



Kuwait University
College of Business Administration
Management and Marketing Department



Latifa A. Albader, Ph.D.
MGT 315 – Managerial Decision Making
Fall 2023

Lecture Time and Location:

MGT 315 / 02A : Sun, Tues, & Thurs 1:00 PM – 1:50 PM Room DG-1009

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM or by appointment

E-mail: L.albader@ku.edu.kw

Course Description:

“Part of making good decisions in business is recognizing the poor decisions you’ve made and why they were poor.” – Warren Buffet

Undoubtedly, managerial decisions have a direct effect on organizations. The objective of this course is to make the student a better decision maker. To do so, the course takes a systematic approach to improving the student’s decision making using theories and tools of behavioral sciences. This course is not intended to address what to choose, but how to choose and evaluate effectively. As such, this class is designed to help students understand when and why humans deviate from standards of accuracy and rationality in decision making. It covers the process of decision making in organizations and focuses on issues that reduce biases and inaccuracies to make better decisions and choices.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):

Upon successful completion of this course, will be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of managerial decision-making process in today’s world
2. Deconstruct individual and group’s decision-making processes identifying inferential errors and systematic biases influencing our decision process.
3. Determine the proper managerial decision in given situations based on qualitative and quantitative data.
4. Predict and influence the behavior of others.
5. Differentiate between decisions that might be viewed as fair, logical, and ethically acceptable.
6. Provide tools and techniques to mitigate the influence of biases on our decision-making processes.

CLO Mapping to CBA Skill-Based Competency Goals

CLO	Competency Goal				
	Analytical (LG5)	Communication (LG4)	Information Technology (LG3)	Decision-Making Skills (LG2)	Business Ethics (LG1)
1	R	R			R
2	I				
3	R		R	R	
4	R	I		R	R
5	R				R
6	I	I			

Type of Emphases:

- **(I)ntroduce:** Students will be introduced to the skill and their grasp of it assessed in the course.
- **(A)pply:** The course will not cover the skill. Students should have a high-level grasp of the skill and are required to apply it in the course.
- **(R)einforce:** Students should have an introductory-level grasp of the skill and the course will improve their mastery to a higher level.

Teaching Approach

This course depends heavily on your ability and willingness to participate and discuss topics in class. **For example, this course will utilize many case discussions, rather than lectures.** The quality of your learning experience depends greatly on your ability to come to class on time, prepared to discuss all topics. Students are expected to lead the class discussion and I (as the instructor) will provide guidance and structure to the discussion.

For you to develop a managerial way of thinking, the focus in this course will be on critical thinking, analysis, and discussion. This means your **grades will NOT be based** on how well you can **recite** and **memorize** course materials and definitions. Rather, your grades will be based on how well you can **apply** course materials through critical thinking and analysis of different topics. To achieve this goal, we will utilize different learning methods including case discussions, lectures, practical reasoning (integrating course topics to try and solve real problems in real organizations).

Course Communication

Throughout the semester, I will be sending you regular emails and announcements on Teams. Please ensure that your email account is active and that you check it regularly or set your account so that it forwards emails to your regular email account. **This is a very dynamic course, and you are responsible for keeping track of the communications and changes as we go through the semester.**

Textbook and Course Materials

- Bazerman, M., Moore, D. (2012). Judgment in Managerial Decision Making. 8th ed. New York: Wiley.
- Other materials will be provided on Microsoft Teams.

Grading and Course Requirements

Assignment	Weight
1. Syllabus Consent Form	0%
2. Preparation and Participation (collective learning, attendance, and class discussions)	20%
3. Exam 1	20%
4. Exam 2	20%
5. Final Exam	40%
TOTAL	100%

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

Grade	Percent Range	
	Low	High
A	95.00	100.00
A-	90.00	94.99
B+	87.00	89.99
B	83.00	86.99
B-	80.00	82.99
C+	77.00	79.99
C	73.00	76.99
C-	70.00	72.99
D+	65.00	69.99
D	60.00	64.99
F	0	59.00

Assignments

1. Syllabus Consent Form (0%)

A syllabus serves as a contract between students and the instructor. For the course to run smoothly and for me to be as fair as possible to everyone in class, it is crucial that both parties adhere to the information contained in the syllabus. Each student will be required to submit a consent form acknowledging that they have read, understood, and agree to adhere to the information and policies contained in the syllabus. Though the consent form itself is not weighted in the course grading structure, I will not grade any assignments for a student until his or her form is submitted.

2. Preparation and Participation (20%)

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” — Benjamin Franklin

Collective learning and attendance will be determined based on roll calls conducted in class. In case method pedagogy, class attendance is critical to individual and collective learning. ***My expectation is that every student arrives on time and attends every class.*** Absenteeism and lateness to class count heavily against the participation grade since it adversely impacts the learning experience of the section as a whole. Anyone who cannot attend class should email me in advance if at all possible. **You are allowed ONLY ONE free absence for case discussion or guest speaker classes. If the case discussion spans two class sessions, missing both sessions counts as if you missed two case classes. If you miss more than TWO case discussion or guest speaker classes, you will receive ZERO points for participation.**

Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Attendance (published in the Student Guide, Chapter 3, Section 13). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on: http://www.kuniv.edu/cs/groups/ku/documents/ku_content/kuw055940.pdf

Class discussions: Class discussions will be assessed on the basis of your contributions to class discussion and listening. Of course, the underlying condition for class participation is attendance. I expect you to attend all sessions. Prior to class, you should thoroughly read and prepare the materials and/or case for that day, including answering the study questions. Please ensure that you have used the frameworks, tools, and ideas from the readings in your analysis as appropriate. In grading class participation, I look at both the quantity and quality of contribution. With regards to quality, some of the criteria I shall apply include:

- Are the points made relevant to the discussion?
- Do they go beyond a mere recitation of case facts, and are implications clearly drawn?
- Is there evidence of analysis rather than expressions of opinions?
- Are the comments linked to those of others?
- Did the contribution further the class understanding of the issues?
- Is the participant a good listener?
- Do comments raise interesting questions?
- In discussion, do the comments fit in the class context?
- Does the analysis make use of tools and techniques from the readings or lectures?
- Are comments made in a respectful, professional, and constructive manner?

Students should not expect to receive full points for participation. Simply being present does not warrant full credit, nor does frequent participation that does not advance the learning of the class. I will use **“cold calling”** occasionally so you need to be prepared for each class. **If students fail to come to class prepared, I will start giving out pop quizzes on the assigned material and will require that you submit case write-ups.** Cell phones must be turned off or set to the “silent” mode during classes.

3 & 4. Exams 1 & 2 (20% each)

We will have two short exams during the semester that will be administered in-person during class. The exams will be on all course material covered up to that point in the semester, including lectures, discussions, and readings. The exams are open book and open notes. Further details about exam policies, content, and date will be discussed in the class. Missed examinations may not be made up without prior permissions, no exceptions.

5. Final Exam (40%)

The Final Exam for this class is a cumulative multiple-choice and/or short answers exam that will account for 40% of your final grade. Like the midterm, the final exam is open book and open notes. The exam will be administered in-person during the allocated time set by the college. The exam will cover all course material including lectures, discussions, and readings. Details about exam contents, time, and location will be discussed in the class. Missed examinations may not, under any circumstances, be made up without prior permission.

Note: *The instructor reserves the right to change assignments and cases as necessary to facilitate an improved learning experience.*

Course Policies:

External Intermediation

Only registered students are allowed to talk to me about their course grades. Your hard work is your only way of doing well in my class. I do not, under any circumstances, deal with external intermediaries that try to influence or interfere with my policies and grading. This applies to everyone including faculty members, parents, relatives, political figures, other students, and so on. Asking me to compromise my morals and standards is, in my opinion, rude and offensive (to say the least). Expecting me to actually respond and/or sway from my policies due to external pressures is even worse. ***External intermediation will automatically result in a final grade reduction of 10%.***

Missed Assignments

There will be no allowance for missed/late assignments. If you wait until the last hour to work on an assignment and you have problems, then that is the risk you chose to hazard by procrastinating.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (published in the Student Guide, Chapter 3, Section 2). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:

http://www.kuniv.edu/cs/groups/ku/documents/ku_content/kuw055940.pdf

Please carefully note all sources and assistance when you turn in your work. Under no circumstances should you take credit for work that is not yours. You should neither receive nor give any unauthorized assistance on any deliverable. If you have any questions about what constitutes “unauthorized assistance” please email me before the deliverable is submitted.

Please note that acts of academic dishonesty during the course will be prosecuted and harsh penalties may be sought for such acts. Students are responsible for knowing what acts constitute academic dishonesty.

Office Hours

Office hours are Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. If you have a time conflict, please contact me to schedule an appointment for another time. You may contact me any time via email. In general, this syllabus is your first source of information on questions pertaining to the class. I will not answer a question for which the answer is in the syllabus or my announcements to the class. When sending me an email, always include the course number, section, and your first and last name in the email title. For example, "MGT 315-02A Flan Alflani".

Classroom Etiquette

The following professional behaviors are expected of students:

- Come to class on time, ready to actively participate. Attendance will be taken as soon as class starts. If you show up to class after I have taken the attendance, you will be marked as absent from class.
- Always be professional and respectful towards everyone in class. No talking during class, no sleeping, no working on other assignments.
- No voice recording or video recording is allowed. Remove headphones and silence cell phones and all other electronic devices during class. This class is designed to be highly interactive which means you need to pay attention to discussions and participate or it will greatly affect your class participation score.
- No eating in class.
- Professional delivery of assignments including proper formatting, organizing, font, grammar, spelling. Professionalism is like a performance appraisal that you will routinely receive throughout your career. Everything you do (or don't) creates an impression.

Course Topics & Tentative Schedule:

Weeks (Tentative)	Title	Topics Covered
1-2	Introduction to Decision Making	Components of a good decision • Rational decision making • System 1 & System 2 thinking • Heuristics
3	Risk Preferences	Uncertainty • Expected utility theory • Prospect theory
4	Framing and Mental Accounting	Framing effect • Endowment effect • Sunk cost • Mental accounting
5	Exam 1	TOPICS 1-3
6-8	Motivational & Emotional Influences	Internal conflicts • Self-serving reasoning • Emotional influences on decision making • Regret
9	Escalation of Commitment	Overview • Competitive Environment • Reducing escalation of commitment

10	Fairness and Ethics in Decision Making	Fairness in decision making • Social comparisons • Ethics • Bounded ethicality • Just-World hypothesis
11	Common Mistakes	Evidence-Based management • Survivorship Bias • Trend analysis • Sampling Bias • Confounding variables • Correlation vs. Causation • investment mistakes
11	Exam 2	TOPICS 4-7
12-14	Negotiations & Game Theory	Sequential games • Simultaneous games • Negotiations

Special dates of note for Fall 2023:

February 4, 2024	Classes Begin
March 16, 2024	Course Withdrawal Deadline
May 13, 2024	Last day of classes
May 22, 2024 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Final Exam for Section 02A

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this syllabus. This may happen in response to either changes in the student or the instructor’s schedule. Although these changes are not expected, if they occur, you will be notified as soon as possible.