



Albertus Magnus College

Course Syllabus

Course Code and Title: Accelerated-Degree-Program- MOL-507 Critical Thinking & Decision Making

Albertus Magnus College adheres to the definition of a credit hour in compliance with and as defined by [NECHE commission policy](#).

CRITICAL THINKING & APPLIED DECISION MAKING - Online

Course Description: Seminar participants will evaluate their own decision-making skills and consider optimal ways of reaching decisions individually and in a group context. The psychology of decision making will be explored with an emphasis on the biases and motivations which may prejudice our decision-making abilities. Participants will critically analyze contemporary decisions in society and apply the course material to a positive organizational context. Students will continue to develop their research techniques and will use the critical thinking skills they develop to identify, explore, and research an issue of their choosing.

PROGRAM AND COURSE OFFERING INFORMATION

Program: School of Professional and Graduate Studies – Masters of Leadership / Master of Science in Management and Organizational Leadership

Session (Mod or Semester): MOL-507-DL1) Crit.Think.& Decision Making

Class Meetings (Days of Week & Times): TBD

Delivery method (On-ground, Blended or Online): Online

Number of Credits: 3

Textbook and Supplementary Readings:

- Collins, J., & Morten, T.H. (2011). *Great by choice*. New York: Harper Collins Publishing.
- Harvard Business Review. (2013) *HBR's 10 must reads on making smart decisions*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Course announcements, assignments, and supplemental materials will be posted to *eLearning*.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Don Nowill, PhD

College email: dpnowill@albertus.edu

Contact (phone): 203-891-7209

Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30 – 5:30

Instructor Biography: Don Nowill, PhD, ACC

I am an organizational psychologist, consultant, coach, and a business school faculty member. As an instructor, I'm passionate about seeing you learn, develop and master the knowledge that is most important to you. I know the pressures and sacrifices of working and going to school full-time. I've been there. I completed my BS, MBA, MS Healthcare Administration and PhD while working full-time. I am here to help you learn, develop and be successful. So, if you are stuck or don't understand an assignment don't hesitate to reach out to me for help.

My academic areas of specialty include leadership and management, organizational behavior and development, entrepreneurship, and strategic marketing and planning. My research interests are leadership effectiveness, organizational revitalization and the impact of relationships on organizational performance, engagement and personal well-being.

My other professional work is as an organizational psychologist. I work with executives, professionals, management teams and boards on issues of relationship rebuilding and restoration, organizational revitalization and performance. I'm passionate about helping entrepreneurs, small-business owners and executives improve their performance and the sustainability of their companies so that they can earn the income they deserve and live the life they want.

My academic credentials include a Ph.D. and M.A. in Human Development & Organizational Systems from The Fielding Graduate University, a MBA and M.S. in Healthcare Administration from the University of Houston-Clear Lake and B.S. in Accounting and Finance from Northeastern University. I am also an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) awarded by the International Coaching Federation (ICF); the largest coach credentialing body in the world.

I live in Hamden, Connecticut, but I grew up in western Massachusetts. I have lived in Boston, MA, Las Vegas, NV, Houston, TX, Summit and Princeton, NJ, Yardley, PA and Orlando, Florida. When I'm not working, I enjoy golfing, bicycling, weight training, and hanging out with my girlfriend, my bearded collie, Jax and close friends.

Education:

- Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems
- MBA with Concentration in Marketing
- MS in Healthcare Administration
- BS in Finance and Accounting

Experience:

- Started several businesses and numerous internal entrepreneur venture
- Led several successful turnarounds
- Worked professionally in Strategic Planning, Finance, Cost Accounting and Operations.
- Served various organizations at C level - Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer
- Coached numerous business owners and executives
- Over 25 years of business experience

Certification:

- Associate Certified Coach (ACC), *International Coaching Federation*
- Emotional Intelligence Assessment and Coaching
- Leadership Development Assessment and Coaching Certified (CCL, Hogan, and Campbell)

- Human Dynamics Assessments applied to work
- Certificate in Mediation

COLLEGE POLICIES

Tradition of Honor: As a member of the Albertus Magnus College Community, each student taking this course agrees to uphold the principles of honor set forth by this community, to defend these principles against abuse or misuse, and to abide by the regulations of the College. To this end, every student must write and sign the following statement at the end of each examination: ***“I declare the Honor Pledge.”***

Intellectual Honesty: Plagiarism is a serious offense against academic integrity and intellectual honesty. In completing written assignments, the student must work independently unless the class instructor indicates otherwise. It is important for students to understand that they must reference the sources for all direct quotes, for the rephrasing of information from an outside source, and for ideas borrowed from readings. Citations are also needed for any images, videos, or other multimedia the student may use in their ePortfolio. Students are required to use APA or MLA format when referencing sources. Failure to cite appropriate references in any of these instances results in an act of plagiarism, intentional or unintentional. The first violation shall result in a grade of zero for the assignment; a second violation will result in failure of the course. If a student is unfamiliar with these formats, please notify the instructor.

Appropriate Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to show a respect for order, the rights of others, and to exemplify a sense of honor and integrity in the classroom. Student conduct is considered an integral part of the educational process. Therefore, no student should be denied the right to learn as a direct result of disruptions in the classroom. Active learning, open inquiry, and the free expression of informed opinion are the foundations of a liberal education at Albertus Magnus College. However, student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct the class is prohibited. Students are expected to be considerate and respectful of the rights, views, and interests of other students and faculty. The instructor will take appropriate action if students do not abide by these rules.

Accommodations for Special Needs: Please advise the instructor of any special problems or needs at the beginning of the semester. Those students seeking reasonable accommodations based on disabilities should contact the Director of Academic and Student Disability Services, Aquinas Hall, Room 114 at (203) 672-1050, or email asejdic@albertus.edu, to obtain a Faculty Accommodation Letter. Albertus Magnus College complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In order to respect the independence, rights and dignity of students with disabilities, the College initiates services only after a student makes a voluntary disclosure of a disability to the Office of Academic and Student Disability Services. Students who are approved for accommodations are responsible for approaching instructors in a timely manner to provide faculty accommodation letters and to arrange how accommodations will be implemented. Accommodations cannot be retroactive, so we strongly advise students to make accommodation appointments as soon as possible.

In providing reasonable accommodations, the College shall not fundamentally alter the nature of programs, services, or activities; require waiver of essential academic standards or violate accreditation requirements.

Online Course Etiquette: This course involves use of the Albertus *eLearning* system. It is important to maintain appropriate interactions with your classmates and instructor in the online environment. All students must review the Albertus policies regarding proper etiquette for interaction in online course work.

COURSE ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICY

PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE/BLENDED COURSES

In on-ground and online discussions, students at the graduate level should be able to:

- Demonstrate both reflective and critical thinking skills, which show the ability to ask necessary questions and critique existing viewpoints (including one's own).
- Offer a unique and relevant perspective on class discussion.
- Respond to existing discussions and begin new threads of discussion, which advance and extend the concepts and ideas of the class.
- Respond to opposing viewpoints and opinions.
- Show the ability to "tradeoff" one's own points of view and perspective when encountering new evidence or viewpoints of others.
- Synthesize differing and opposing ideas and concepts.
- Apply appropriately and meaningfully, to assigned problems and discussions, research encountered in the course and cite correctly.

ATTENDANCE IN ONLINE/BLENDED COURSES

The College policy regarding attendance will be followed in this course.

PARTICIPATION

Exemplary (A)	Strong (B)	Weak (C)	Unsatisfactory (F)
Completes all online assignments (individual and/or team papers, posts, presentations). Writes postings that offer a unique perspective. Demonstrates clear evidence of reflective and critical thinking. Integrates and synthesizes key ideas. Clarifies and extends existing viewpoints. Disagrees respectfully with views of fellow learners; recognizes necessary tradeoffs in own points of view. Incorporates research, when appropriate. Cites accurately. Uses correct grammar and punctuation.	Completes all online assignments (individual and/or team papers, posts, presentations). Writes some postings that offer a unique perspective. Demonstrates some evidence of reflective and critical thinking. Integrates and synthesizes a few key ideas. Clarifies and extends several existing viewpoints. Disagrees respectfully with views of fellow learners; only occasionally recognizes necessary tradeoffs in own points of view. Incorporates research, when appropriate. Often cites accurately. Uses mostly correct grammar and punctuation.	Completes most online assignments (individual and/or team papers, posts, presentations). Offers a perspective, but postings lack clarity or relevance. Shows little evidence of reflective or critical thinking. Does not integrate or synthesize key ideas. Does not clarify or further existing viewpoints. Shows no consideration of views of fellow learners. Shows reluctance to tradeoff point of view. No inclusion of research. Uses weak grammar and punctuation.	Makes few or no postings, adds no value to discussions, does not complete assigned activities in a timely manner.

Class Announcements: The instructor uses *eLearning* and email to communicate with students between classes. Students are expected to check their Albertus Magnus email and *eLearning* course at least every-other day for announcements from the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A self-assessment of own decision making style/skills linked to the concepts provided in the text.
- A research-based course paper that analyzes an important aspect of decision making.
- Application of the course concepts to personal and professional decisions as demonstrated in short papers, classroom discussions, and online postings.

Course Outcomes

Individual

The following outcomes are expected of each learner for this course:

- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, contrast the roles of advocacy and enquiry in effective decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain the “three Cs” of decision making: conflict, consideration, and closure.
- Through writing a two-page paper, explain five myths that surround decision making in organizations.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain the role of empirical creativity in decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, identify how managers can recognize sources of bias when making decisions.
- Through writing a two-page paper, describe how leadership style influences how decisions are made.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain why organizations that are specific, methodical, and consistent in their decision making tend to be successful in times of uncertainty.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, identify psychological traps that can adversely affect management decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain the impact of risk and uncertainty on decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, discuss why managers tend to make overly optimistic forecasts when making

decisions about investments.

- Through participating in a team presentation assignment, identify strategies for a decision-making approach that balances risk and rewards.
- Through participating in a team presentation assignment, assess the effects using obsolete knowledge and traditional approaches on decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, describe the benefits of using “evidence-based management” in decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, identify the role of “productive paranoia” in organizational success.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain why being consistent and methodical is important when making decisions.
- Through writing a two-page paper, describe the role of ethics, personal values, morals, and beliefs in decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, describe the role of organizational culture in decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, explain the role of luck in the successful outcome of decisions.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, describe the role of strategic planning in relation to organizational decision making.
- Through responding to an online discussion-board question and participating in an online discussion with other class members, specify the benefits of continuous issues focused strategic planning in organizational decision making.

Team Learning Outcomes:

- Through participating in a team presentation assignment, assess the effects using obsolete knowledge and traditional approaches on decision-making.
- Through participating in a team presentation assignment, identify strategies for avoiding bias and other awareness traps when making decisions.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Unless otherwise specified:

Discussion Board (DB) Posts: Main discussion board post (response to DB question) is due Thursday. Response to peer’s main post is due by the end of the day Saturday (unless stated in e-learning otherwise).

Assignments: All assignments are due the end of the day Sunday – unless stated otherwise in e-learning courseroom.

If there are circumstances that may delay the completion of an assignment, it is a student's responsibility to dialog with the instructor *before* the assignment is due to discuss options. Failure to complete the assignment on time and without prior discussion may result in zero credit for the assignment.

OUTCOME MEASURES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following are recommended grading weights; the final grading weights are always at your discretion. In addition to the weighted assignments below, you may assign homework to help individuals and teams to successfully achieve the course objectives.

Assignment	Responsibility (Team or Individual)	Session Due	Recommended Grading Weight
Discussion board postings and responses to other learners	Individual	Sessions One–Eight	30%
Team assignments	Team	Sessions Three–Six (As assigned)	10%
Final Paper	Individual	Session Eight	15%
Final Presentation	Individual	Session Eight	15%
Individual papers	Individual	Session 1-4	15%
Class participation	Individual	Sessions One–Eight	15%

TEAM – MOVIE ANALYSIS

TEAMS WILL MAKE 20-MINUTE IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS. ONLINE STUDENTS: Will submit their presentations the night of scheduled class and include audio to discuss each slide. As a last resort you can use speaker notes. Your Team assignments are posted in the courseroom.

YOUR PRESENTATION IS BASED ON ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE FROM THE FOLLOWING PERSPECTIVES:

Team	Presentation	Topic
A	Week 4	The impact of bias and other psychological traps on the decisions made by key decision makers in the movie
B	Week 5	How different attitudes towards risk and rewards affected the decisions made in the movie
C	Week 6	The impact of using obsolete knowledge and traditional approaches on the quality of the decisions made in the movie
D	Week 7	How different approaches to ethics, morals, and personal values affected the decisions made in the movie

MOVIE CHOICES:

Thirteen Days (2001) starring Kevin Costner. The movie tells the story of the Cuban missile crisis that brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of war. The movie does an excellent job of illustrating the decision-making process used to resolve the crisis. (True Story)

Apollo 13 (1995) starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon: The movie tells the story of the ill-fated mission to land on the moon and how the crew and NASA overcome a series of problems to return the crew safely. (True Story)

Crimson Tide (1995) starring Denzel Washington and Gene Hackman. On a U.S. nuclear missile sub, a young first officer stages a mutiny to prevent his trigger-happy captain from launching his missiles before confirming his orders to do so. One is hard-pressed to know who is right and who is wrong regarding the decisions made and actions taken.

Moneyball (2011) starring Brad Pitt, Robin Wright, and Jonah Hill. Oakland A's general manager Billy Beane's successful attempt to put together a baseball club on a budget by employing computer-generated analysis to decide who to acquire as new players.

Another Movie of the team's choice subject to the instructor's approval

INDIVIDUAL COURSE PAPER

Learners will select one of the following topics for their individual course paper.

- The effect of attitudes to risk on decision outcomes
- The causes and effects of judgmental distortions and bias
- The dynamics of decision making in groups and teams
- The role of creativity in decision making
- Factors influencing decision making in successful organizations
- Another decision related topic of the learner's choice (with approval from the instructor)

Learners should provide real-life examples either from personal experience or from the literature to illustrate the points made in the paper. The course paper should be a minimum of six pages in length and be in APA format. In addition to referencing course texts, the paper should reference a minimum of three peer-reviewed journals.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION - Learners will make a 7- to 10-minute PowerPoint presentation of their papers to the class in Session Eight.

ONLINE STUDENTS: Presentation needs to include audio to discuss each slide. As a last resort you can use speaker notes.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION GRADING RUBRIC

Organization	Presentation is organized in a logical way that complements the central theme; transitions are well-paced to create a natural and engaging flow (18-20)	Presentation is organized in a logical way and transitions are paced so that the material is easily accessible (16-17)	Presentation organized mostly in a logical way and transitions are paced so that the material can be understood with focus and effort (14-15)	Presentation organized in a way that is illogical OR transitions are paced so that the material cannot be understood (0-13)	20
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates comprehensive exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (9-10)	Demonstrates moderate exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (8)	Demonstrates minimal exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (7)	Does not demonstrate exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (6)	10
Visual Appeal	There is a consistent visual theme that helps enhance understanding of the ideas; includes multiple types of media (18-20)	Original images are created using proper size and resolution that enhance the content; includes more than one type of media (16-17)	Visually depicts topic and assists audience; images are proper size and resolution (14-15)	Graphics are unrelated to content and cross over each other. Distracting, busy, and detract from presentation (0-13)	20
Narration (Writing/ Audio)	Audio is clearly recorded. Mechanics and style ensure clarity. Incorporates multiple properly cited scholarly resources (23-25)	Audio is somewhat clearly recorded. Mechanics and style promote clarity. Incorporates some properly cited scholarly resources (20-22)	Audio is unclear. Mechanics and style make narration intelligible. Incorporates very few properly cited scholarly resources (18-19)	Audio is not included. Several mechanical errors OR does not incorporate scholarly resources (0-17)	25
Earned Total					100%
Comments:					