Choice in Context: Research Perspectives

2017-18 Academic Year
Master of Research in Economics, Finance and Management

1. Description of the subject

- Research Seminar
- Total credits: 6 ECTS
- Code: 31914
- Workload: 150 hours
- Term: 3rd
- Type of subject: Optative
- Department of Economics and Business
- Coordinator: Gaël Le Mens
- Logistics: Room 24.009. Times (Mondays and Tuesdays 11 to 13 – and some Wednesdays 11 to 13).
- Teaching team:
  G. Cornelissen / M. Epure / G. Le Mens / D. Navarro-Martinez / Helena Ramalhinho
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

The course is made of 5 different Themes taught by different professors. Each professor will select some 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 first session of the Theme for which they are assigned. For each theme, 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 papers (‘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.

Unless otherwise communicated, 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. (Some professors by change the due date according to circumstances).
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 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. We will also likely do some in-class exercises about the research process (developing ideas, going from idea to research project, etc.) 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-1 assignments (out of N assignments – with N equal to the number of themes, i.e., 5).
- 50%: Participation in the sessions (each professor will give you a participation grade for their session(s) – Please make sure to use a nametag so that professors can learn your names).

These grades will be averaged with a weight corresponding to the number of sessions taught each professor (typically 3-4 sessions). The readings for each session will be made available on the BGSE intranet.

3. **Schedule (tentative)**

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

**Introduction**

S1  Gert Cornelissen ([gert.cornelissen@upf.edu](mailto:gert.cornelissen@upf.edu))

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

S2  Gaël Le Mens ([gael.lemens@upf.edu](mailto:gael.lemens@upf.edu))
S3  Gaël Le Mens
S4  Gaël Le Mens
S5  Gaël Le Mens

**Theme # 2: Prescriptive Analytics for Logistics and Supply Chain Management**

S6  Helena Ramalhinho ([helena.ramalhinho@upf.edu](mailto:helena.ramalhinho@upf.edu))
S7  Helena Ramalhinho
S8  Helena Ramalhinho
S9  Helena Ramalhinho

**Theme # 3: Governance and control systems in organizations**

S10  Mircea Epure ([mircea.epure@upf.edu](mailto:mircea.epure@upf.edu))
S11  Mircea Epure
S12  Mircea Epure

**Theme #4: Moral and ethics in decision-making**

S13  Gert Cornelissen ([gert.cornelissen@upf.edu](mailto:gert.cornelissen@upf.edu))
S14  Gert Cornelissen
S15  Gert Cornelissen
S16  Gert Cornelissen

**Theme # 5: The role of emotions in decision-making processes**

S17  Daniel Navarro-Martinez ([daniel.navarro@upf.edu](mailto:daniel.navarro@upf.edu))
Concluding Session
S20  Gaël Le Mens  (gael.lemens@upf.edu)