

## **MGMT 579: Mindful Decision Making**

**Spring Quarter, 2021**

### **Professor**

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Because this course will be **hybridized**, some of the class content that would normally happen with us all together in an in-person course, particularly me lecturing or showing videos, will be replaced by videos that you can watch at your convenience before the class session. **You can find those videos on this Syllabus part of the Canvas website in the schedule below (as they become available)**, and they are also required.

Office hours: I am happy to meet one-on-one by Zoom or Skype. Please don't hesitate to email me if you would like to do this.

### **Course Overview**

This course is designed to provide you with a better understanding about how you and other people think, feel, decide, and behave. One main objective is to increase awareness of the psychological processes that underlie the choices that people make, as well as systematic biases and heuristics that people have when making decisions. A second main objective is to give you a space to reflect on who you are and who you want and do not want to be, as well as provide tools for how to mindfully create a life that aligns with your goals. A third main objective is to better understand how to interact with oneself and other people in ways that are mindful and responsible. A last main objective is to appreciate the role of emotions and moods in how people decide and behave. All of these topics will be presented based on scientific research, including related interventions which can help people become more effective. In the process, we will discuss mindfulness from a variety of angles: as a psychological state and trait, as a long term training and “on-the-spot” intervention, as a philosophical and cultural concept that changed as it was brought to the West and secularized, and topic of scholarly and popular debate.

### **Course Objectives**

- Identify decision-making biases and heuristics
- Ponder the role that identity and emotions play in decisions and behavior

- Consider the big picture goals we have including happiness and meaning
- Understand what mindfulness is and different ways it can be thought of and applied
- Deepen understanding of human psychology related to managerial decisions and stress

### **Course Schedule and Preparation**

This schedule is tentative. Because the amount of time required to cover each topic tends to vary, topics may be changed or omitted depending on our progress throughout the quarter. For each topic, I will typically use multiple means to convey the material.

I will reserve some time during each class to discuss the readings and videos. For the most part, I have erred on the side of popular press articles over scientific articles for the required readings. To find scientific articles on these topics, please see the bibliography at the end of this syllabus which contains optional readings, search [www.scholar.google.com](http://www.scholar.google.com), or email me (ahaf@uw.edu).

### **Expectations and Course Plan**

I run a highly participative course, with many discussions and exercises. We each have jobs to do. It is my responsibility to choose topics that will hopefully be important for your life and to guide our journey together in ways that are interesting and effective. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared and motivated to learn. Since this is the first time most of us have conducted a full course online, we may need to give each other the benefit of the doubt at times. Please let me know if some way that I am conducting the course is not working for you and how it could be improved.

### **Grading**

Here are the components that will comprise your grade for the course:

**Introductory Video (2%):** Make a 1-3 minute video to introduce yourself including:

Your Name as you like to be called

Your goal for this course or what you want to get out of it.

Anything else you want me to know, for example, your thoughts about or past experience with mindfulness.

Submit by Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm.

**Assignment 1 (14%):** Write an individual profile of approximately 1500 words. Use realistic imagination and project yourself 10 years into the future three different ways. Describe what you are doing with

your life and how you got there after graduation. In other words, your task is to write three significantly different possible futures for yourself (in separate sections). Submit this on Canvas on **April 15th**. Confidential, mostly pass or fail grade (unless you did not take it seriously). This is an individual assignment.

**Assignment 2 (14%):** First, write a personal journal entry (private, not to turn in) on what you think your three biggest strengths are and three biggest weaknesses are. Second, ask five people who know you well and whose opinions you value to give you general feedback. Ask them for 2-3 things that they appreciate about you (or think are your biggest strengths) and 2-3 things that they think you could improve on. Write a 1-2 page description of this experience including who the five people were and at a big picture-level what you learned from the exercise, possibly including if anything surprised you, if you heard similar or different things from multiple people, or how much overlap there was between your own self-evaluation and others' feedback. Please, of course, omit any details that you do not feel comfortable sharing. Submit this on Canvas by **April 20th**. Confidential, mostly pass or fail grade (unless it seems like you did not take it seriously). This is an individual assignment.

**Assignment 3 (20%):** In a thoughtful, deep way, answer the question: How will you apply this course to your life?

Write a 1-2 page single spaced report and submit it by **May 2nd**. Some suggestions on how to do this and what it could include: Think about an experience you had in your life that something in the course helped you rethink, and/or how your behavior or decision(s) will be different in the future. Describe the experience/behavior/decision (possibly in story form). Identify, explain, and define concept. Explain how the course concept changed your thinking about this experience, and/or how you would apply that concept in your life going forward, or something better!

**Final exam (25%):** There will be a final examination covering all of the class topics. It will be open book and open notes, but you will be bound by the UW Foster Honor Code to work alone on it. You will only have two hours to complete the exam after you open it. It will be administered on Canvas in the "Quizzes" function.

**Participation, preparation, and attendance (25%):** Readings and videos are required unless otherwise noted. There will be at least one pop-quiz. You get points for the quality and quantity of things you say in class. I will use random call cold calling (I have a list of all students in a randomized order and cold call in that order). You can make up missed classes as outlined below.

**Making up a class:** Watch the recording(s) of the class meeting you missed and read the required readings. Do the related exercises if there were any (will be posted on Canvas). Write a single-spaced 1 page response essay on what you thought about the class, what you would have said in the class discussions, and your reactions to the required readings and videos. Email that write-up to me (ahaf@uw.edu) within three days of the last class meeting (**by 11:59pm on Sunday, May 2nd**).

## **Student Professionalism in Class**

Each student is expected to be on time to and prepared for each class meeting as well as fully engaged in class content throughout the class meeting. Please refrain from engaging in any activities that might distract you or your classmates (especially if your microphone is not muted).

## **The Honor Code**

I employ the principles and procedures espoused by the Foster School of Business MBA Honor System to maintain academic integrity in the course. The Honor Code of the Foster School expressly prohibits cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, and lying to administration or faculty as it pertains to academic work. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be handled by referral of the matter to the Foster MBA Honor Council.

I expect that you will complete all deliverables required in the course in accordance with the principles of the Honor Code and submit them by the due dates assigned. If you have any uncertainty about how the Honor Code applies to a specific deliverable in the course, please ask before taking action; when it is not possible to ask before acting, please err on the side of conservatism.

## **Access and Accommodations**

Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me, preferably by email, at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu](http://disability.uw.edu). DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).