

Choice in Context: Research Perspectives

2016-17 Academic Year
Master of Research in Economics, Finance and Management

1. Description of the subject

- Research Seminar
 - Total credits: 6 ECTS
 - Type of subject: Optative
 - Department of Economics and Business
 - Coordinator: Gaël Le Mens
 - Teaching team:
G. Cornelissen / G. Chondrakis / M. Epure / G. Le Mens / D. Navarro-Martinez / Helena Ramalhinho
- Code: 31914
Workload: 150 hours
Term: 3rd

2. Teaching guide

• Introduction

People routinely make choices in complex environments they do not fully understand. In such settings, they cannot consciously evaluate the available alternatives on all their attributes and then make a utility-maximizing choice. Nevertheless, people still make choices and bear the consequences of these choices. How do they manage to do this and how do they deal with this? In this research seminar, we will discuss state-of-the art knowledge about how people decide such complex environments. We will focus on a variety of environmental parameters such as the organizational environment, the position in a social network, in a status hierarchy or the political and cultural context. We will also study how additional factors such as personality, emotions, or ethical concerns affect decision-making. We will invoke a number of different theoretical perspectives (e.g. cognitive psychology & social psychology, decision science, business strategy, managerial accounting, financial reporting, operations management, organizational behavior).

Professors from multiple areas of the department will contribute to teaching the course.

Finally, there will be one session to wrap-up the course.

• Teaching methodology

Each professor will select two to four main papers related to the research they will discuss – and possibly some background readings that will help you understand where the papers fit in the current state of knowledge. You will have to read these papers carefully before the session they are assigned to. For each week, you will choose one of two types of assignments:

- **Option 1:** Write a two-page short paper on how the assigned readings relate to your Master / MRes thesis. Explain how you can use the insights / methods / theoretical framework developed in the readings for the week inform your thesis project. If this course is to help you move forward with your own research ideas (and your thesis), this should be your preferred option.
- **Option 2:** Choose two of the assigned paper ('articles to be discussed'). Write a one-page commentary on each of the two papers. The commentaries should highlight: (1) the ideas (substantive and/or methodological) that you find interesting and/or (2) the problems/advantages you see in the adopted methodology. These commentaries will be shared with the professor teaching the session and should not simply summarize the papers. Instead, they should reflect critical thinking and analysis of the papers being discussed.

Assignments have to be sent by email to the professor by **19:00 the day before** the first session taught by this professor (typically, this will be Sunday 19:00). They will be graded by the professor in charge of the session for which they are due.

The sessions will be run in a 'seminar' format: students will take turns in leading the discussion of the assigned papers. The professor will make sure the discussion is covers the important themes for the session. He or she will also provide some perspective by situating the research being discussed in the broader literature. Finally, the professor will give the students feedback on the commentaries they wrote in preparation for the sessions.

• Assessment and Grading System

Your grade for the course will be made of two components:

- 50%: Average of the top N-2 assignments (out of N assignments – with N likely equal to 10).

- 50%: Participation in the sessions (each professor will give you a participation grade for their session(s)).

These grades will be averaged with a weight corresponding to the number of sessions taught each professor.

The readings for each session will be made available on the BGSE intranet.

3. Schedule (tentative)

(Monday – Tuesday from 11:00 to 13:00)

Theme # 1: Judgments in contexts: Rational choice, cognitive biases and information sampling

S1	Gaël Le Mens (gael.le-mens@upf.edu)
S2	Gaël Le Mens
S3	Gaël Le Mens
S4	Gaël Le Mens

Theme # 2: The role of emotions in decision-making processes

S5	Daniel Navarro-Martinez (daniel.navarro@upf.edu)
S6	Daniel Navarro-Martinez
S7	Daniel Navarro-Martinez

Theme # 3: Governance and control systems in organizations

S8	Mircea Epure (mircea.epure@upf.edu)
S9	Mircea Epure
S10	Mircea Epure

Theme # 4 Predictive Analytics for Logistics and Supply Chain

S11	Helena Ramalhinho (helena.ramalhinho@upf.edu)
S12	Helena Ramalhinho
S13	Helena Ramalhinho

Theme # 5: Moral and ethics in decision-making

S14	Gert Cornelissen (gert.cornelissen@upf.edu)
S15	Gert Cornelissen
S16	Gert Cornelissen

Theme # 6: Decisions at the top of organizations: how firms make decisions about resource acquisition

S17	George Chondrakis (george.chondrakis@upf.edu)
S18	George Chondrakis
S19	George Chondrakis

Concluding Session

S20	Gael Le Mens (gert.cornelissen@upf.edu)
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