



# Greenleaf Academy

## Foundations of Servant Leadership

### Master Syllabus

#### **Servant Leadership Defined**

Servant Leadership is a non-traditional leadership philosophy, embedded in a set of behaviors and practices that place a primary emphasis on the well-being of those being served.

#### **Course Description**

The first in a series of three courses, Foundations of Servant Leadership is designed to give students a deeper understanding of Robert Greenleaf's ideas and concepts that are driving the current Servant Leadership movement along with identifying personal characteristics and behaviors associated with the effective application of Servant Leadership. Students will participate in four 90-minute sessions held in on e- and/or two - week intervals. Course discussions are facilitated to focus on core Greenleaf writings, as well as review and examine considerations from contemporary practitioners. As the title indicates, this course is the first step in the Servant Leadership journey and lays the foundation for students to become servant leader practitioners, as well as bring its benefits to their organizations and those they serve as leaders.

#### **Course Objectives and Outcomes**

##### **Learning Objectives:**

- *Review and become knowledgeable of Servant Leadership philosophy and principles.* A number of Greenleaf's seminal writings will be featured along with others works providing examples (written and video) of Servant Leadership application and principles.
- *Learn from and with other students by engaging in active Servant Leadership-based dialogue.* Classes will consist of brief overviews of the weekly assigned material, followed by robust discussions among class members. Students will share their impressions of the readings and content, consider identifying and connecting the material to their present lives and experiences; and how the material might apply to their current work, social and personal lives going forward.
- *Demonstrate understanding of the basic Servant Leadership tenants and application.* At the conclusion of the course, students will submit a short (5 to 8 page double-spaced) reflection paper. The submission will reflect the student's facility with basic Servant Leadership concepts, which of them were particularly meaningful to you; citing new or refreshed knowledge and insights that have come from class materials and discussions; and how they might help chart their life going forward.

### **Learning Outcomes and Skills Attained:**

- At the conclusion of the Foundations course, students will have gained a thorough knowledge of the basic principles and aspects of Servant Leadership and demonstrate the ability to articulate, be conversant with, and share insights about the Servant Leadership philosophy.
- Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of how the subject matter can apply to their own leadership philosophy and practices, compare and contrast their current styles of Servant Leadership principles.
- The reflection paper will demonstrate how the student's perspective has changed or been sharpened by the class experience. This will include applying greater facility with Greenleaf's philosophy and Servant Leadership principles, describing how it will influence their life and organization now and into the future. Many find this exercise most valuable when this paper is related to individual experiences and intentions for future considerations.

### **Required Readings to be Purchased by Participants**

1. Greenleaf, The Servant as Leader
2. Greenleaf, The Institution as Servant
3. Larry Spears (Co-Editor), The Power of Servant-Leadership  
This book includes major essays authored by Robert K. Greenleaf:
  - *The Leadership Crisis*
  - *Servant: Retrospect and Prospect*
  - *Have You a Dream Deferred*
  - *Old Age, The Ultimate Test of Spirit*

The ten characteristics are also provided in this volume (pages 5-8 in the introduction).

4. Kent M. Keith, The Case for Servant Leadership (Greenleaf Center, 2008)
5. Omar Harris, The Servant Leader's Manifesto

The short articles, videos, and other resources will help round out our understanding of the concepts of Servant Leadership; and illustrate what these principles mean in everyday life. There may be timely substitutions and additions. This is a foundations course, where typically, the goal is to acquaint the learner with the basic principles that underlie the concept of Servant Leadership. The Greenleaf Academy offers succeeding courses that focus on Key Practices and Implementation. These courses build on the Foundations course, and each other, and equip the learner to fully comprehend the principles of Servant Leadership, and then put them into practice in their daily lives.

As adult learners and professionals, we are constantly learning new things, gathering information, and thinking about application. Unlike college-level learners, we are not solely

concerned with course completion, but seek to consider where these principles can apply to our day-to-day work, and make us more effective in our leadership and interactions with others. Therefore, the use of current materials will help us in this process, even though we will not be constructing specific action plans during this class.

## **Instructions for Completing Reflection Paper**

Greenleaf says that the journey to Servant Leadership begins with the inner self and personal reflection is part of that journey. The paper should be the reflection of your journey through this class, and what it meant to you.

The learning objective of the paper is to provide you with the opportunity to reflect on what insights you gained from the course, and to memorialize them by writing them down. It is a way, in Greenleaf's words, to "*gather fragments of data fed (from the course) into my (your) internal computer from which intuitive insights come*". It's also designed to be something you can refer to in the future to remind you of this experience, and refresh you, especially in times of doubt and confusion. Like the course, it is **YOUR** paper, not the instructor's, and hopefully a resource to you as your life and career progress. In addition, it is a way for the instructor to measure the effectiveness in conducting the class, based on how well each student learned the material, added it to personal knowledge, and related it to the work and personal facets of life.

With that in mind, here are the guidelines for your paper.

### **Final paper (5-8 pages double-spaced)**

Please submit no later than three weeks after the end of course. All submitted papers will be returned with comments (or reviewed via a phone or video call upon request).

The following five-step process is suggested for the development of the paper:

1. Consult your notes, journals, and class materials, taking particular attention to things that really struck you.
2. Refer back to the reading materials to re-read those things that you feel had the greatest impact on you. Highlighting and marginalia your readings are a good source. Think about why they struck you, and how they might affect things you do going forward. Think about the class discussions, and what insights you drew from your colleagues.
3. Draft the first version of your paper with this in mind. Read it twice on consecutive days, and then put it away.
4. No sooner than one week later, take the paper out and read it again to see if it still represents your feelings and reflections; paying particular attention to the things that have transpired in the meantime that you may have done differently, or with more vigor, based on your experience in the course
5. Revise if you would like and submit your final paper with the file name YourName.FinalPaper with the email subject line that includes "Final Paper – Instructor Last Name" and send to [info@greenleaf.org](mailto:info@greenleaf.org) copying the instructor at his/her Greenleaf email address.

The paper will NOT receive a letter grade. The idea is to reflect on the student's learning, knowledge, and insights. The paper should draw on reflections and new knowledge and understandings generated by this class.

- What learning came to you "from the margins", from outside of what you already knew?
- How is Servant Leadership "home" to you, and what can that mean to others?
- In other words, in Greenleaf's terms, this is the "hole in the hedge" opportunity to stretch, a chance to see things as a whole.
- What does Servant Leadership mean to you personally? What do Greenleaf principles and practices in your everyday life? How might your own personal characteristics, beliefs and behaviors enable you to achieve your goal of becoming a servant leader?
- How can you explain Servant Leadership to others in a way that may be potentially meaningful to them, and demonstrate your "servantship"?

Some suggestions to help you prepare to write the paper:

- As you go through the course, use a highlighter or write notes in your books to mark those thoughts and ideas that resonate with you or cause you discomfort.
- Keep a journal as you go through the class, noting things that particularly strike you.
- What are the concepts that speak to you... that cause you struggles... that create questions for you?
- How does Greenleaf's work make meaning for you?
- There is a reason you took this class, what are your hopes for yourself as a result of what you have learned?
- What can you use from your readings and discussions today to help you chart your life course?

## **Opportunity to Earn Certificate**

All students are eligible to receive a certificate upon course completion, provided the following criteria is met:

- Participate in group discussions
- Read required texts and other assigned readings about servant leadership.
- Write and submit a short paper (5-8 pages) reflecting content mastery.
- Contribute in four (4) group discussions with facilitators and other students. \*
- Share insights and learning using Microsoft Teams.

\*NOTE: Upon consultation with the instructor, students may make up one (1) missed group discussion. Participants who miss more than one group discussion are not eligible to receive a course completion certificate.