

Leadership for Social Impact

Offered by: Astoria Worker Project

Instructor: Andres Bernal

Date & Time: Thursdays, 6-8pm, August 7-October 23 (no class on Sept 4 or Sept 11)

Format: Weekly Zoom sessions + collaborative projects

Cost: Free / Community-supported

Slides: <https://www.canva.com/design/DAGvbfT9JmY/iFOXLMcXXliJ2XsxNoIALg/edit>

WhatsApp Chat: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/E7XWHqnsA5T1NLWG472LkX>

Course Introduction

Welcome to the Astoria Worker Project's *Leadership for Social Impact* course! This is a space to grow, individually and together, as we explore how to lead change rooted in justice, dignity, and solidarity. Whether you are organizing your block, helping build a worker co-op, or figuring out how your job connects to larger systems, this course is for you.

This course defines leadership as a **social and relational practice of influence**, not tied to position or authority, but emerging from our ability to affect others through our presence, narratives, and actions. This means that leadership begins within and is expressed through how we connect, adapt, and inspire others. It is not about controlling others, but about creating space to transform oneself, relationships, and systems.

We'll consider leadership not as a title, but as a practice, something lived and shared. Through self-discovery, group learning, and strategic thinking, we'll strengthen our capacity to lead ourselves and our communities into a future where work works for everyone. Along the way, we'll also explore how our internal stories, fears, and aspirations shape our presence in the world. This course is about aligning with your deeper purpose and cultivating the courage to lead from within.

To support this journey, each session will begin with a grounding prompt to connect us to our shared purpose, followed by a short period of reflection or journaling. Participants will also be paired with a **Leadership Learning Partner** early in the course—someone to check in with between sessions for mutual support and insight. After each session, we'll offer a straightforward integration prompt to reflect on in your own time, helping the learning stay alive between gatherings.

Learning Goals

Participants will:

1. Deepen their understanding of how personal growth connects to collective power.

2. Practice using systems thinking and network strategies for social change.
 3. Learn to recognize and manage burnout and resistance in themselves and others.
 4. Explore personal values, leadership styles, and internal narratives as sources of both strength and challenge.
 5. Understand key lessons from successful and unsuccessful social movements.
 6. Cultivate vision, purpose, and presence as essential tools for transformative leadership.
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Course Overview & Weekly Themes

Week 1 – Leadership and the Self

8/7/25

Key Concepts: Defining leadership; distinction from authority and management; internal narratives; leadership as relational practice; the self in society

Group Activity: Leadership Mapping + Belief Reflection – Participants reflect on formative experiences and inherited leadership scripts.

Featured Thinkers: Plato (inner harmony); Hegel (recognition and dialectical growth); de Beauvoir (freedom and ambiguity); Foucault (care of the self); Anzaldúa (liminality and borderlands)

Week 2 – Depth Analysis & Purpose

8/14/25

Key Concepts: The unconscious in leadership; eco-leadership and influence beyond control

Group Activity: The Mask, The Mirror, and the Shadow

Week 3 – Relational Leadership & Internal Scripts

8/21/25

Key Concepts: Inherited narratives; emotional intelligence; eco-leadership

Group Activity: Leadership Challenge – Tell stories of lived leadership and reflect on internal scripts.

Week 4 – Leadership from the Future

8/28/25

Key Concepts: Deep listening; personal and collective visioning; presencing, and Leadership journey

Group Activity: Participants explore presencing through a meditative leadership journey

9/4/25

NO CLASS

Week 5 – Leadership through Networks

9/11/25

Key Concepts: Leadership discourses, understanding relational networks; collaboration across differences; identifying shared resources

Group Activity: Network Mapping + System in the mind – Visualize connections and uncover untapped mutual support.

Week 6 – The Underdog Advantage: Power, Vision & Strategy

9/18/25

Key Concepts: Power as a relational force; strategic clarity for everyday people; “the underdog mindset” in movement-building

Group Activity: Power Mapping in Our Neighborhoods – Map out where power lives in our local community—from landlords and politicians to mutual aid hubs and organizing spaces.

Week 7 – Adaptive Leadership in Uncertain Times

9/25/25

Key Concepts: Adaptive challenges; discomfort as growth; navigating resistance

Group Activity: Leadership Scenarios Roleplay – Act out real-world dilemmas and practice adaptive response.

Week 8 – What Makes a Movement Move?

10/02/25

Key Concepts: Movement lifecycles; political strategy; momentum organizing; collective identity

Group Activity: Case Study Gallery Walk – Learn from past and present movements in small groups.

Week 9 – Crafting Narratives & Messaging for Change

10/09/25

Key Concepts: Strategic storytelling; message discipline; authentic voice

Group Activity: Message Jam – Share a vision or pitch and remix messages in creative formats.

Week 10 – Tools for Impact: Organizing & Implementation

10/16/25

Key Concepts: Campaign planning; movement infrastructure; accountability

Group Activity: Campaign Planning Lab – Draft your campaign or project blueprint with peer support.

Tone & Approach

- **No homework. No grades.** Come as you are.
- **Live Zoom-based sessions** with time for reflection, small group work, and whole group discussion.
- **Trauma-informed and anti-oppressive** space grounded in care, equity, and imagination.
- Each week includes **a grounding prompt, an interactive activity, and space for visioning and feedback.**
- Participants are encouraged to bring their whole selves, including their uncertainties, creativity, and unique voices.
- *Between sessions*, you'll receive a straightforward reflection question to deepen your integration and continue learning with your Leadership Learning Partner.