

HONR 3365, Section 01 (CRN: 83963)
From Information to Decision: Coping with a Complex World
Fall, 2017: TR 11:00-12:20PM, CFS 104

Participating Faculty	
Dr. Mark Frank, Economics & International Business Office: SHB 232, ext. 4-4890 E-mail: markfrank@shsu.edu Office Hours TTh 1:00–3:00 pm and by appointment	Dr. Olena Leipnik, Sociology Office: CHSS 270J, ext. 4-4087 E-mail: SOC_OVL@SHSU.EDU Office Hours: M W: 12:30-2:00 pm and by appt.
Dr. Aaron Lynne, Biological Sciences Office: LDB – 125C, ext. 4-1544 E-mail: aaronlynn@shsu.edu Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 and by appointment	Dr. Jason Enia, Political Science Office: CHSS 496A, ext. 4-1467 E-mail: jason.enia@shsu.edu Office Hours: W: 10:30-12:00 and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Dixit, Avinash and Barry J. Nalebuff. 2008. The Art of Strategy: A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business and Life. W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393062434

Additional items available on Blackboard and/or handed out in class.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to fundamentals of decision making and problem solving that will prepared them for subsequent course work and to enrich their lives. To this end, upon completion of this course the student will have learned:

- the fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories of decision making.
- to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions.
- skills in working with others as a member of a team.
- a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.
- to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS: The course is divided into four sections. The instructor(s) responsible for each of the four sections will assign work, or give an examination, that will worth 100 points (20% of the final grade). Additionally, each student will be assigned to a group and will be responsible for working with other members of the group to present to the class a "Group Issue Analysis." The grade for the "Group Issue Analysis" is worth the remaining 20% of the final grade.

Section	Points
"How Science Informs Public Policy Decisions"	100
"Economic Choices & Decision Making"	100
"Social Differences in Making Decision and Choices"	100
"Decision Making and Global Problems"	100
Your "Group Presentation Issue Analysis"	100
Total Points	500

Course grades will be determined on the following basis:

Point Totals	Course Grade
450 – 500 pts.	A
400 – 449 pts.	B
350 – 399 pts.	C
300 – 349 pts.	D
Below 300 pts.	F

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Because of the seminar nature of the course, unexcused absences cannot be tolerated. **For each absence, beyond the two allowed by University policy, two percent (2%) of the total available points will be deducted from your grade.** Attendance will taken at each class meeting. Should serious illness or some other legitimate reason necessitate your missing class, notify the instructor for that unit as soon as possible concerning the reason for the absence.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable time frame in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If the student has a disability that may affect adversely their work in this class, then he or she needs to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how they can best be helped. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. There will be no retroactive accommodations.

USE OF TELEPHONES AND TEXT MESSAGERS IN ACADEMIC CLASSROOMS AND FACILITIES: Any use of a telephone or text messenger or any device that performs these functions during a test period is prohibited. These devices should not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way that they cannot be seen or used by the student. Even the visible presence of such a device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. Use of these devices during a test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty. See student code of conduct: <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/StudentGuidelines2010-2012.pdf#page=29>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule and the assignments are tentative. Changes will be announced in class.

Day/Date	Topic(s)	Assignment
August 24 (Th)	Introduction to the Course and Faculty; Group Project Assignments	Print and bring to class the “Group Project Preference Form” posted on Blackboard in ‘Group Presentation Documents’ (we’ll fill them out in class).
DECISION MAKING TO SOLVE GLOBAL PROBLEMS (Dr. Jason Enia)		
August 29 (Tu)	The fundamental and pervasive challenge of international politics: the nature of the system	Mearsheimer, John. 2001. The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, pp. 29-36; 42-54.
August 31 (Th)	Effects of the international system, pt 1: The security dilemma	Jervis, Robert. 1978. “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” excerpted pp. 335-349.
September 5 (Tu)	Public goods part 1: Pure Public Goods	Barrett, Scott. 2007. Why Cooperate? The Incentive to Supply Global Public Goods, pp. 1-21
September 7 (Th)	Public goods part 2: Commons Problems	Hardin, Garrett. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons at
September 12 (Tu)	The role of institutions in the international system	Keohane, Robert. 1984. After Hegemony, excerpted pp. 292-307.
September 14 (Th)	Final discussion	TBD
September 19 (Tu)	Group Issue Analysis #1: How Would You Reform the United Nations?	Print and bring the “Presentation Evaluation Form” to class (you will fill it out and submit it in class).
ECONOMICS & DECISION MAKING (Dr. Mark Frank)		
September 21 (Th)	Decisions in Sequence – Using Backwards Reasoning	Dixit A, and B. Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 2 “Games Solvable by Backwards Reasoning” in <i>The Art of Strategy</i>
September 26 (Tu)	Simultaneous Decision Making and the Nash Equilibrium	Dixit A, and B. Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 3 “Games Solvable by Backwards Reasoning” in <i>The Art of Strategy</i>
September 28 (Th)	Cases of Multiple Equilibria – Using Coordination and Focal Points	Dixit A, and B. Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 4 “A Beautiful Equilibrium” in <i>The Art of Strategy</i>
October 3 (Tu)	Cases of No Equilibria – Using Randomization to Mix Strategies	Dixit A, and B. Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 5 “Choice and Chance” in <i>The Art of Strategy</i>
October 5 (Th)	Group Issue Analysis #2: “During Recessions, Should the Government Bailout Large Firms at Risk of Failing?” (Group members bring “Grade Allocation Agreement” to class.)	Print and bring the “Presentation Evaluation Form” to class (you will fill it out and submit it in class).
October 10 (Tu)	In-class exam	

SOCIAL DIFFERENCES IN MAKING DECISIONS AND CHOICES (Dr. Olena Leipnik)		
October 12 (Th)	Social Institutions. The Roles of Structure and Agency	Berger, Peter. 1963. <i>Invitation to Sociology: a Humanistic Discipline</i> . Pp. 1-24.
October 17 (Tu)	Dominant group and the minorities. Exercise “The Construction of Race”	Harris, Aisha. “Santa Claus Should Not Be a White Man Anymore.” <i>State</i> . December 8, 2013. Plushnick-Masti, Ramit. “Texas teen's fatal DWI defense: 'Affluenza'.” <i>USA Today</i> . December 12, 2013.
October 19 (Th)	Choices in everyday life. Conspicuous consumption. Video	Sundie, Jill, et al. 2011. "Peacocks, Porsches, and Thorstein Veblen: conspicuous consumption as a sexual signaling system." <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i> 100.4: 664. Wang, Y. and Griskevicius, Y. 2014. “Conspicuous Consumption, Relationships, and Rivals: Women's Luxury Products as Signals to Other Women.” In <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> .
October 24 (Tu)	Major choices in life. Our partners, our careers. Exercise “Gender Factor in Making Choices”	Bielby, W. & Bielby, D. 1992. “I will follow him: family ties, gender-role beliefs, and reluctance to relocate for a better job.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 1241-1267.
October 26 (Th)	Existential choices and social environment. Exercise “Submarine”	Frankl, Victor. 1963. Chapter “The Case for a Tragic Optimism” in <i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> . Pp. 164 – 179.
October 31 (Tu)	In-class exam	
November 2 (Th)	Group Issue Analysis #3 (Group members bring “Grade Allocation Agreement” to class)	Print and bring the “Presentation Evaluation Form” to class (you will fill it out and submit it in class).
How Science Informs Public Policy Decisions (Dr. Aaron Lynne)		
November 7 (Tu)	What is Science?	Writing Assignment Guidelines
November 9 (Th)	Case Study 1: All that Glitters May Not Be Gold: Transgenic Rice	Case study notes
November 14 (Tu)	Case study 2: Sex and Vaccination	Case Study notes
November 16 (Th)	Case Study 3: The Petition: A Global Warming Case Study	Case Study notes
November 21 (Tu)	Case Study 4: And Now What, Ms. Ranger? The Search for the Intelligent Designer	Case Study notes
November 23 (Th)	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class Meeting	
November 28 (Tu)	Final Discussion	
November 30 (Th)	Group Issue Analysis #4: “Mandatory Vaccinations” (Group members bring “Grade Allocation Agreement” to class.)	Print and bring the “Presentation Evaluation Form” to class (you will fill it out and submit it in class).
December 7 (Th)	11:00-1:00: Final Exam Period. No class meeting.	Last chance to speak to faculty members regarding this class. Please contact faculty directly to arrange meeting.

GUIDELINES FOR "GROUP ISSUE ANALYSIS"

There will be four (4) "Group Issue Analysis" during the semester. A group of students will make a presentation on a particular issue. Students will be allowed to indicate preferences for particular issues and will be assigned to groups (teams) according to their preferences to the extent this is possible.

The group (team) presentations must include:

1. The necessary background information to put "the issue" in a meaningful context.
2. Opposing points of view.
3. Critical responses to the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing points of view.
4. Each member of the team is expected to fully participate in the oral presentation.
5. Each team member is expected to recommend an issue resolution — his/her response and justification for it.

Required in advance:

1. It is **essential** for each group to have a **minimum of two meetings** with the faculty member responsible for the particular unit, and
2. An **issue summary** distributed to seminar members containing
 - a. a brief outline of the background of the issue,
 - b. the main contending points of view,
 - c. the major pros and cons for the points of view, and
 - d. suggestions for follow-up inquiry/reading.
3. The procedure to be used for **allocating points among group members** must be submitted prior to the group presentation. (Refer to *Grade Allocation Agreement* and example on the following pages.)

Evaluation Criteria and Methods: The presentation of the issue analysis by the group should (a) be clearly organized, (b) convey all the major relevant points accurately, (c) use appropriate public speaking techniques, and (d) use appropriate technology. The attached *Presentation Evaluation Form* will be used to evaluate each aspect of the presentation and the points associated with each evaluative criteria. A copy of this form is available on Blackboard.

Evaluation Weights: Fellow students, participating faculty, and the faculty member responsible for that course unit will evaluate the "Group Issue Analysis." Each evaluator will complete a form indicating the rating given to the presentation and the reasons for the rating. The overall rating will be determined using the following weights:

1/3 = The average of the student ratings,

1/3 = The average of the faculty ratings (by those faculty in attendance), and

1/3 = The rating by the faculty member in charge of the unit.

Point Allocation Among Group Members: The total points to be allocated among the group is a function of the group average score (0 to 100) and the decision among the group members about how to allocate the points. Members of the group must decide, based on the perceived contribution of each group member, how to allocate the points. For example, if each group member is perceived to have done the appropriate share of the work on the group project, then each member will be given 100% of the points awarded. So if the project was given a grade of 90 then each team member would receive a grade of 90. Alternatively, if there are four members of the team and it is perceived that two team members do more work than the other two, then two members might be given 110% of the grade (99 points) and the other two receive only 90% of the grade (81 points). The allocation must maintain the average for the group, so for every point above the average that one or more team members receive, one or more other team members must have an equivalent reduction. Any student who feels they have been awarded an improper allocation may appeal to the class coordinator. You will indicate your group's point allocation on the "Grade Allocation Agreement Form" (form available on Blackboard, see example below).

HONR 2331
Grade Allocation Agreement

Grade Allocation for Group _____

	Group Member	Grade Allocation (%)	Group Grade	Member's Grade
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Average = 100%

Signatures:

Fill out these two
sections & sign.

The rest will be
calculated for you.

HONR 2331
Grade Allocation Agreement

Grade Allocation for Group _____

Group Member	Grade Allocation (%)	Group Grade	Members Grade
1. Sandy	90%	90	81
2. Bill	100%	90	90
3. Stacy	110%	90	99
4. Robyn	110%	90	99
5. Frank	90%	90	81

Average = 100%

Average = 90

Signatures:



HONR 2331 Presentation Evaluation Form

Group Issue: _____

Criteria	Criteria and points awarded--100 points possible				Points
	1--6 points	7--12 points	13--18 points	19--24 points	
Organization (1 to 24 points)	No coherent sequence of information.	Some coherent sequencing but presentation jumps around.	Group presented information in a logical sequence.	Group presented information in a logical, interesting sequence.	_____
	1--8 points	9--16 points	17--24 points	25--32 points	
Knowledge of Topic/Information Accuracy (1 to 32 points)	Presenters have little grasp of the topic, have difficulty answering even simple questions, a large number of inaccurate statements made.	Presenters have some grasp of the topic but are able to answer only simple questions, several inaccurate statements made.	Presenters accurately grasp the content and adequately answer direct questions, but cannot elaborate.	Presenters at ease with the content and can give further elaboration/ explanation as needed.	_____
	1--5 points	6--10 points	11--15 points	16--20 points	
Balance (1 to 20 points)	Mentioned both sides of the issue.	Presented weak cases for both sides.	Presented a strong case for only one side and a weak case for the other.	Presented strong cases for both sides.	_____
	1--3 points	4--6 points	7--9 points	10--12 points	
Use of Technology (1 to 12 points)	Group used little or no presentation technology.	Group used technology but in a manner that poorly supported the presentation.	Group used technology in a manner adequate to support the presentation.	Group used technology adding significant value to the presentation.	_____
	1--3 points	4--6 points	7--9 points	10--12 points	
Public Speaking/ Delivery (1 to 12 points)	Presenters read from notes, they mumble, and used incorrect pronunciation/ grammar.	Presenters make some eye contact, their voices are audible, there are a number of noticeable mistakes of pronunciation/ grammar.	Presenters engage audience, their voices are distinctly audible, few mistakes of pronunciation/ grammar.	Animated presenters hold audience attention, and the previous criteria are met.	_____
				Total Points →	

Evaluators Comments:

Evaluator: ____ Student ____ Faculty