

LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERISTY

UNIT GUIDE

ORGANISATIONS AND DECISIONS

UNIT NUMBER: IHR-2-213

SEMESTER 1 - 2005/2006

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS, COMPUTING AND INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT**

Unit Title:	Organisations and Decisions
Unit Number:	IHR-2-213
Unit Level:	2
Number of Credits:	1
Study Hours:	Contact: 48 Private study: 102
Total Hours:	150
Unit Co-ordinator	Fiona Mullen Room L335a E-Mail: mullenfm@lsbu.ac.uk Tel: 020 7815 8289

INTRODUCTION

The content of this unit concerns the ways in which people within and representing organisations take decisions. The tenets of the rational actor model are delineated and its implications and techniques are explored. But the bulk of the unit suggests that these tenets are an inaccurate description of the ways decisions are actually taken at the individual, group and organisational levels.

AIMS

Organisations and Decisions will introduce you to the ways managers and others make decisions. The unit will highlight and examine the ways people identify, evaluate and select options. The unit will also examine the ways individuals and groups take decisions be they rational or irrational in the pursuit of stipulated goals. In order to make sense of the academic content of this unit, the teaching team will prepare students for, and facilitate, the development of effective information searching and the selection of appropriate methods to make individual and joint decisions.

ASSESSMENT

Final Examination constitutes 60% of the weighting and coursework constitutes 40% of the weighting, broken down as follows:

Element	Weighting	Due Date
Individual Essay-2,000 words	40%	Week 10 W.C 28/11/05
Final Exam (Closed book)	60%	Week 14 W.C 16/01/06

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Identify the tenets and techniques of the rational actor method and make judgements about the effectiveness of this approach.
2. Acknowledge your explanatory style and locate the ways that you and others define and frame a situation.
3. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of rule-of-thumb methods of heuristics.
4. Clarify and establish the range of personal and organisational goals in a given context.
5. Identify situations where stakeholder and/or personal goals might conflict and use appropriate negotiation and power strategies to make and implement decisions.
6. Identify and analyse the cultural context of organisational decision making.
7. Identify the ethical dimensions of a situation in order to clarify your moral position.
8. Observe and identify the advantages and disadvantages of making decisions in groups and the socio emotional, task and political dimensions of committees and work groups.
9. Specify the political dimension of decision-making.
10. Identify and analyse how leadership and organisational decision making interact.

KEY SKILLS

Analysis and Problem Solving Skills are developed and demonstrated in the majority of the seminar exercises.

Communication Skills are developed in the student presentations and demonstrated in the assessed essay and the examination.

Interpersonal Skills are developed in the student presentations and the discussions in the seminars.

Learning Skills are developed in seminar exercises and case studies and preparing group presentations.

Information Technology Skills are demonstrated in the group presentations and the assessed essay.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMME

There is a one-hour lecture that sets the context and provides an account of the main theories and research findings associated with each topic.

Seminars last two hours, comprising discussion, workshops and individual and group exercises. When students prepare an individual essay they will be required to use relevant academic references. The Harvard referencing system is recommended. All students are expected to engage in an effective information search in the library.

Students will be formed into learning sets in the first week of the unit.

Week 1 – WC 26th September 2005

- Identify the tenets and the techniques of the rational actor model and make judgements about the effectiveness of this approach.

Lecture: Rational Actor Model and its Criticisms.

Reading:

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 3, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt 9 p269-282 Oxford University Press.

Week 2 – WC 3rd October 2005

- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of rule-of-thumb methods or heuristics in the making of a decision.

Lecture: Short cuts and bias: heuristics.

Seminar: Group exercises on a typical student decision to demonstrate the use of the rational actor model.

Reading:

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 3, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt 9 p269-282 Oxford University Press.

Week 3 – WC 10th October 2005

- Explore the macro context of decision making with particular emphasis on culture.

Lecture: Organisational decisions and culture

Seminar: Exercise on the cultural context of organisational decisions.

Reading:

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt. 7, Oxford University Press.

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 11, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Week 4 – WC: 17th October 2005

- Identify the ethical dimensions of a situation in order to clarify your moral position.

Lecture: Ethics in Business?

Seminar: Short case studies on business ethics.

Reading:

Parker, Martin chpt. 10 in Alvesson, Mats & Willmott, Hugh (eds). (2003), **Studying Management Critically**, Sage.

Winstanley & Woodhall (eds). (2002), **Ethical Issues in Contemporary Human Resource Management**, chpt 2, Palgrave, Macmillan.

Week 5 – WC 24th October 2005

- Observe and identify the advantages and disadvantages of making decisions in groups and socio emotional, task and political dimensions of committees and work groups.

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- Clarify and establish the range of personal and organisational goals in a given context.

Lecture: Nature and Dynamics of Groups.

Seminar: Workshop discussion & activity

Reading:

Haslam S. Alexander, 2004, **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Chpt 6, Sage

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: chpt 12, Prentice Hall.

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 12, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Week 6 – WC: 31st October 2005

- Observe and identify the advantages and disadvantages of making decisions in groups and the socio emotional, task and political dimensions of committees and work groups.
- Clarify and establish the range of personal and organisational goals in a given context.

Lecture: Groups and decisions.

Seminar: Case study.

Reading:

Haslam S. Alexander, 2004, **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Chpt 6 & 7, Sage

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: chpt. 12, Prentice Hall.

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 12, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Week 7 – WC: 7th November 2005

- Explore the various theories of leadership and their approach to organisations and decision making.

Lecture: Leadership and decisions.

Seminar: Discussion on Leadership

Reading:

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 14, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Haslam S. Alexander, 2004, **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Chpt 3, Sage

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: chpt. 13, Prentice Hall.

Week 8 – WC 14^h November 2005

- Clarify and establish the range of personal and organisational goals in a given context.
- Identify situations where stakeholder and/or personal goals might conflict and use appropriate negotiation and power strategies to make and implement decisions.
- Specify the political dimensions of decision-making.

Lecture: Strategic decision-making.

Seminar: Case studies.

Reading:

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt. 4, Oxford University Press.

Levy, Alvesson & Willmott, chpt. 5, Alvesson, Mats & Willmott, Hugh (eds). (2003), **Studying Management Critically**, Sage.

Week 9 – WC: 21st November 2005

Lecture: Organisational change and decision-making.

Seminar: Change handling workshop.

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt 12, Oxford University Press.

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: chpt. 15, Prentice Hall.

Week 10 - WC: 28th November 2005 (COURSEWORK DUE!)

Lecture: Power, Control and Resistance.

Seminar: Integrating coursework and preparing for submission. Previews of student essay and feedback.

Reading:

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, chpt 10, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Haslam S. Alexander, 2004, **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Chpt 7, 8, 11 Sage

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt. 9, 10 & 11 Oxford University Press.

Week 11 – WC: 5th December 2005

Lecture: Identities and Decisions within Organisations

Seminar: Exploring consequences related to decision-making process. A unit overview

Reading:

Haslam S. Alexander, 2004, **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Chpt 6, 10, 11, Sage

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, chpt. 11 Oxford University Press.

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: chpt. 11 Prentice Hall.

Week 12 – WC: 12th December 2005

Lecture: Revision lecture.

Seminar: Revision Seminar

ASSESSMENT

The examination shall consist of 60% of the weighting and the coursework shall consist of 40% of the weighting.

The examination will consist of a minimum of six questions and students are required to answer three questions.

Each member of the subgroup will write an individual essay that should be submitted to Room L105 on Thursday, 1st December of WEEK 10 2005. Each student will write ONE essay. This will be an individual essay which is worth 40% of the marks allocated to the unit.

The individual essay builds upon the group workshops and discussion held within the seminar programme. The **essay titles** are:

1. Ethical business is an oxymoron. Discuss.
2. What leads to irrationality in decision-making groups? How can this irrationality be minimised?
3. To what extent can the contingency approach to leadership tell us the best way to make decisions?
4. The nature of power is more important than rationality in understanding how decisions are made. Discuss.
5. Decision making is central to the organisational change process. Discuss
6. Can personality have an impact upon organisational decision-making?
7. It is often claimed that ‘group think’ is damaging and harmful. Present an essay exploring this claim and suggest methods we can employ to avoid key problems.
8. How does the process of socialisation influence our organisational decision-making?

Support ALL essay responses with relevant theoretical perspectives, academic models and appropriate academic referencing. Remember referencing is evidence of good quality research and student engagement.

If you are unsure about referencing and academic essay writing seek advice with respect to tips and techniques. A failure to reference, use examples and justify your claims will result in poor marks

The unit is structured so that the concepts that are dealt with in the opening weeks of the unit can be used to analyse situations at the latter stages of the unit. It is likely that your essay will demonstrate knowledge of a range of Learning Outcomes. The following list provides a summary of the primary and the secondary Learning Outcomes for each of the essays. The secondary Learning Outcomes are not an exhaustive or definitive list – much depends upon your interpretation of the literature and of the question. The weight of the coursework assessment is on the nature of group and organisational decision-making.

The essay should consist of no more than 2,000 words.

Assessment Criteria for Individual Essay:

- a. clear and appropriate interpretation of the essay question.
- b. carefully sequenced flow of an argument.
- c. understanding of appropriate theories and empirical research.
- d. proper referencing to sources and a complete bibliography.
- e. effective use of language with clear and unambiguous syntax and the use of appropriate academic vocabulary.
- f. essays must be word processed (double line spacing, pitch 12) and a spell check performed.

Feedback will be on the standard South Bank essay feedback form. Feedback will involve:

Analysis and Problem Solving Skills will be assessed in terms of Criteria A & B.

Learning Skills will be assessed in terms of Criteria C & D.

Communication Skills will be assessed in terms of Criteria E & F.

Information Technology skills will be assessed in terms of Criterion F.

Coursework Guidelines

Please bear in mind the following points.

- Discuss any problems you may have in completing the coursework with your seminar tutor as soon as possible.
- Make sure you know the deadline for submission.

- Get the approval of the unit co-ordinator to any extension of the deadline.
- Hand in the coursework to the School Office by the submission date. Unless you have obtained the agreement by the unit co-ordinator to the late submission of your coursework submitted:
- Up to two weeks late after the deadline will receive a maximum mark of the pass mark (40% for undergraduate courses).
- Students are expected to adhere to the standards and expectations as set out in the University's Student Handbook, available at:
<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/registry/handbook02.pdf>

In particular, attention is drawn to the following issues:

- Mobile phones must be turned off or diverted to voice mail during all lecture and seminar activities.
- Punctuality in attending all learning activities.
- Appropriate acknowledgement and referencing of all work submitted.

READING

Core

Wilson F.M (2004). **Organizational Behaviour and Work: A Critical Introduction**, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press

Haslam S. Alexander, (2004), **Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach**, Sage

Furnham, A. (1997). **The Psychology of Behaviour at Work**: Psychology Press.

Arnold Robertson, & Cooper. (2004) **Work Psychology**. 4th Edition: Prentice Hall.

Hatch MJ. (1997). **Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives**, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alvesson, Mats & Willmott, Hugh (eds). (2003), **Studying Management Critically**, Sage.

Winstanley & Woodhall, (2002), **Ethical Issues in Contemporary Human Resource Management**, Palgrave, Macmillan.

Huczynski, A., & Buchanan, D. (2003). **Organisational Behaviour**, Harlow: Prentice Hall.

(Note: ensure that you are using the most current edition of these textbooks)

Background and Further Reading

Bazerman, M. (2002). **Judgement in Management Decision Making**, Fourth Edition, John Wiley & Company: New York.

Clegg, S. (1999). **Understanding Organisations**: Sage

Electronic Resources:

The library's **INFOTRAC** system of electronic journals is useful; especially as the journal **Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Making Processes** is available.

How to start using Blackboard



Blackboard student information

PLEASE ENROL ON THE BLACKBOARD SITE IMMEDIATELY

To use Blackboard you will need an Internet connection and a browser (Netscape 4.6 or later with JavaScript and cookies enabled or Internet Explorer 4 or later).

- 1) Go to <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/bb/> (Have a look around this site later, there is other information to help you here – follow “Student Information” link)
- 2) Click on "Log in to Bb"
- 3) Enter your LSBU Username and Password

The username should be all lower case, no spaces. It will usually be the same as the first part of your SBU email address (e.g. if your email address was bintonp@lsbu.ac.uk, your username would be bintonp. If it is the first time you have logged in, your initial password will be the 7-digit student number on your security pass. If you have an old style (blue) pass, to get this 7 digit number, take the last 8 digits from the long string of numbers at the bottom of the pass (usually starting with a 9 or a 2) and ignore the last digit.

- 4) When you click on the login button with the mouse, you should enter the Blackboard system.

If you have problems logging on:

- a) Check that you have typed in your username and password correctly and try again.
- b) If you still cannot login, contact your Unit Co-ordinator (the person who gave you this sheet) with your full name, LSBU username, student number and email address.

If it is the first time you have used Blackboard, you should change your password to one that only you know. You do this by clicking on "Personal Information" in the TOOLS section at the left-hand side of the SBU tabbed screen, then choosing "Change Password". There are other parts of the Personal Information section that you may want to edit. You can change the email address that Blackboard uses to send you mail by choosing "Edit Personal Details". If you have been given a CD to use with Blackboard and you are using Blackboard on a PC away from LSBU, you may need to change the letter that your PC uses to identify the CD drive by choosing "Set CD Rom Drive". Privacy Options are set to not reveal your personal details to other Blackboard users, only change this if you want the details (listed in "Edit Personal Details") to be available to all other LSBU Bb users.

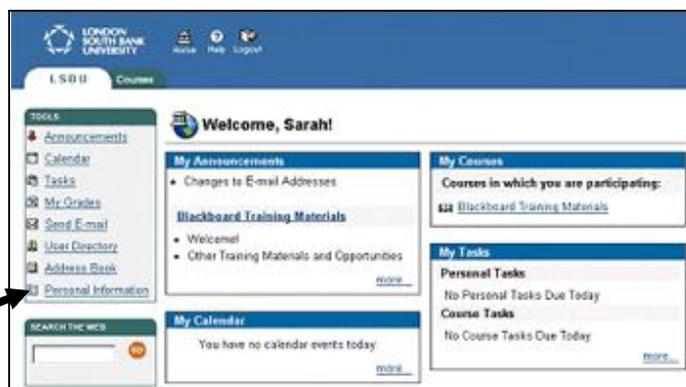
Have an Account? Login Here.

If you already have an account, enter your login information here and click the "Login" button below.

USERNAME:

PASSWORD:

[Forgot your password?](#)



Feel free to explore the other features of the LSBU tabbed screen. There are some useful tools here.

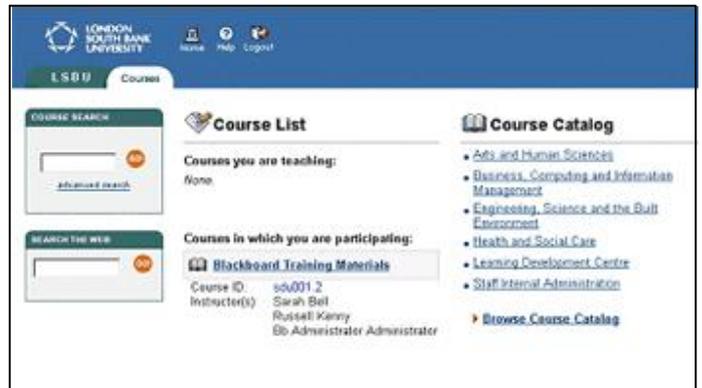
Please turn over...

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- 5) Click on the “Courses” tab at the top of the screen to move to the Courses tabbed screen.

This screen lists any LSBU Bb Units (Bb calls them “courses”) that you are participating in. If this is the first time that you have used Blackboard there will not be any listed yet. In order to participate in an LSBU Bb Unit, you need first to enrol on it (Note: this only enrolls you to use Blackboard at LSBU, it is not connected with other LSBU enrolment processes) it will then appear as a “course” that you are participating in.

- 6) On the right hand side of the “Courses” tabbed screen is a section marked “Course Catalog” (US spelling!). Beneath this are the names of the LSBU Faculties, look in the appropriate section for the LSBU Bb Unit that you are going to enrol on.



Your LSBU Bb Unit is called: **Organisations and Decisions**

Code: **IHR-2-213_s204**

- 7) Click on the Enrol button to the right of its name. You will be asked for an enrolment access code, which is: **boerievi** (all lower case letters) Enter it then click on the Submit button. Please do not give the access code to anyone else.

You are now enrolled on this LSBU Bb Unit. Each time that you log into the LSBU Bb site, this unit will be one that you are listed as participating in. You will be able to enter the Unit from the “Courses” tabbed screen without having to enter the access code again. Experiment with the various parts of Blackboard, you should find it quite intuitive to use. If you wish, you can download a Blackboard Student Manual as a PDF file that explains all features. It is available from <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/bb/student/helpsheet.html> together with other useful information.

Forgotten Password?

If you forget your password, under the password entry box is a link that reads “**Forgot your password?**” you can click on this to get instructions about how to get a new password emailed automatically to the email address that Blackboard holds for you (initially your LSBU email account).

Can't Login?

If you have problems logging in:

a) Check that you have typed in your username and password correctly and try again. The username should be all lower case, no spaces. It will usually be the same as the first part of your LSBU email address (e.g. if your email address was bintonp@lsbu.ac.uk, your username would be bintonp. Your initial password (unless you have changed it) is your 7-digit student number usually starting with a 9 or a 2.

b) If you still cannot login, contact your Unit Co-ordinator (the person who gave you this sheet) with your full name, LSBU username, student number and email address.