MGMT 579: Mindful Decision Making  
Spring Quarter, 2022

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FULL TIME: Class meets the last five Tuesdays and Thursdays of Spring Quarter 3:30pm-5:20pm.

EVENING: Class meets the last five Thursdays of Spring Quarter, 6pm-9:30pm.

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. Preparation for each class topic will usually involve reading an article or two written for practitioners but generally grounded in the research literature.

I will reserve some time during each class to discuss the readings. I have erred on the side of popular press articles over scientific articles for the required readings. I probably will not include any academic articles because every time I have done so in the past students have voted for that one to be dropped from the course. To find scientific articles on these topics, please see the bibliography at the end of this syllabus which contains optional readings, search scholar.google.com, or email me (ahaf@uw.edu).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Introductory video due</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Full Time MBA</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong></td>
<td>Hafenbrack, A. (2017). Mindfulness Meditation as an On-The-Spot Workplace Intervention. INSEAD Knowledge. <a href="https://knowledge.insead.edu/leadership-organisations/mindfulness-meditation-as-an-on-the-spot-workplace-intervention-5636">Link</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5 (Thu)</td>
<td>6pm-9:30pm</td>
<td>Optional: Berinato, S., &amp; Hafenbrack, A. (2019). Mindfulness is demotivating. HBR.</td>
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<td><strong>Full Time MBA</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
<td><em>(FT for Tuesday)</em>&lt;br&gt;Wilson, T.D. (2011). Redirect, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-21)&lt;br&gt;Stone, D., Heen, S., &amp; Patton, B. (2010). Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most. Penguin. Ch. 6 (pp. 111-128)*</td>
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| **Full Time MBA**  | **Session 4 ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE** May 26       | (FT for Tuesday) Esfahani Smith, E. (2013). There is more to life than being happy. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/01/theres-more-to-life-than-being-happy/266805/  
(FT for Thursday) Grant, A. (2013). Give and take: A revolutionary approach to success. Hachette UK. Chapters 1 & 7, pp. 1-26, 186-215. *(I know this is kind of a lot of pages but these were some of the readings students cited as the best last time so I didn’t want to cut them, I cut the emotion readings instead)* |
| May 24 (Tue) & May 26 3:30-5:20pm | Happiness and Meaning                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Evening MBA        | Generosity and Trust                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| May 26 (Thu) 6pm-9:30pm |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| June 2 (Thu) 6pm-9:30pm | Understanding and Using Emotion              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                     | Self-Control and Decision Support Systems    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                     | Course Summary                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

**ASSIGNMENT 3 will be due at 11:59pm on Sunday June 5th.**

**There will be an open book take home individual 3-hour exam, probably administered between Sunday June 5th 12pm and Wednesday June 8th 11:59pm.**

**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, **May 2**nd, 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 **May 19**th. 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 **May 26**th. 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 **June 5**th. 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 three 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 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 ½ page response essay per half-week session you missed on what you thought about the class, what you would have said in the class discussions, and your reactions to the required readings. In other words, if an FT MBA student misses a day, submit one essay, if an evening student misses a day then submit two essays because there are two sessions on the same day. Email that write-up to me (ahaf@uw.edu) within three days of the last class meeting (by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 5th).

**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. You are allowed to use your laptops in class to take notes, but please refrain from engaging in any activities on your computers that might distract you or your classmates.

**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 or 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. It is my personal tendency to try to accommodate students’ needs beyond what is legally required whenever possible.

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
(Supplementary Readings, Not Required):

Identity: Who We Are and Want to Be
Cialdini, R. B. (1993). Influence: the psychology of persuasion. (especially the new chapter on “Unity” in the updated edition, as well as the principles of commitment and social proof)


### Mindfulness and Stress Management


**Motivational Biases**


**Cognitive Biases and Heuristics**


**Happiness and Meaning**


**Generosity and Trust**


Understanding and Using Emotions


**Negative Feedback and Group Dynamics**


**Self-Control and Decision Support Systems**


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This syllabus is subject to change.