

**NOTE: This is a SAMPLE syllabus/itinerary and may not be the most up-to-date version. Please contact the faculty leader of this course for more recent information.**



## **GBE790 2018**

### **Decision Making in a Cultural Context**

#### ***Short Term Program to Scotland***

**Instructor:** Iris Berdrow

**Office Phone:** 2130

**Office:** AAC306

**E-mail:** iberdrow@bentley.edu

**Blackboard Site:**

**Dates:**

1. *First pre-session:* Saturday TBD, 9am – 1pm; Smith 122
2. *Second pre-session:* Saturday TBD, 9am – 1pm; Smith 122
3. *Travel Dates:* March 2 – 11, 2018 (flight departures evening March 1<sup>st</sup>)  
(Pre-sessions will be available via Centra for Remote students only)

#### **Course Description**

Decision making is a key function for managers. Culture influences the ways managers make decisions and solve problems. Culture also impacts the type of decisions to be made, the stakeholders considered in making decisions, and the regulatory/social constraints under which decisions can be made. Learning how to make effective decisions in real time, taking into consideration the stakeholders, the context, the risks, as well as the objectives is imperative. But decision making happens in a cultural context and managers themselves bring their cultural lens to the decision making process.

This course focuses on managerial decision making and stakeholder analysis in the context of a foreign culture, thus providing students the opportunity to understand how culture influences managerial practice. Specifically, the course examines the role of managers as decision makers in a foreign context. Students will learn about the concepts of managerial decision making, and how culturally conditioned values, attitudes, beliefs and norms of behavior influence managerial and decision making styles. Students will have an opportunity to explore these concepts further in Scotland where they will learn about the management of an historic educational residential estate focused on fiscal and environmental sustainability as well as a local golf course, whisky distillery, oil company and bakery supply business. In addition students will visit cultural heritage sites; travel to different cities to learn more about Scotland; have an opportunity to play golf at St. Andrews and Edzell golf courses. Students will also engage in a hands-on work project at the estate which is a charitable trust.

## ABOUT THE COURSE

This course integrates formal and experiential learning of the knowledge, skills and perspectives required for (a) managing effectively in culturally diverse settings, and (b) decision making. The focus is on intercultural management applied to the specific field of managerial decision making. Students will attend two pre-travel Saturday sessions focused on Culture and Decision Making, spend 9 days in Scotland and complete two papers post trip. Students will earn three credits for the combined formal classroom, short-term program and written assignments.

### Course Prerequisites:

Students will only be accepted into the course if they have submitted a satisfactory application and have met faculty expectations.

### Course Themes

1. **Managing:** Students will learn about the role of managers, the perspectives managers take on achieving their objectives, stakeholder analysis, and the unique perspectives of managing small rather than large corporate structures.
2. **Decision Making:** Students will learn decision making processes, use of heuristics, satisficing versus optimizing, the constraints to making perfect decisions, and the impact organizational environments on decision making.
3. **Stakeholder Analysis –** Students will learn how to identify stakeholders and map out their differing objectives such that optimal decisions can be made.
4. **Culture – mine, ours and theirs:** Learning about cultures is different than experiencing the implications of cultural differences on the behaviors of self and others. An emphasis is placed on engaging in self-reflection while being immersed in another culture.
5. **Paying Forward:** Students will act as consultants to the management team of The Burn, the educational retreat center in which they will be living. Students also have an opportunity to engage in a hands-on work project at The Burn. The activity will allow students to uncover a piece of the history of The Burn while improving the grounds for future visitors.

### Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to teach students the basics of managerial decision making and stakeholder analysis within a cultural context. The goal is for students to understand how culture shapes the approach to decision making, the prioritization of objectives, and the constraints within which managers have to function. The course also provides the opportunity to learn about environmental sustainability, estate management and service provision.

### Student Learning Objectives

Knowledge: upon completion of the course students will demonstrate knowledge of:

- Role of managers
- Peculiarities of managing small enterprises
- Managerial decision making
- Stakeholder Analysis and mapping
- Organizational and national culture
- Inter-cultural effectiveness

Skills: upon completion of the course students will demonstrate ability to:

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis
- Analyze a business decision within its cultural and economic context
- Recognize the trade-offs in a business decision
- Manage a personal versus a team decision

- Map the cultural norms of a country

Perspectives: upon completion of the course students will demonstrate an awareness of:

- Cultural complexity
- Environmental protection and sustainable practices
- Historical impact on present day business decisions

## Travel

Students will participate in a 10-day trip to Scotland during March break, leaving Thursday evening and returning on Sunday.

The host estate is The Burn<sup>1</sup>, a historic Georgian mansion situated in the Highlands of Scotland. While close to Aberdeen, the Burn provides a beautiful setting on 200 acres of park and woodland on the banks of the River North Esk. The Burn was donated to Goodenough College who runs it as a residential education facility offering lodging with full service to a diverse clientele. While staying at the Burn students will learn first-hand from the management team (Bursar, Associate Bursar and Estate Manager) the details of managing a residential education facility in a historically significant legacy estate. They will learn about the management of the property which is nationally certified as an SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest, due to the geological significance of the gorge and the rare lichen that grows on one tree on the property. They will also learn about the challenges of funding a non-profit estate.

As golf is core to the Scottish culture, students will get a tour and presentation at the Edzell Golf Club. Edzell Golf Club lies at the gateway to the Grampians in the foothills of the Angus Glenn; the mountains form a backdrop to this lovely heathland/parkland course. The original course was laid out in 1895 by Bob Simpson, top golf course architect of his day. In 1933/34 the course was re-designed on recommendations made by the famous James Braid and remains virtually unchanged to this day. Today the course is situated in some 128 acres and has been complemented with the addition of the 9 hole West Water course in 2001. There is also an option for students to preregister and play at Castle Golf Course of St. Andrews.

Students will have an opportunity to learn about the oil industry, a key component of northern Scotland's economy and culture. A company visit will help students understand decision making in a global industry with a very local impact, in particular the impact of the global oil price crisis.

Students will also learn about managing a small business with a visit to Isabella's Preserves, a local preserves business with an international market reach.

Students will also visit:

- A Scottish distillery in the Highlands
- Dunnottar Castle beside Stonehaven, (where Mel Gibson filmed the movie Hamlet and found the idea of Braveheart!)
- Edinburgh Castle, Queen Elizabeth's official residence in Scotland.
- St. Andrews University, the oldest university in Scotland.

Social events will be planned at The Burn including a Lords & Ladies evening at which students will learn traditional Scottish dancing, and a whisky tasting at which students will learn the nuances of this ancient craft.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://home.btconnect.com/theburn/index.html>

Learning about cultures is both a cognitive and emotional process. It is often too easy to focus on the cognitive and avoid the emotional by behaving like a “tourist”. The hands-on work experience integrates students more closely with the locals, the situation, and their emotional response. Specifically students will spend an afternoon “working” at The Burn. A specific project will be chosen by the Estate Manager that will be the Bentley contribution. The project will have historic significance, improve the estate and continue a Bentley legacy started by the 2015 student group.

During the week students will be asked to present briefs, discussing relevant management, service, environmental, and cultural (including historical, geographical, political) issues and their approach to dealing with these issues given what they have learned in class and on the visit.

### **Course materials**

- Readings package
- Self assessment instruments

### **Academic Requirements:**

The academic requirements of the course are:

1. Class Preparation, Participation & Citizenship	15%
2. Cultural Mapping Assignment due Feb 25	20%
3. On-site Management Brief, team assignment	15%
4. Post Trip Reflection, due Mar 20	20%
5. Research Project, due Apr 3	30%

Please note that grades for assignments 2, 4 and 5 will be posted on BB with the grades. Please use BB to check your grade so you can download your personalized grade rubric.

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on BB.

### **Cultural Preparation:**

Each student will complete a Global Competence Self Assessment as well as a cultural map of Scotland. Guidelines will be provided at the first presession and the completed Cultural Preparation will be due at the 2<sup>nd</sup> presession.

### **On-Site Management Brief**

Teams of students will present to The Burn management ideas for enhancement of the facility. This can include maintenance projects, management practices, marketing plans, website development, or other ideas. The intent is to apply what you have learned about management of a not-for-profit organization to The Burn.

### **Post trip Reflection**

Students will submit a 3-5 page reflection on what they learned through the trip. This will focus on their effectiveness as global managers and will use the concepts covered in the pre-sessions as frameworks for their self-assessment.

### **Research Paper:**

Students are required to complete a research paper on a topic of their choice. The topic must integrate issues of decision making and Scottish culture. The project details are provided in the attached project guidelines.

### **Expectations about attendance, etiquette, participation**

Effective intercultural experiences depend on flexibility, openness, empathy, and patience. All students are expected to display these traits while on the trip. Anyone who jeopardizes the learning, comfort or safety of others will be asked to leave the group and will receive a failing grade for the course. Since an objective of this course is to learn and practice effective intercultural behaviors students will complete peer evaluations, assessing their fellow travelers on their intercultural effectiveness.

### **Physical Activity During the Faculty-Led International Course/GBE**

Please be aware that faculty-led international courses/GBEs are not typical classroom experiences, and students may be expected to participate in physical activities during their time abroad. Some of these activities may be quite strenuous. Students may be asked to participate in physical activities, such as walking or hiking, as a part of the experience. Students are expected to participate in physical activities as a part of the course, unless they require any modification and/or reasonable accommodation due to a disability. Documentation from the Office of Disability Services will be required in such cases.

### **Statement about academic integrity**

This class will be conducted in full accordance with Bentley's policies about academic integrity and the Bentley Honor Code. These can be found at:

<http://www.bentley.edu/shandbook/integrity/>

[http://www.bentley.edu/shandbook/Integrity/The Bentley Honor Code.cfm](http://www.bentley.edu/shandbook/Integrity/The_Bentley_Honor_Code.cfm)

### **PRESESSIONS:**

#### **I. Decision Making:**

Students will learn about the basic models of decision making as well as the cognitive processes that enhance and inhibit effective decision making. Students will also learn about stakeholder analysis, specifically how to identify stakeholders of a decision, map out varying objectives and recognize the tensions between competing agendas.

Readings:

#### How are decisions made?

1. Managers and Their Not-So Rational Decisions by S. Trevis Certo; Brian L. Connelly; Laszlo Tihanyi; Mar 01, 2008; Business Horizons
2. Five Minds of a Manager by Jonathan Gosling and Henry Mintzberg; Nov 01, 2003. Harvard Business Review

#### Uncovering our biases:

3. Bounded Awareness: What You Fail to See Can Hurt You by Dolly Chugh; Max H. Bazerman; May 01, 2007, Harvard Business Publishing
4. Decisions Without Blinders by Max H. Bazerman and Dolly Chugh; Jan 1, 2006, Harvard Business Publishing

#### Stakeholder Analysis:

5. Business Ethics and Stakeholder Analysis, by Kenneth E. Goodpaster, 1991. Business Ethics Quarterly.
6. Managing for Stakeholders, Edward R. Freeman; Darden Business Publishing, Jan 7, 2013.

#### Getting buy-In: Advocacy versus Inquiry

7. What You Don't Know About Making Decisions by David A. Garvin; Michael A. Roberto; Sep 01, 2001 Harvard Business Review

## **II. Effective Global Management: A conceptual framework:**

Students will be provided with two models to guide their learning in this course. The first is the model of Effective Global Management which suggests that a Global Manager must have developed (1) business/technical knowledge and skills, (2) cultural knowledge and skill, and (3) situational knowledge and experience in order to take effective management action in a foreign environment. The model emphasizes the need for both knowledge and skill. The knowledge includes learning the conceptual models for the course, learning about the country, and about different companies that operate in France. The skill and experience will be provided during the trip.

The second model is the concept of culture and how it impacts organizations, particularly culturally diverse companies, will be considered. The intent here is to raise the importance of understanding self and others as culturally conditioned and learn how to manage across those cultural boundaries.

### **Readings:**

1. The Burn and Charitable Trusts, Note by Iris Berdrow.
2. Cross-Cultural Management, Nancy J. Adler, 1997. International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, pp.10-32.
3. Making Decisions Across Cultures, David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, 2009. Cultural Intelligence: Living and Working Globally, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, pp.63-83. HBP Reprint BK0004.
4. The Traditional British House, Martin J. Gannon and Rajnandini Pillai, 2013. Understanding global cultures: metaphorical journeys through 31 nations, clusters of nations, continents, and diversity, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.
5. Culture in International Management: Mapping the Impact by DiStefano and Maznevski.
6. Synergy From Individual Differences: Map Bridge Integrate (MBI) by Maznevski and DiStefano.
7. Global Competencies: An Introduction by Allan Bird and Joyce Osland.