

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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B8553: Managerial Decision-Making

Joel Brockner
e-mail: jb54@gsb.columbia.edu

Stephen Harty
e-mail: hartystephen@gmail.com

Joe Timko
e-mail: timko.joe@gmail.com

Course Assistant:

For Bidding Purposes Only.

Welcome to the course! We will be studying the individual and collective factors that affect the decisions that managers make in their everyday work lives. Our approach will be descriptive and prescriptive, i.e., we will focus on how managers *actually* make decisions, as well as how they *ought* to make decisions to maximize organizational and personal outcomes. Regardless of the approach we take, the goal of the course is the same: **to improve how you go about planning and implementing decisions, both your own and the people with whom you work.** Emblematic of the instructional mantra of Columbia Business School – blending theory with practice – the course will be co-taught by a faculty member at CBS (JB) and by long-time senior executives in multiple organizations (SH and JT), both of whom are now Executives-in-Residence at CBS.

The course is divided into two main sections. The first section will deal with individual-level processes that influence managers' decisions. The second section will consider collective (group and organizational) forces that affect managers' decisions. Throughout, we will consider the obstacles to sound decision-making, and how to work through and around such obstacles.

The in-class and reading materials are designed to complement rather than to repeat one another. Therefore, some of the reading material will not be discussed at great length during class time, although all reading material will be covered at some point. If you are having difficulty understanding the readings or seeing how they relate to the class material, please contact us. We may move more rapidly or more slowly than is indicated on the syllabus. We will periodically remind you about where you should be in the readings to stay on track. *In any event,*

all of the assigned readings are required. Moreover, all of the readings noted as “Cases” need to be read prior to the class for which they are assigned. For each case, we will provide some questions beforehand that you should consider and be ready to discuss in class.

Your course grade will be determined to a large extent (65%) by your performance on the final assignment, for which you have an option. One choice is to take the final exam, which will be given after the semester ends. The other choice is to write a paper (approximately 4000 words in length), due on ----- some topic pertinent to managerial decision-making. More details about the paper option will be provided in-class and on-line.

Classroom participation will determine 20% of your grade. The emphasis in grading your classroom participation will be on the quality, not simply the quantity of your input. You are expected to come to class being up-to-date in the readings, and ready to take part on a proactive basis. The course deals with subject matter with which all of us have had ample experience. In addition, we will provide exercises and cases on decision-making. The net effect should be some lively exchanges between class members which will contribute greatly to our learning.

The remaining 15% of your grade will depend upon your performance on weekly assignments associated with each class. You will be asked to respond to questions pertaining to the subject matter of each class, in about 250-300 words. After the first week of the semester, the written assignments are always due at 11 PM on the Tuesday night prior to the class on Thursday. This will allow the faculty to read your responses prior to the class.

Connection to the Core

This course connects to and extends material covered in core course classes, most notably LEAD: People, Teams, and Organizations (B6500). In looking at decision-making at the individual level of analysis, we will be examining when, why and how people deviate from a more economically rational model of decision-making. Here we connect with core class concepts such as the role of intuition in decision-making, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. In looking at decision-making at the group level of analysis, we will be examining the various forces operating in groups that help to explain why the whole may be different from the sum of the parts. In looking at decision-making at the organizational level of analysis, we evaluate what managers need to do ensure that their decisions are not only well-formulated, but also well-implemented. Regardless of our level of analysis, however, this course by its very nature lends itself to a considerably “deeper dive” on the topics that also were touched on in the core.

Readings

All readings and all cases will be posted to the course website on the date for which it is assigned on the syllabus.

SYLLABUS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>
Session #1 January 27	Course Introduction; Individual Influences I Decisional Biases	Pfeffer & Sutton Gregersen (<i>Bursting the CEO Bubble</i>) Wedell-Wedellsborg
Session #2 February 3	Individual Influences II Bob's Meltdown Dark Triad Emotional Intelligence	Carr (CASE) Templer Chamorro-Pfeffer John Fisher et al. Bryant & Sharer
Session #3 February 10	Guest Speaker I Group Influences Lincoln's Decision Process	Goodwin (CASE) Precursor (CASE) Gregersen (Better Brainstorming)
Session #4 February 17	Guest Speaker II Group/Organizational Influences Whitmer	Perlow Sunstein & Hastie Whitmer (CASE)
Session #5 February 24	Ethics; Organizational Influences Best of Intentions Implementation	Humphreys (CASE) Sull et al. Ashford & Detert Gino & Coffman Ammerman & Groysberg
Session #6 March 3	Organizational Influences Stick to the Core Implementation	Waite (CASE) Darling et al. O'Reilly & Tushman