Summary of Chapters

The underlying theme that runs through the course is the need for leaders to recognize the place of spirituality, ethics, and leadership. We will offer a perspective on ethical leadership that emphasizes personal narratives that are a part of larger social-historical narratives. These personal narratives, in large part, constitute the ways in which we will construct the ethical notions of character, not simply as a traditional moral construct connoting integrity, uprightness and honesty (which are all good things to possess); but more so, character will be examined as a narrative script that arises from a social-historical and cultural dramatic repository from where you as a leader make certain claims about knowledge and values. Moreover, our approach will require a new way of looking at character, civility and community—especially around issues of difference and social change in local, national and global contexts.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

This chapter introduces prominent ethical leaders and invites you to reflect on your own story. It sets the stage for this course, which, in many ways, is not only an opportunity to learn more about the relationship of ethics and leadership, but it is also an invitation to existing and emerging leaders to join us in an adventure of flying together as reconnoitering dreamers exploring new mindscapes of imagination and possibility in a world that is begging for leaders who are not only skilled and competent, but also trustworthy and authentic; leaders who are spiritually disciplined, intellectually astute and ethically-anchored; leaders who are courageous enough to enter the no-trespassing zones of our world as ambassadors of justice and peace.

In Chapter One, we introduce the question of ethical leadership in the current global context. In the United States, we are reeling from the effects of two costly wars, struggling with the aftermath of a financial crisis precipitated by unscrupulous ethical practices on Wall Street and Main street, embroiled in political contests that have degenerated into character assassination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender and unresolved cultural wars; and a confused and frightened citizenry that is asking the question raised by Martin Luther King, Jr. over forty years ago, “Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community?” Certainly, our struggles must be understood not only in national terms, but as part of a fast-paced, technological and globalized world.

*Ethical Leadership: Character, Civility and Community* does not pretend to have the answer Martin Luther King’s question nor to all the other many questions that we will examine, but as we devote the next chapters to discussing the problem of leadership, and more fundamentally
**ethical** leadership, we will invite you to help us seek new solutions and strategies that address the leader’s perennial question, “Where Do We Go from Here?” or as leadership theorist and former Medtronic chairman and CEO, Bill George asks “Which Way Is True North?”

**Chapter 2: Looking At Leadership**

This chapter is an introduction and overview of selected general theories and practices associated with leadership. We will take a look at traits, behavioral, situational, contingency, transactional, transformational, servant-leadership, and authentic leadership. Ethical leadership, which we will discuss later, is a critical resource and method for interpreting courses of action and interaction with these various approaches. We will not cover all of the territory, but essentially we want to provide you with a map of what is out there and where you might locate your own style or identify your predisposition toward certain styles.

Secondly, we will also attend to definitions of leadership with emphasis on the slippery nature of definitions. Leadership like love is a many splendored and splintered thing. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein challenged his listeners to really “look” at a phenomenon beyond its accepted linguistic configurations and to ask the harder question of “What do I mean when I say x, y, and z?” For instance, “ethical” in certain contexts does not properly apply in others. Clearly, the moral quagmires of same-sex marriage, euthanasia, stem cell research, climate change, immigration, and abortion are testaments of what is at stake for ethical questions raised in public life. Moral norms and customs that are so easily accepted within certain communities and traditions run into complex conundrums when placed in a larger public debate where a diversity of views prevails.

The question of leadership is just as difficult to address when we are forced to “look” at it. For instance, are all leaders, by virtue of the label, good leaders? Can one be a leader and not be good? Is there something inherent in the definition of “leader” that suggests some moral obligation? When leaders fail to be “good,” what are we implying about the definition of “leader”? Is leadership tied to position or authority only, or are other assumptions being made about “leadership” and the “good”? If all leaders are not “good,” and if position or authority is not the defining variable of leadership, then what is? What do we mean by a “good leader” or a “bad leader” anyway?

In this chapter you will meet leaders and leadership theorists who are asking and responding to similar questions.

**Chapter 3: Standing at the Intersection Where Worlds Collide**

In this chapter, I will share a personal story that contextualizes the language of *lifeworlds* and *systems*, liberally borrowed from philosophers and social theorists (Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas), but without a lot of chatter about the history of the terms. I am most interested in helping students understand that fragile, everyday lifeworlds, as described, are often under assault by vast and impersonal systems that place
leaders in very dangerous, vulnerable, and practically impossible situations (the intersection). Hence, we will discuss dangerous intersections, noisy intersections and the crisis of leadership at these intersections.

Leaders, therefore, who aspire to ethical life and practice, need to cultivate certain habits and practices that allow them to negotiate, manage, leverage and hopefully, transform the intersection. I am not all convinced that the proliferation of rules, laws, and penalties, though necessary, are adequate. I believe we need to look at the question of ethics and leadership differently in order to address the challenges of the intersection.

You will meet leaders and scholars who are discussing the dangers, the noises and the traps at the intersection.

Chapter 4: What is Ethical Leadership?

This chapter provides an early working definition of ethical leadership that incorporates the dynamics of spirituality, ethics, and leadership as one way of addressing the challenges associated with the development of ethically-anchored character, transformative acts of civility and a sense of community. I will describe ethical leadership as:

[The critical appropriation and embodiment of moral traditions that have shaped the character and shared meanings of a people (an ethos). In fact, ethical leadership does not emerge from a historical vacuum but from the lifeworlds of particular traditions and speaks authoritatively and acts responsibly with the aim of serving the collective good. Ethical leaders, therefore, are those whose characters have been shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of particular traditions—often more than one—yet they tend to be identified with a specific cultural ethos and narrative. Finally, ethical leadership asks the question of values in reference to ultimate concern.]

This is a very important part of our ongoing deliberation about what constitutes ethical leadership from our perspective and will be revisited throughout the other chapters. I will also provide conceptual frames for discussing the self, social and spiritual dimensions of a model for ethical leadership that will receive further elaboration as the course builds.
I will further suggest that leaders of the new century must not only be aware of external environmental realities that shape the challenges and issues that they must confront—they must also be aware of the inner environments that shape character, civility, and a sense of community. Leaders who are not awake, i.e. aware of the interiority of experience, the often deep subconscious elements that drive behavior and action, are increasingly in very vulnerable circumstances and can endanger the mission of a team, organization, and as we have witnessed too many times to ignore, very large numbers of people. What are the critical resources and methodologies at our disposal to develop a new generation of emerging leaders who are awake—physically and emotionally whole, spiritually disciplined, intellectually astute, and morally-anchored? As the survey of leadership theories and practices will demonstrate, leadership studies abound with various approaches to this question. As stated, absent from many of these approaches is the question of spirituality and ethics and how these interrelated themes inform and transform human consciousness so that the leader is predisposed to make the fitting decision and carry out the appropriate ethical action among competing claims and a cacophony of voices and visions.

In this chapter you will meet leaders and theorists who discuss what ethical leadership means within their disciplines, organizations and institutions.

**Chapter 5: Ways of Doing Ethics**

This chapter outlines four traditional ways that the Western world has conceived theories and practice of ethics and how these perspectives impact leadership at the intersection of lifeworlds and systems. These four ways are, respectively, the Rationalist (deontological), Realist (utilitarian), Retooler (pragmatist) and Relationist (communitarian). I present a fifth, non-exclusive way of doing ethics that I describe as the Raconteur (Way of the Story-Teller or the way of virtue). In this last way of doing ethics (Raconteur), the emphasis is on narrative-based ethics and the ways in which leaders critically reflecting on collective memory and specific cultural narratives are enabled to reconnect with forgotten practices that form certain kinds of
communities of discourse and practice which represent virtues, values, and virtuosities (excellencies) that allow retrieval and appropriation for the present.

In this chapter, you will meet mainly scholars and theorists who are thinking about ethics in respect to their disciplines and stories.

**Chapters 6-8: The Quest for Character, Civility and Community**

In Chapter 6 you will be introduced to a very important tool, the Ethical Leadership Model™, which is an interactive, conceptual guide to the relations and interplay of self, society and spirit as discussed in Chapter 4. The ethical concepts of character, civility and community will be defined along with the attendant principles and practices that pertain to each. For instance, character consists of three virtues (integrity, empathy and hope) all of which are located in spheres of the self, social and spiritual). Likewise, civility will be defined in respect to the social dimension of the model and its attendant values (recognition, respect and reverence); and community in respect to the spiritual dimension and its attendant virtuosities (courage, justice and compassion).

![Figure 2: The Ethical Leadership Model™—Defining Virtues, Values & Virtuosities of Character, Civility and Community](image)

Utilizing the three pivotal concepts of character, civility, and community, we will discuss the critical virtues, values, and virtuosities that are integral to the principles and practices of ethical leadership. We will invite participants to rethink these pivotal concepts in respect to a host of public issues related to leadership. Respectively, in Chapter 6 “Character at the Intersection,” we will discuss three virtues: integrity, empathy, and hope; in Chapter 7, “Civility at the Intersection,” the three values or social practices of recognition, respect, and reverence; and in Chapter 8, “Community at the Intersection,” three virtuosities: courage, justice, and compassion.

In these chapters, you will meet a broad spectrum of leaders and theorists asking questions and sharing about what constitutes character, civility and community at the intersection.
Chapters 9-10: Staying Awake at the Intersection and Ethical Decision-Making at the Intersection

Chapters 9-10 present some tools (practical skills and competencies) that ethical leaders need in order to negotiate and transform the traffic at the intersection. These last chapters integrate the proposed model of ethical leadership for the development and training of leaders using the defining concepts and practices of character, civility and community. Chapter 9, “Staying Awake at the Intersection”, addresses the challenge for emerging leaders to become aware of internal and external environments that engender possibility, hope, and vision. Emphasis is placed on the role of spirituality and imagination in public life with specific emphases on character, civility, and community. Chapter 9 includes “Remembering, Retelling, and Reliving Stories,” one of the most practical of the discussions which encourages emerging leaders to return to personal narratives that are connected to larger social historical constructions that form character, civility, and community.

Chapter 10 introduces a process for ethical decision-making for leaders involving discerning, deliberating and deciding with attendant examinations of specific cases of ethical leadership. In this chapter, attention is given to contextual analysis and the tool of looking, listening, and learning as important competencies for leaders who raise the ethical question in organizations and public life.

Chapter 11: Putting it all Together

In Chapter 11 we will ask you to apply your Ethical Leadership Toolkit to create a case study around an issue that is of the utmost importance to you. We will also outline an action plan for your use in what you have learned during this course for your ongoing ethical leadership practices.