

**Course Syllabus**  
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[ updated: Sunday, August 9, 2015 ]

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**Course:** MGT 458  
**Title:** Decision Making and Creativity (3 units)

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”  
---Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

**Program:** Bachelors of Science, Management  
Other Business and Economics majors  
Other CSUN majors  
**College:** CSUN College of Business and Economics

**Semester:** Fall, 2015  
**Class:** 13227  
**Day/Time:** Mon/Wed 3:30pm - 4:45pm  
(Mon 8/24 - Mon 12/7, 16 weeks)

**Location:** JH1236

**Delivery Format:** traditional

**Lead Student:** Wayne Smith, Ph.D.

**Office Room:** JH4225

**Office Hours:** Mon/Wed 4:45pm – 5:15pm (and by appointment)

**Office Phone:** +1 818.677.4524

**Email:** [wayne.smith@csun.edu](mailto:wayne.smith@csun.edu) (Subject Line = “[CSUN Mgt458]”)

**Public Web:** <http://ocw.smithw.org/2015fall/mgt458-13227/>

**Private LMS:** <http://moodle.csun.edu/> (needed to submit some deliverables)

**Required Materials (Bookstore):**

1. Hammond, J., Keeney, R., and Raiffa, H. (2002) *Smart Choices* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Broadway (ISBN 978-0767908863).
2. One Shakespearean play (e.g., Hamlet, King Lear). Exact titles to be determined later. All texts are available online (e.g., <http://www.gutenberg.org>) and inexpensive supplemental texts (e.g., Barron’s “Shakespeare Made Easy”) are widely available.
3. Three (3) “Green Books” (or “Blue Books”) (large format)

**Required Materials (non-Bookstore):**

1. Supplemental Materials—the URL is on the course web page
2. Harvard Business Review (HBR) Materials—the URL is on the course web page

**Recommended Materials:**

1. Hacker, D., and Sommers, N. (2011) *A Writer's Reference* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston:MA. ISBN-13 978-0-312-60143-0, ISBN-10 0-312-60143-3
2. Wall Street Journal (20-30 minutes daily, in printed or online form)  
[ <http://student.wsj.com/info/2010/08/05/ordering-information/> ]

You must bring your required materials, including any instructor-supplied name tag or desk tent card, with you to each class.

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the] analysis and skill-building in creative and ethical decision making, focused on managerial and organizational contexts. Decision making is considered as a comprehensive process, encompassing identification and framing of issues/problems, evaluations of alternatives, choices, implementation, and learning from the experience. Attention is given to a variety of contemporary decision-making and creativity techniques, in addition to traditional and rational decision-making models.

This course is *not* an online course. Attendance in class is required. This course is designed on a traditional university schedule. This course requires, at a minimum, three times the number of hours per week outside of class as the number of hours in class.

Also, students who wish to add must attend each class and submit all assigned work.

**Course Prerequisites:**

This course requires 1), completion of MGT 360 with a “C”, 2), completion of BUS302L, and 3), completion of the Upper-Division Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE). All prerequisites will be strictly enforced.

**Learning Objectives:**

The primary emphasis in this course is placed on acquainting students with the literature and practice of decision-making. A secondary emphasis is on helping students understand the relationship between decision-making and creativity, especially creativity in the context of market, product, or organizational innovation. The specific objectives are to:

- Understand the theories, models, and frameworks of key ideas in decision-making, such as rational expectations and social exchange, from a multi-disciplinary perspective
- Apply one or more decision-making models to creative environments, especially as viewed through the lens of English Literature
- Explore major issues and trends in the field
- Improve skills in the area of management communication, especially written communication

**Pedagogical Approach:**

The course will use a variety of approaches including lectures, videos, class discussions, assignments, analyses of business news and cases, and in-class, experiential exercises, including extemporaneous debate.

### **Learning Rhythms and Patterns:**

I tend neither to read nor summarize the required reading materials in class. I tend to offer clarifications, differences of perspectives, or explorations of the core material. Additionally, I tend not to use a large number of presentation slides, much less post them online. Students must allocate sufficient out-of-class time to do the required reading in order to participate in class and ask substantive questions as necessary. Students will need to have mastered necessary skills in reading comprehension, retention, and recall. Each class session will generally begin with an opportunity to ask questions regarding the required reading materials or lecture topics from the previous class session. Each class session is generally oriented around one or two learning themes. The textbook materials support the core ideas of those themes, the peer-reviewed and other materials support key theories and models of those themes, and the non-peer-reviewed and other materials support key ideas in practice or working examples.

### **Examinations and Quizzes:**

There will be one examination (a final) scheduled in advance. I may give cumulative exams, although I usually exclude specific material. The final exam will cover the chapters covered in class as well as in-class discussions and other non-textbook materials. Due to time constraints, we will not be able to cover each and every aspect of the textbook readings or other readings for class. Nonetheless, you are responsible for all the material (i.e., it is “fair game” for the exam) unless explicitly directed otherwise by the instructor. No make-up exams will be given without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency.

There will be at least two quizzes. The quizzes are scheduled after approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the material has been completed; you will need to keep up with the reading, classwork, and assignments. *Please bring a scantron and a large-format green book with you to each class.* The final exam may require a green book and the quizzes may require a green book. Additionally, please bring a blue pen or black pen with you to class each day.

### **Assignments:**

There will be at least two assignments (both team-based). The assignments will be described in advance and will be available on the course website.

- Assignment: Movies in Management (written)
- Assignment: Shakespeare in Management (presentation)

Assignments and reports announced in class may consist of self-assessments, case analyses, or short write-ups. Assignments and reports are due promptly at the beginning of class. Assignments and reports not submitted promptly at the beginning of class (I will make a “last call” announcement) are assessed an immediate 50% point penalty. No

assignments or reports will be accepted after the end of the class session without a signed note from a medical doctor or public safety agency. Therefore, if you fear you might miss class or might not be able to turn in your assignment on time, you may give it to another student to turn in on the correct day and at the correct time. Assignments and reports will be generally graded on straightforward point scheme (“scoring rubric”) enumerated within each assignment. In addition, the writing requirements will be scored for each assignment and report as well (in general, I take off 10% for each error in language use and composition).

Be sure to collect your scored exams, assignments and reports (in other words, anything you turn in) and retain them in your records.

**Exercises:**

There may be one or more exercises in the course. Some exercises are completed in-class, and some are completed out-of-class. Exercises will always be due in-class.

**Participation:**

I occasionally ask for volunteers in class. I often provide participation points to students for this effort. Additionally, if I call on you and you are either absent or not prepared, you will lose participation points. You can also lose participation points in other ways, such as not picking up scored/graded assignments and reports. There is extrinsic and intrinsic value to volunteering in class and being prepared for class.

**Grading System:**

The contribution of each component to the final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Component	Relative Weight
Participation	5%
Exercises	20%
Assignments	30%
Exams	45%

Weights within the “Participation,” “Exercises,” “Assignments,” and “Quizzes” components are distributed evenly. The Department of Management strives for some uniformity in final letter grading distributions. Therefore, students are ranked in class by weighted points. Letter grades are not assigned to any quiz, exam, assignment, or report. For each exam, I will provide not only the mean and standard deviation, but also the relevant letter grade percentiles as well. These percentiles can be used as a guide as to help assess your relative performance in class. Each student has the same opportunity to earn high marks. Students should study diligently and strive for high marks on a persistent basis. All of your work matters. There is no “non-important” work in this class.

Grades will be assigned based on the following (plus/minus suffixes may be used):

<b>Letter</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>“Real World” interpretation</b>
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grade you earn	interpretation	
A	Exceptional	Promote early
B	Very Good	Retain and provide merit pay increases
C	Average	Retain and provide cost of living increases only
D	Barely Passing	Let go when replacement is found
F	Failure	Fire immediately

I have minor hearing loss in my right ear. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and wait until I call on you. It helps me to be able to see you before you begin your question. Thank you in advance. All audio or video recording of class is prohibited.

**Classroom Disruptions:**

Please ensure that the audio portion (“ringtone”) of your cell phone is off during class. No interaction with your cell phone, including texting, is permitted during class. If you wish to use a computer in class to take notes, you must sit as far forward in the class as possible (usually in the first row of the room).

**Academic Integrity:**

Any cheating in or out of class will result in a failed exam, an “F” in the course, and a letter the Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs recommending that the student be expelled from the University. Additional classroom behavior requirements for this class are listed at:

<http://ocw.smithw.org/general/behavior.pdf>

**At the start of the semester:**

My class roster identifies students by name, CSUN ID, class level, and major. On the first day of class, I know very little about each student. However, I have found that some students benefit by visiting me in my office during scheduled office hours at least once very early in the course. Please do let me know if you fall into one of the following categories:

*Management students.* Management students need to earn a “C” or above in this course. Management students who find themselves in some difficulty by the mid-point of the course should initiate a dialogue with me in my office about their chosen major.

*Differently-abled students.* The textbook for this course is available in electronic form for students who are registered with the CSUN Center on Disabilities. Further, all materials in this course have been designed to be accessible as possible to those with visual, aural, motor, and cognitive impairments. If there are additional needs, please let me know as soon as possible.

*Military service.* If you are either currently in the active service, reserves, or ROTC, or will be attending OCS soon, please let me know. In particular, I want to ensure that the class schedule doesn’t conflict your service schedule. I also would like student veterans

to self-identify themselves to me as well. Veterans have unique experiences and can make important contributions to a management class.

*Student athletes.* I try to attend at least one game or meet for each student athlete, even if your sport is in a future semester. Again, you will need to self-identify yourself to me.

*International students.* Managing expectations is difficult; managing expectations regarding higher education and culture is *extraordinarily* difficult. Please see me as soon as possible if you do not completely understand any aspect of this course, including writing and grading standards.

**At the end of the semester:**

I do not discuss any aspect of scores or grades via email after the last class session. I can discuss scores or grades in my office after the beginning of the following semester.

Students who earn an “A” may request a written letter of recommendation from me. If such a letter is desired, please try to ask me before the end of the following semester. A request for a letter of recommendation begins and ends with a discussion in my office during office hours.

**Acknowledgements:**

Several individuals helped me develop this course, most of whom are my colleagues located in the Department of Management. My passion for decision-making, particularly in terms of quantitative reasoning and statistical mechanics, was sparked as a student of Dr. Abe Feinberg, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Systems and Operations Management.

A few former students also helped. Ms. Camerin Curry, a former top student in BUS302 (Gateway), helped me think through how to use the theory of theatre and the depth of literature in new ways to help me help management students in the broad and difficult area of creativity. Ms. Irina Halfon, arguably one of the finest students to graduate from the College of Business in the past ten years and now a full-time accountant, helped me think through decision-making in organizations and the evaluation of the impact of various decisions.

I have much to learn from all of these individuals, and most important, from my students.