

School of Management

MMBA 508 PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING

Trimester One 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

COURSE COORDINATOR & LECTURER

Dr Jim Sheffield

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PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR

Linda Walker

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Trimester Dates

Teaching Period: Monday 5 March – Friday 8 June

Study Period: Monday 11 June – Thursday 14 June

Examination Period: Friday 15 June – Wednesday 4 July (inclusive)

Withdrawal from Course

Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 16 March 2012. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 18 May. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an ‘*Application for Associate Dean’s Permission to Withdraw Late*’ including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty’s Student Customer Service Desks.

Class Times and Room Numbers

Class times: Mondays, 1740 – 1930

Note: The class scheduled for Monday June 4 (Queen’s Birthday) is moved to Thursday June 7

Room number: Rutherford House Lecture Theatre 3 (RHLT3)

Course Content

This course provides vivid case examples of decision making in decisive moments. A multiple-perspective approach is adopted and three perspectives – **emotion**, **reason** and **morality** – are explored in some depth. Students apply concepts and frameworks to analyse decision processes, including a problem-solving and decision making situation that they have experienced. The aim is to reflect on that experience and gain deeper insight into it through the application of conceptual material.

Course Learning Objectives

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

1. Analyse the role of **emotion** (intuitive or behavioural perspective)
2. Analyse the role of **reason** (classical or ‘rational’ perspective)
3. Analyse the role of **morality** (impact of decision on others)
4. **Apply** concepts and frameworks to evaluate problem solving and decision making processes

Course Delivery

The course meets once per week. There are no tutorials. Blackboard is used to support individual and group learning.

Expected Workload

150 hours, including reading in preparation for class, time spent in class, and completion of the assessment requirements.

Group Work

6% of the assessment (2 assignments @ 3% ea) is based on group work. Each group assignment requires a group to combine individually assessed 1-page chapter summaries to create a 1-page group chapter summary. The time required for each group assignment is less than 2 hours. At the discretion of the lecturer, group members who do not achieve a passing grade on their individual chapter summary will not share in the marks earned by their team.

Readings

Lehrer, J. (2009). *The Decisive Moment: How the Brain Makes Up Its Mind*, Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company. \$31. (This required text should be purchased from Vic Books Pipitea Campus, Rutherford House, ground floor at Bunny Street entrance.)

De Bono, E. (2008). *Six Thinking Hats*, London: Penguin Books. \$13. (This recommended text may be purchased from Vic Books, Borders, Whitcoulls, or similar bookstore.)

Materials and Equipment

No materials or equipment is required beyond access to a computer and word processor.

Assessment Requirements

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

1. Chapter quizzes. 8 quizzes @ 2% ea. (16%)

A quiz is provided for each of chapters 1-8 of the required text. Each quiz must be completed before the start of the class for the week scheduled. A practice quiz on the Introduction (due before the week 1 class) is also provided. Each quiz has 15 questions. You have 4 attempts per quiz. Only the best attempt is scored.

2. Chapter summaries. 500 words ea., due as scheduled.

2 individual summaries @ 4% ea. and 2 team summaries @ 3% ea. (14%)

At the beginning of the course you are placed in teams and assigned 2 chapters to summarize. The chapter summaries fall due starting with the week 2 class. The individual chapter summaries must be submitted at least 48 hours before the beginning of the class. The team chapter summaries must be submitted at least 24 hours before the beginning of the class. Team members who do not achieve a passing grade on their individual chapter summary will not share in the marks earned by the team. All students may download the team summaries before class.

3. Assignment: My Decisive Moment, 2,500 words, due at the beginning of the week 10 class (30%)

Select a problem-solving and decision making situation that you have experienced that is important to your development. The aim is to reflect on that experience and gain deeper insight into it through the application of conceptual material. You should analyse the problematic situation, what triggered it, and how you felt about the decision process before, during and after it unfolded. You should consider how the decision process might have been managed better by you and others in the organization. You will be assessed on your ability to make sense and critically reflect upon your experience through the application of concepts, ideas and/or frameworks.

4. Examination - 2 hour closed book (40%) Students who enroll in courses with examinations are obliged to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period. The final examination for this course will be scheduled at some time during the period from Friday 15 June – Wednesday 4 July (inclusive).

Relationship between the assessments and the course learning objectives are as follows:

Learning Objective	Quiz and Summary of Ch 1	Quizzes and Summaries of Ch 2, 3	Quizzes and Summaries of Ch 4, 5.	Quizzes and Summaries of Ch 6, 7, 8.	Assignment	Exam section
	X					
1		X				A
2			X			B
3				X		C
4					X	D
Due	Week 2	Weeks 3-4	Weeks 5-7	Weeks 8-10	Week 10	

Quality Assurance Note: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCA programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

Examinations

Students who enrol in courses with examinations are obliged to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period.

The final examination for this course will be scheduled at some time during the period from **Examination Period: Friday 15 June – Saturday 4 July 2012 (inclusive)**

Penalties

Quizzes and chapter summaries that are submitted late will not be accepted and will receive zero marks. In fairness to other students, assignments submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 5% of the total marks available per day of lateness. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted and will receive zero marks. In the event of unusual, unforeseen circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family bereavement), students should discuss waiver of the penalty with the course coordinator prior to the due date.

Length Guidelines

In business, time is short. You must make every word count. A chapter summary or assignment within +/- 10% of the specified length is acceptable. Assignments more than 10% (250 words) over the maximum (2,500 words) will be penalized at the rate of 1 mark per additional 50 words. For example, a 3,000 word assignment (250 words more than 2,750) will have 5 marks deducted after it has been marked.

Submission of Assessment Items

Quizzes, chapter summaries and the assignment are submitted electronically via Blackboard which automatically records the submission time. In addition a paper copy of the assignment must be submitted by the beginning of the week 10 class. A cover sheet is required for the individual and team chapter summaries and the assignment. Please keep an electronic copy of your work archived in case the original goes missing, and for the purposes of checking length (assessed via the word count function in Word) and originality (assessed via Turnitin.com). 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. Submit the assignment within one week of the date due
- b. Obtain at least 40 per cent of the marks available (i.e. 16 marks out of 40) for the final examination.

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, regardless of whether the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied or not. Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements will be posted on Blackboard or on the Mezzanine Floor Notice-board.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class. That person's name and contact details will be made available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information and information on any changes will be conveyed to students via class announcements and in written form on the university blackboard server for MMBA 508.

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce and 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/resources/virtualref.shtml#style>

Victoria MBA Grading Standards are as follows:

Excellent Category

A- (75 – 79%) to A (80 – 85%) to A+ (85% and above): The learning is demonstrated to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master's level.

Very Good Category

B+ (70 – 74%): The learning is demonstrated at a high standard. Students have reached a level that clearly exceeds "competency".

Good Category

B (65 – 69%): The learning is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as fully competent.

Satisfactory Category

B- (60 – 64%): The learning is demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent.

Marginal Category

C (50 – 54%) to C+ (55 – 59%): The learning is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to "fail" the student.

Unsatisfactory / Failure Category

E (0 – 39%) to D (40 – 49%): The learning is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed.

For the following important information follow the links provided:

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

General University Policies and Statutes

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>

The University's statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx

AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/>

Te Putahi Atawhai

Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/tpa/index.aspx

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/

Commerce Library

The Commerce Library occupies parts of levels 1, 2, and 4 in the Railway West Wing. It contains the following resources directly relevant to course objectives:

Bazerman, M. (2006). *Judgement in Managerial Decision-Making*, New York: Wiley

De Bono, E. (2008). *Six Thinking Hats*, London: Penguin Books. \$13. (Recommended text)

Fisher, R., Ury, W., and Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating An Agreement Without Giving In*, London, Random Century

Fisher, R., and Brown, S. (1989). *Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate*, London, Penguin Books

Gawande, A. (2011). *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*, London: Profile Books

Lehrer, J. (2009). *The Decisive Moment: How the Brain Makes Up Its Mind*, Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company. \$31. (Required text)

Nutt, P. (2002). *Why Decisions Fail - Avoiding The Blunders and Traps That Lead to Debacles*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Russo, J. & Schoemaker, P. (2002). *Winning Decisions*, New York: Fireside

Targett, D. (1996). *Analytical Decision Making*, London: Pitman

Thaler, R. & Sunstein, C. (2009). *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness*, London: Penguin Books Ltd

Course Schedule

The schedule of course learning objectives organized by assessment item and date is as follows:

Week Dates	Topics	Readings (* = Text. The Decisive Moment.) (BB = material to be downloaded from BB)
Week 1 Mon 5 March	Introduction: Hallmarks of an excellent class Course overview; Assessment and teams; Reframing	Introduction* Bazerman and Moore (2009, pp 1-10 (BB)
Week 2 Mon 12 Mar	Introduction: Decision making in a sports situation. Reframing via de Bono's six thinking hats	Ch 1: The Quarterback in the Pocket*; Morse (2007) Summaries of Ch 1 (BB)
Week 3 Mon 19 Mar	Emotion: The positive uses Creating options via other reframing techniques	Ch 2: The Predictions of Dopamine* Summaries of Ch 2 (BB)
Week 4 Mon 26 Mar	Emotion: The negative uses	Ch 3: Fooled by a Feeling* Summaries of Ch 3 (BB)
Week 5 Mon 2 April	Reason: The positive uses	Ch 4: The Uses of Reason* Summaries of Ch 4 (BB)
Mid-Trimester Break		
Week 6 Mon 23 April	Reason: The negative uses	Ch 5: Choking on a Thought* Summaries of Ch 5 (BB)
Week 7 Mon 30 Apr	Reason: Cognitive heuristics and biases	Bazerman and Moore (2009, pp 13-41 (BB)
Week 8 Mon 7 May	Morality: Application to 'Before breakfast' and assignment	Ch 6: The Moral Mind* Summaries of Ch 6, White (1952) (BB)
Week 9 Mon 14 May	Morality: Application to 'Silent typing'	Ch 7: The Brain is an Argument* Summaries of Ch 7, Sheffield (1992); Fisher & Ury (1981) (BB)
Week 10 Mon 21 May	Application: Organisational change Assignment Due	Ch 8: The Poker Hand* Summaries of Ch 8, (BB)
Week 11 Mon 28 May	Application: Health, planning	Ch 9: Coda (=summation) Laugesen (2010), Gawunde (2011) (BB)
Week 12 Thurs 7 June	Application: Scenarios, research reporting	Sheffield (2005) (BB)



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Individual Chapter Summary Cover Sheet

CHAPTER NUMBER AND
TITLE: _____

DUE 48 HOURS BEFORE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Word count = _____ Group Number: _____

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Individual Chapter Summary (4%) Mark Sheet

Name: _____

	Ex	VG	G	S	M	U/F	
Chapter is analysed for conceptual material	← Excellent Poor						→ Chapter is described but not analysed for conceptual material
Reflection and analysis generates insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Description of chapter does not generate insight
Implications for managing the decision process reflect insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Implications for managing the decision process not discussed/ show no insight
Answer is structured coherently	← Excellent Poor						→ Answer lacks a coherent structure and is hard to follow
Referenced appropriately	← Excellent Poor						→ Referenced inappropriately
Word limit adhered to (500 words +/- 10%)	← Excellent Poor						→ Too long/too short

Ex=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; S=Satisfactory; M=Marginal; U/F=Unsatisfactory/Failure (See also course outline, p. 4)

General Comments:

Grade: _____ **Out of 100%:** _____



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Team Chapter Summary Cover Sheet

CHAPTER NUMBER AND TITLE: _____

DUE 24 HOURS BEFORE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Word count = _____ Group Number: _____

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Team Chapter Summary (3%) Mark Sheet

Group Number: _____

	Ex	VG	G	S	M	U/F	
Chapter is analysed for conceptual material	← Excellent Poor						→ Chapter is described but not analysed for conceptual material
Reflection and analysis generates insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Description of chapter does not generate insight
Implications for managing the decision process reflect insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Implications for managing the decision process not discussed/ show no insight
Answer is structured coherently	← Excellent Poor						→ Answer lacks a coherent structure and is hard to follow
Referenced appropriately	← Excellent Poor						→ Referenced inappropriately
Word limit adhered to (500 words +/- 10%)	← Excellent Poor						→ Too long/too short

Ex=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; S=Satisfactory; M=Marginal; U/F=Unsatisfactory/Failure (See also course outline, p. 4)

General Comments:

Grade: _____ **Out of 100%:** _____



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My Decisive Moment (30%)

Assignment Cover Sheet

DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS ON _____

Word count = _____

Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Course Lecturer: _____

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Trimester 1 2012

My Decisive Moment (30%)

Assignment Mark Sheet

Name: _____

	Ex	VG	G	S	M	U/F	
Your decisive moment is analysed for conceptual material	← Excellent Poor						→ Chapter is described but not analysed for conceptual material
Reflection and analysis generates insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Description of chapter does not generate insight
Suggestions for better managing the decision process reflect insight	← Excellent Poor						→ Suggestions for managing the decision process not discussed/ show no insight
Answer is structured coherently	← Excellent Poor						→ Answer lacks a coherent structure and is hard to follow
Referenced appropriately	← Excellent Poor						→ Referenced inappropriately
Word limit adhered to (2,500 words +/- 10%)	← Excellent Poor						→ Too long/too short

Ex=Excellent; VG=Very Good; G=Good; S=Satisfactory; M=Marginal; U/F=Unsatisfactory/Failure (See also course outline, p. 4)

General Comments:

Grade: _____ **Out of 100%:** _____