

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
THE WHARTON SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS

LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS 227 Syllabus  
Spring 2015

Professor G. Richard Shell  
THE LITERATURE OF SUCCESS:  
ETHICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Classroom: F38 Huntsman Hall  
Office: 643 Huntsman Hall  
Class times: Tuesdays 3:00 -- 6:00 PM  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 – 2:50 PM or call/email me  
Office Phone: 215-898-9525; e-mail: shellric@wharton.upenn.edu

This course explores the history, literature, ethics, and philosophy of two age-old questions: what does it mean to be “successful” and how does one achieve this elusive goal? It surveys some of the classics of the “success” genre – from Epictetus’ (c. A.D. 50-130) classic “Handbook for Living” to Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Dale Carnegie’s How to Win Friends and Influence People in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will also watch Arthur Miller’s play Death of a Salesman. Professor Shell’s book Springboard: Launching Your Personal Search for Success (Penguin/Portfolio 2013) provides the thematic foundations for the course. In addition to examining these readings from both critical and cultural perspectives, you will utilize a number of web-based and in-class self assessments to examine your own personal strengths, talents, personality traits, and achievement orientations.

GRADING: There is no “Wharton curve” for this course. Top grades go to people who do outstanding work on the three dimensions being evaluated. Grading is based on:

- 20%: Your overall class contribution and participation;
- 15%: Eight 1-page personal reflection papers/journals on assigned topics;
- 65%: Two personalized, well-written research papers:
  - 25%: A short paper (6-10 pages) on a “success theme” (TBA)
  - 40%: A “Final Project” (10-20 pages) titled “My 2015 Theory of Success and How I Plan to Achieve It.”

***CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY: Class attendance in this course is critical. Students may miss one class without penalty, but beyond that a 10% grade penalty will be imposed for each class (or part of a class) missed unless the student provides a written medical excuse or evidence of a family emergency. Recruiting and extracurricular activities, while recognized as important student interests, are not valid excuses for missing class, arriving late, or leaving early.*** Please consider this very carefully when enrolling.

The course readings combine books with selections on Canvas. There is a class-by-class “Introduction to Readings” with review questions for each class on Canvas as well as reading selections posted on for that class. The following books are also required (and are on reserve at Lippincott Library if you wish to read them there): Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People; Stephen R. Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People; Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich, and G. Richard Shell, Springboard: Launching Your Personal Search for Success. **NOTE: We will also use Rath’s StrengthsFinder 2.0 web-based personality profiler available online for \$9.99.** You can find that assessment at the web address below:

<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/Purchase/en-US/Product?Path=Clifton%20StrengthsFinder>.

## **CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### Part I. Introduction

Class 1 (1-20-15): The Question: What is a Successful Life?

Discuss: Course Requirements, Syllabus, Grading, Reading Response Papers, Personal Journals.  
Read: Readings to be handed out, read, and discussed during class. Readings include the Introduction and Chapter 1 from G. Richard Shell, Springboard: Launching Your Personal Search for Success.

Activity: Do and discuss the Six Lives Exercise. Discuss the “Experience Machine” described in the “Introduction to Class 1 Readings – What is Success?” Begin the investigation of the differences (if there are any) between happiness and success. Also, briefly discuss The Accomplished Child” essay.

Class 2 (1-27-15): The Metaphor Challenge: Defining Success for Yourself

Read: G. Richard Shell, Springboard, Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Discuss: The standard success goals: happiness, status, fame, and fortune.

Activity: Bring your answer to “The Lottery Exercise” described at the end of Springboard Chapter 3. Come to class with a specific example of someone you know (or admire) who does what you think of as “Meaningful Work” as described in Chapter 4 of Springboard. Be prepared to discuss the person you use as your example.

### Part II. The Character School

Class 3 (2-3-15): Character, Virtue, and the Self-Made Person: Benjamin Franklin

**Read:** Canvas Readings for Class 3, including Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography, Part 1 (written in 1771) and a short selection from Part 2 (written in 1784).

Activity: Group discussion of Franklin's book as well as your individual VIA Strengths profiler results for Top 5 and Bottom 5 virtues. See See Canvas Reading Introduction for this class to get directions on the VIA profiler as well as a sheet summarizing all 24 VIA virtues. You will pick one of Benjamin Franklin's 13 virtues to practice for the rest of the semester. Chose wisely!

Class 4 (2-10-15): Character and Virtue as a System for Success:  
Habits and Elephants

Read: Canvas readings on Self Control for Class 4 + Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989). Everyone should read the chapters titled "Inside-Out," "The 7 Habits—An Overview," and "Inside-Out Again" in 7 Habits. In addition, different students will be assigned to read and report on each of the chapters covering the specific habits.

Activity: Groups discuss readings as well as their experiences trying to practice one of Franklin's virtues on a daily basis for this past week.

Class 5 (2-17-15): Character's Roots: Family and Role Models

Read: Canvas Readings for Class 5.

Activity: Discuss the "rags to riches" paradigm. Does success depend on where you start out in life? Or is it more about where you end up? We'll do an "Advantages" exercise to see where we have started. We'll also discuss in detail the "Ain't No Makin' It" reading and the role of social class, social constraints, and role models on success.

Class 6 (2-24-15) Success, Family, and Literature: Death of a Salesman  
**Journal #1 Due – Experience Report on Self Discipline and Self Control (practicing my virtue)**

Activity: Watch and discuss the original Broadway cast production of Death of a Salesman.

Class 7: (3-3-15) Character, Success and Social Influence

Read: Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People (1937) (Parts 1 and 2 only – roughly the first 100+ pages); Shell, Springboard, Chapter 9. READ CARNEGIE FIRST!

Activity: Group discussion on authenticity vs. social "technique." Share examples of your "Friends of Virtue." Homework: pick one of Carnegie's techniques and practice using it during the coming week. You can report on your results in the next class.

SPRING BREAK (No class on March 10, 2015)

### III. The Excellence School

Class 8 (3-17-15): Aptitudes, Talents, and Success

### **\*Paper #1 Due – Shorter Paper on Topic To Be Announced**

Read: Springboard, Chapters 5 and 6; StrengthsFinder 2.0; Canvas readings.

Activity: Review “flow” experiences; survey and talk about StrengthFinder and SAME profiler (in Springboard) results.

Class 9 (3-24-15): The Problem of Purpose

Read: Canvas Readings -- Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates; Fankl, Man’s Search for Meaning.

Activity: Discuss Short Papers and Purpose Readings; the role of religion (if any) in your life. Also – “virtue practice” checkup!

### IV. The Mind Power School

Class 10 (3-31-15): Success through Beliefs, Mental Focus, and Positive Mental Attitudes  
**\*Journal # 2 Due – Experience Report on Expressing Gratitude or an Apology in Real Time.**

Read: Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich -- Introduction and Chapters 1-6 & Chapter 15 (feel free to look into some of the parts we are skipping – much of it is repetitive but some is very strange indeed!). Springboard, Chapter 7. Read Napoleon Hill first!

Activity: Watch Byrne video -- The Secret. Discuss Mind Power School – strengths and weaknesses in the theory. Share personal experiences related to readings.

Class 11 (4-7-15): Mind Power’s Roots: Stoic and Buddhist Philosophy

Read: Canvas Readings for Class 11.

Activity: Launch discussion of how you will survey your social network about your true strengths, virtues, and talents and how they might relate to your choice of work. Also, bring your most and least favorite quotes from the Stoic and Buddhist philosophers and be ready to discuss your selections.

Class 12 (4-14-15): Mind Power’s Tools – Goals, Models, Self-Talk, GRIT, Rituals

Read: Springboard, Chapter 8; Canvas Readings for Class 12.

Activity: Group discussion on Journal #3 -- virtues, vices, strengths and weaknesses. Discuss Mind Power Tools – what works? What does not?

Class 13 (4-21-15): Success Case Studies:

Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Entrepreneur Mary Kay Ash

Read: Canvas Readings for Class 13

Activity: Be prepared to assess the strengths and aptitudes of two lives you read about. Also, make a judgment about whether you think either or both of these women is a “success.” Finally, be ready to name at least one of the people you intend to use as a success role model in your Final Project.

Class 14 (4-28-15): Class Wrap-up

**Journal #3 Due – Complete Capabilities Assessment – Report on What You Can Do Better Than Most.** (My True Virtues, Strengths, Talents, and Aptitudes, with Comments from My Circle of Friends, Colleagues, and Family).

Read: Springboard Chapter 10. Someone bring a camera!

Activity: Bring these things: 1) your final Personal Journal 2) a final “self grade” for yourself on your virtue practice for the semester, and 3) a favorite, “signature quotation” from the readings to share with the class along with an explanation as to why you picked that passage.

**FINAL PROJECTS DUE:** Deadline to be announced. No extensions and penalties will be imposed for late papers! I have to submit grades on a deadline!

**NOTE: This is a course that is graded based primarily on writing excellence and research originality, though there may be much to be gained from the course on a personal level even if you are not a great writer. Please keep this in mind when registering.**

**Class participation and contribution (20 points):** This score is a combination of professor and student ratings. Students will peer-rate each other at the end of the term on a 1-10 scale based on perceptions of each classmate's overall contribution to the class learning experience. The professor will also rate each member of the class in terms of overall effort on all the assignments and insights displayed in class and written work. The final allocation of the 20 points will be given by the professor by combining both inputs and identifying the top, middle, and lower groups in terms of overall class contribution. Note that class contributions are not measured solely by the amount people talk in class (although people who do not say anything will have trouble excelling on this aspect of the grade). Class contributions are occasions when students trigger lively, informed debate and discussion by what they say – either in class or in small group discussions. People who speak up simply to reinforce or restate something someone else just said are not contributing as much as people who raise new points, deepen areas of discussion with relevant personal experiences, or challenge points of conventional wisdom that everyone else has assumed to be true. You will be mixed in small groups with different classmates to give everyone a chance to engage with lots of other people.

**Personal Reading Reflection Papers (6 points) (sample provided at end of syllabus):** You are expected to do (and will get a great deal more from the class by doing) all the readings for each class. But to assure that there will be in-depth discussions in each class, everyone is required to turn in five 1-2 page (single-spaced) "Personal Reading Reflection Papers" during the semester that explore your genuine reactions and feelings about the assigned readings. These papers should serve as jumping off points for explorations of your past, present, and future – helping you to consolidate the story of who you are and who you want to be. There will be four groups (randomly assigned). Personal Reading Reflection Paper assignments for each group are as follows (papers are due at the beginning of the relevant class):

Group 1 (Red Folders):	Classes 3, 4, 8, 10, 12
Group 2 (Yellow Folders):	Classes 3, 5, 9, 10, 13
Group 3 (Green Folders):	Classes 3, 5, 8, 11, 12
Group 4 (Blue Folders)	Classes 3, 7, 9, 11, 13

One point will be awarded for each paper turned in that meets the standard indicated by the sample. Three (3) points will be deducted from your final grade for each paper that is not turned in. Two (2) points will be deducted for papers turned in late.

A one point bonus will be awarded for people who turn in all five of their Reading Reflection Papers and all three Personal Journals (see below) on time and in good order.

**Personal Journal Entries (9 points).** There will be three (3) Personal Journal Entries, each worth 3 points. Length: 2 or more pages, single-spaced. They due on dates noted in **bold** the syllabus.

Personal Journal Topics:

1. Experience Report on Self Discipline and Self Control (“my virtue practice”). Write a report on your successes and failures exercising self discipline and self control while practicing one of Benjamin Franklin’s 13 virtues from his Autobiography. Explain your “personal best practices” to motivate your self to proactively do things that you would prefer to put off (exercise, homework, job applications, etc.) as well as to resist impulses that ought to be resisted (to eat or drink too much, try too hard to please others, watch T.V., play video games, spend too much time on social media). Cite any research, motivational readings, blogs, etc. you found helpful!
2. Experience Report on Expressing Gratitude or an Apology in Real Time. Write about your real-time experience (this must be done during the semester) expressing gratitude, an apology, regret, or remorse to someone in your life who deserves to be acknowledged or apologized to and who might be surprised to find that you were thinking of them and wanted to be sure he or she knew you appreciated them or regretted some wrong you have done in the past. Write about why you picked this person, what happened, how you felt about the experience, and why the exercise was either easy or hard – and what you learned from doing it.
3. Complete Capabilities Assessment – A Report on What You Can Do Better Than Most. Write an essay on your virtues, talents, strengths, and natural aptitudes as revealed in all the different profilers we have used this semester – and any others you would like to include. In addition, get maximum feedback and comments from your social circle of family, friends, and working associates (people you associate with in jobs, clubs, classes, etc.). The goal of this journal is to come to some solid conclusions about the combination of things you do better than most – and that may well form the foundations for the success you achieve in your life.

Three points will be awarded for each Personal Journal turned in. Five (5) points will be deducted from your final grade for each Personal Journal that is not turned in. Three (3) points will be deducted for Personal Journals turned in late.

**Two Research Papers: Short (25 points) and Long (40 points)**

**1. Short Paper (6-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times Roman) (25 points): Topic to be announced --** *Here is a topic I used in the past. This year will be different, but it gives you the idea:* Write a paper on the nature of love and its relationship (if any) to the idea of “success.” Motivate the paper and give it narrative flow by using your own personal experience as an organizing principle and reference point, but understand that – unlike reading papers and journals -- this project will be primarily graded as a research paper. Thus, illustrate your thesis

and deepen your own understanding of the topic using as many research sources as appear to you to be relevant: from social science, literature, history, philosophy and/or hard science (i.e. neuroscience, genetics, medicine, etc.). Papers will be graded on the basis of depth and originality of research from materials outside the course readings, outstanding writing and proofing, original thesis development, clear organization, illuminating case and personal examples, and careful editing.

**2. Final Project – (10-20 pages, doubled-spaced, 12-point Times Roman) (40 points). (Sample papers from past classes will be provided)**

**Paper title:** “My 2013 Theory of Success and How I Will Achieve It.”

Write a paper that presents your current theory about what the word “success” means for you and how you intend to go about fulfilling your success concept in your life. These ideas and plans should be expressed through mastery of the course readings, at least one major additional ‘reading’ (see note below) that inspires you, additional relevant research that sustains and supports your success theories, and illustrations/stories/examples drawn from the lives of two people you admire (at least one of whom is no longer living and neither of whom were discussed in the course) from business, social life, your community or culture, the arts, religion, sports, or political history. If you select a member of your family or close family friend as one of your role models, that person must be no longer living and I will expect extensive interviews with those who knew the person to be part of your research. You will form groups and meet throughout the semester to discuss your evolving ideas on how to write this Final Project.

*Note on grading the Final Project: I cannot grade the papers in this course based on sincerity – though my hope is to inspire sincere reflection. Thus, please be aware that the Final Project is both a personal statement and a research paper that expresses your personal philosophy. The best papers treat the lives of the role models as complex rather than simple narratives. They avoid “cherry-picking” selected facts about a person to support their thesis while ignoring facets of the life that contradict or complicate the thesis. Nobody is perfect! The “additional reading” can be any form of personal or artistic expression – a poem, painting, short story, film, success book, religious writing, play, comic book, photograph – you name it. The more original and thoughtful the paper and examples, the better. Hence, someone who picks the famous “Serenity Prayer” (“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”) or Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem “If” as his or her original reading may not get as much credit as someone who finds a lesser-known but equally powerful reading or other expression that delivers the same wisdom. And someone who chooses to use the person who founded his or her country or religion as a biographical example may not get as much credit as someone who researches and discovers a lesser-known but equally inspiring figure. The best papers also typically go beyond course concepts (or outside course concepts altogether) in defining what success means for the writer. Writers who simply survey the “success schools” studied in class and pick bits and pieces from each will not do as well as those who find novel ways to expand, deepen, or invent new ways to think about and/or measure success and connect these ideas to both the lives of their role models*



*and their own lives. Overall, in the best papers, the two lives, the extra reading, and the success theories combine to form a well-integrated whole that expresses an understanding about the complexity of life and what it takes to make one's way in it.*

## **SAMPLE PERSONAL READING REFLECTION PAPER – LGST 227**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading: Mary Kay Ash, Miracles Happen

Class # \_\_\_\_\_

Response: This was a surprising book – I thought it would be more of a bio. A lot of the material was a how-to book on motivation. Frankly, I was put off by the tone of the book. As much as Mary Kay touted feminism she sounded a little too effeminate for me to take her seriously – although that is also probably a function of the changes in societal views over time. In general, however, her ideas on motivation were great, especially the concept of incremental rewards. For example, her “ladder of success” pins spurred her employees to constantly compete against their past performance. Obviously more important than the actual jewel in the pin is the recognition of achievement that it affords the Consultant. I myself am not really motivated by stuff like that but I have been trying to motivate the directors of my student organization recently and I have been struggling. There are several people who are not giving a desirable amount of time and attention to their committees and to our group in general. With the rest of the board, I have been trying to think of ways to incentivize them – should I try something like rewards? It might send the wrong signal + I don’t think that a Mary Kay-esque recognition scheme (or even objects that symbolize recognition) will work. It would look too cheesy or even too much like a bribe. People are motivated by different things – I remember reading in a Consumer Behavior textbook about McClelland’s achievement theories - that people are motivated by achievement, authority, or affiliation (or some combination of the three). Mary Kay’s ladder pin is based on a need for achievement, while for example, one of the directors in my group is motivated by authority – and he has not been performing highly since he lost his election to by Chair.

I saw a lot of similarities between the messages found in this reading and some in Covey’s book. One idea that particularly stood out was the need to prioritize. In one quote I liked a lot, Ash writes “if you were going to drive to your vacation destination, you wouldn’t start without a road map. The same should be true of your life. Without a plan – a road map – you will never get where you want to go. To accomplish anything significant, you must sit down and decide what you want from life.” Like Covey, she stresses the need to keep a manageable but important list of daily goals (she calls this her “\$35K list”), and also that this list should be shaped by a broader life plan (Covey’s mission statement). Mary Kay’s message was conveyed with lots more exclamation points than Covey’s... but it was same idea. My brother and I used to make fun of my mother for always making lists like this, but now I see that it is a pretty common success technique.

To be honest, I had trouble taking some of this reading seriously. As hard as Mary Kay clearly worked, her excessively positive attitude made me discount some of what she had to say. This is something that I have experienced – one of my signature strengths was positivity – something I didn’t need to take a personality assessment to notice – but there have been points where this has disadvantaged me. A lot of times when you constantly come off as happy, nice, enthusiastic, etc. people don’t take you seriously and they think you are naïve, even if that is not the case. I am not sure what I can do about that.