Welcome to MiO!

The workplace is designed, inhabited, and controlled by people, but people make mistakes. Executives make decisions today that lead to unforeseen problems tomorrow, competitors mispredict their rival’s moves and motives, and coworkers misperceive each other’s thoughts and feelings. This course highlights how the human mind comes to make such errors, and what to do about them—ultimately, to understand how to manage yourself and others just a bit more wisely, both in the work environment and in daily life.

To accomplish this goal we will draw upon experimental social psychology, the bedrock of the course. Through laboratory findings and basic science, each week you will learn well-tested, well-replicated insights about social life: you will be armed with management wisdom that works as opposed to management wisdom that “sounds right.” The first half—Internal Thought—outlines the psychological underpinnings of how people form preferences, plan for the future, and take others’ perspectives. The latter half—External Change—uses these insights to understand real organizational issues like persuading others, building culture, working in groups, and attaining work-life balance.

• CONTACT INFORMATION •

Professor:
   Ed O’Brien, Ph.D. (eob@chicagobooth.edu)
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Teaching assistants:
   Yuji Winet (ywinet.TA@gmail.com), Ph.D. student in Behavioral Science
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Section times:
   Section 81, Fri 6:00pm-9:00pm (your specific TA: Yuji)
   Section 85, Sat 9:00am-12:00pm (your specific TA: Mike)
   Section 86, Sat 1:30pm-4:30pm (your specific TA: Cintia)
**PREREQUISITES**

No course prerequisites. No auditors. Cannot be taken pass/fail.

**PROVISIONAL GRADES**

I will submit provisional grades for students graduating in the summer quarter based on performance at the time these grades are due.

**ACADEMIC SERVICES**

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, please contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. To receive a reasonable accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Disability Services. Please contact the office at 773-702-6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit disabilities.uchicago.edu. Student Disability Services is at 5501 S. Ellis Avenue. If you have an approved accommodation from Student Disability Services for this course, please contact Academic Services at AcademicServices@lists.chicagobooth.edu as soon as possible.

**MATERIALS**

—Course website: [https://canvas.uchicago.edu/](https://canvas.uchicago.edu/)

—Readings: All readings are required, before each class. I will not summarize the readings in class. You will be expected to understand basic references about the readings and be ready to discuss them. I view the readings as laying the groundwork for some basic principles that will help you then more efficiently process the lectures in real time. The lectures comprise new material that will go beyond the readings.

—Books: There are three books assigned for the course:


We’ll read sections from each of these books, but I encourage you to keep these books on your shelf and read them in their entirety when you have the chance. Gilovich’s *How We Know What Isn’t So* is an introduction of basic features of human judgment, and we will be applying these insights directly to managerial contexts. Heath and Heath’s *Made to Stick* describes why some ideas succeed in the market of ideas while others fail. Terkel’s *Working* is a classic in business publications, is written by a Chicago icon, is enjoyable, gives valuable insight into people’s work lives, and offers a chance to explore differences in people’s underlying motivations and jobs in the decades since the book was published.

—Lecture slides: I will post the lecture slides immediately after our section ends. In other words, you will not have access to the slides before or during the lecture. I promise this isn’t to annoy you, but to enhance learning, to keep the slides fresh and interesting, and to allow the lecture to be as updated as possible. Therefore, plan on spending your class time taking your own notes as we move along the material (the slides will be numbered during lecture, for your reference while taking notes).

Per Booth policy, note that lecture slides (and all course documents) are confidential, privileged, and only for the information of the intended recipient and may not be used, published or redistributed without my prior written consent.

### GRADING

Final grades for the course comprise the following components:

—Midterm (50% of course grade): There will be a midterm exam, held during Week 6. The exam will cover all material from Weeks 1-5. Per Booth policy, each student will sign a pledge of honor before the exam; at my discretion, this pledge may be required on any other graded work throughout the course.

—Final Paper (20% of course grade): The final assignment is a final paper, due in class on Week 9. The paper will be written in small groups and can be no longer than 10 pages double-spaced (excluding references and appendices). You will pick an organization (e.g., a group member’s present/past employer) and write a list of recommendations for how to improve it, based on class concepts.

—Thought Papers (20% of course grade): You will write 6 weekly thought papers, to be submitted in Canvas by the start time of your section each week. You will formulate your reactions to the previous lecture and/or the upcoming readings, based on questions that I send out. Each paper will be scored on a “check” scale and cannot exceed 1 page single-spaced. If you exceed this limit, know that we will grade only what we see on the first page. Know also that the Canvas submission portal closes exactly at the due date. Late papers therefore cannot be submitted and you will automatically earn zero points.

The grading scheme is designed such that almost all papers each week will receive a check. This means you’re doing a good job and are meeting the high expectations I have
for Booth students. Keep it up. For this reason, you will not receive specific feedback for check grades, but know that we are available if you ever want to chat more about any grade. Some papers may receive a “check-minus.” These papers are below the bar, usually meaning you didn’t answer part of the question, you answered the question without considering the psychological orientation of the class, or if it was clear that you just dashed off an answer without thinking much. A small handful of papers may receive a “check-plus.” The grading scheme is designed such that these papers will be rare. They are reserved for the best papers relative to your peers that also offer unique insight—that others would find useful after doing all readings and attending class.

—Class Involvement (10% of course grade): Much of the knowledge you will gain from class will come from other students—from hearing, evaluating, and discussing ideas in lecture. This is a team effort. Hence, being an active contributor in the classroom is a key component of the learning experience. This component will also be used as a deciding factor if you are on the boundary between grades at the end of the quarter. With this in mind, know that we will be monitoring your class involvement in terms of

- Showing up: Arrive on time, return from breaks on time, don’t leave early
- Contributing: Actively participate in class questions and discussions
- Being a teammate: Actively participate in small-group work
- Respecting where you are: Pay attention, no talking with neighbors
- Following all classroom etiquette, each and every week (see next section)

NOTE NOW AND NOTE WELL: Merely being present will not be enough to make you a leader of the curve for Class Involvement. If we’re reaching the end of the course and I’ve rarely heard your voice in class and we’ve rarely communicated in any capacity, that doesn’t bode well for your Class Involvement score, even if you showed up each week.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

To ensure that you, your classmates, and I spend our limited time together in the most efficient and productive way possible, you must follow some basic ground rules:

1. Be constructive. Do not disparage another student for a comment made in class, no matter how subtle or clever your attempt may be. During our 3 hours together, think of our group as a team working with each other to bring the course material to life. We will put on our “social psychologist” hats together.
2. No cell phones at any time beyond a quick check of the clock, no exceptions.
3. Please no chatting with neighbors. If you have a question or comment about class content, just raise your hand and share with the class. I will call on you.
4. I prefer that you do not use laptops/tablets for note taking. I assure you that your learning experience will be enhanced and improved (and you will most definitely help reduce distractions in the classroom) by taking notes by hand.
5. Please no chatting with neighbors. If you have a question or comment about class content, just raise your hand and share with the class. I will call on you.

6. Arrive on time. We will start each class promptly and end each class on time.

7. Please no chatting with nei—ok, you get it.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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**PART ONE: INTERNAL THOUGHT**

**Week 1 — The Power of the Situation (Fri 6/28, Sat 6/29)**

- Readings: (i) “The Talent Myth” by Gladwell (ii) “A Tale of Two Plants” by Keller
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): NUMMI discussion
- Due by class start: Only the readings above

**Week 2 — Mistaken Impressions: Receiving and Seeking Information (Fri 7/5, Sat 7/6)**

- Readings: (i) “Why CEOs Fail” by Charan, Colvin (ii) “How We Know What Isn’t So: Chapter 4 and Chapter 6” by Gilovich [this is two chapters in total; skip Chapter 5!] (iii) “Made to Stick: Introduction and Chapter 1” by Heath & Heath
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): Carter Racing
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 1

**Week 3 — Sense Making: How Beliefs Create Reality (Fri 7/12, Sat 7/13)**

- Readings: (i) “Pygmalion in Management” by Livingston (ii) “How (Un)ethical Are You?” by Banaji, Bazerman, Chugh (iii) “Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome” by Manzoni, Barsoux
- Also read in prep for in-class discussion: (i) “Ann Hopkins - A” (ii) Amicus Curiae Brief
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): Ann Hopkins debate
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 2

**Week 4 — Mind Reading: Knowing Others’ Thoughts (Fri 7/19, Sat 7/20)**

- Readings: (i) “Managing Your Boss” by Gabarro, Kotter (ii) “The Better Boss” by MacFarquhar
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): None
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 3
Week 5 — Motivation (Fri 7/26, Sat 7/27)

- Readings: (i) “On the Folly of Rewarding A, While Hoping for B” by Kerr (ii) “Motivation: A Diagnostic Approach” by Nadler, Lawler (iii) Selected Readings from “Working” by Terkel
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): Motivation at Work
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 4

**PART TWO: EXTERNAL CHANGE**

Week 6 — Workplace Wellbeing: Hacks for Happiness and Creativity (Fri 8/2, Sat 8/3)

- MIDTERM THIS WEEK! Lecture takes place after midterm (midterm will not go full time).
- Due by class start: Nothing (no readings, no thought paper). Just study for the midterm!

Week 7 — Group Decision Making (Fri 8/9, Sat 8/10)

- Readings: (i) “Groupthink” by Janis (ii) “The Abilene Paradox: The Management of Agreement” by Harvey
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): Subarctic Survival
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 5

Week 8 — Passive Influence: Culture, Commitment, and Norms (Fri 8/16, Sat 8/17)

- Readings: (i) "Applying (and Resisting) Peer Influence" by Griskevicius, Cialdini, Goldstein (ii) "Cult-like Cultures" by Collins, Porras (iii) "Is Yours a Learning Organization?" by Garvin, Edmondson, Gino
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): Class Experiences
- Due by class start: The readings above + Thought Paper 6

Week 9 — Active Influence: Managerial Persuasion (Fri 8/23, Sat 8/24)

- Readings: (i) “The Necessary Art of Persuasion” by Conger (ii) “Harnessing the Science of Persuasion” by Cialdini
- In-class activity (materials to be distributed in class): “12 Angry Men” discussion
- Due by class start: The readings above + **FINAL PAPER DUE! (hard copy)**; no thought paper