

## Assignment: Management Skills at the Movies

wayne.smith@csun.edu

[ updated: Saturday, January 6, 2018 ]

---

**Course:** *MGT 370*

**Title:** *Management Skills Development (3 units)*

“Those of us who study and conduct research on organizational and managerial phenomenon need to have our thinking stimulated and deepened by writers of fiction who are insightful observers and interpreters of everyday life.”

--Lyman Porter (1930-2015)

“Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.”

--Margaret Fuller (1810-1850)

### Goal

The purposes of this assignment are as follows:

- To view, comprehend, and analyze a contemporary movie
- To draw analogies and develop insights useful in a management skills context
- To illustrate issues of management skills, knowledge, and abilities in practice

### Instructions

In general, your task is to evaluate a few themes related to management skills development that you observe in a movie and generate a written deliverable. The movie can be a current movie or an older movie. It can also be a TV series. If a team selects a TV series, the TV series must be from a series with episodes of an hour in length or longer, and also, the analysis (including the two scenes) needs to be from the same episode.

Both team composition and selection of a movie will be done before the middle of the semester. Each person in each team must contribute both to the analysis and to the writing. The written deliverable must be printed and delivered to the instructor at the beginning of class on the due date. The written deliverable must also be submitted electronically via email to the instructor no later than 1 hour before the beginning of class on that day.

### Deliverable

The due date is listed on the course outline. Before that due date, there should be enough time in or out of class to go over any questions you may have.

### Length

The written deliverable must be no less than 6 pages and no more than 9 pages (not including the cover page or references). Teams can use pictures from the movie as needed. There must be at least one diagram in the written deliverable. Teams can include an Appendix as needed.

## Scoring

There will be 100 points allocated for breadth and depth of content. There will be 100 points allocated for language use, grammar, and mechanics.

## Content

There is no single, best approach to achieve the objectives of this assignment. In general, this assignment combines ideas from several general education, lower-division core, and upper division courses. However, the following outline is provided as a working guide to help students structure and sequence their ideas into a coherent package.

- Use a “Cover page” including Team Number and all the names of the Team Members.
- Describe why the team selected the three movies, and why the three movies were ordered (ranked) as first-, second-, and third-choice. Describe the team discussion and decision process.
- Movie Synopsis (include as many of the following ideas as they are material)
  - Provide a synopsis of the movie. A synopsis is a distillation of the movie and contains two main elements: Story summary (i.e., chronological order) and Plot Summary (e.g., cause-effect). These two summaries are important but different. Also, summarizing anything is difficult; however, this a recurring and practical skill for managers.
  - Observing change is hard. One technique that management students can borrow from art/humanities students is to understand basic literary theory and practice applying that theory often. From the Literary Ideas below, use at least three from elementary, at least three from intermediate, and at least one from advanced.
    - Elementary Literary Ideas—(e.g., [Character](#), [Plot](#), [Setting](#), [Style](#), [Theme](#))
    - Intermediate Literary Ideas—(e.g., [Analogy](#), [Antagonist](#), [Conflict](#), [Diction](#), [Humor](#), [Imagination](#), [Protagonist](#), [Soliloquy](#), [Symbol](#), [Transition](#))
    - Advanced Literary Ideas—(e.g., [Irony](#), [Sarcasm](#))
- Importance and Value
  - Our class is on management skill development. Development means that there is some type of change or some type of transition. There are many transitions in a movie (and in life). Why, of all the transitions that your team could have chosen, is this particular transition important? What theory/model/framework regarding Planning, Leading, Organizing, or Controlling from your MGT 360 course helps justify why this transition (i.e., a set of two scenes) is important?
  - There are many individuals in a movie (and in life). There are often multiple people just in a single scene. What is your rationale for choosing the key

individual that you did? In others words, why is this individual a good individual from whom we can learn and see management skills development?

- First Scene
  - Describe the situation and setup the context.
  - Describe *a* Management Skill you feel is missing? Be specific. Why? Use the language of our textbook to explain (the recent past) or predict (the near future). What is the evidence? Be detailed.
  - Describe *another* Management Skill you feel is missing? Be specific. Why? Use the language of our textbook to explain (the recent past) or predict (the near future). What is the evidence? Be detailed.
  - There are three levels of Management skills in our textbook: Personal, Interpersonal, and Group. The two skills chosen need to be from two different levels
  
- Second Scene
  - Describe the situation and setup the context.
  - Describe a Management skill you now see in the key individual. Explain how this key individual acquired that skill. This is a skill that was missing in the earlier scene.
  - Describe another Management skill you now see in the key individual. Explain how this key individual acquired that skill. This is another skill that was missing in the earlier scene.
  
- Supporting Analogies
  - Although the textbook is the primary source of reading support (theory) for this assignment, that textbook theory should be supported by a strong analogy from one of the “Library” readings from our course outline. A team may use more than one analogy from more than one “Library” reading as desired.
  - Although the textbook is the primary source of reading support (theory) for this assignment, that textbook theory should be supported by a strong analogy from one of the “HBR” readings from our course outline. A team may use more than one analogy from more than one “HBR” reading as desired.
  
- Network Analysis
  - Draw a first “sociogram”—i.e., a network chart. Add entities (actors or themes) and relationships (links or ties) as needed to help describe your overall analysis to an audience that likely did not see the movie. Use the [Metrics](#) and [Key Terms](#) parts of the Wikipedia Social Network Analysis page. At a minimum, use at least three network *entity* ideas: size (e.g., small, large), density (e.g. number of connections for each entity), centrality (e.g., importance), bridges (e.g., boundary-spanning), cliques (e.g., distinctiveness, isolation), and holes (e.g., gaps). Entities always have important attributes also. Identify at least three important attributes of the entities: e.g., gender, ethnicity, rank, seniority, education, experience, etc. Vary the shapes or colors of the entities by type of attribute if needed. Label your entities well. At a minimum, use at least three network

*relationship* ideas: valence (e.g., number of relationships between any two entities), cardinality (e.g., one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many), direction (e.g., one-way, two-way), strength (e.g., strong, weak), impact (e.g., positive, negative), and reciprocity (e.g., balanced, equal) in your discussion of your network chart. Vary the thickness of the line by relationship if needed. Label your relationships well. Beyond using the common language of network analysis, there is no single “one way” to draw a sociogram.

- Draw a second “sociogram”. Using the language of network analysis, show how the entities or relationships (or both) change over time. Use the sociograms to demonstrate and reinforce the theories and analogies that were previously used to analyze the main management skill development (transition). Ensure that the change or transition is clear both in the presentation and on the second diagram.
- Current Event
  - Describe a current, substantive organizational event from the world of organizations (for-profit or not-for-profit). Of all the possible current events you could selected, what is your reasoning and rationale for selecting this one? That is, why is this one important?
  - Describe a Management Skill you feel is needed? Be specific. Why? Use the language of our textbook to explain (the recent past) or predict (the near future). What is the evidence? Be detailed.
  - Draw an analogy between the management skill development from the movie and the management skill development needed in the current event.
- Concluding Thoughts
  - Describe any limitations of your management skill development analysis. For this “Limitations” section, focus on the limitations of your analysis of the management skill development associated with the movie, especially in the area of understanding how the key individual developed one or both of the management skills.
  - Describe how, if you have more time and more resources, you would research this management skill development issue. For this “Future Study” section, focus on the study of the development of the management skills related to the current event. Ground your answer in one or more qualitative research methods such as [In-depth Interview](#), [Oral History](#), [Focus Group](#), [Ethnography](#), [Content Analysis](#), or [Case Study](#).
- Use a “References” (or “Works Cited”) page. Make sure you also use “In-Text” Citations as well.

## Movie

Each team will select (with my approval) their own movie. I’ll ask for the names of the movies by the middle of the semester in order to eliminate any duplicates and help with applicability.

## Sources for Articles (current events)

The sources for the articles for this class will be drawn from the following set:

- Newspapers (Dailies)
  - Los Angeles Times
  - New York Times
  - The (London) Times
  - Wall Street Journal
  - Financial Times
  
- Magazines (Weeklies or Monthlies)
  - The Economist
  - Bloomberg BusinessWeek
  - Forbes
  - Fortune

The current event can be anything of interest during the time period that the students in the each team have been in college. Also, the current event should be substantial enough so that more than a single article has been written about it.

### **Source for MGT 360 Textbook**

For the Planning, Leading, Organizing, and Controlling theories, models, and frameworks, I would prefer that teams use the most recent requirement textbook from MGT 360. If that is not available, you can access and use a current MGT 360 textbook—albeit temporarily—at the Reserve Bookroom at the CSUN Library. Another choice is to use a Creative Commons-licensed Principles of Management textbook listed below. Select the file format best for you:

<http://ocw.smithw.org/mgt360/textbook/carpenter.pdf>

or

<http://ocw.smithw.org/mgt360/textbook/carpenter.docx>

### **Tips on analyzing a Literary Work**

While this analysis is a management-level analysis in an organizational context such as a business, the movie itself is a “literary work”. In addition to the requirements in this document, it is helpful to have some general tips on how to analyze a literary work (including movies). The following document can help with that particular task. Again, select the file format best for you:

<http://ocw.smithw.org/mgt370/movie-analysis-ideas.pdf>

or

<http://ocw.smithw.org/mgt370/movie-analysis-ideas.doc>

