
Organizational Behaviour

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Objectives

The core objectives of this course are:

- > Provide an opportunity for you to define your personal project and what you are going to do in the next few months / years to grow as an individual and a professional;
- > Have you discover things about you that will help you achieve your personal development goals;
- > Have you see your social world and other people differently—to change what you notice and think about and how you apprehend the world around you—and
- > Change what you do as you navigate through that world.

Description

We will discuss a set of core theoretical concepts that form the foundation of social and cognitive psychology as scientific fields. We will illustrate many of the concepts through in-class experiments. You will have a chance to put the theory into practice through assignments, case discussions and project assignments. I will ask you to reflect on how the scientific knowledge discussed in class can be put into practice in your own life within and outside organizations, to help you achieve your development goals.

Contents

The course is structured in 5 distinct parts.

Part 1: Introduction: Two Selves, Goals, Well-Being and Life Satisfaction

- > Session 1: Power, the experiencing self and the remembering self
- > Session 2: Well-Being and Life Satisfaction

Part 2: Thinking about Thinking- Basic Concepts

- > Session 3: System1, System 2, Attention and Effort
- > Session 4: The Lazy Controller - Associative Machine
- > Session 5: Cognitive Ease
- > Session 6: The Search for Coherence
- > Session 7: Case Zia Yusuf at SAP
- > Session 8: Judgments... They seem so easy, don't they?
- > Session 9: Self-Justification and the reduction of cognitive dissonance

Part 3 - Heuristics and Biases

- > Session 10: Impressions: What do people pay attention to?
- > Session 11: Judgments from Memory: Information Sampling and Availability
- > Session 12: Schemas, Stereotypes and Representativeness
- > Session 13: The Construction of Causal Explanations – Stereotypes
- > Session 14: Statistics and Regression to the Mean

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Part 4: Overconfidence

- > Session 15: Overconfidence & Leadership Illusion
- > Session 16: Being critical of Expert judgments
- > Session 17: Case: Gary Loveman and Harrah's Entertainment
- > Session 18: Over-optimism
- > Session 19. Case: Laura Esserman

Part 5: Conclusion

- > Session 20: Conclusion

Methodology

1. Involvement and Engagement

This course is time demanding! To accomplish the ambitious objectives of the course, you will need to spend a substantial amount of time each week engaging with the course material. Students have routinely told me that this is the most time-intensive course in the trimester. If you take that course, but are not ready to spend the necessary amount of time and energy reading the assigned readings and cases, thinking on your self-reflective assignments and your individual project, and meeting with your teammates to discuss the case studies, the course will be a very frustrating experience. On the other hand, students who have committed themselves to engage deeply with the course concepts have found the course to be an enriching and sometime transforming experience.

To accomplish our objectives, we need to be partners in the learning process. The design of the tiered classroom subtly reminds people of settings such as theatres in which they are entertained or see some lecture or performance. Then, in a desire to be liked or seen as helpful, professors and students become complicit in an exchange in which faculty “help” students through outlines, notes, class summaries, and a variety of teaching aids and students reciprocate by asking for more help and coming to evaluate the classroom experience as they would many other “service” or entertainment experiences.

The currently available empirical evidence suggests that instructor ratings and student learning (as assessed on objective tests) are completely uncorrelated. That is not surprising as teaching and learning are two separate activities. Teaching is what I do, learning is what you do.

I will do my best to make available to you the tools—the readings, a classroom environment conducive to learning and to candid discussion—that I hope will motivate you and encourage you to learn the material. But learning is your responsibility. Moreover, it is your responsibility to decide what is important for you to learn and retain, and how best to do that. For that reason, you will find few if any

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handouts being distributed to summarize the sessions or other such aids such as summaries of readings or texts.

This is not a briefing, a lecture, or a presentation, it is a course. When you subsequently need to put the material of this course into practice, you probably won't have the notes, handouts, the books, or me or my colleagues sitting near by. It is, therefore, my hope that you will work to internalize the learning, ideas, and the feelings and beliefs about power and influence that you develop during this course.

2. Education and Learning.

Education is about seeing new things or seeing the same things differently. Therefore, the materials and ideas that form the basis for much of the course material have been selected because they actually do challenge many aspects of conventional wisdom or the taken-for-granted assumptions that many people hold about human nature, how we think, our propensity to make mistakes and good predictions, our skills, the role of luck, the sources of success and influence. They even occasionally may seem inconsistent with other classes you are taking or have taken at the UPF or elsewhere. The ideas and concepts are, however, well-grounded in the literature in the behavioural and social sciences. If some of the readings or discussions disagree with your ideas or cause you to feel uncomfortable, that is part of the learning process.

3. Teaching Material

In-class experiments

We will illustrate many of the course concepts using in-class behavioural experiments. To participate in experiments, you will be asked to fill-in online surveys at the beginning of many of the course sessions. Please bring your Smartphone or laptop to class so as to be able to respond to the surveys and take part into that activity.

Evaluation criteria

Grades will be based on three components:

1. 30%: Class participation (including case study reports)
2. 40%: Final individual project
3. 30%: Self-Reflective Assignments

1) Participation

I will spend part of many sessions discussing readings / assignments with the class. Such discussion is generally an enjoyable and productive learning experience under the condition that students come prepared to the session. Students are therefore expected to complete all the readings and all the assignments.

I expect discussions to be engaging, fun, and productive learning experiences. Those who consistently come prepared to class, contribute to a positive learning

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atmosphere and are engaged with the course material and the pedagogical activities will receive a high participation grade. On the other hand, those who show a lack of involvement in the course, the discussions and the pedagogical activities will likely receive a very low participation grade.

In order to help me track your class participation, as well as to learn your names, I am asking you to use a nametag in every session. It will be impossible for me to track your participation if I do not know you and therefore you should try to make sure I know your name as early as possible. In fact, it is your responsibility to make sure that I know your name and properly account for your participation. If I do not know your name, I will not be able to give you a proper participation grade, even if you are a good contributor to the class discussion.

Thinking-about-Thinking Assignments

The course outline lists "Thinking-about-Thinking Assignments" for each session. These are questions about the material covered in the previous session that I am asking you to think about before coming to class. At the beginning of each class, I will randomly choose 2 or 3 students and ask them to share their thoughts about the question asked for that session. You should be ready to come in front of the class and give a 3 minute presentation of the outcome of your thinking process (just speaking, without any slides). Insightful presentations will give a considerable boost to your participation grade. These 'Thinking Assignments' are strictly oral assignments. You do not have any document to turn in.

Group assignments about the case studies

In order to motivate you to do the readings and think about the cases before class, the course outline lists questions about the case studies on Aula Global. After completing the readings for a given session, you should meet with your study group and discuss your answers together. Each study group will have to produce a written document answering all the questions to be submitted on Aula Global before the beginning of each relevant seminar session. Students are encouraged to discuss the readings together (within and across groups), but each group should produce their own original written report.

Case reports should be uploaded on Aula Global as .pdf documents by 9:00am the day of the session when they will be discussed. Often, there is no right or wrong answer, and to get a pass, you need to show that you put some serious thoughts in your response, as for the Self-Reflective assignments. You will not receive detailed written feedback about these assignments. Rather, you should seek the responses to your questions in the class discussion.

2) Individual Project

There will be an individual project designed to have you put the ideas of the course into practice or, at a minimum, think about how you intend to use the material of the

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course as you plan your future activities and career. The assignment is described in a document that will be posted on Aula Global at the beginning of the trimester. Individual projects should be uploaded on Aula Global as .pdf documents by 9:00am the day of the LAST session of the course.

3) Individual Self-Reflective Assignments

The Self-Reflective assignments are designed to help you explore the content of the course in the context of your own plans, objectives, values, and experiences. If taken seriously, these self-reflective assignments will be useful as work in process for your individual project. They will be graded on a letter grade scale: A/B/C/Fail.

These Self-Reflective assignments are designed as nudges to make you think about you, your plans for the future, and how you are going to achieve them. There is no right or wrong answer, and there is really no point in trying to imagine what the professors want to read and then write your assignment accordingly. If you do so, I can guarantee you that writing these assignments will be a frustrating experience. But if you take these assignments seriously and honestly, you will learn some valuable insights. To get a pass, you need to show that you put some serious thoughts in your response.

Self-Reflective assignments should be uploaded on Aula Global as .pdf documents by 9:00am the day of the practical session when they will be discussed.

4) Information concerning the written assignments

Turned-in assignments must be original and unpublished. Turning assignments in on time means turning them in when they are assigned per instruction provided by the teaching team. In order to make the logistics of the course as simple as possible, we will adopt the following rules:

- > Assignments should be uploaded on Aula Global as .pdf files on Aula Gloval by 9:00am the day they are due. We will not accept assignments via email.
- > Please use LASTNAME_FIRSTNAME.pdf as a filename.
- > If an assignment is submitted in a format other than a .pdf document and the teaching team cannot open the document, it will not be graded and thus will automatically receive a grade of 0.
- > No late assignment will be accepted. Late assignments will automatically receive a grade of 0.

These rules will be consistently applied, with no exception (this applies to the individual project as well)

5) Message from the program director

"Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason can have important consequences in your final grade.

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As with all courses taught at the UPF Barcelona School of Management, students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. If the course is again failed after the re-take, students may have to register again for the course the following year.

Plagiarism is to use of another's work and to present it as one's own without attributing the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at a Barcelona School of Management Master of Science and signing the "Honor Code," students acknowledge that they understand the Barcelona School of Management's policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program."

Bio of the professor

Gaël Le Mens is a professor in the Department of Economics and Business at UPF. His research focuses on learning by individuals and organizations. Several his papers explain how individuals might develop and maintain inaccurate beliefs because they rely on the biased samples of information they obtain from their experiences. In related projects on the dynamics of social processes, he has examined the development of technological trajectories, the evolution of cultural tastes and their consequences for organizational viability, the evolution of organizational inertia and dynamics of organizational failure.

Gaël's research has been published in top scientific journals such as Psychological Review, the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the USA (PNAS), Cognition, Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Organization Science and Administrative Science Quarterly. Popular accounts have appeared in the New York Times, the Times (London), WSJ.com, FT.com, USA Today, ABCNews.com, Focus and other in-print and online periodicals. He has taught graduate courses at UPF, INSEAD, London Business School and the University of Lugano in Switzerland.