

MANAGERIAL DECISION MAKING

MANA 7A49: Section 18063

Fall 2022

Asynchronous

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COURSE TEXT & READINGS

Kahneman, D. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY: NY. ISBN: 978-0-374-53355-7

Ariely, D., 2008. *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape Our Decisions*, Harper Perennial, NY: NY. (ISBN: 978-0-06-135324-6)

(There are a number of editions this book. The version I need you to have says "revised and expanded edition" on the cover. The specific ISBN is: 978-0-06-135324-6 and the publisher is Harper Perennial. If you have not yet acquired the book, please make sure you get the correct one. If you have already gotten the book and you aren't sure if it is correct, below is a list of the chapters I asked you to read and the chapter titles. If you do not have one or more of those chapter titles in your book, then please let me know. No need to buy another copy, I have a work-around. It's just easier if everyone has the same one to begin with.

Chapter 2: The Fallacy of Supply and Demand
Chapter 5: The Power of a Free Cookie
Chapter 13: The Context of Our Character, Part I
Chapter 14: The Context of Our Character, Part II
Chapter 15: Beer and Free Lunches)

Messick, D.M. & Bazerman, M.H. (1996). Ethical leadership and the psychology of decision making. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 37, 9-22.

Velasquez, M., Moberg, D.J. & Cavanagh, G.F. (1983). Organizational statesmanship and dirty politics: Ethical guidelines for the organizational politician. *Organizational Dynamics*, 12, 65-80.

Movie: *A Civil Action*, 1998. Starring John Travolta and Robert Duvall. It is available on a variety of streaming platforms. **Discussion 3 (due September 11) depends on having viewed this film.**

PACKBACK

In addition to the readings, students will be required to purchase Packback (\$29), a discussion app. You may register by following the instructions below:

Packback Requirements:

Your participation on Packback will count toward 15% of your overall course grade.

There will be a Weekly Sunday at 11:59 pm CST deadline for submissions. In order to receive full credit, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

- 1 open-ended Question every week, worth 3pts of each assignment grade
- 2 Responses every week, worth 2pts of each assignment grade

How to Register on Packback:

You may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to <https://app.packback.co> and clicking "Sign up for an Account"

Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.

2. Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Looking to join a community you don't see here?" section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.

Community Lookup Key: **0e0c0c12-5491-4dc3-9fc6-d65a852423a3**

3. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback may require a paid subscription. Refer to www.packback.co/product/pricing for more information.

How to Get Help from the Packback Team:

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV7QmikrD68>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Decision Making is one of the central activities of organizations, and of individuals. We have some good ideas about how to structure problems and

make decisions, but we often fail to do so. More specifically, we often fail to make decisions that are in our objectively rational best interest (or in the best interest of our companies, communities and our world). The question is why and is that always and necessarily a bad thing? The objective of this course is to better understand the systematic ways that we make imperfect decisions both in order to better understand and assess the decisions made by others and to understand and make better decisions ourselves.

COURSE STRUCTURE

There will be weekly discussion posts and responses to your colleague's posts. There will also be a group project and related class discussion and weekly quizzes. Each of these will be explained in greater detail below.

COURSE GRADES

Assignment	Number of Assign.	Points per Assign.	Total Points
Quizzes (7 total)	6 (counted)	10	60
Introduction Post	1	10	10
Topical discussion and reply posts (8 total)	8	5	40
Packback Posts (7 total)	6 (counted)	5	30
Group Current Event Paper	1	30	35
Peer Evaluation	1	5	5
Current Event discussion posts	4 (counted)	5	20
Total Possible Points			200

Grading

Grade	Total Points	Grade	Total Points
A (93% - 100%)	186 - 200	C (73% - 75%)	146 - 151
A- (90% - 92%)	180 - 185	C- (70% - 72%)	140 - 145
B+ (86% - 89%)	172 - 179	D+ (66% - 69%)	132 - 139
B (83% - 85%)	166 - 171	D (63% - 65%)	126 - 131
B- (80% - 82%)	160 - 165	D- (60% - 62%)	120 - 125
C+ (76% - 79%)	152 - 159	F (<60%)	Below 120

Quizzes

There will be seven (7) 10-question multiple-choice quizzes during the half-semester, one each week. Each question is worth 1 point, so each quiz is worth 10 points. The first quiz will cover the syllabus AND definitions of the words/phrases that are the topic of the first week's readings. The remaining quizzes will cover the readings due for the week. There is no option to take the quiz late; once the deadline has passed, the quiz will not be re-opened. At the end of the half-semester, I will drop the lowest quiz score.

Quizzes become available on Monday mornings and close the following Sunday night at 11:55 pm. You will have 15 minutes to take the quiz and the clock starts the moment you hit "start." There is no backtracking, you have to answer each question when it appears, and the quiz cannot be paused and re-started. Make sure to disable pop-up blockers before taking the quiz. I have posted a practice Quiz that you can use to make sure all pop-up blockers have been turned off. If you click on the quiz and nothing happens, a pop-up blocker is typically to blame. Do **not** attempt to take the quiz on a smartphone or tablet, Blackboard is not designed well for mobile platforms.

Introduction Post

Students are being asked to submit a discussion post where they introduce themselves to each other. These posts are intended to help us get to know each other a little bit. One of the benefits of an MBA program is the opportunity to network with colleagues. This is particularly difficult to do in an asynchronous environment. So, I encourage responses to my prompt in the Forum to be as voluble as you are comfortable with. This is an opportunity to connect, so think about the things that you learn about others that prompts you to want to get to know them better and provide that level of information for your fellow MBA students. In order to prompt you to connect, you are required to respond to the posts of two classmates. The responses have to be an acknowledgment that you have touched base with someone else. The description for the post specifies questions that I would like you to answer. The chattier the post, the better the grade. This assignment is worth 10 points.

Weekly Discussion Posts

Each Monday morning, starting the first week of class, a discussion forum will become available. The description for the forum will describe a task for the week involving the weekly readings. Each student must create a thread in that forum responding to the assigned task by Thursday of each week. **IN ADDITION**, each student must respond to at least one other student's post. The posts and responses are due the following Sunday. **If you have done external reading (required for some discussions) the URL(s) (or reference) for your readings must be provided.** The combined grade for the original post and response post is 5 points.

Discussions are graded as follows:

- a. 1 pts. for a discussion post
- b. 1 pts. if it is timely (Thursday by 11:55 pm)
- c. 1 pts. if it is substantive
- d. 1 pts. reply
- e. 1 pts. if the reply is substantive

Packback

Each Monday morning a Packback Assignment will be posted in Blackboard. Typically, each student will need to do a little bit of research on a topic that interests them and then will need to post on Packback a question for the rest of the class about that topic as well as providing a URL to the information you found. You will also post some additional information about why the topic is interesting and why you want to know the answer to that question. Once you have posted your question, you will have to respond to the questions of one of your classmates. The Packback posting period ends on Sunday nights at 11:55 pm. Your participation on Packback will account for 30 points toward your overall course grade.

Questions and response posts will be graded by PackBack artificial intelligence on the basis of creativity and contribution to the overall discussion. You will receive feedback on your posts from PackBack as well as the anticipated curiosity score. While Packback will say you earned all 5 points as long as you posted a question and a reply, I adjust the grade based on the curiosity score as follows:

Question: 3 points

Reply: 2 points

Assuming you do both the question and a reply (as assigned), then points are assigned as follows based on the average curiosity score (question and replies).

Average curiosity score: 0 – 74 = 2-point deduction

Average curiosity score: 75 – 89 = 1-point deduction

Average curiosity score: 90 – 100 = no deductions

The Packback software generates its reports for all Questions and replies that were posted as of 12:01 am on Monday mornings and ending at 11:59 pm the following Sunday. There is no mechanism to allow for late or early submissions. So, **you cannot be late, and you cannot work ahead with Packback.** There are 7 total Packback posts, **I will count the six (6) highest posts for the final grade.**

Group Current Event Paper

Groups

I am arbitrarily assigning students to groups and assigning dates by which each group must submit a current event. If you already know you cannot work with your group for that week or time period, let me know by the end of the first week so that I can rearrange assignments. After that, schedules and conflicts are managed within the group. To find your group members UH email addresses; go to the UH homepage (uh.edu) and scroll to the bottom of the page, click on Directory. Enter the full name as it appears in the Group sheet and you will get a list of “matches.” The student you are looking for should be first in the list. When you click on their name you will get their UH email. You may need to check your spam folders from time to time to make sure that messages from fellow students are not getting inadvertently thrown away. Alternatively, you can use the “Message” function in Blackboard.

Paper

Each group will find a current event that you can use to illustrate one or more of the decision-making biases/heuristics that we will be covering in class. You do not have to limit your example to a for-profit company. You may use any organization (note: if you choose to do sports or politics, you have to provide enough information for someone who does not follow either to be able to understand what you are saying). Alternatively, you can choose an experience that one (or more) of you may have experienced on the job that illustrates a bias or heuristic discussed in the class (or even one that isn't discussed in class, but that you know about from a different class or different context). The goal of the current event paper is to see how decision-making occurs in the world. As you will see, often more than one heuristic or bias is occurring at the same time. Your paper should include a summary of the event in question (enough for your colleagues to understand the bias/heuristic(s) you are illustrating) and then a description of why you believe the event may be an example of a decision-making bias. You should provide the URL's or citations for all articles used as source information.

Typical papers are between 1 and 3 pages long (double-spaced, 12 pt. font) and will be submitted in the Assignments section of Blackboard. I will be posting these as a Discussion Forum to which your peers will be responding, so when writing, keep in mind that your current event will become a discussion forum. I will be grading for coherence (is it clear, is it a good example, can I follow your logic), not for length of paper. **Please submit your papers in a Word doc** instead of a pdf file.

This paper is worth 30 points.

Peer Evaluation

Students will evaluate the performance of their teammates on the group project. A peer evaluation form has been posted in the Group Membership section of Blackboard. Complete the form and submit in the Assignment section of Blackboard. Students who fail to submit a peer evaluation earn a 0 for the peer evaluation grade. This assignment is worth 5 points.

Current Event Comment Posts

Each week students will be required to post either a comment related to the post or a reply to someone else's comment about the current event example. There are 5 posts worth 5 points each. The group who submitted the current event for that week are **not** expected to comment on their own submission, but may if they wish. I will count the 5 highest Discussion Post grades.

0-1 pt – compliment, repetition of already known information, or meaningless comment.

2-3 pts – made a worthwhile comment, asked an interesting question and answered it, or reframed the current discussion.

4-5 pts – made an insightful comment, demonstrated critical thinking, asked “why” and did some additional reading in an attempt to answer the question, or provoked an entirely new train of discussion.

Grade Assessments

Grading of written work is necessarily a subjective endeavor. I will provide feedback on all assignments. In general, I look for four things: comprehension, critical analysis, clarity, and professionalism.

Comprehension: the post/paper demonstrates that you understood the readings and my comments posted in Course Content as well as the comments of your colleagues.

Critical analysis: the post/paper demonstrates a thoughtful, insightful and nuanced analysis of both the event described and the decision-making principles the example illustrates.

Clarity: the post/paper is written so that I and/or your colleagues can understand what you are saying. Is it coherent and organized and does it clearly reference the readings?

Professionalism: the post/paper demonstrated professional writing skills, including good grammar and spelling along with appropriate citations in the main text and the reference list.

Note Regarding Plagiarism for papers and posts: all quotations and **paraphrases** (including any references to data or information obtained from a source other than the author's personal knowledge) must be referenced. Ideas gleaned from your reading or from papers you've written for other classes must

be properly cited. Any commonly accepted method of citation referencing is permissible (e.g. APA, ALA, Chicago Manual of Style...). For the lawyers and engineers among you, you are invited to use the style with which you are most comfortable. Please check your paper to make sure you have properly cited your sources. "Cutting and pasting" without using quote marks to denote the material and without acknowledging the source is an act of plagiarism and will be treated as such. All papers are expected to use proper referencing. Posts do not have to use in-text citations but must provide your sources at the end of the post. However, the current event papers are expected to use in-text citations.

Papers/posts that do not acknowledge source material will lose points. In some cases, I may also require the student/group to correct the problems and res-submit the paper. Major infractions, however, will be considered to be plagiarism and I will follow University procedure, which can be found in the student handbook. If you have any questions about plagiarism, referencing or academic integrity, please contact me and I will be happy to answer them or help you in any way I can. See below for a link to the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy.

Late Papers

I will accept late papers and posts with a point penalty, and I will **not** accept papers/posts that are more than 3 days late.

Note on Blackboard Dates and Grade Points

Because I permit late submissions and because I want you to be able to go back and revisit past discussions, I do not have an end date on most discussion forums and assignments. Please reference the schedule for the date by which postings, papers and quizzes are due. If something on Blackboard does not agree with the syllabus, the syllabus is correct. If you have questions, please email me at bcarlin@uh.edu. Do NOT assume that Blackboard due dates or point totals are accurate.

Notes on Policies

- It is expected that a variety of viewpoints will be represented in online discussions. This is important and necessary for learning. All opinions are worth hearing and are to be respected and I expect all postings to meet the high standards of professionalism expected of graduate students. Use of vulgar, coarse or inflammatory language will not be tolerated.
- Writing is important and is taken seriously in this class. Errors of grammar, syntax, and spelling indicate either haste or a lack of clarity in thinking. Consider having spouses/roommates/friends read your reports before submission. Also, there is a Writing Center on campus that is available for your use and consultation (<http://writingcenter.uh.edu>)

- The Bauer College has a policy that requires all of its instructors to be evaluated by their students. The results of these evaluations are important to provide feedback to instructors on how their performance can be improved. In addition, these evaluations are carefully considered in promotion, salary adjustment, and other important decisions. We openly encourage students to provide feedback to the instructors and to the CBA through the evaluation process.
- **UH CAPS - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (<http://www.uh.edu/caps>) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program (http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html), a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.**

COVID-19 Information

Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

Vaccinations

Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#).

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or

government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Blackboard email/announcements.

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

UH Email

Please check and use your Cougarnet email for communications related to this course. To access this email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your Cougarnet credentials.

Honor Code Statement

Students may be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including but not limited to projects, quizzes, and

exams: “ I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the University of Houston Graduate Academic Policy. I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston.”

<http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=12165>

Helpful Information

Coogs Care: <https://www.uh.edu/dsaes/coogscare/>

Student Health Center: <https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>