COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course has three goals:

(1) **Experience.** To give you experiences (both directly through simulations and vicariously through cases) to increase your likelihood of success as a leader;

(2) **Retention.** To enable you to retain those experiences until you can put them into action;

(3) **Navigation.** To help you chart a course to get from where you are now to a top-leadership position.

Top Management Process (TMP) is about the job of the General Manager, the leader of an organization who is ultimately responsible for the organization (design & success), strategy (development & execution), operations (P&L responsibility) and results. This job is quite different from an individual producer’s job, such as a trader, or the head of a function such as marketing or finance, or the head of a business unit. All the functions report directly or indirectly to the GM. It is the GM’s job to ensure that these interdependent units are coordinated and integrated and executing a common strategy that is continually responsive to a continuously changing market place.

GMs succeed or fail based upon their ability to develop and articulate a beneficial strategy and on how well they are able to design organizations, lead people within the organization, influence parties outside of the organization and make effective business decisions to operationalize strategy. How are people selected, developed and appraised? How do GM’s provide strategic leadership? How are good working relationships promoted? How is strategy actually decided? And then how is it executed? How are these decisions made in a world that is continuously changing, where multiple forces are at work and interacting with each other, where data is often woefully incomplete, or just plain wrong, and executives’ prior experience with the issues their organization faces is often limited? The challenges are daunting. The course is one in which you will have a chance to study the challenges that confront GMs and to formulate approaches to those challenges so that you will not be as daunted when you face them.
TMP argues that good decisions are more likely if GMs have a systemic and process-oriented mindset. By system we mean how everything is connected to, and interacting with, everything else. By process, we mean the complex ways in which people, events, issues and situations evolve and interrelate over time. In TMP we study three kinds of processes: leadership, organization, and group. This diagram below illustrates how these three interact.

**Leadership Processes:** We view leadership as a process because it is a series of choices, actions and decisions over time that shapes the organizational context in which people work. It is about how GMs bring people together to work on the company’s people, strategy and operations choices and build relationships among them to foster productive conversations so that GMs are better informed and more likely to lead good decision-making processes.

We pay particular attention to the relationship between a GM and team members because they are connected in a reciprocal way: they influence each other’s feelings, thoughts and actions, often negatively. The uncertainties of the environment, the importance of responsibilities such as people, strategy and operations decisions, the need to work through people and the fact that anxiety is contagious all combine to tempt leaders and members into reactivity and impulsiveness which then reinforce each other’s regression. A hallmark of leadership process is the ability of GMs to resist regressive forces and stay in a catalytic mode, calmly encouraging trust, participation, and collaboration, and maintaining good relationships in order to help their organization work through tough issues and situations. We call this hallmark “Self Leadership”, and we will discuss this concept more fully in the course.
Organizational Processes: Much of a GMs decision-making is accomplished through organizational processes such as strategic planning, performance reviews, business development, programming of operations and budgeting. These organizational processes are sequences of activities and tasks that unfold throughout the year and that are always interacting with each other and with other on-going events. Every company uses these organizational processes to plan what they are going to do, to hopefully link all the different departments together in common action and to monitor progress. They are the principle ways through which organizations do their work.

Group Process: The GMs’ top team needs to be involved in these organizational processes. Increasingly, as markets and organizations have become more complex and dynamic, successful GMs work with and through their top team. They have learned that no one person can possibly possess the experience and expertise needed to handle strategy, people and operations choices alone. When their team works well, GMs gain diversity of viewpoint and perspective. Realizing these benefits though is not easy. With diversity comes conflict. Leaders and members can regress into unproductive discussions. Group process is about the multitude of ways in which people interact with each other and the quality of their working relationships when they are working on company issues.

Getting these three processes right is in fact quite difficult. It’s not just that markets are difficult to read and unpredictable. Organizations operate in markets but are also made up of people, making them doubly unpredictable. Organizations are organisms, not mechanisms. Anxiety is more commonplace in our organizations than we typically like to think. While anxiety can motivate people, it can lead to stress and impaired functioning. Work relationships break down. Inter and intra group conflict breaks out. Information does not get to the right people. Functional stove pipes, business silos and country fiefdoms develop and impede discussion and coordination. Decision making deteriorates. Thus, the objective of TMP is to improve our capabilities in designing and leading these three kinds of processes so that good decisions result. The course is organized into four modules.

Module I: Making the Transition to General Management

Module II: Systemic Thinking and Process Mindset

Module III: Top Management Team Dynamics

Module IV: General Management in New Era

In Module I, we discuss the challenges in making the transition from an individual producer to a general manager. Almost one in two GMs fail, usually within the first 18 months. The major ‘derailers’ are poor working relationships, inability to build and lead a team and difficulty in adapting to the broad scope of the job.

In Module II, we will introduce systemic thinking and the process mindset and explore how they can help new GMs handle the challenges of their job. Systemic thinking helps GMs start with the total situation and learn all the many factors at work and how they might be influencing each other. It lessens the tendency to focus only in an individual or a single department to understand poor performance. Systemic thinking also helps GMs move from a managerial orientation to a leadership orientation.

In Module III, we study the dynamic processes behind top management team management. We study how CEO succession processes are conducted in both established and entrepreneurial firms, how GMs handle conflicts in the top management team, and how they build a board and manage the relationship with it.
In Module IV, we discuss two contemporary responsibilities of GMs: (1) reinventing companies for continuous success, especially in face of the new era’s digital transformation, and (2) answering the call to be socially responsible and taking up activism.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS
*Describe course pack, Link here*

CONNECTION TO THE CORE
The MBA core courses, Strategy Formulation and LEAD: People, Teams, Organizations, are most relevant to the current course. Formulating competitive strategy is one of the most important tasks of top managers, but to make strategy work, top managers need to have effective organizational, group, and leadership processes. So we will refer to the concepts that you learned in the LEAD class but elevate them to the top level of organizations, deploy them under the guidance of organizational strategic priorities, and take into account the complexity of organizations.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Preparation of submission</th>
<th>Discussion of Submission*</th>
<th>Discussion of Concepts**</th>
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<td>By the group</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Individual grade</td>
<td>Individual preparation</td>
<td>Permitted to discuss; sharing solutions or submission files is not allowed</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
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<td>Individual grade</td>
<td>Individual preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Not permitted to share/discuss solutions or submission</td>
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</table>

All of your assignment submissions are subject to the [CBS Honor Code](#). Violations of the CBS Honor Code may lead to failing the assignment, failing the course, suspension, and/or dismissal. In order to avoid ambiguity that may lead to unintentional violations of the Honor Code, assignment description types have been standardized and specified below.

The designated group can be either an assigned study group or a self-selected one.
Submission means any work and/or output pertaining to the specific assignment. If an assignment submission contains a calculation or decision related to a specific set of data and setting, discussing the details how to make this calculation or decision with regard the data/setting is to discuss the submission. Providing another student with a draft of the calculation or decision is sharing the submission.

**Concepts** mean any ideas, examples, readings, or other related materials from the class/course. Conceptual discussion should not be based on a specific set of data or setting related to a calculation or decision required in the assignment, but could be based on other related examples, preferably those from class/course materials.

***As no conceptual discussion is permitted, Type C is akin to a take-home exam.***

**Class Participation**

An important course requirement is active involvement in class discussion. Your participation is essential for both your own learning and that of other students. Much of the learning will take place in our discussion of the business cases. I expect that every student will arrive well prepared and able to answer the pre-assigned assignment questions. From past experience, it is helpful to meet in study groups to discuss the case and the assignment question before class.

Both the frequency and quality of your participation in class discussion will be affected by non-attendance. Not coming to a class means that you will not have a chance to take part in class discussion, which is a critical component of your overall grade.

Please note that a CA will be recording student participation in class. Your participation grade will NOT be based on the CA’s records alone. The main purpose of the CA’s record-keeping is to ensure that certain students are not unfairly being given too many or too few opportunities to speak in class. In other words, the CA’s presence is meant to keep my management of the class discussion in check. In some cases, the CA’s records will be used to verify specific instances of student participation that particularly stood out in terms of quality. In terms of the quality of participation, the best class comments:

- Articulate a clear stance or argument.
- Raise issues from past classes or current events or other anecdotes that are relevant to the discussion.
- Show curiosity and a willingness to experiment.
- Use data or examples to support conclusions.
- Help others feel safe about participating by inviting further discussion or summarizing points that have already been made by your classmates.

I will cold call throughout the class, so be prepared to answer any questions regarding the details of the case, and to articulate your opinions about the assignment questions. Because the class is primarily discussion-based, if you have any reservations or question about participating in class at any time, I encourage you to email me to meet.

Finally, although the primary way to take part in class discussion is to actively do so with your voice, for some discussion formats, I will explicitly allow you to earn participation credit by submitting substantive and relevant comments and questions in the virtual chat function during class. The CA will monitor the chat box, and I will ask the CA to occasionally contribute with any items from the chat window.

Below are some tips for preparing for a class discussion:

- Before reading a case, always read the “guiding questions” in the relevant session of your Canvas calendar.
- Take notes while you read the case to help you diagnose the key problems the case describes.
- Re-read your response to the session’s poll question, as it will almost always be part of our class discussion.
- I encourage you to have a printed copy of the case in class so that you can refer to it during our discussion without distraction from your laptop.
Quizzes
To evaluate your course preparation and your understanding of course materials, I will give short quizzes for each class, which cover the obvious content of a case or assigned articles. No make-up opportunities are available if you are absent or late. Your best 8 quizzes will be counted. The quizzes are assignment type C (individual preparation and grading; no discussion is allowed during the exam).

Group Presentation, Question, and Write-up on “Great CEO”
This is a group assignment. At the beginning of the semester, I will ask each of you to nominate five greatest corporate CEOs in history. From this list and other sources, I will assign one CEO for each group to analyze and set a class time for each group to present their analysis. The group presentation, question, and write-up are designated as assignment type A (Group preparation and grading; discussions within group is permitted, but not between groups).

Group Presentation. The group is responsible for conducting a comprehensive analysis of the designated CEO. The analysis should include the following components: (1) early experience and career trajectory, with particular attention to the formation of leadership style and critical career junctions, (2) the greatest achievements of the CEO and the leadership style, organizational and team process, and key drivers behind the success, (3) the limitations, challenges, missed opportunities, and pitfalls for the CEO, and what you would do differently; (4) the lessons that you learn from analyzing this CEO; (5) anecdotes or fun facts about this person. The presentation should be about 20 minutes long followed by Q&A. Also, I do not expect but welcome non-traditional forms of presentation. However, please remember that presentations that neglect content in favor of form are not likely to score well. Your presentation will be evaluated by both me and the whole class. Your presentation slides should be submitted to me via email by 12 AM ET on the day that you present the assigned CEO in class.

Group Question. When a team is presenting its “Great CEO” analysis, I expect everyone in the class will be able to ask questions. In order to maintain a high level of interaction and discussion, a non-presenting group will be designated as a “Question Team.” This group will study the same CEO and prepare questions for the Presenting Team. However, make sure that the questions that you ask the Presenting Team are those that you have an answer to yourself, as I may turn the question around and make you answer it. The role of “Question Team” rotates from one CEO to another so that all teams have opportunities to both present and question.

Your question performance will be evaluated on the depth and relevance of your questions (and possible answers) during the presentation. The question team will generate a list of the questions that they intend to ask the Presenting Team and mark those that they actually asked during the class. You may also add any additional questions that are asked that were not anticipated. This list must be turned into me by the end of the class period by paper or email. Prior experience shows that it is helpful if a group designates one group member with this recording and submission task.

Group write-up. After hearing the feedback from the class, the group will produce a written report of their analysis of this CEO. The report should start with a brief introduction of the CEO and focus mainly on (1) the strategic leadership, organizational and team process, and key drivers behind the CEO’s greatest achievements, (2) the limitations, challenges, missed opportunities, and pitfalls for the CEO; (3) the key takeaways from analyzing this CEO. The whole write-up should not exceed twenty (20) double-spaced typewritten pages, with 1” margins and 12 point font. The limit
does not include appendices, which you can use to provide charts, figures, reference, or other background material, but should be no longer than five (5) pages. Always include page numbers. The group report will be due on XXX (TBD).

Important note. You may divide the task among team members but I expect all of you make equal contributions to the presentation. For example, some of you who are not presenting the visual materials should take on more work in answering questions or writing the report. So contribution can take different formats, and not everyone has to participate in every part of the team work.

Peer evaluation of group contribution. Each of you will complete a peer evaluation of the members of your team with respect to the team final project. Scores for individual student contributions to the team final project are assigned by me, based on my assessment of the team’s project quality, my observations of the team’s working dynamics and thoughtful consideration of the information provided through your peer evaluations.

Final Exam
The final exam will be a one-hour exam and will consist of multiple-choice, true/false questions, and short answers to a pre-assigned case. The date and time of the final exam is determined by the University. You will be analyzing a case, using your laptop to type your responses to the exam questions. The exam is open book; you are welcome to refer to all of the cases, course readings, and your notes during the exam. The final exam is assignment type C (individual preparation and grading; no discussion is allowed during the exam).

Students that miss the exam for an excused reason but are unable to take the exam within the stated make-up period will receive a zero for the final exam grade. Students that miss the exam without notifying OSA (unexcused), will receive an F for the course grade.

Optional TMP Research Report
For students who aim at getting “H” for the final grade, they need to submit a research report on TMP topics (within the limit of 15 double-spaced pages with 1" margins and 12 point font), which is due at the final session of the class. Students can conduct research on a variety of TMP-related topics (such as key factors that influence the job success of new CEOs, antecedents of CEO succession, how board of directors affect firm performance, the leadership analysis of CEOs other than those studied in class, etc.). These exemplar topics are meant to give you some ideas, and you don’t have to be limited to these topics. Students should submit a one-page proposal which includes their name, research topic, and writing plan by the 6th session. The proposal needs to be approved by the professor before a student can proceed to write their research report. Whether a student will get H depends on both the quality of the report and the grade of other parts of the evaluation. Submitting a report does not guarantee a student will get H. For students who do not choose to write the TMP research report, the best grade is in the category of “HP.”

The research report is designated as assignment type Bz (Individual preparation and grading; discussions of concepts are permitted).
ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students are required to attend each class. Students should reach out to the instructor or TA regarding excused absences (for religious observances; personal, medical, and family emergencies; military service; court appearances such as jury duty). Unexcused absences will affect your course grade.

For in-person students, attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class by the CA. If you cannot attend class due to unavoidable circumstances, I expect you to send me an email prior to class, notifying me and CA of your absence. Please note that any unexcused absences will significantly impact your overall grade for the course.
In addition, the Office of Student Affairs requires that you submit an Excused Absence Form, the link to which you can also access on the course page in Canvas. Unexcused absences will affect your course grade as follows:

Unexcused absences will affect your course grade as follows:
- Students that miss more than 33% of their classes (unexcused absences) will at most receive a P for the course grade
- Students that miss more than 50% of their classes (unexcused absences) will receive a F for the course grade

This course may use PollEverywhere as a tool to increase in-class student engagement. PollEverywhere may also be used to confirm student attendance and participation records. Students who have concerns regarding whether their responses have been recorded should contact the instructor. Finally, if a student is not present in the classroom at the time of a poll (due to absences or any other reasons), the poll should not be answered. Responding to a poll when not present in the classroom is a violation of the Honor Code.

I encourage students who had to miss a session to ask their classmates for notes and lecture slides. However, it is considered an honor code violation to consult any materials from past sections of TMP. Similarly, you must not share class materials with future students.

If you must miss a session on a given day, you can make up for it by attending another section of Top Management Process at a different timeslot on the same day. In particular, you may only attend another session taught by me, but not a different instructor because the material might be slightly different which could result in inconsistency in your assimilation of the material in the class.

If you are attending asynchronously, your attendance will be recorded based on your submission of a news article and your description via Canvas (described in the ‘Class Participation: Asynchronous Remote Students’ section above). Failure to submit the assignment on time will result in an unexcused absence.

CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS
Students are expected to adhere to CBS Core Culture in this class by being Present, Prepared, and Participating. The purpose of Columbia Core Culture is to promote the values of a consistent classroom environment of mutual respect, preparation and engagement in all courses. Students are expected to adhere to the same standard of behavior prescribed by Core Culture and Honor Code in traditional in-person, fully remote and Hyflex classes.

Present: Students should be on time and present for the entire session.
- Faculty are expected to start and end class on time and students are expected to be ready to begin class on time.
You should arrive to class 10 minutes early. An instructor can choose to factor consistent lateness into a student’s participation grade. Asynchronous students are expected to watch course recordings in a timely manner (generally within 24 hours).

- For in-person students, regarding masks, you must follow the University’s COVID compliance protocol. For the latest guidance, please click here and scroll down to “Face Covering and PPE.”
- For students attending in-person, also make sure you bring your name card and have it prominently displayed.

**Prepared:** Students should complete pre-work needed for class.

- Be seated and ready to participate in the class at the start time of class.
- Expect cold-calling.
- Expect to use PollEverywhere during class, and that part of a student’s participation grade is to participate in polling questions.

**Participate:** All courses will have a meaningful component of the final grade attached to preparation and participation.

- Communications will be respectful. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated, and the faculty member has the right to determine what is inappropriate.
- Everyone’s comments are important. The diversity of experience among members of the class will enhance learning. All students will be treated equitably within the classroom. The classroom is a place of expression and discussion. Be courteous to others and do not interrupt when another student is speaking.

**INCLUSION, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Columbia Business School will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services for information about registration. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services online at [www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html](http://www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html) or by contacting (212) 854-2388.

Columbia Business School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students, staff and faculty. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to a Title IX Coordinator. They will treat this information as private, but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of the University Chaplain, and the Ombuds Office for Gender-Based Misconduct are confidential resources available for students, staff and faculty. “Gender-based misconduct” includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see [http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students](http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Required Pre-Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due (Type)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1: Making the Transition to General Management</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/25/2022</td>
<td>Take up the GM role Strategic and organizational challenges</td>
<td>Silvio Napoli at Schindler India (A) Strategic Leadership: A Road Map for the General Manager’s Journey</td>
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<td><strong>Module II: Systemic Thinking and Process Mindset</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/15/2022</td>
<td>Systemic thinking</td>
<td>Friendly Fire</td>
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<td>2/22/2022</td>
<td>High stakes decision-making</td>
<td>Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest Mount Everest</td>
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<td>3/1/2022</td>
<td>Group process and leadership, decision-making under ambiguity</td>
<td>Columbia’s Final Mission</td>
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<td><strong>Module III: Top Management Dynamics</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Established firms’ CEO succession</td>
<td>CEO Succession at Cisco</td>
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<td>3/29/2022</td>
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<td>4/5/2022</td>
<td>Managing top management team</td>
<td>Blake Sports Apparel Role Play Express Truck</td>
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<td>Module IV: GM in the New Era</td>
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<td>Managing the board</td>
<td>Pixability Board process simulation</td>
<td>“Great CEO” Presentation/Question</td>
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<td>Corporate reinvention</td>
<td>The Reinvention of Kodak Wendell Weeks at Corning Inc.</td>
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<td>12 4/26/2022</td>
<td>CEO Activism and course review</td>
<td>CEO Activism</td>
<td>“Great CEO” Write-up due Optional TMP research report due</td>
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