
MANAGEMENT OF COMPLEXITY in Fall 2020 (BA5062)

Course Code	BA5062	Professor(s)	Albert Cath
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-2A03
Class Schedule	M: 16:20-17:55 in G-207	Office Hours	by appointment
Credits	2	Email	acath@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

Coping with complex issues is the most fundamental and unmet challenge facing management in the 21st century.

This course confronts students with different perspectives on managing complex issues. Complex problems can be characterized by the fact that there is little scientific, social, economic, and political agreement on the myriad of issues they entail and that there is a high level of uncertainty about the problem. The course will rotate around core contexts for leadership and decision making. Mainstream management concepts and models largely describe and prescribe the simple contexts of managing and organizational structures. At most, mainstream organizational concepts address “complicatedness” rather than complexity. Management of Complexity refers to coping with the unpredictability of “emergent practice” that invites managers to different approaches of decision making and leadership.

This course opposes the orthodoxy of management discourse that adheres to the worldview of simplicity informing most mainstream management theories and practices. We will focus on the following question: are mainstream management models that were developed and tested over the past seventy years still adequate to cope with the complex issues that confront management today? We will focus our inquiry on the consequences of global warming (climate change). Climate Change is a wicked, untamed, complex, ongoing phenomenon that has no simple solution. We will study the different approaches proposed by the Cynefin Framework through case studies that address the complex sustainability challenges today’s businesses and policymakers currently face.

The course engages students with advanced interdisciplinary ‘Management of Complexity’

themes that put strategy, organizational dynamics, and leadership (both in theory and in practice) into the foreground. We will take a critical approach to understand how theory influences practice and how our perceptions of leadership, management, and strategy evolve over time and circumstance. Through readings, in-class activities, assignments, and cases, the course will explore how the Management of Complexity influences the direction of organizations and businesses. The course follows a participative model, so students are expected to be prepared and attend each course meeting. Moreover, students will have more opportunities to build their own skills through high levels of participation in in-class activities.

Course Learning Outcomes

To understand conventional and critical approaches of complexity in management theory and practices.

To develop the ability to analyze complex (“wicked”) problems, where great uncertainty is present, in a management context.

To investigate some of the common historical narratives of complexity and explore how these influence our current perceptions of management theory and practice.

To explore contemporary organizational complexity concepts and apply them to management issues.

To acquire practical experience in dealing with wicked, complex management issues.

General Education

GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Demonstrate an ability to apply management theories and concepts in practical business situations as evidenced through case studies, course-related projects, and in the final thesis or internship report.
2. Offer a variety of management solutions to complex problems, effectively deploying concepts, frameworks, and critical approaches perceptively and with thoughtfulness.
3. Demonstrate an ability to conduct conventional and critical research into management problems, showing familiarity with a range of data, research sources, and appropriate quantitative and qualitative methodologies.
4. Be able to communicate effectively and convincingly on an empirical and conceptual basis, both in writing and orally.
5. Show a high level of professional reliability, with an ability to work under self-direction and in teams, and to display a high level of personal and professional ethical integrity.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The graduate program learning objectives match the student learning goals for the course at least on two levels of learning. In the first place the learning goals are practiced – i.e. the student is expected to use this but not to have fully mastered it (experiential learning). Secondly, this should be demonstrated in their written and oral deliveries – the student can be expected to do this consistently and accurately.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

The purpose of this course is to understand strategy and leadership in the context of complexity by meeting the following objectives:

1. To understand conventional and critical approaches to complexity in management theory and practices.
2. To develop the ability to analyze complex (“wicked”) problems, where great uncertainty is present, in a management context through casework.
3. To investigate some of the common historical narratives of complexity and explore how these influence our current perceptions of management theory and practice.
4. To explore contemporary organizational complexity concepts and apply them to management issues.
5. To acquire practical experience in dealing with wicked, complex management issues.

These goals will be realized through the course structure based on an integrative learning framework that is built into the curriculum. It is my hope that students in the course will be able to further exercise and develop their core life, educational and professional skills along the following lines:

- Civic Engagement
- Critical Thinking
- Ethical Reasoning

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- Inquiry and Analysis
 - Oral Communication
 - Problem Solving
 - Written Communication

Course Outline

This course plan is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard *

TEXTBOOK & ARTICLE READINGS & FILMS & CASES & ASSIGNMENTS

DATE	CHAPTER	FILM	CASE	ASSIGNMENTS
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Week 1

28 SEP Course Introduction and some basic conceptualizations and their Contexts. Profile and Interest Form

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Week 2

05 OCT Chapter 4 of the Solace in Complexity book + 2x2 Matrix assignment.

Week 3

12 OCT The Cynefin perspective (twice) + Read [Case BP oil spill & discuss the Cynefin exercise it in class in 3 groups.](#)

Week 4

19 OCT Monitoring the BP oil spill case & discuss the Cynefin exercise it in class in 3 groups

 Read the Andy Sterling Article on Risk vs uncertainty.

Week 5

26 OCT Midterm Exam: submit the BP oil case at noon latest. Cath Methods & Philosophy
Lecture Part 1.

Mid Semester

Week 6

02 NOV Munro article Undoing Management. One page paper on BP management in the oil
spill in relation to the Munro et al. Article.

Week 7

09 NOV Theory Introduction to complexity through Morin + Cath Introduction to social
Complexity through Letiche et al. Second-Order Systems Theory. Read Chapter 5 first part of
the Solace book. CAS systems article + Morin Multi-Dimensional Model article.

Week 8

16 NOV Theory Introduction to complexity through Morin + Cath Introduction to social
Complexity through Letiche et al. Second-Order Systems Theory. Read the remainder of
Chapter 5 of the Solace book. Morra-park Case! Three examples of principles. One page paper
on the BP oil spill case with a reflection on the complexity principles of Morin.

MIDTERM GRADES DUE

Week 9

23 NOV Cath Methods & Philosophy Part 2: a narrative approach + Dialogical Square method. Read chapters 2 & 3 of the book as a reference for the dialogical Square. **Starting the Fukushima Case.**

Week 10

30 NOV Submit a 3-page team paper and present the Fukushima Case framed by the Cynefin exercise + Read Bochner article.

Read Agar's article. Monitoring the Fukushima Case framed by the dialogical square of the case. Starting the personal essay.

Present and submit a 3-5 page team paper of the Fukushima Case framed by the Dialogical square. Starting the Mushroom book. Mushroom book

Week 11

07 DEC Final Class: Wrap up of the class symposium.

Week 12 **12-15 DEC Reading days**

Week 13 **Final Exam 17th of December at 3.00 pm**
Submit Personal Paper and prepare Seminar on the
Course

Week 14 **04 JANUARY 2021 All grades due**

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are still expected to attend ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.*

COURSE ATTENDANCE:

Attendance will be taken in the first ten minutes of the course. Attendance may be taken through a sign-in sheet. If a sign-in sheet is used, it is the student's responsibility to sign in. In general, students are expected to avoid disturbing the class by arriving late and leaving early. This is a two-credit course that meets once per week for 80 minutes. Our time is precious. **Two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence.** Please avoid unnecessary departures while the course is in session.

Students are expected to attend all course sessions. Missing an exam or a presentation will result in a failing grade for that item. Attendance will have a significant impact on the calculation of final grades. Students with excessive absences (regardless of medical or personal reasons) will not receive credit for the course.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for legitimate medical or family emergencies at my discretion, provided that the student has been proactive about staying up-to-date on assignments, readings, and cases and has contacted me and collected the required documentation.

Cultural study trips offered by AUP will be excused automatically, but only for the days that the study trip is scheduled. Days taken before or after a cultural study trip for personal travel, or any other form of personal, non-emergency travel, will not be considered as an exception to the attendance policy.

Assignment instructions are available well in advance of the deadlines. Illness or personal problems that emerge around the deadline date will not result in an extension on your assignments.

If a student is signed in on the attendance form and is not present in the course, it is a violation of the university's academic integrity policy and will result in a failing grade for the course, as well as other disciplinary actions to be determined by the Dean of the University.

Grading Policy

Student Performance will be evaluated based on the following factors:

Class Participation

Based on attendance and participation with (group) presentations, discussions, and in-class projects, as well as group peer evaluations.

- Attendance: this is not simply a matter of being present, but also involves arriving on time and being prepared for each course session. Please bring the textbook to each class as well as any other materials that you may need.
- Course Presentations: Students (groups) will be selected at random to present their analysis of a short case assignment intermittently during class. These presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes, although the specific duration will change based on the presentation assignment. There will be no student presentations during the first week of class. Please refer to the course calendar for due dates.
- Course Discussions: Various activities, full class and small group discussions are an essential part of the learning experience in this course. Students are expected to actively participate by providing input and feedback to other students and by listening when other students are speaking.
- Peer Evaluations: Student group members may be expected to evaluate one another for the depth and effectiveness of their contribution to in-class activities and the final presentation. Evaluations will be cross-referenced for consistency and fairness.

Individual Assignments

Individual essay assignments are due throughout the course, the midterm assignment, and the final assignment. These must be submitted before the course commences on the due date *through the Safe Assign system*.

Midterm Assignment

The midterm assignment will cover readings, lectures, and class discussions through the course sessions until the midterm exam. The personal assignment should be 5-7 pages in length.

Final Paper

The final essay will cover a topic of the student's choice, incorporating the cases and readings covered during the course. These papers must be a minimum of 2500 words (approximately 8-10 pages at 300 words per page). Criteria for these papers will be discussed following the course midterm.

Grade Allocation

Final grades will be weighted based on performance within the various criteria as follows. These calculations may be adjusted as we progress through the semester:

Class Participation and Group Work	15%
Case Presentations	25%
Mid-Course Analysis Paper	25%
Final Analysis Paper	35%

Grading Scale

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Passing	Unsatisfactory
100-95 A (4.0)	89-87 B+ (3.4)	86-84 B (3.0)	79-77 C+ (2.4)	73-70 C- (1.7)
90-94 A- (3.7)		83-80 B- (2.7)	76-74 C (2.0)	69-67 D+ (1.3)
				66-64 D (1.0)
				60-63 D- (0.7)
				Under 60 F (0)

All graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 to be in good academic standing at the University. Students with a GPA of less than 3.00 will be placed on probation. A student receiving a grade of "C-" or lower will be required to retake the course. Graduate students are allowed only two grades of "C+" or lower during their program.

To give you a better understanding of what the grading scale means, let's take a quick look at

the typical student profile for each category:

Excellent: Reserved for students that display superior quality and outstanding performance throughout the course, including the extensive use of resources other than the textbook and assigned readings to complete assignments and presentations. It also means that the student participates fully in course discussions and group activities, maintains excellent attendance, and performs extremely well on course exams and assignments. An 'A' student is highly motivated to learn the material and completes the course readings in advance of the lecture, showing strong skills in critical thinking, global learning, and exceptional informational literacy on all of the assignments, projects, and exams. The student also takes a proactive role in group projects and consistently responds to the presentations of other student groups. My goal is to see every student perform this well.

Good: The student provides work that is above average in quality. Maintains good performance on exams and in-class discussions, including the effective use of assigned readings and above-average course participation. Assignments are turned in on time and to a good level of quality. There is some evidence of additional research and critical thinking on core topics. Attendance, while not perfect, is still good. The student shows evidence of critical thinking, global learning, and information literacy through their engagement in the course.

Satisfactory: Adequate and acceptable work in meeting course requirements and average performance in assignments, exams, and projects. There is little use of external resources beyond the required texts. The student shows some engagement with the course but participates at a minimal level. Meets the minimum attendance requirements. Displays some critical thinking, global learning, and/or information literacy in assignments and group projects.

Unsatisfactory: Failed to meet basic course requirements, below-average performance, and attendance. The typical profile for such students: they often show up late to class, are often unprepared for class, and/or are frequently absent. The student is rarely prepared for group presentations or discussions. Assignments are missing, late, or copied or paraphrased directly from general sources that can be found on the internet. The student probably spends an inordinate amount of time in class on their smartphone. Such students are encouraged to withdraw and try again when they have improved their academic skills or they decide to put more effort into their studies.

A significant amount of studying outside of the course meetings is expected from all

students who expect a 'B' grade or higher in the course. This means AT LEAST three hours of reading, and research outside of class for every hour you spend in class - much more if the expected grade is an 'A'. I expect students to use resources other than the required materials to complete assignments. Outstanding and good performance will be awarded to those students who go beyond the required and suggested readings in their final projects, assignments, and presentations.

Students with unsatisfactory performance will be notified at the midterm point so that we may mutually assess the likelihood of successful course completion. If I contact you for a meeting at the midterm point, please do not ignore my request. Often, we can work out an academic study plan to get you back on track. However, please be reminded that excessive absences are often the cause of poor performance and this is difficult to remedy.

Other

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:

1. **Laptops & Mobile Phones:** Laptops can be used during classes especially for taking notes, and having access to the remote aspects of the teaching and, specifically necessary for an in-class project. **Mobile phones are to be turned off and put away at all times while class is in session. Please do not send or receive text messages during class, even in silent mode.** Students regularly observed texting underneath their desks during class will be remembered when I issue final grades. Moreover, mobile phones are not allowed in the room during exams under any circumstances. Students found to be using a mobile phone or other electronic devices during exams will be asked to leave and will automatically receive a failing grade. No exceptions.
1. We will use Blackboard and Microsoft Teams for this course. **Students are expected to check the Blackboard site, The specific Microsoft Teams site as well as their AUP email during the course for updates.** All assignments will be posted here as well as course reader materials and other resources. If you need to reach me outside of class, please contact me via email for an appointment.
1. This is not just a matter of "being present" for during class, but also involves arriving on time and being prepared for each course session. Attendance is taken in the first 10

minutes of each class, and late students will be marked as late. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are signed in for each class. Moreover, I will not excuse any absences, for any reason, with the sole exceptions being if the student is enrolled in an official AUP Cultural Study trip or has a note from a certified physician that indicates they were unable to attend class on the specific dates of the absence. Other reasons for absence should be reported by email and it is upon my discretion to decide whether the absence is excused or not. Students that experience significant health or personal problems must inform the Student Affairs Office immediately so that we can begin to work out a plan to help you maintain your academic performance. Personal travel, visiting relatives and friends, and other non-emergency excuses will not be accepted. (See the section on Course Attendance above.)

1. Students are expected to turn in all course assignments on time through the email system. Late submissions will be marked down one full grade level for being late for each course session where the assignment still has not been submitted, making the highest possible grade a 'B' after missing the course deadline. It is the student's responsibility to make sure assignments have been received. Plagiarized or copied assignments will result in a failing grade for the course.
1. **Food and Drinks:** Students may drink beverages in class if they are in spill-proof containers that can be completely sealed. Please do not consume any other food or beverages in the classroom.
1. **Professional Behavior:** Students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times during the course. Please avoid disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn during lectures and presentations. Academic dishonesty on assignments or exams - including copying another student's work, plagiarism, or using instructor grading keys - will result in a failing grade for the course. Other disciplinary actions up to, and including, removal from the course, suspension or expulsion from the University, may also result from violating course and university policies. Likewise, harassing or threatening behavior in class will not be tolerated. Please uphold professional standards at all times while you are in the university program. [The students are expected to fully respect the Sanitary Protocol issued by AUP for the Fall 2020 Semester.](#)
1. **Microsoft Teams etiquette :**

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- Please RSVP to meeting invitations.
 - Join meetings with a mute on, keep it on if there is any background noise.
 - Think about headphones, maybe noise-canceling if you're easily distracted. Headphones with microphones may be a good investment.
 - Put your cameras on so we can see you.
 - To the extent possible, have a dedicated "serious" space for your meetings. This is like being in a class. Remove as much as you can distractions in the room you are "in class". Keep the food and drink to a minimum.
 - Cool backgrounds are appreciated.
 - Raise your hand to be recognized unless we're working in a very small group. Try not to talk at once in the classroom, this creates serious microphone problems for those attending online.
 - Try to keep the chat on the topic.
 - I'll ask for a different volunteer every class to remind me to record and to keep track of the chat and any questions there.

1. **Other Policies:** For all other policies and procedures, students are bound by the University's general policies and procedures. Copies of the University policies on absences and academic dishonesty were given to each student at registration. Students are responsible for adhering to these policies.

1. **Know the Syllabus:** It is your responsibility to read and understand this document as it clearly outlines the course policies, schedule of readings and assignments, as well as the course expectations. If you experience academic problems during the course because you have not been following the course policies, then telling me "you didn't know" is going to be a completely ineffective excuse. **I make no exceptions to my course policies unless explicitly stated in this document or through prior arrangement with the Office of Academic Affairs.**