



Victoria Management School

MGMT 206 SYSTEMS THINKING & DECISION MAKING

Trimester One 2007

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

COURSE COORDINATOR

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LECTURERS

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TUTORIAL COORDINATOR

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Class Times and Room Numbers

Lectures: Wednesday: 15:40 – 17:30 (RH LT 1)

Workshops Thursday: 15:40 – 16:30 (RH LT 1)

Tutorials: Tutorial sessions will be held on Mondays, Tuesdays 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 5th March**. Each student must sign up for one 50-minute tutorial time and attend the same tutorial each week. The procedure for signing up is given later in the outline. Available times for tutorials are listed at sign-up.

This course has a 3-hour final examination to be held in the examination period from 8th-27th June 2007.

INTRODUCTION

The course will examine the notions of systems thinking and how they relate to decision making in a managerial context. It will provide an introduction to a range of systems thinking approaches, and provide an understanding of how everyday situations can be better managed.

The intent has been to design a course which provides an appropriate introduction to the broad field of systems approaches to describing and understanding organisations, organisational settings and problematic situations in organisations. 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.

Throughout the course, the emphasis is on taking a managerial view of the situation, and seeking to find solutions to typical decision problems and how they can be approached differently using systems thinking in such a way that organisational performance as a whole is improved.

In particular, the course will challenge students to think critically and 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.

OBJECTIVES

Overall Course Objectives

The course 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
 - o to describing and understanding organizations, and organizational and managerial problem situations
 - o 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

Course-related Student Learning Objectives

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

- demonstrate an understanding of some major systems frameworks, concepts and conceptual vocabulary underpinning successful problem-solving and decision analysis relevant to management
- demonstrate an ability to critically analyse and work with these different systems frameworks for examining managerial issues
- use such frameworks to describe and develop an understanding of managerial decision situations, and develop robust solutions
- develop an ability to communicate the logic behind your recommendations
- recognise the importance of critical analysis, leadership and communication in managerial problem solving and decision making using systems thinking.

Course Coverage

A schedule of topics to be covered is attached at the end of this outline.

Programme and Course-related Learning Objectives relating to **VUW's Generic Graduate Attributes**

This course will provide students opportunity:

- to develop oral, written, visual and IT-related communication skills
 - through active participation in tutorial and class discussion
 - through the development and presentation of oral and written reports, using narrative, rhetoric, logic-based, diagrammatic, and other schema as forms of presentation
 - through formal and informal classroom debate
- to develop critical and creative thinking skills
 - through exposure to methods designed specifically to improve creative thinking skills, and exercises and assignments designed to practise these skills
 - through exercises and assignments that require analysis, evaluation, interpretation and synthesis
 - through exercises and assignments requiring the generation of creative ideas to solve problems
 - through debate and classroom discussion
 - through case studies based on real situations where these skills can be applied
- to develop leadership skills
 - through structuring independent study, choosing own examples for tutorials and assignments
 - through facilitation of small group discussions or activities
 - through fulfilling spokesperson duties, reporting on a group's activities or ideas to a class
 - through contribution of ideas to the tutor or lecturer in a constructive way
 - through designing action plans to help lead and implement change.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 15 hrs per week including both scheduled contact time (lectures, tutorials, workshops) and outside class.

GROUP WORK

Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the nature of the assignment questions. Please do not work together to formulate a response and do not loan out or allow others to borrow from your assignments, nor borrow from others. You will need to sign a statement to this effect when handing in your assignments.

TUTORIAL SIGNUP INSTRUCTIONS:

Requirements to use this programme:

- You must be enrolled in the course for the tutorial you want to sign up for; and
- You will need your SCS username and password.

You will only be allowed to enrol in ONE tutorial session. You must always attend the tutorial session that you have signed up for. If you attend a different session, your attendance will not be recorded.

Instructions

Go to the signup website at: <https://signups.vuw.ac.nz> and enter your SCS username and password to log into the system.

The "Signup Home" page opens. It displays all courses you are enrolled for and that use the new signup system. Click on MGMT 206.

MGMT 206 course page opens. It will show the course contact, brief detail of the signup requirements including last date to enrol, and the schedule of tutorials. A "key" is provided at the bottom of the page that explains all buttons and what they do.

The schedule of tutorials includes the day/time, location, maximum group size, and spaces left in the tutorial session.

If there are spaces left in a particular session, you will see the “ENROL” button next to it. You can click this button to enrol yourself into that tutorial session.

If there are NO more spaces left in a particular session, find another. You can waitlist in your desired tut if the waitlist spaces have not been filled. If this is the case you will see the “JOIN WAITLIST” button. You can click this button to join the waitlist for your desired tutorial session. You will be removed from any other waitlist you may have joined earlier. If somebody withdraws from this session, you will automatically be moved up the waitlist or enrolled into the session. An email will be sent to you if you’re enrolled into the session from a waitlist.

You can only “JOIN WAITLIST” if you have already enrolled in one of the other available sessions. In other words, “ENROL” in one session and then you can choose to join the waitlist for one (1) other preferred session. The WAITLIST is only active while the tutorial sign up process for your course is active. In other words, once the signup process has been closed for your course the WAITLIST is AUTOMATICALLY CANCELLED. It does not roll over into the start of the tutorials.

You can choose to “WITHDRAW” from a session you are already enrolled in as long as you are NOT ON a waitlist. You can also choose to “CANCEL WAITLIST” to remove yourself from a particular waitlist.

A “FULL” button indicates all seats and waitlists are full for that tutorial session. You must choose another.

More details on the various buttons are available in the “Key” section at the bottom of the signup page.

You can only “ENROL” in ONE tutorial session and “JOIN ONE (1) WAITLIST” for other tutorial sessions.

You will be able to login and signup (or change your signup) anytime between 12 midnight 19th Feb 2007 and the last date: midnight 1st March 2007. You will NOT be able to signup or change your choice after the last date - midnight 1st March 2007. Any changes will be made by the tutorial coordinator on a case by case review of your ‘exceptional circumstance’.

You can view/confirm details of the sessions that you are enrolled and waitlisted for by clicking on “My Signups” on the left hand menu.

Click on “Support” on the left hand menu if you are having problems.

This online signup system is available round the clock over the internet. Please make use of it to sign up for a MGMT 206 tutorial before midnight, the 1st March 2007. Any requests after this date any will need to be manually handled by the Tutorial Coordinator and you will need to submit a written application stating the reason why you were not able to sign up on time using the online system, along with other relevant documentation such as a medical certificate etc. Please note that the tutorial coordinator will only put you into a particular tutorial session in ‘exceptional circumstances’ and there is **NO GUARANTEE** that you will get your requested tutorial time.

Tutorials start on the second week of the course. As there is a limit on the number of students in each tutorial class you are encouraged to sign up early. Placement into a tutorial will be strictly on a first-come-first-served basis. Confirmation of your tutorial group will be posted on Blackboard and on the Management notice board on the Mezzanine Floor of Rutherford House (Pipitea Campus) by 5pm 2nd March 2007. If you have any serious problems about the allocations see The Tutorial Coordinator in the RH office ASAP.

READINGS

The **recommended** textbook is *The Goal*, EM Goldratt and J Cox, 2nd Revised Edition, 1992, which is available from Victoria Management School at the special price of \$25. To purchase your copy, please pay \$25 to the Cashier at the FCA Counter, Ground Floor of the Railway Station, and then take your receipt to Tricia Lapham in RH 919 to collect your copy.

Readings listed in the course schedule will be distributed. Further resources are available in the VUW Commerce Library. A video of *The Goal* can be viewed in the Audio-Visual Suite at the Library on the Kelburn Campus.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Tutorial contributions	15%	
2	Individual Assignment 1	15%	2pm April 4 th
3	Individual Assignment 2	15%	2pm May 2 nd
4	Individual Assignment 3	15%	2pm May 23 rd
5	Final Examination	40%	8 th -27 th June 2007
	TOTAL	100%	

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

1 Tutorial Contributions Marks: 15%

Tutorial Attendance, Preparation and Participation

The grade will depend on the student's preparation for, and quality of the contribution to, tutorial class discussions. Students should prepare in advance of the tutorial, as indicated by the lecturer, and should be prepared to discuss the issues with the rest of the tutorial group in a supportive, positive manner.

2. Assignments

There will be **three (3) assignments, worth 45% in total** Marks: 45%

Assignment 1: due Wednesday, 4 April 2007 at 2pm - Systems Thinking up to 15 marks

Assignment 2: due Wednesday, 2 May 2007 at 2pm - Project Management up to 15 marks

Assignment 3: due Wednesday, 23 May 2007 at 2pm - Theory of Constraints up to 15 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 in general how one might respond to the nature of the assignment questions with other students; but **reports must be your own work.**

3 Examination Marks: 40%

The examination will be held during the period 8-27 June inclusive. Exact date to be advised.

The examination is worth 40% of the total marks available for this course. It is an open-book 3-hour examination. All material covered on the course will be examinable, and questions will include a mixture of problems to be worked, case-based questions, and essay questions.

Calculators may be used in the exam, but computers and communication devices are **not** permitted.

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

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments should be posted in MGMT 206 Box 26 at Mezzanine floor of Rutherford House in hard copy form by the due time on the due date.

All completed assignments must have a completed cover sheet (see Annex A of this course outline.)

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.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To meet Mandatory Course Requirements, students are required to:

- a. Attend at least 8 out of the 10 tutorial sessions;
- b. Submit all assignments by the scheduled dates and times; and
- c. Obtain at least 40 per cent of the marks available (i.e. 16 marks out of 40) for the final examination.

Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements a. and b. will be posted on Blackboard or on the Mezzanine Floor Notice-board within 2 days of the release of final assignment marks, and prior to the examination.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments and the exam:

A+	excellent performance in all respects at this level
A	excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
A-	excellent performance in many respects at this level
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance at this level
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. Note this is a failing grade.

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements 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.

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) Page limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. A **penalty** of up to X% of the grade may be applied to an assignment which is X% **over the page limit**.

Policy on Remarking

Every attempt is made to ensure that the marking is consistent across tutors and fair to students. Students may ask for their written work to be remarked. A different tutor will do the remarking and provide comments. The original marking sheet is removed to ensure the process is independent. If the mark differs by 10% or less the two marks are averaged. If it exceeds 10% then it is independently marked by a third marker and the average of the two closest marks is taken. Experience from previous years is that almost all remarks are within 10% and where there is a change in mark, half the assignment marks go up and half go down. Occasionally there is a significant shift in the mark.

Application for remarks must be made within 5 days after the marks are available. To apply for a remark, complete the request for re-examination of assessed work form available from the Tutorial Coordinator stating which sections (criteria listed in the mark sheet) you wish re-examined. Explain why you think the mark does not, in your view, fairly reflect the quality of your work. Hand this with your assignment to Reception Level 10. Allow for up to 5 days for remarks to be completed.

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/research/reference/referencingguides.aspx>

COMMUNICATION and ADMINISTRATION

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
MGMT206_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.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services 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 Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education 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.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.vuw.ac.nz/policy.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.vuw.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.

ANNEX A

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



Victoria Management School

MGMT 206 Individual Assignment Cover Sheet

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Tutor's Name: _____ Tutorial Number: _____

Tutorial Day: _____ Tutorial Time: _____

Date Due: _____ Date Submitted: _____

*I have read and understood the university policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.
I declare this assignment is free from plagiarism.*

Signed: _____

Extension of the due date (*if applicable*)

Please attach a copy of the note authorising your extension.

Date extension applied for: _____

Extension granted until: _____

Extension granted by: _____

MGMT 206 Weekly Schedule 2007

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Lecture (Wednesday)	Workshop (Thursday)	Tutorials (M-W)	Assignments
1	28 Feb, 1 Mar	Introduction to course and administration	1. Churchman (1979) 2. Ulrich (2003)	Introduction to Systems Thinking	Class Exercise on the Art of Systems Thinking	No Tutorials	
2	7,8 Mar	Problem Structuring	3. Elias, Cavana & Jackson (2002) 4. Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997)	Stakeholder Thinking as Systems Thinking	Class Exercise on Stakeholder Analysis	Case on Principles of Systems Thinking	
3	14,15 Mar	Causal Loop Modelling	5. Maani & Cavana (2000)	Feedback Thinking as Systems Thinking	Class Exercise on Causal loop Diagrams	Case on Stakeholder Thinking	
4	21,22 Mar	Systems Archetypes	6. Sterman (2000) 7. Checkland (1988) 8. Mabin, Davies & Cox (2006)	Fixes that Fail, Shifting the Burden, Limits to Success	Class Exercise on Systems Archetypes	Case on Causal loop modelling	
5	28,29 Mar	Project management	9. Meredith & Mantel, (2006) 10. Johnson et al (2001)	Introduction, Why do projects fail? Project critical success factors, Schedule planning	Class Exercise on project scheduling	Case on Systems Archetypes	
6	4,5 Apr	Project Planning and Controlling	11. Chase et al (2006) 12. Zwikael et al (2000)	Resource planning, cost management, time-cost trade-off, project control	Class Exercise on time-cost trade-off	Computer Lab– Microsoft Project (1)	Assignment 1 due 2pm on 4 April
Mid-Trimester Break							

MGMT 206 Weekly Schedule 2007 (Cont'd)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Lecture (Wednesday)	Workshop (Thursday)	Tutorials (Mon-Weds)	Assignments
7	26 Apr	Managing Constraints	<i>The Goal</i> 13. Scheinkopf (1999) 14. Mabin & Gilbertson (1994)	No Class (Anzac Day)	Intro to TOC <i>The Goal</i> Five Focusing Steps	Computer Lab– Microsoft Project (2)	
8	2,3 May	Managing Conflicts and Tradeoffs	15 Goldratt (1994) 16 Dettmer (1998)	Evaporating Clouds (‘Necessary condition’ logic)	Evaporating Cloud Examples	TOC principles 5FS Applying the 5FS	Assignment 2 due 2pm 2 May
9	9,10 May	Managing change: Exploring Consequences of actions	17 Goldratt (1997) 18 Schragenheim (1998)	TOC Cause and Effect diagrams (‘Sufficient cause’ logic)	TOC Cause-Effect Diagrams	Evaporating Clouds	
10	16,17 May	Implementing Change	19 Gupta, Boyd & Sussman (2004) 20 Kendall (1998)	Prerequisite Trees Combining logics	Prerequisite Tree examples	Cause -Effect diagrams	
11	23,24 May	Implications of applying TOC	21 Umble, Umble & Von Deylen (2001) 22 Newbold (1998)	Buffer Management	TOC revision	Prerequisite Trees	Assignment 3 due 2pm 23 May
12	30,31 May	Course Review and Integration	23 Peach (1996) 24 Mabin, Forgeson, & Green (2001)	Review and Integration of course Exam Briefing	Revision clinic	Revision tutorials tbc	