
Organizational Behavior

Professor: Gaël Le Mens

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 4 ECTS

Term: 1st Term

Objectives

The core objectives of this course are a) to 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; b) to have you discover things about you that will help you achieve your personal development goals; c) to 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 d) to also change what you do as you navigate through that world.

This Syllabus describes everything I can think of that is relevant to the course and its requirements and logistics. Please read it carefully and use it as a guide to what we will be doing.

Methodology

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 in the theory sessions. 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, to help you achieve your development goals. If you have engaged the course material enough on a regular basis during the quarter, you will notice that how you see others and how they see you will have changed substantially.

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. Those who have committed themselves to engage

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deeply with the course concepts have found the course to be an enriching and sometime transforming experience.

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 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 nearby. 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 behavioral 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 behavioral 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. Your participation in most if not all online surveys will be anonymous.

Required Books:

1. Thinking, Fast and Slow, by Daniel Kahneman (2011). This book provides an in-depth discussion of the concepts that will be taught. Many of the book chapters are assigned readings for the theory sessions. I am asking you NOT to read the chapters before they are assigned. The reason is that we will do, in class, a number of the experiments that are discussed in the book. If you read the chapter beforehand, you will know the experiment results before we do the experiment in class and you will eliminate all the fun and surprise that are should make the course memorable and enjoyable (and ease your learning). On the other hand, if you read the chapter AFTER the corresponding session, it will help you fixate the learning in your memory and will also make your exam prep easy
2. Power, by Jeffrey Pfeffer, 2010, Harper Business. This book discusses how many psychological concepts can be used to your advantage in organizational setting. It provides a conceptual background for a number of the case discussions. Although you might not agree with some of the positions of the author (you surely do not have to agree with him!), this book discusses a number of issues that are worth reflecting on as you decide where to start your career and the type of professional life you will enter.

To go further (optional readings to learn more deeply about the psychological concepts that provide the foundation for the course):

1. The Social Animal (10th edition, 2007), by Elliot Aronson, Worth Publishers. This is a basic social psychology textbook, well-written, engaging, and accessible to non-experts. Any other recent edition or a Spanish translation should work as well (although it is useful to know the concepts in English, as we will discuss them in that language in class).
2. Encyclopedia of Social Psychology 2 Volume Set (2007), by Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs.
3. Social Cognition Making Sense of People (1999), by Ziva Kunda.

Readings to download from Aula Global - To the extent possible, I will make the assigned reading available for download on Aula Global. Some of the readings can

be a bit challenging and therefore I therefore encourage you not to wait for the last minute before starting to read the material for a given session.

Case studies - Due to copyright restrictions, it is impossible for me to post some of the case studies on Aula Global. You will be provided with access to the case studies by the program management office:

1. Zia Yusuf at SAP: Having Impact (OB73-PDF-ENG)
2. Jeffrey Sonnenfeld (A): The Fall From Grace (OB34A-PDF-ENG)
3. Gary Loveman and Harrah's Entertainment (OB45-PDF-ENG)

Evaluation criteria

Grades will be based on three components:

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

Bio of Professor

Gaël Le Mens is a Full 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. He is the holder of a €1.2M ERC Consolidator grant on belief and attitude change.

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-

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print and online periodicals. He has taught graduate courses at UPF, INSEAD, London Business School, ESADE, and the University of Lugano in Switzerland. He has given invited lectures at Stanford, MIT and IESE.