Leading Groups & Teams

Have you ever been on a team and thought to yourself, there has to be a better way to do this? The nature of teamwork is changing dramatically. Globalization, rapid technological change, and the transition from a material- to an innovation-based economy have resulted in more dynamic, distributed, cross-functional, demographically and culturally diverse teams. This complexity creates the potential for increased creativity and innovation in teams, but also increased potential for stereotyping, conflict, and coordination difficulties if not actively managed.

This course is inspired by the required Teams@Haas MBA core curriculum and is designed to provide a forum for undergraduate students to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by contemporary teams. Together, we will consider the impact of multi-team membership, demographic diversity, culture, physical space, and distributed work on coordination and the development of relationships within teams.

The goal of the course is to equip students with a deeper understanding of what enhances team effectiveness as well as hands-on-experiences designed to explore strategies for leading and supporting teamwork. By the end of this course, students will better understand how to successfully launch a team, diagnose team dynamics, recognize and manage different forms of conflict, support teams in reflection and feedback, as well as facilitate team communication towards making better collective decisions. The primary objective is for students to feel more confident and capable participating as a member of a team as well as more prepared to support the teams they lead. The course will feature short lectures, guest speakers, experiential team-based exercises, and a team project.

Brandi Pearce, PhD, is a lecturer and the Director of Teams@Haas. Prior to completing her PhD, Pearce worked in the Silicon Valley at Oracle Corporation as a product manager in the alliance organization. Pearce’s research explores collaborative dynamics in global Fortune 500 organizations. Much of her research is conducted in the Silicon Valley working with teams, individual contributors, and executive leaders to develop a deeper understanding of what drives creativity, employee engagement, and innovation in teams. Pearce can be reached at bpearce@haas.berkeley.edu.