Critical Thinking and Decision Making

Course Description:
This course integrates theory and practice in order to develop and accumulate problem solving skills—the ability to analyze, think, perform, evaluate, and adapt to the changing needs of organizations. The course focuses on complex decision making processes, critical thinking skills and creative problem solving techniques for the learning organization; motivation and coaching of others; and development of conflict resolution skills.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this course, the students will able to:

- Understand and apply various decision-making approaches and models to cases and examples.
- Apply various creativity approaches to expand options, increase organizational innovation, and enhance problem-solving.
- Describe various theories of learning and methods that link to an effective learning organization.
- Diagnose the sources of poor performance and where appropriate apply motivation theories to recommend solutions.
- Identify the antecedents of conflict and apply conflict management and negotiation techniques to manage group conflict situations.
- Identify critical ethical issues and differentiate between good and bad ethical choices through course topics.

Course Requirements:

- Project 1 12.5% 125 point
- Project 2 15% 150 points
- Project 3 10 % 100 points
- Other assignments 12.5% 125 points
- Attendance 10% 100 points
- Exams 20% 200 points
- Final Exam 20% 200 points

Required Materials:

Course Policies

**Exams** – The material is broken into four segments which will then be followed by an exam worth 50 points. Each exam will be offered according to the schedule. Students that are late to class will generally not be provided extra time to complete the exam, so please come on time. Make-ups for missed exams are only offered under very limited circumstances (for example university sponsored events and doctor required bed rest) but generally do not include minor illnesses. Permission before the scheduled class is required to qualify for a make-up exam. If permission for a make-up has been given, an alternative form of the exam might be substituted at the instructor’s discretion. The final exam is comprehensive.

**Projects** - A number of projects are required during the semester. The purpose of the projects is to provide applied experience relevant to the material. Please view the requirements for these assignments in the Blackboard course.

**Additional assignments** – Required assignments should be submitted through Blackboard. The assignments are important building blocks that will enable the student to understand the material and complete the projects on time. Assignments will include group contracts and appraisals for group members. It is essential that every group member attend additional meetings and participate fully in completing the work. Negative appraisals from other group members will adversely impact the grade. Members not fulfilling their group contracts may be “fired” from the group. A “fired” individual will be required to complete the project alone.

**Attendance** - Attendance for all classes is expected. Attendance is required for this course. Students are expected to be in their seats and ready for class at the beginning of the class period. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class. On days that group work is a significant portion of session, students may be required to sign out. Points will be deducted for coming late and leaving early. It is important to come to class prepared to work on the scheduled material. Two class periods can be missed without the loss of points. After two missed classes 10 points will be deducted for each additional missed class. This is a no fault policy, any exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis; however, students with University Excuses will be given an opportunity to make-up missed work without penalty. Such make-up work must be submitted within one week of the absence or as designated by the Professor. Each student, whether present or absent, is personally responsible for assignments and whatever material is covered. A student should consult with other students for missed class notes.

Any student that is absent for an extensive period of time, without the specific prior approval of the instructor, may be reported to the registrar as stopped attending (SA) which could have serious consequences on financial aid and/or academic standing. The last date of regular attendance will be used as the stopped attending date, regardless of homework and exam completion.
Extra credit – Opportunities to earn extra credit may be offered during class or by completing other specific professional activities outside of class that have been identified and posted in advance by the instructor.

Electronic Device Usage – Computers or tablets are required to complete the homework assignments and projects.

Grading: (scores are generally not rounded up to the next higher grade)
A 900 – 1000
B 800 – 899
C 700 – 799
D 600 – 699
F below 600

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero the first time and failing the course for any additional offence.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10, 2015 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Preferred methods of scholarly citations – APA style is the only accepted method used for citations and referencing during this class. All work should be paraphrased rather than copied directly. Material used from sources other than the text should use APA style citations and references.

Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students
engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Schedule – Spring 2014 – Expected schedule (any changes will be announced in class and in Blackboard):** Please see the Blackboard course for a more detailed schedule of course material and information on homework assignments.

**Text notations** - *Creative Approaches to Problem Solving* (CAPS) and *Pearson Custom* (PearC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Jan. 21</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 26</td>
<td>Managing Conflict</td>
<td>pp. 56-70 (PearC)</td>
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Wed. Jan. 28  Resolving Conflict  pp. 70-84 (PearC)
Mon. Feb. 2   Understanding Creativity  Chapter 1 (CAPS)
Wed. Feb. 4   Creative Problem Solving  Chapters 2 (CAPS)
Mon. Feb. 9   Understanding the Challenge  Chapter 3 (CAPS)
Wed. Feb. 11  Review
Mon. Feb. 16  Exam 1 Conflict management and Chapters 1-2
Wed. Feb. 18  Generating ideas  Chapter 4 (CAPS)
Mon. Feb. 23  Project 1 part 1 paper due before class and Negotiations during class
Wed. Feb. 25  Start Project 2
Mon. Mar. 2   Project 1 part 2 due before class and Preparing for Action  Chapter 5 (CAPS)
Wed. Mar. 4   Planning your approach  Chapter 6 (CAPS)
Mon. Mar. 9   Review
Wed. Mar. 11  Exam 2 Chapters 3-6
March 16 – 20 Spring Break
Mon. Mar. 23  People as problem solvers  Chapter 7 (CAPS)
Wed. Mar. 25  Context for CPS  Chapter 8 (CAPS)
Mon. Mar. 30  Project 2 due & Review
Wed. Apr. 1   Community Presentations
Mon. Apr. 6   Exam 3 Chapters 6-8
Wed. Apr. 8   Diagnosing work performance  pp. 4 – 10 (PearC)
Mon. Apr. 13  Motivation model  pp. 11 – 31 (PearC)
Wed. Apr. 15  Role of Content  Chapter 9 (CPS)
Mon. Apr. 20  CPS as a Change Method  Chapter 10 (CAPS)
Wed. Apr. 22  Project check in
Mon. Apr. 27  Review
Wed. Apr. 29  Exam 4 Motivation and Chapters 9-10
Mon. May 4   Project 3 due before class & Designing your way through CPS  Chapter 11 (CAPS)

Comprehensive final exam according to the University Schedule