



Victoria Management School

MGMT 206 SYSTEMS THINKING & DECISION MAKING

Trimester 1 2006

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACT DETAILS

TEACHING STAFF

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TUTORIAL COORDINATOR

tba

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INTRODUCTION

The course lecturers welcome you to this fifth offering of Systems Thinking and Decision Making to be presented by the Victoria Management School. The intent has been to design a course which provides an appropriate introduction to the broad field of systems approaches to describing and understanding organizations, organizational settings and problematic situations in organizations. In doing so, the course will adopt a multiple perspective approach to the framing and solution of managerial problems, and will provide students with an introduction to a range of relevant concepts and frameworks that will allow for the development of a better understanding of problem solving and decision-making processes. As such, the course will offer insights about typical decision making behaviour and how that behaviour can be improved through an empathy with systems notions; and through the employment of systemic approaches. In particular, the course will challenge students to think systemically about issues that confront managers in the fields of managing change, managing resources, managing projects, and in general, managing in situations where uncertainty unfolds over time.

You may be interested to note that the course has gained a reputation for 'making you think'.

OBJECTIVES

The course therefore has several objectives, which include:

- understanding the nature of systems, systems thinking and systemic reasoning
- understanding the systemic nature of problems facing managers in organizational settings
- examining the nature of systems approaches
 - to describing and understanding organizations, and organizational and managerial problem situations
 - to managerial problem situation solving and decision making
- understanding the variety of ways in which decisions are and can be made
- improving competence in structuring problems
- exploring ways of approaching a range of typical managerial problems and tasks ...
 - ... in different functional areas of management, at strategic and operational levels
- developing an ability to devise robust strategies and make balanced decisions
 - comprehending the complex interaction of systemic forces acting on organisations

General Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of major systems frameworks, concepts and conceptual vocabulary ...
 - ... under-pinning successful problem-solving and decision analysis
 - ... relevant to management
- use such frameworks to describe and develop an understanding of managerial decision situations
- demonstrate an ability to critically analyse and work with different systems frameworks for examining managerial issues.

TEXTBOOK

The Goal, EM Goldratt and J Cox, 2nd Revised Edition, 1992; available for purchase from Tricia Lapham in RH 919 at the special price of \$25. Correct payment should be by cash, or cheque made payable to VUW.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

A selection of additional readings will be made available to students and will be distributed at class initially. They may also be collected from RH Room 919 at times to be notified, on evidence of enrolment and identity. Weekly readings are listed in the course schedule - pages 6&7 of this outline.

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the set of suggested readings, and where directed, to have prepared topics in advance of classes/tutorials, being ready to discuss the issues which the readings present.

COMMUNICATION

As you will learn from MGMT papers, good communication is crucial to the success of any organisation, especially classes. Communication in this course will be conducted in face-to-face mode in the lectures, workshops and tutorials as well in on-line mode through the **Blackboard** system.

With respect to individual student questions and concerns, given the number of students involved in this course, it would be greatly appreciated if students could observe the following etiquette. Individual questions and concerns can be addressed in tutorial sessions or by contacting your tutor. Please do not hesitate to raise an issue, as it may be a common student concern. Tutors will either respond immediately, or seek clarification and then respond. If concerns remain, then the lecturer concerned or course coordinator should be contacted.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Information on course-related matters will be announced at class and posted on the **Blackboard** website at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/>. It will be crucial for you to regularly check Blackboard for messages, announcements and materials.

EMAIL CONTACT

Students wishing to contact staff by email should adhere to the following instructions:

Include the **Course Code**, your **Name**, your **Student ID** and the **Topic** in the subject area of the email, eg
MGMT300_Smith_Pauline_3000223344_Ass1 Query

All students must use their VUW SCS email account and ID. Otherwise, email will be classified as Spam and will be dumped without being read. All emails with attachments will be dumped, unless requested by staff.

CLASS TIMES and ROOM NUMBERS

TIMETABLE - Lectures

Class sessions will be held in		RH LT 1	
on	Wednesdays	... between	1540-1630 hours
and	Fridays	... between	1540-1730 hours

They will comprise formal lectures supplemented by case discussion, student presentations and practical exercises. See schedule overleaf for week-by-week plan of sessions.

Our general intention is to hold lecture-type sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays from 15.40 – 16.30 followed by a workshop/class exercise session on Fridays between 16.40 and 17.30.

Attendance at all classes is expected. Those who do not attend all classes will find the course much more difficult than those who do attend. Additionally there will be marks awarded for signed hand-ins for those attending and participating in the workshop sessions on Fridays. Tutors and lecturers are not to be expected to repeat material that might have been missed in classes.

TIMETABLE - Tutorials

Tutorial sessions will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Pipitea campus in Tutorial Rooms in GB, RW and RH. Tutorials will commence in Week 2 of the course, on **Monday 6th March**.

Tutorial Sign-Up Procedure

Tutorial sign-up will commence **in person during the first lecture on Wednesday 1st March**. Please ensure that you attend this lecture, as **requests will not be taken by email or by phone**.

If you miss the tutorial sign up at the first lecture please collect a MGMT 206 Tutorial Preference Form from **Tricia Lapham in RH 919** and return this to the MGMT 206 assignment box (Box 26) on the mezzanine floor of Rutherford House. Any student who signs up for a tutorial after the first lecture is less likely to get their preferred tutorial time. **If you have special circumstances that limit your availability for tutorial times then it is important you attend the first lecture.**

Tutorial lists will be posted on the MGMT 206 Blackboard site and on the Management Notice Board on the Mezzanine Floor of Rutherford House by **6pm Friday 3rd March**.

Once tutorial allocations have been made, changes will only be made in exceptional circumstances and students requesting a change of tutorial will have to provide documentary evidence of reasons for the requested change. **Please note that employment is not generally considered an exceptional circumstance.**

TIMETABLE - Workload outside classes

Students should allocate at least 6-8 hours per week to this course, in addition to class and tutorial times above.

Skimping on attendance at classes will make the course much harder and less enjoyable.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

A student's overall grade in the course will be determined in the following manner:

1 Tutorial Work **worth 15%** **ie 15 marks**

Tutorial Preparation and Participation

The grade will depend on the student's preparation for, and quality of the contribution to, tutorial class discussions. Students will be expected to provide a two-page summary of their work to their tutor at the start of the tutorial. The two-page hand-in will contribute to evidence of preparation. Preferred referencing style is APA system.

For each tutorial:

Students will prepare a type-written, two-page, single spaced, 10 point Times font, word-processed tutorial assignment, to be handed to the tutor at the beginning of the tutorial (See attachment).

Students will prepare two copies of each hand-in and keep a second copy for their own reference and for use during the tutorial. Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work.

2 Class Exercises **worth 5%** **5 marks**

Attendance at all classes is expected of all students enrolled in the course. Class exercises will be conducted during the workshops from weeks 1-5 from 4.40 - 5.30 p.m. They will be based on the topics covered in that week's lecture. Students will form a group of four to five students (it can be the same or different groups for different workshops) for discussing and preparing answers for these class exercises. Each group should submit the results to the lecturer before leaving the class.

3 Terms Work – Assignments – to posted in Box 26 Mezzanine Floor RH

There will be **two (2) assignments, worth 40% in total** **40 marks**

Assignment 1: due Friday, 7 April 2006	- ST Assignment	up to 15 marks
Assignment 2: due Wednesday, 24 May 2006	- TOC Assignment	up to 25 marks

Students will prepare two copies of each assignment, keeping the second copy for their own reference and for use during the course. Students must also keep an electronic copy of their assignment.

You may discuss work with other students; but reports must be individual submissions.

4 Open Book Exam (3 hours) **worth 40%** **40 marks**

Calculators may be used in the exam, but computers and communication devices are **not** permitted. Exam will be held during the period 9 – 24 June inclusive. Exact date to be advised.

5 Overall Pass Mark - for the course will be **50%** of the total marks available ie 50 marks

6 Mandatory Course Requirements for passing the course

- comprise:
 - i) submission of **EIGHT** tutorial **Hand-Ins** at the due times
 - ii) attendance for **at least 8 out of 10** tutorials requiring **Hand-Ins**
 - iii) obtaining **at least 40%** of the marks available to Tutorial Work, ie 6 marks
 - iv) submission of **all** assignments **by the due dates**
 - v) obtaining **at least 30%** of the marks available to **each** assignment
 - vi) obtaining **at least 40% in the exam.**

- Students who fail to satisfy all of the mandatory requirements [(i) to (vi)] for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" grade.

- Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, whether or not the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied.

For example, a student who obtains an overall course mark of 35 and does not fulfil one or more of the mandatory course requirements will be given an E grade. A student who fails to sit an examination will have their course mark calculated with an entry of Zero for the exam and their grade determined in the usual way.

- Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Requirements (i) – (v) will be posted on Blackboard or on the Mezzanine Floor Notice-board. Students will be expected to check both places for notification.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments should be posted, in hard copy form, in Box 26 by the due time on the due date. Assignments received after that time will be deemed to be late, and must be handed to the Tutorial Coordinator for this course.

All Hand-Ins should have: a Tutorial/Assignment Cover Sheet stating your name, the course name, tutor's name, tutorial number and day/time, assignment name and number, a word count and due date. You should also put page numbers on each page, and use in-text referencing and include a list of references at the end. Preferred referencing style is APA system.

Students must prepare two copies of each hand-in and keep the second copy for their own reference. Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived in case the original assignment goes missing. Failure to do so will jeopardise any claim by you that your work was submitted in the rare cases where your work goes astray.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading:

A+	excellent performance in all respects
A	excellent performance in almost all respects
A-	excellent performance in many respects
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance
C+, C	work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
D	poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
E	well below the required standard
K	Failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment.

PENALTIES - for Lateness & Excessive Length of Assignments

(i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. **The penalty is 2 of the marks available** for an assignment submitted after the due time on the due date **for each part day or day late. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays** will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received **more than 7 days after the due date** will not be accepted and the student will **automatically fail the Mandatory Requirements**.

(ii) Course Outlines provide a signal to student of forthcoming workload, dates of submission etc, and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties.

Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

(iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, **in advance**, to the Tutorial Coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

All such applications must be made **before** the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, eg a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired. Please be sure to ask at the time of consultation for the degree of impairment to be stated in any certificate you provide to support your case.

(iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the Tutorial Coordinator as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.

(v) Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. **The penalty will be X% of the grade for an assignment which is X% over the word limit.**

FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student Administration Office

The Student Administration Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce & Administration and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- FCA Student Administration forms (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

Check with the Student Administration Office for opening times (04) 463 5376.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

Student Conduct and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at:
www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: disability@vuw.ac.nz. The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Co-ordinator, or Associate Dean who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/ or email student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email education@vuwsa.org.nz.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Maori and Pacific Mentoring programme (Faculties of Humanities and Social sciences and Commerce and Administration).

- **What:** Academic Mentoring for Maori and Pacific students studying at all levels in the above faculties. Weekly sessions for an hour with a mentor to go over assignments and any questions from tutorials or lectures. Registered students can use the faculty's study rooms and computer suite at any time at Kelburn and Pipitea.
- Mature student and Post grad network.

If you would like to register as a mentor or mentee please contact the coordinator.

Where:

Melissa Dunlop
Programme Coordinator
Room 109 D
14 Kelburn Parade: back courtyard
Ph: (04) 463 6015
Email: Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz

Please Note: A mentoring room will also be running at Pipitea Campus starting January. Please contact the Programme Coordinator for details.



Victoria Management School

MGMT 206 SYSTEMS THINKING & DECISION MAKING

Trimester 1 2006

Assignment Cover Sheet

Assignment No. ____

Topic: _____

Due Wednesday ____ __ 2006

My Tutor is : _____

My Tutorial Day is: _____

My Tutorial Time is: _____

Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Lecturer: _____ Arun Elias / Vicky Mabin (select one)

Part 1: Approaching Management Problems using Systems Thinking and Systems Frameworks – Arun Elias

Week	Date	Topic	Lectures (Weds + Fri)	Readings	Workshop hour (Friday)	Tutorials	Assignments
1	1,3 Mar	Introduction to course – administration;	Introduction to Systems Thinking	Reading 1 and Maani & Cavana Ch.1	Class Exercise on the Art of Systems Thinking Hand-In	No Tutorials	
2	8, 10 Mar	Problem Structuring	Stakeholder Thinking as Systems Thinking	Reading 2 and Maani & Cavana Ch.2	Class Exercise on Stakeholder Analysis Hand-In	Case on Principles of Systems Thinking Hand-In	
3	15,17 Mar	Causal Loop Modelling	Feedback Thinking as Systems Thinking	Reading 3 (Maani &Cavana Ch.3 pp.25-38)	Class Exercise on Causal loop Diagrams Hand-In	Case on Stakeholder Thinking Hand-In	
4	22,24 Mar	Systems Archetypes	Fixes that Fail, Shifting the Burden, Limits to Success	Reading 3 (Maani &Cavana Ch.3 pp.38-55)	Class Exercise on Systems Archetypes Hand-In	Case on Causal loop modelling Hand-In	
5	29,31 Mar	Soft Systems Critical systems	Introduction to Soft Systems Methodology Introduction to Critical Systems Heuristics	Reading 4 Reading 5	Class Exercise on Soft and Critical systems Hand-In	Case on Systems Archetypes Hand-In	

MGMT 206 2005 Part 2: Approaching Management Problems using **The Theory of Constraints Methodology** - Vicky Mabin

Week	Date	Topic	Lectures (Weds + Fri)	Readings	Workshop hour (Friday)	Tutorials	Assignments
6	5,7 Apr	Managing Constraints	Intro to TOC <i>The Goal</i> The 5 Focusing Steps	Readings book 2: 1 - 8	Class exercise: Intro to TOC	Case on Soft and Critical systems Hand-In	Assignment 1 due 7 April
Mid-Trimester Break							
7	26,28 Apr	Managing Conflicts and Tradeoffs	Evaporating Clouds for Resolving conflicts, dilemmas, and tradeoffs (‘Necessary condition’ logic)	13 – 15	Class exercise: Evaporating Cloud Example	Summary of TOC and 5FS Applying the 5FS Hand-in: Summary and own example of applying the 5FS	
8	3,5 May	Managing change: Diagnosing the Core Problem	Cause and Effect diagrams (‘Sufficient cause’ logic)	9 – 12	Class exercise: Cause-Effect Diagrams	Evaporating Cloud Hand-in	
9	10,12 May	Managing Change: Developing Fundamental Solutions	Combining Necessary Condition and Sufficient Cause logic to build fundamental solutions	13 (ch 8), 16, 17	Class exercise: Prerequisite Tree example	Cause -Effect diagrams Hand-in	
10	17,19 May	Managing Projects and other Implementation Issues	Project Management with TOC Critical Chain approach	18, 19	Class exercise: Critical Chain Example	Negative Branch /PRT Hand in The Dice Game	
11	24,26 May	Review and Integration	Buffer Management Review of TOC		TOC revision	Action Planning using CC Hand in: worked example	Assignment 2 due 24 May
12	31 May	Course Review	Review and Integration of course Exam Briefing		Revision clinic	Revision tutorials tba	