP

This course is for undergraduates and graduates. It is well-suited for students interested in the psychology of leadership, ethics, organizational behavior, high performance, and new approaches to leadership in the 21st Century.

CREDITS & CERTIFICATES

Participants will receive **6 ECTS** credit points and a certificate if they attend regularly (at least 80% attendance), participate actively and fulfill all course assignments. Additionally, six weeks after the end of the course a Transcript of Records is issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the academic program, you are invited to **join our cultural and social program**. We offer a fine selection of interesting activities that aim to give you an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, you have the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and to meet students from all parts of the world. **Costs for these offers are included in the program fee.** Below, you find examples of previously offered cultural activities. You will be informed about the respective cultural program shortly before the start of the program via email as well as during the course period.



POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDED TOURS

- Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*)
- German Parliament (*Bundestag*)
- House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*)
- Topography of Terror exhibition
- Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS

- Kreuzberg Tour
- Museum Island (*Museumsinsel*)
- Berlin Cathedral (*Berliner Dom*)
- Daytrip to Potsdam
- Exhibitions

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- Welcome Session
- Beach Volleyball
- Farewell Get2gether

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom: Be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Assignments: Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

Commitment in class: Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers').

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

Attendance policy: No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must follow teachers' instructions to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory course explores the principles and practices of positive leadership. This model is grounded in psychology, positive psychology, ethics, and organizational behavior, emphasizing strengths, purpose, and wellbeing.

Throughout the course, students will participate in both theoretical and practical activities. By examining the case studies of successful leaders, a method used at Harvard University, learners will identify leaders' strengths, worldviews, and overall leadership approaches that contributed to their success. The 21st century and its unprecedented conditions demand unique strategies. There is an increased need for resilient, adaptable, yet conscious and compassionate leaders. This course equips learners with the skills necessary to thrive in this ever-changing landscape.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course's goal is to equip learners with the tools to cultivate ethical leadership, resilience, adaptability, trust, and engagement within their teams and organizations. Through case studies, students will analyze the leadership approaches of great leaders and learn how to perform at a high level, think systematically, and support their teams and counterparts in thriving. Learners will engage in weekly class discussions, reflective exercises, and create their leadership statement at the end of the course, which will serve as a compass for their future leadership endeavors. This course is ideal for those aspiring to make an impact in business, governmental agencies, healthcare, educational institutions, non-profits, and beyond.

READINGS

The complete list of resources (readings, tests, and videos) will be available via Moodle during the course. Please note that some of the materials will have allocated time during class for reading/watching.

1. Loehr, J., & Schwartz, T. (2001, January 1). The making of a corporate athlete. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2001/01/the-making-of-a-corporate-athlete>
2. Brian Johnson. (2016, January 6). Heroic Interview: Deep Work with Cal Newport [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9K4_3BZz8s
3. Peter Marshall. (2016, March 15). PSONA Films - Anita Roddick - My Story (The Body Shop) (30 mins. 30 secs.) [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpq4SyNbUbY>
4. Curious Mermaid. (2018, July 30). Rachel Carson [[Silent Spring]] Documentary [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbLACDNJyN4>
5. Reelblack One. (2019, June 18). Success! The Marva Collins Approach (1981) [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXIDVjDIXpc>
6. SOH Talks & Ideas Archive. (2013, June 26). Alain De Botton - Religion for Atheists (Ideas at the House) [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br8m2S98HU4>

7. Andrew Weil, M.D. (2014, March 28). Why your health matters | Andrew Weil, M.D. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBsVjouAOqE>

ASSIGNMENT INFO

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, students are required to:

1. Participate in case study discussions (20%) - weekly discussion on case studies and pre-class readings, connections between previous experiences and how to integrate this content into their leadership styles.
2. Complete writing assignments (40%) - weekly written assignment integrating leaders, their strengths, and leadership styles (400-800 words, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font):

Week 1: Leadership styles and high-performance

Week 2: Integrative leaders - strengths-based approach and personal definition of success

Week 3: From individual to societal levels: leadership as a force contributing to a paradigm shift

3. Final project: My Leadership Statement (40%)

The last classes will be devoted to the Leader Purpose Canvas workshop, where each student will work on their personal Leader Purpose Canvas.

The final written assignment should include a leadership statement, theoretical concepts, clear leadership strategies, and a rationale for implementing them. It should contain 1.000-1.300 words, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Delivery materials: Leader Purpose Canvas document and final paper.

For graduate students, one additional reading will be assigned per class, and the final written assignment should contain between 2.000 and 2.500 words.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Blenda Batista is an Adjunct Professor at the Doctoral Program in Happiness Studies alongside former Harvard Professor Tal Ben-Shahar, Centenary University, New Jersey, U.S. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Human Ecology and Positive Psychology at the University NOVA of Lisbon, focusing on measuring happiness among remote workers and assisting companies in promoting employee wellbeing. She is a graduate teacher from the University of Brasília, Brazil. She holds a specialization in Positive Psychology from the Happiness Studies Academy and a Master's degree in the Science of Education from the State University of New York, U.S. In 2023, Blenda was awarded the best interdisciplinary project at the EUTOPIA Summer Doctoral School for the project 'Cyber Wellness', an initiative that combines education, technology and wellbeing.

With over 15 years of experience as an international educator, Blenda has conducted training sessions in various countries, including Israel, Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Germany, and the United States. She also co-founded three startups, the first one, *Alikia*, on holistic nutrition, was part of the 25 most innovative companies in Brasília, Brazil, in 2015.

Blenda's mission is to help elevate the levels of wellbeing in our society through excellence in education, knowledge and content creation. She will be delighted to embark on this learning journey with you.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to Positive Leadership and High Performance

Tuesday, Jul. 14th: Introduction to leadership styles

- Introductory class:
 - Welcoming students
 - Coursework explanation
 - Q&A
- Leadership styles

Wednesday, Jul. 15th: Leadership and high-performance

- Strengths-based approach (VIA Character Strengths test)
- High-performance management
 - The Corporate Athlete
 - Deep work & Restorative breaks

Friday, Jul. 17th: Culture Design Canvas & Case Studies

- Culture Design Canvas workshop
- Conscious Capitalism - class discussion
- Case Study 1 - Business - Anita Roddick
- Week 1 - Writing assignment - time allocated in class

Week 2: Examining Great Leaders - Case Studies & Tour

Tuesday, Jul. 21st: Tour & Case Study 2 - Environmentalism

- Case Study 2 - Environmentalism: Rachel Carson
- Visit to the Startup Hub (to be confirmed by the host)
 - Students will become acquainted with the startup world, understand what it takes to be an entrepreneur today, and explore the future of this field.

Wednesday, Jul. 22nd: Case Studies 3 & 4 - Education

- Learnings & Insights from the tour
- Case Study 3 - Education: Marva Collins
- Values, purpose, and success

- Case Study 4 - 21st Century Education: Prof. Tal Ben-Shahar

Friday, Jul. 24th: Case Study 5 & 6 - Religion & Medicine

- Case Study 5 - Religion: Alain de Botton
- Conflict-resolution workshop
- Case Study 6 - Medicine: Dr. Andrew Weil
- Week 2 - Writing assignment - time allocated in class

Week 3: Tour & Examining Great Leaders - Case Studies

Tuesday, Jul. 28th: Health and wellbeing & Tour

- Health and wellbeing for leaders and organizations
- Visit to the Holistic Health Center (to be confirmed by the host)

Students will become familiar with the holistic approach to health, understanding the impacts of a stressful and unhealthy lifestyle and how to prevent them. It supports an integrative perspective on life that can be applied to various fields, including entrepreneurial, educational, managerial, and personal contexts.

Wednesday, Jul. 29th: Reflection & Case Study 7 - Society

- Learnings & Insights from the tour
- Case Study 7 - Society: Jacinda Ardern
- Problem-solving strategies

Friday, Jul. 31st:

- Leadership in the AI era workshop
- Week 3 - writing assignment - time allocated in class

Week 4: Leader Purpose Canvas

Tuesday, Jul. 4th: Leader Purpose Canvas (Part 1)

- Reflection on leaders' strengths and styles
- Class discussion
- Introduction to the Leader Purpose Canvas workshop
- Time allocated to work individually

Wednesday, Jul. 5th: Leader Purpose Canvas (Part 2)

- Time allocated to work individually on the Leader Purpose Canvas
- Group work dynamic

Friday, Jul. 7th: Leader Purpose Canvas (Presentations)

- Students will present their Leader Purpose Canvas, along with their rationale for the selected strategies.
- Summary discussion, Certificates, and feedback.