Texas A&M University
Departmental Request for a New Course
Undergraduate • Graduate • Professional

1. This request is submitted by the Department of ________
   Bush School of Government & Public Service

2. Course prefix, number and complete title: BUSH 637: Decision Making in Government and Public Service

3. Course description (not more than 50 words): Course will introduce students to the study of judgment and decision making processes, especially as they are or can be applied in government and administrative settings. Course content is firmly grounded in empirically-based theory and research, but with a practical, applied slant.

4. Prerequisite(s): Graduate Classification

5. Is this a variable credit course? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, from _______ to _______.

6. Is this a repeatable course? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, this course may be taken ______ times. Will the course be repeated within the same semester/term? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Has this course been taught as 489/689? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many times? ______ Indicate the number of students enrolled for each academic period it was taught. Will be taught as 689 in Spring 08. Projected enrollment: 15

8. This course will be:
   a. required for students enrolled in the following degree program(s) (e.g., B.A. in history)
      MPSA (Master of Public Service and Administration Program)

9. If other departments are teaching or are responsible for related subject matter, the course must be coordinated with these departments. Attach approval letters.

10. Prefix | Course # | Title (exclude punctuation)
     BUSH | 637 | DECISION | MAK | GVT | PUB | SER
     Lect. | Lab | SCH | Subject Matter | Content Code | Admin. Unit | Acad. Year | FICE Code | Level
     0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 2

Approval recommended by:

Head of Department: Date: 12/4/07
Chair, College Review Committee: Date: 12/6/07
Head of Department (if cross-listed course): Date: 12/5/07
Dean of College: Date:

Submitted to Coordinating Board by:

Dean of College: Date:

Director of Academic Support Services: Date: 12/5/07
Effective Date: 12/5/07

To have this form reviewed, please send to Linda F. Lacey, Mail Stop 1265 or fax to 847-8737.
OAR/AS-504
The Bush School of Government and Public Service

Bush 637
Decision Making in Government and Public Service

Instructor
Jeryl L. Mumpower
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Phone: (979)-862-8821
E-mail: jlmumpower@bushschool.tamu.edu
Office Hours: xxx

COURSE PURPOSE

This course will introduce students to the study and practice of judgment and decision making processes in governmental and administrative settings. The course content is firmly grounded in empirically-based theory and research, but with a practical slant – the course is designed to help students to develop and improve their own decision making skills.

Theories of judgment and decision making can be divided into three broad categories: descriptive theories of judgment and decision making (theories about how decision makers actually behave); normative theories (theories about how decision makers ought to behave given certain assumptions about rationality); and prescriptive theories (theories about how to improve decision making processes and outcomes). This course will touch on all three types of concerns but will focus primarily on the last topic. We will be primarily concerned with what Herbert Simon defines as "bounded rationality" --- the behavior of persons who are attempting to behave purposefully but who lack complete knowledge about the world or perhaps even their own values, who are saddled with inherent cognitive and mental limits, and who have limited resources and time. Because of such limitations people are unable to make decisions in a manner compatible with economic notions of rational behavior. According to Simon, "it is precisely in the realm where human behavior is intendedly rational, but only limitedly so, that there is room for a genuine theory of organization and administration" (from the Introduction to the 3rd edition of his classic Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization).

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

The course will be divided into six modules of roughly two weeks. The basic schedule is given below. Specific assignments for each module will be given out the week before it begins.

Module 1: Decision Structure and Process
- Introduction to course
- Limits to cognition
- Examination of decision processes
- Heuristics and biases/Prospect Theory
- Alternatives, criteria, and futures
- Value-focused thinking
Module 2: Multiattribute Utility Models & Decision Analysis
- Decisions under risk and uncertainty
- Assessing probabilities
- Assessing utilities
- Multiattribute utility models
- Sensitivity analyses

Module 3: Judgment Models
- Intuition and analysis
- The role of judgment in decision making
- Social judgment analysis
- Cognitive skills
- Expert judgment

Module 4: Resource allocation models
- Resource allocation problems
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Investment progressions and efficient frontiers
- Sensitivity analyses

Module 5: Negotiation and conflict management
- Negotiation and bargaining
- Conflict and conflict management
- Analytical mediation
- Tradeoffs between utility and equity
- Searching for optimality

Module 6: Group decision making
- Group decision making
- Nominal and real groups
- Group decision support systems
- Decision conferences
- Assessing the effectiveness of decision processes in groups

Review and Summary

Final Examination
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Grades will be based on approximately the following weightings:

- Decision structure & process assignments (overdue after date) 15%
- Multiatribute utility models (overdue after date) 15%
- Judgment models assignments (overdue after date) 15%
- Resource allocation assignments (overdue after date) 15%
- Negotiation & conflict assignments (overdue after date) 15%
- Group decision making assignments (overdue after date) 15%
- Final Examination (date) 10%

Assignments should be submitted electronically, preferably in editable files such as WORD or EXCEL. Hard copy is also acceptable.

Grades may be adjusted by one letter grade to reflect the quantity and quality of classroom participation.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE WORK

The class policy regarding incomplete grades is in accordance with Texas A&M University Student Rule 10.5:

A temporary grade of I (Incomplete) at the end of a semester or summer term indicates that the student (graduate or undergraduate) has completed the course with the exception of a major quiz, final examination or other work. The instructor shall give this grade only when the deficiency is due to an authorized absence or other cause beyond the control of the student. When an instructor reports an incomplete grade to the registrar, he or she will fill out an "Incomplete Grade Report," which is filed with the department head. Copies are sent to the student and to the student's academic dean. This report includes (1) a statement of the instructor's reason for awarding the incomplete grade and (2) a statement concerning the remaining work to be completed before the last day of scheduled classes of the next fall or spring semester in which the student enrolls in the university unless the student's academic dean, with the consent of the instructor (in the absence of the instructor, the department head), grants an extension of time for good reason. If the incomplete work is not completed within this time or if the student registers for the same course again, the I will be changed to an F by the registrar. Grades of I assigned to 684 (Professional Internship), 691 (Research), 692 (Professional Study) or 693 (Professional Study) are excluded from this rule.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) POLICY STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Student Disabilities in Room B118 of Cain Hall or call 845-1637.
AGGIE HONOR CODE

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M University community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information please visit: www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/

READINGS

The following texts are required:


Additional reading assignments will be required for each module. These supplementary readings will typically be made available to you electronically either through a class listserv or via Electronic Reserves.
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Bush 637
Decision Making in Government and Public Service

Instructor
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Office Hours: xxxx

Assignment for Module 1 (Decision Structure and Process)

1. Read Kahneman's "Maps of Bounded Rationality: A Perspective on Intuitive Judgment and Choice." (Electronic Reserve)

2. Read Chapter 10 of Smart Choices. (Also begin to read the entire book; the sooner you can finish reading it the better. If anything is not clear, press ahead, we will discuss in class later on.)

3. Read Cooper's "Letter from the Space Center" (New Yorker: November 10, 1986); on Electronic Reserve

4. Read Langwiseche's "Columbia's Last Flight" (The Atlantic Monthly, November 2003); on Electronic Reserve

5. Write a five-page paper describing a decision that you have made recently. This may be either a professional or personal decision. Although you may briefly describe the problem, your primary focus should be on the process by which you made your choice. The emphasis should be on how you selected your preferred option or alternative. Be prepared to discuss in next weeks class.

6. Identify 10 potential difficulties or pitfalls in decision making. Kahneman's Nobel Prize lecture and Chapter 10 of Smart Choices should be helpful. Illustrate 5 of these potential difficulties or pitfalls with examples from your self description (#6 above); illustrate the other 5 with examples from "Letter from the Space Center" or "Columbia's Last Flight."

7. Construct two two-dimensional matrices to show alternatives by criteria. List the alternatives down the side (rows) and the criteria across the top (columns) of the matrix:
    Make one matrix to represent the alternatives and criteria in your personal choice (#6 above).
    Make one matrix to represent the alternatives and criteria for the Hudson River PCB problem. Three useful resources are
Briefly explain each matrix.

**Addendum for Module 1:**

The January 2006 issue of the Harvard Business Review is very good, although (not surprisingly) it is heavily oriented toward the private sector. Two articles in particular are well worth taking a look at with respect to the issues we discussed in Module 1, I have placed both on Electronic Reserve:


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Assignment for Module 2 (Multiattribute Utility Models)

1. Read Smart Choices, Chapters 1-7 (and the remaining chapters if possible.)

2. Read the following three articles, all in Electronic Reserve:


3. Build a multiattribute utility model for a problem that is work-related and which you personally face. Write a paragraph or two describing the problem and adequately annotate the model, that is, the selection of alternatives and criteria, assignment of utilities, and assessment of weights, to indicate the justification of your judgments. Use at least two explicit and distinct assumptions about the future. What differences between analyses for the two or more futures emerge?

   Now perform a few sensitivity analyses with your model. What changes in utility scores and weights are worth testing? What impacts do those changes have on the cumulative, weighted utilities for the alternatives?

   Using such "rules" as optimism, pessimism, regret, or expected value, identify a single alternative that you might choose. Explain your choice convincingly.
4. Repeat the exercise described above for a work or personal problem faced by another individual. You should serve as that individual's "decision consultant" and assist with the structuring of that person's choice.

5. Write a four-page essay discussing what you learned as a result of these modeling efforts (#4 and #5, above), especially new insights you have about your own decision-making processes (or the decision-making processes of others). Stand back, observe, and comment on this project.

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Assignment for Module 3 (Judgment Models)

1. Read the following:


2. Begin to familiarize yourself with the POLICY PC software.

3. (Cognitive Skill building). Attached is a hiring task described sequentially in three, four, and five cues. Create a NEW BLOCK in POLICY PC for this task and test your cognitive skill at least three times at each level. Record your function forms and weights for each skill building effort, and note your consistency score (R). Write a brief one-page essay about this cognitive skill building exercise.

Note: POLICY PC is a DOS program and you may find it hard to work with. If so, get in touch with me. It used to work fairly well with earlier versions of WINDOWS but in latter versions you may run into Catch-22's. The purpose of these assignments is not to frustrate you. I wish there were a WINDOWS version of this software, but there isn't yet one available.
4. Choose a work-related problems that involves a series of repetitive judgments about cases. Identify the key cues on which such judgments are based and develop a judgment task using POLICY PC for each task. Work with at least one other judge, so that you can compare your judgment policies. Analyze your intuitive judgment policies and report the results. Write a 3-page essay about your work. What did you learn about the problem? What did you learn about the strengths and weakness of the way you structured the problem for analysis using POLICY PC? What did you learn about your own judgment processes? What did you learn about your collaborator's judgment processes.

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THREE CUE TASK (20 CASES)

Interview Impression
Relative Weight = .333

References
Relative Weight = .333

Years of Experience
Relative Weight = .333

HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT YOU'LL SEE:

DO YOU WISH TO REFINE THE CUE SET? N
DO YOU WISH THE JUDGMENTS TO COME FROM AN EXISTING FILE? N
DO YOU WISH THE CUE VALUES TO BE RANDOMLY GENERATED? Y
DO YOU WISH TO SAVE THESE CUE VALUES? N
DO YOU WISH TO SAVE THIS SET OF JUDGMENTS? N
DO YOU WISH ALL FUNCTION FORMS TO BE ESTIMATED QUADRATICALLY? Y
DO YOU WISH THE QUADRATIC TERM CALCULATED BY SUBTRACTING THE CUE MEAN? Y
FOUR CUE TASK (25 CASES)

Interview Impression
Relative Weight = .3

References
Relative Weight = .2

Years of Experience
Relative Weight = .2

Examination Score
Relative Weight = .3

HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT YOU'LL SEE:

DO YOU WISH TO REFINE THE CUE SET? N
DO YOU WISH THE JUDGMENTS TO COME FROM AN EXISTING FILE? N
DO YOU WISH THE CUE VALUES TO BE RANDOMLY GENERATED? N
DO YOU WISH TO SAVE THESE CUE VALUES? N
DO YOU WISH TO SAVE THIS SET OF JUDGMENTS? N
DO YOU WISH ALL FUNCTION FORMS TO BE ESTIMATED QUADRATICALLY? N
DO YOU WISH THE QUADRATIC TERM CALCULATED BY SUBTRACTING THE CUE MEAN? Y
FIVE CUE TASK (30 CASES)

**Interview Impression**  
Relative Weight = .25

**References**  
Relative Weight = .05

**Years of Experience**  
Relative Weight = .1

**Examination Score**  
Relative Weight = .4

**Education**  
Relative Weight = .2

**HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT YOU'LL SEE:**

DO YOU WISH TO REFINE THE CUE SET?  
DO YOU WISH THE JUDGMENTS TO COME FROM AN EXISTING FILE?  
DO YOU WISH THE CUE VALUES TO BE RANDOMLY GENERATED?  
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DO YOU WISH ALL FUNCTION FORMS TO BE ESTIMATED QUADRATICALLY?  
DO YOU WISH THE QUADRATIC TERM CALCULATED BY SUBTRACTING THE CUE MEAN?
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Assignment for Module 4 (Resource Allocation Models)

1. Read the following:


   Darling, T. A., Mumpower, J. L., Rohrbaugh, J., & Vari, A. Negotiation support for multi-party resource allocation: Developing recommendations for decreasing transportation-related air pollution in Budapest. Group Decision and Negotiation, 1999, 8(1) 51-75. (recommended, not required)

2. Build a resource allocation model for a work-related problem. Write a brief description of the problem and adequately annotate benefit scores, costs, and relative weights to indicate the justification for your judgments. Use spreadsheet software, so that you can perform sensitivity analysis easily. Which aspects of your model (i.e., specific benefit, cost, or weight assessments) are most sensitive to potential changes?. Report your results concisely.

   Discuss in two to three pages what you learned from building the model, especially the strengths and weaknesses of the model building process.

3. Repeat assignment 2, this time for a problem faced by another individual. You should serve as that individual's "decision consultant."

   All assignments are overdue after date.
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Assignment for Module 5 (Negotiation and Conflict Management)

1. Read the following:


2. Read and study the materials distributed in class that give you instructions for an upcoming role-playing negotiation exercise to be conducted in the next class.

3. A set of EXCEL printouts is attached. Two countries (YELLOW and BLUE) have been involved for some years in border warfare. They are now engaged in negotiations about six issues. Their judgment policies about the desirability of potential treaties are described in graphic form, similar to the output of a MAU model or judgment analysis model from POLICY PC. The attachment displays the relative weights and utility curves (or function forms) that each country associates with each issue.

Your tasks are the following:

- Describe briefly each country's bargaining position. (You don't have sufficient information to know for sure WHY a country takes the position that it does, so you merely need to describe their positions, not explain or justify them.)

- The attachment also lists 100 randomly generated hypothetical treaties and the ratings that each country gave them, in accordance with the graphically displayed policies. Review these hypothetical treaties and their ratings. Prepare a brief "mediator's report" that identifies one or more hypothetical
treaties that appear to be potentially good settlements to the dispute. Justify your choice. Can you design a better alternative than is included in the set of 100? Why is it better?

- Describe what you believe you have learned about bargaining, negotiation, and analytic mediation as a result of this assignment.

3. Based on the “Getting to Yes” reading, write brief essays (no more than two pages each) addressing five of the following questions. Use examples to illustrate your points wherever possible.

- Define positional negotiating and principled negotiating (negotiating on merit) and explain why Fisher and Ury argue that negotiating on merit superior to positional negotiating.
- Why is it important to separate the people from the problem. How do perceptions, emotions, and communication play a role? Can people problems be prevented in the first place? Justify your answer.
- How can one go beyond positions to identify interests? What are most people’s most powerful interests? How should you handle your own interests if you are a disputant in a conflict?
- How can you invent creative options to resolve conflict? What are the keys to creating mutually beneficial agreements? How can you dovetail interests to create options for mutual gain?
- What is a BATNA? Why are negotiators’ BATNAs important in negotiations?
- How can objective criteria, fair standards and fair procedures be used to resolve conflict?
- What is the one-text procedure and how might it be used in different negotiations?
- Discuss an on-going negotiation (either from work or current affairs) from the perspective of the material discussed in “Getting to Yes.”
- Make up a good question about negotiation and conflict management and answer it.

*Above assignments are overdue after date.*
YELLOW'S JUDGMENT POLICY FOR EVALUATING QUALITY OF POTENTIAL CONTRACTS

- **Length of Treaty**
  - Relative Weight = 0.30
  - Graph showing utility over years.
- **France to Submitta**
  - Relative Weight = 0.15
  - Graph showing utility over years.
- **Width of DMZ**
  - Relative Weight = 0.15
  - Graph showing utility over kilometers.
- **Force in Occupied Area**
  - Relative Weight = 0.20
  - Graph showing utility over troops.
- **Extent of Release**
  - Relative Weight = 0.10
  - Graph showing utility over prisoners.
- **Extradition Treaty**
  - Relative Weight = 0.10
  - Graph showing utility over prisoners.


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The Bush School of Government and Public Service

Bush 637
Decision Making in Government and Public Service

Instructor
Jeryl L. Mumpower
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Phone: (979)-690-7526
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Office Hours: xxxx

Assignment for Module 6 (Group Decision Making)

1. Read the following:


2. Write a 5-10 page essay on group decision making. Be sure to address the following issues: What are the primary strengths and weaknesses of group decision making? How can group decision making be facilitated and the quality of group decisions be improved? How should we assess the quality of group decision making?

3. Write a brief (3-5 page) description of how you would use a group to address a specific public policy problem. Be clear about the problem and about whom you would include in the group and why. Explain why the problem is an appropriate one for group decision making and how you would manage or facilitate the group process.

All assignments are overdue after date.