

School of Economics and Finance

## **MMPE 520 SPECIAL TOPIC: ECONOMICS OF BEHAVIOUR AND BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS**

Trimester 2, 2016

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **Prescription**

In contrast to the rational and self-interested model of human behaviour traditionally used in economics, behavioural economics uses insights from psychology and sociology to make more realistic assumptions about human behaviour and motivations. In particular, this course studies people's limited computational capacity, limited self-control and social preferences and their implications.

#### **Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course students should be able to

- C1 identify situations in which people rely on decision heuristics that lead to systematic mistakes,
- C2 identify situations in which people have self-control problems and explain how this affects their decisions,
- C3 identify situations in which people are not only concerned with their own payoff and explain how this affects their decisions,
- C4 apply the concepts of behavioural economics to specific policy problems, and
- C5 describe how a more realistic understanding of human behaviour and motivation can lead to more effective public policy.

#### **Trimester Dates**

From Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **Withdrawal from Course**

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016. 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 or [online](#).

### **Names and Contact Details**

Course Coordinator/lecturer: Jan Feld, Room 209, Railway West Wing, Pipitea Campus  
Email: [jan.feld@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:jan.feld@vuw.ac.nz)

Course Administrator: Rachel Zhang, Room 120, Railway West Wing, Pipitea Campus  
Email: [rachel.zhang@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:rachel.zhang@vuw.ac.nz)  
Phone: 04 463 6148

### **Class Times and Room Numbers**

Lectures will be held on Tuesdays 9:30-12:20 in RWW126.

### **Readings**

Halpern, David (2015). Inside The Nudge Unit. London: WH Allen

A reading list with mandatory and supplementary readings will be published on Talis. This list will be updated as the course progresses.

### **Expected Workload**

MMPE 520 is a 20-point course that means that the total expected work load is 200 hours. This involves attending one 3-hour lecture for 12 teaching weeks, plus readings, completing assignments, preparing for the test and writing the final paper.

### **Assessment**

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

Your final grade will be composed of

one test (2 hours, week 11, C1-C5)	20%
participation (C1-C5)	10%
one classroom session (presentation and discussion leading, 50 min, C1-C5)	10%
ten short notes on a research article (max. 200 words, C4-C5)*	5%
one final paper (max. 10 pages, due: 28 <sup>th</sup> October at 8 p.m., C1-C5)	55%

\*Students are expected to upload one short note on a research article on the Monday before the lecture before 10 p.m. on Blackboard.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)

### **Penalties**

About the short notes on a research article: Missing notes, delayed notes, or notes of unacceptable quality will be marked with 0%. The final mark for the short notes will be the average mark for the best 10 notes. This means that a student can miss two notes and still get 100%.

### **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 submitted to Turnitin. A copy of submitted materials will be retained 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.

### **Student feedback**

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

### **Class Representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details 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 or information on changes will be conveyed to students through the VUW Blackboard website.

### **Link to general information**

For general information about course-related matters, go to <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>

### **Note to Students**

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 academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

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