Decision Making in Government and Administration

Public Administration 611 (4 hours)

Instructor: John Rohrbaugh

Classes: Thursday 5:45 – 8:45 p.m.
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Hours: Monday 3:00 – 5:30 p.m.; Thursday 3:00 – 5:30 p.m.
(and by appointment)

Overview: The main objective of this course is to survey contemporary theory and research concerning managerial decision making so that familiarity with a variety of formal modeling techniques might be gained. In the process, it is hoped that students will come to better think about their thinking and, as a result, improve their own decision-making skills. A major focus of the course will be on the conduct of decision consultancies during which actual problems of judgment and choice that others are facing will be explored. Although formal models from the field of decision science can provide useful frameworks for exploring the difficulties of complex decision making, they are not viewed here as solution systems, that is, as the mechanisms by which judgments and choices should be made. The emphasis of this course is far more on the improvement of the decision making than the improvement of the decision model. Because decision making often occurs within the context of a group, the course will give special consideration to team processes.

Schedule:

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Introduction to course; examination of decision processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Assessing discrete alternatives; multiattribute utility models</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Idea generation; sensitivity analyses; group exercise</td>
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<td>9/26</td>
<td>Harmonizing solutions; consideration of multiple futures</td>
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<td>10/3</td>
<td>Resource allocation models; cost-benefit approaches</td>
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<td>10/10</td>
<td>Investment progressions and efficient frontiers; group exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>Deciding about resource reductions; sensitivity analyses</td>
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<td>10/24</td>
<td>Intuition and analysis; role of judgment in decision making</td>
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10/31  Knowledge and consistency; *group exercise*
11/7   Group judgment models; cognitive skill building
11/14  Negotiation and conflict management; *group exercise*
11/21  Analytical mediation; compromises and horse trading
12/5   Equity and utility in multi-party negotiations
12/12  Final examination

**Grading:**

- Multiattribute utility model and essay (due 10/3)
- Resource allocation model and essay (due 10/24)
- Judgment models and essay (due 11/14)
- Analytical conflict model and essay (due 12/12)

Each project assignment is counted equally as one-fifth of the final grade. The final examination is counted as one-fifth of the final grade. Late assignments will be accepted with a grade penalty of 10% for each passing week. All project reports must be submitted in “hard” copy, not electronically. The grade earned by each student does not depend in any way on the distribution of others’ grades. There is no penalty for assisting and supporting other students in this course (excepting violations of the academic rules and regulations of this university).