

Decision Making in a Chaotic Reality

Hamline University School of Law

Dispute Resolution Institute

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Course Syllabus

July 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, & 16 2013 (4:30 - 9:00 p.m.)

2 Law School Credits

Course Description

Professionals in today's chaotic world must develop the skills necessary to handle those inevitable situations in which external events intrude upon, and interfere with, the professionals' abilities to make clear and appropriate decisions. These situations of uncertainty can easily deteriorate into crises. If not handled correctly, they also can cause irreversible damage to relationships. In order to be effective in such situations, conflict professionals must possess the capacity to collect, assess and adapt to new and changing information. They must also develop their creative capacities and vision to take into account and address the consequences for the future ("the day after"). Using the most contemporary tools and methodologies for creative problem-solving, students will develop the skills needed for making good decisions in a chaotic reality.

Class Goals:

1. To provide students with the knowledge and tools for decision making in changing, challenging situations.
2. To challenge students in a variety of complex situations cases and simulations within the safety of a supportive group environment.

Course Format

The course is built as an interactive workshop that combines theory discussions together with practice of tools through exercises, simulations, and case studies.

Academic Rule AR-105(B)(8):

A student who does not take a scheduled examination will receive a grade of "F" for that examination, unless properly excused. In addition, any student who does not turn in a required paper on the scheduled date will receive a grade of "F" for that paper, unless properly excused. Failure to meet any course requirement can be the basis for a final grade of "F" in the class, unless properly excused.

Advance Reading Assignment

As you know, this course is extremely condensed. So, please read the assigned course texts in their entirety before the course begins:

Course Texts

- Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro, *BEYOND REASON: USING EMOTIONS AS YOU NEGOTIATE*, ISBN 978-0143037781 (Penguin, 2005)

Class Agenda

- July 8** **What is decision making in a chaotic reality?; How do we react/decide in stressful situations?; Decision making in groups and one on one situations**
- July 9** **Analyzing tendencies; Action/Reaction Cycle; “The Flat World Theory”; What are the 5 levels of difficulty in decision making?**
- July 10** **Pitfalls in decision making – internal and external**
- July 11** **Decision making within a chaotic reality – The 8 steps method; Preparation sheet for decision making in a chaotic reality**
- July 15** **Decision making in crisis situations; Role of the manager; Managing the conflict rather allowing the conflict to manage you**
- July 16** **Lessons from hostage and crisis situations that can be applied to the legal, commercial, and business world to foster efficient and effective decision making in a chaotic reality**

Course Grading Policy:

Grades will be based on the following:

1. Attendance and Meaningful Participation (25% of course grade)

Class participation is an **integral** part of the learning process in this course. It includes mandatory attendance, preparation for and participation in class exercises, and active participation in class discussions.

2. Written Assignments and Oral/Video Summary (75% of course grade)

There are two required writing assignments (the second of which includes the requirement to orally present a summary (either on video or audio tape):

a) After each session, students will be required to write a short essay/paragraph (200-300 words), reflecting their personal insights on the session materials and discussions (approximately ½-1 page double-spaced, 12 point font, with standard margins). 15% of course grade. Essays are due at the beginning of the next class session.

b) Final assignment- an analytical report on a self-selected subject related to the course (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, with standard margins). You must also orally “present” your report either on video or audio. This analytical report is worth 60% of the course grade and is due **Tuesday, July 30, 2013**. Further information regarding preparation and submission of your final assignment will be provided during the last class session.