Course Description

BUEC601 centers on decision making as a critical life and leadership competency. We make dozens of daily decisions from the mundane (“Should I have a cup of coffee?”) to the highly complex (“Do I invest in a new product; how much of the company should I bet on this investment; or should we acquire a new company?”) While we are good at making the first type of decision, we are generally not as good at making complex decisions.

When we make decisions, the primitive parts of our brain tend to overlook complexity, which enables us to make the quick decisions (fight or flight) that were essential to our survival in our prehistoric environments. The need for complex decision making was rare in our prehistoric environment, therefore the brain components that help us in our modern complex environments developed much later. Today, these components are often in conflict with our primitive brain’s desire to make quick, approximate decisions. The conflict between these two brain systems results in many unconscious decision-making flaws, namely our cognitive and emotional biases.

Our preference for quick and approximate decisions also inhibits us from reflecting on our decisions, hindering our ability to learn and limiting our ability to recognize when and how our choices should be modified. This may condemn us to repeat the same errors over and over again. By studying how effective decision makers use both emotional intelligence and critical thinking as techniques for managing these biases, we will improve our own reflective ability, our decision making, and our overall performance as leaders.

In this course, we will use a powerful self-assessment tool called the Predictive Index (PI) to discover our default behavioral and decision-making preferences, including how we view the world, our tolerance for ambiguity and risk, and ultimately how we make decisions. The PI, validated according to EEOC guidelines, is used by thousands of organizations for recruiting, hiring and performance coaching.

The tools and strategies presented in this course will allow us to examine and proactively manage how our preferences, biases and reflective ability enable or impede us in our leadership journey. Our overarching goal is to develop strong decision-making processes that will help us improve our decision making in complex situations.
Readings

All of the * readings are available for purchase from the Harvard website:
http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/61284956

eCourse Reserves through University of Delaware's Delcat Discovery are available:
http://delcat.worldcat.org/coursereserves/course/fetch/2925045
Passcode: 4781

Week One:


*“Beyond Bias: How to Shift Ingrained Thinking”, Halvorson and Rock, Rotman Management, Spring 2016

Week Two:


The Emotional Life of Your Brain, Davidson and Begley, 2012. Chapter One. (Available from Amazon or the UD bookstore)

Week Three:


Recommended:
“Respecting the Emotional Brain”, Chapter Three, Brainwork - The Neuroscience Behind How We Lead Others, David Sousa (Triple Nickel Press, 2012)

Available for free and online through the UD library course reserves:
http://delcat.worldcat.org/coursereserves/course/fetch/2925045
Passcode: 4781

Week Four:

Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools – Mini Guide, Paula and Elder. You can purchase this from Amazon or the bookstore.

Important Information

This is a one-credit course that only meets for four weeks. Each class period meets for three hours. Please try not to miss any of the class sessions. Attendance at the second class is mandatory. If you must miss the second class for work, please let me know and I will move you to a later section of this course. Additionally, I will send you a link to the Predictive Index Assessment before the course starts and this must be completed prior to the first class. I will let you know once I send it out.

Assignments and Grading Policy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four short open book and open note quizzes**</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>(10 items - True/False, Multiple Choice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning journal consisting of four entries based on each week’s materials – due at the end of the course</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and engagement (don’t miss class!)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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This class moves very quickly and as such no late assignments will be accepted.

** I will provide a study guide to assist you with the quizzes. The quizzes help me determine how well you understood the concepts in that week's class. They will only be 15 minutes long and will be administered online. You can complete the quiz anytime after the end of that class session and before the beginning of the next class session. They will be open book / open notes, but you may not get or give help to another person once you or they have taken the quiz. Academic dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action and possible expulsion from the program.

Course Schedule & Topics

Week One: Introduction

• Decision-making as a key competency
• Even senior leaders have difficulty and make career ending decisions
• Socrates - Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence
• We have evolved two systems in our brain for thinking and decision making (System I and II)
• System I - Decision Heuristics – pros and cons
• System I - Common cognitive biases
• Managing the major cognitive biases
• System I - Emotional Tagging and Pattern Recognition
• System II – Math Lazy?
• Sensory and memory limitations

Week Two: The Predictive Index and Your Baseline Preferences

Attendance is Mandatory at this class

• Self-Awareness as a key leadership competency
• The PI and self-awareness
• Debrief of the predictive index results
• The PI results and your decision-making preferences
• Using the PI to improve your leadership, teamwork and decision-making

Week Three: Emotional Intelligence

• What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)
• Why does EI matter
• How the PI and EI relate
• A bit of anatomy (the PFC and the Amygdalae)
• Emotion and Thinking – the evolutionary artifact
• Identifying the emotions of others
• Emotion and Decision Making – the Pros and Cons
• Decision Making, Stress, and Chronic Stress
• New Ways to Understand/Measure Emotion and Performance (an example of how stress impacts performance)
• Emotional Styles and the Brain
• Modifying your Emotional Style and Building EI

Week Four: Critical Thinking and Tools to Improve Decision Making

• Improving our analytical decision process
• Critical Thinking and the elements of thought
• Framing problems to improve decision-making
• An expanded dual-process model - improving both our algorithmic and reflective thinking
• Reflective thinking and business
• The Cognitive reflection test
• Improving our reflective abilities

This syllabus is subject to change per the instructor but advance notice will be provided.