

COURSE INFORMATION

Course title:	Decision Making for Managers		
Course code:	BA 563	Credits:	1.5
Session, term, period:	2024W1, Period 6	Class location:	DLAM 125
Section(s):	001	Class times:	M/W 4:00-6:00
Course duration:	Sept 3 2024 – Oct 2, 2024	Pre-requisites:	n/a
Division:	Interdisciplinary	Co-requisites:	n/a
Program:	MBA		

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dale Griffin, PhD		
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Teaching assistant:	TBA
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The MBA is essentially a program about making good analytical decisions in business and organizational settings. This course is designed to make you a better decision maker by helping you understand your weaknesses and build on your strengths in decision-making. This is an integrative course that links material from Managerial Economics, Operations, Statistics, Marketing, Psychology, Finance, and Strategy.

Decision makers need to be able to think effectively about the inputs for a decision analysis, whether to trust the analysis, and how to use the outputs to guide actions by themselves and their organizations. And, most important of all, decision makers need to know how to make effective, unaided intuitive decisions, and to recognize the limits on their intuitive skills. The course will move back and forth between models from strategy, operations and economics of how we **should** make decisions and psychological, descriptive models of how people **actually** make decisions to help you understand and improve your native decision-making abilities—and help you avoid making BAD decisions.

COURSE FORMAT

BA 563 (2024) will be offered as an in-person class. Most classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion, with some classes being devoted to interactive case discussions. Discussions will focus on the slides and examples provided in class, but will also include readings and contemporary events.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To introduce decision frameworks to help structure complex and difficult decision problems in management and leadership.

To explain common decision traps and failures of reasoning.

To understand and apply organizational processes to overcome individual decision failures.

To link ethical behaviour with good decision-making.

At the end of the course, students will be able to ...




- Distinguish between intuitive and analytical approaches to decision-making and understand the benefits and trade-offs of each.
- Understand and apply the values-based decision-making approach.
- Apply formal reasoning and decision frameworks to help structure and clarify difficult and incomplete decision problems.
- Identify common decision traps and failures of logical reasoning with business impact.
- Identify sources of risk and structure risk management practices that reduce catastrophic outcomes.
- Design and apply organizational processes to reduce the impact of individual decision failures.


and

- Students will be skilled in critical thinking.
- Students will be able to integrate knowledge from relevant business disciplines when making decisions.
- Students will be aware of ethical implications of management and leadership decisions and activities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

At UBC Sauder, we are committed to responsible business practices that can have transformative impacts on society. One of the ways we are reinforcing our commitment to responsible business is by showcasing relevant content in our courses via the lens of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). In this course, we will touch on topics that relate to the following goals:

Sustainable Development Goal	Description of how and when the goal is covered in the course.
<p>Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being</p> 	<p><i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</i></p> <p>In our case discussion based on the Robinhood investment app, we consider the health effects of allowing easy and quick access to investments, and consider the similarity of online investing-- with fintech apps that are designed to make investing "fun"-- to gambling, which can have addictive consequences.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Gender Equality</p> 	<p><i>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i></p> <p>In class discussion on gender differences in investment practices, risk-taking, and overconfidence, we consider observed differences between men and women in investment resources and practices.</p>
<p>Goal 10: Reduce Inequality</p> 	<p><i>Reduce inequality within and among countries</i></p> <p>A consistent theme across the course is the potential for managerial decisions to increase or decrease wealth. Differential access to capital investment resources and knowledge is one of many contributors to continuing income inequality. Our case on the Robinhood investment app also considers the role of fintech innovation in democratizing financial investment opportunities</p>

<p>Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy</p> 	<p><i>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</i></p> <p>In our case example on decision-making in the fracking (oil extraction) industry, we consider the tradeoffs between extracting wealth, providing cheap energy, and human health and well-being.</p>
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ASSESSMENTS

Summary

<u>Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<i>Written Assignments</i>	50%
<i>Participation</i>	20%
<i>Group Presentation</i>	30%

Details of Assessments

A student's grade will be based on performance on 3 written assignments (5% for personal Decision Audit, 25% for the analysis of a Decision Fiasco and 20% for final reflection paper), participation in class (20%), and a final group live case presentation (30%).

It is very important that students take an active role in classroom activities and discussions and come fully prepared. The class participation grade will reflect the quality of the student's involvement in the class activities and discussions. Perfect attendance is assumed. Participation can also be registered through comments and queries communicated outside the classroom setting.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Textbook

- **Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*.** New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux. (paperback, denoted as "K" in the reading list below). This is more of a "popular" or "easy-reading" summary of the field rather than a dense and scholarly textbook. Widely available in bookstores or online. I expect that at least half the class has already read it—this is already a classic for both academic and business audiences. Also available as an ebook..
- **Required reading.** Even if you have read it before, please re-read the specific passages that are assigned and connected with the course. If you want an additional reading, I recommend 2017 Economics Nobel winner Richard Thaler's recent book "Misbehaving" and Kahneman et al.'s 2021 "Noise" as well as many that will be listed in class.

Readings

- We will use a handful of *Harvard Business Review* readings that will be accessed online through the UBC library site and through Canvas (entitled "HBR" in the reading list) as well as a few "briefing papers" from the big consulting companies, particularly McKinsey (freely available online). As usual, **every** reading should be read **before** the class for which it is assigned.

- A small case package of 3 cases, available online through the Ivey case site (see below for instructions for access).

Estimated cost of required materials: \$20 - \$30 Canadian.

NO DISTRIBUTION OF RECORDINGS

There is no distribution of recordings of class. Classes are designed as and are intended to be in-person. Your attendance is expected. If you are unable to attend, the policy regarding missed classes described in this syllabus applies. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the materials you need for missed classes.

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Missed or late assignments, and regrading of assessments

Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Academic Concessions

If you experience unanticipated events or other circumstances that constitute valid grounds for academic concession as defined by [UBC's Academic Concession Policy](#), complete and submit the [Academic Concession Request & Declaration Form](#). Concessions are time-sensitive and the online form should be submitted within 48 hours of the missed deadline. Upon submission, your request will be recorded in the RHL and you will also receive an email with further instructions. Please read this email carefully and be sure to also refer to the relevant course syllabus for each concession that you have requested. Please know that you should continue to work on the coursework for the course(s) which you submitted a concession for. You should anticipate being asked to submit work or write an exam as soon as the circumstances affecting your ability to fulfil your academic responsibilities are resolved.

Other Course Policies and Resources

- There is assessed work due in the second week of class. Those joining the course after this time will need to make arrangements with the instructor to arrange a new due date.

Code Plagiarism

Code plagiarism falls under the UBC policy for [Academic Misconduct](#). Students must correctly cite any code that has been authored by someone else or by the student themselves for other assignments.

Cases of "reuse" may include, but are not limited to:

- the reproduction (copying and pasting) of code with none or minimal reformatting (e.g., changing the name of the variables)
- the translation of an algorithm or a script from a language to another
- the generation of code by automatic code-generations software

An "adequate acknowledgement" requires a detailed identification of the (parts of the) code reused and a full citation of the original source code that has been reused.

Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.

POLICIES APPLICABLE TO COURSES IN THE ROBERT H. LEE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Attendance

Excepting extenuating circumstances, students are expected to attend 100% of their scheduled class hours. Absent students limit their own academic potential, and that of their classmates, and cause unnecessary disruption to the learning environment. Students missing more than 20% of the total scheduled class hours for a course (including classes held during the add/drop period) without having received an academic concession will be withdrawn from that course. Withdrawals, depending on timing, could result in a “W” or an “F” standing on the transcript.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive for classes and activities on time and fully prepared to engage. Late arrivals may be refused entry at the discretion of the instructor or activity lead. Students arriving later than halfway through a scheduled class will be treated as absent for that class.

Electronic Devices

Devices such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones are not permitted to be used in class unless directed by the instructor for in-class activities. Students who do not follow the School’s policy in this regard may be required to leave the room for the remainder of the class, so that they do not distract others. Research shows that students’ use of laptops in class has negative implications for the learning environment, including reducing their own grades and the grades of those sitting around them.

Citation Style

Please use the American Psychological Association (APA) reference style to cite your sources.

Details of the above policies and other RHL Policies are available at:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,199,506,1625>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website at <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>.

Respect for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The UBC Sauder School of Business strives to promote an intellectual community that is enhanced by diversity along various dimensions including status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, social class, and/or disability. It is critical that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be valued in and well-served by their courses. Furthermore, the diversity that students bring to the classroom should be viewed as a resource, benefit, and source of strength for your learning experience. It is expected that all students and members of our community conduct themselves with empathy and respect for others.

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI Permitted Where Specified With Attribution

For this course, students may use generative artificial intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT, for specific assessments or coursework, where it is expressly specified by the instructor. In these cases of permitted use, students must disclose any use of AI-generated material as per the assessment guidelines and keep a record of how it was used. In general, in this course AI tools are permitted for information search, literature research, brainstorming ideas, summarizing articles, and proof-reading personally written work. However, all required readings must be personally read and all submitted writing must be personally written without AI prompts or first drafts. Where AI is used for research or brainstorming, the prompts used must be submitted as a reference section or appendix.

COPYRIGHT

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline and could be subject to legal action. Any lecture recordings are for the sole use of the instructor and students enrolled in the class. In no case may the lecture recording or part of the recording be used by students for any other purpose, either personal or commercial. Further, audio or video recording of classes are not permitted without the prior consent of the instructor. Students may not share class Zoom links or invite others who are not registered to view sessions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

TOPICS & READING LIST

“K” refers to the Kahneman text “Thinking, Fast and Slow”

Review Readings from Harvard Business Review available from the Canvas Library tab—**read HBR1 and HBR2 before the first class:**

HBR1: *What you don't know about making decisions* (Garvin & Roberto, 2001)

HBR2: *The Hidden Traps in Decision Making* (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 2006)

HBR3: *Building your company's vision*. (James C. Collins, Jerry I. Porras. Sept 01, 1996.)

HBR4: *How to Make Values Count in Everyday Decisions*. (Joel E. Urbany; Thomas J. Reynolds; Joan M. Phillips. July 1, 2008.)

HBR5: *HBR: Managing Risks: A New Framework*. (Robert S. Kaplan; Anette Mikes, Jun 01, 2012.)

HBR6: *Deals without delusions* (Lovallo, Viquerie, Uhlaner, Horn, 2007)

HBR7: *Decisions without blinders* (Bazerman & Chugh, 2006)

Readings from McKinsey (subject to change by first class)

M1

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-case-for-behavioral-strategy#>

M2

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/A%20case%20study%20in%20combating%20bias/A-case-study-in-combating-bias.pdf>

M3

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/strategic-decisions-when-can-you-trust-your-gut>

M4

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Strategy%20and%20Corporate%20Finance/Our%20Insights/Better%20forecasting%20for%20large%20capital%20projects/Better%20forecasting%20for%20large%20capital%20projects.pdf>

M5

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/overcoming-a-bias-against-risk>

M6

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/bias-busters-premortems-being-smart-at-the-start>

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to change with class consultation)

Class	Synchronous Or Asynchronous	Date	Topic	Readings or Activities	Assessments due
	A	Pre-course	Your mind, your decisions	HBR1, HBR2, K1, (K2-7 optional)	
1	S	Weds, Sept 4	Strategic Decision Making	K8, K9. HBR3, M1	
2	S	Fri, Sept 6	Values-based Decisions	HBR4	
3	S	Mon, Sept 9	Risk and Uncertainty	K17, K18, HBR5, M2	Decision Audit assignment
4	S	Weds, Sept 11	Judgment biases	K10-K12, K14-K16, K20-K22, M3	
5	S	Mon, Sept 16	Structured Decisions and Ethical Tradeoffs	Caprica Energy case	Case discussion
6	S	Weds, Sept 18	Integrative Decision Tools	M4	
7	S	Mon, Sept 23	Behavioral Economics and “Nudge”	K26-K28, K31, HBR6, M5	Decision Fiasco assignment
8	S	Weds, Sept 25	Behavioral Finance and Influencing Financial Decisions	K32, K34, K Conclusions 1-3 Behavioral Finance Case (Robinhood)	Case discussion
9	S	Weds, Oct 2	Organizational Decision-Making Traps	HBR7, M6	
10	S	Fri, Oct 4	Course Summary Case Discussion	Leadership & Mount Everest Case	Case discussion

Purchasing Case materials:

Please see the step by step instructions below to purchase the materials required for your course.

Course: BA 525 Decision Making for Managers

Professor(s): Dale Griffin

1. Go to the Ivey Publishing website at www.iveypublishing.ca
2. Log in to your existing account or click "Register" to create a new account and follow the prompts to complete the registration. If registering, choose the "Student" role.
3. Click on this link or copy into your browser: <https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1ROF000001dWYv2AM>
4. Click "Add to Cart".
5. Go to the Shopping Cart (located at the top of the page), click "Checkout", and complete the checkout process
6. When payment has been processed successfully, from the Order Confirmation screen, click on "Access Purchases", then click "Downloads".
7. If the coursepack contains Digital learning Experience or Multimedia materials, click on "Go to Course" or "Go to Simulation".

IMPORTANT: Access to downloadable files will expire on the course end date, so be sure to save a copy on your computer. The downloadable file is a PDF document that can be opened using Adobe Reader. This material is for your personal use only and is not to be shared, reproduced, or distributed in any form.