

Up-to-date as of January 3, 2023 (subject to change)

Managing in Organizations (MiO)

38001 Syllabus | Winter 2023 | Sections 03 & 81 | Professor Ed O'Brien

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 miscalculate 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'll be armed with management wisdom that works as opposed to management wisdom that might merely "sound right" on the surface (but that doesn't actually work in reality). The first few weeks outline the psychological underpinnings of how people—you, me, colleagues, clients, all of us—process information in biased ways. The remaining weeks then use these insights to understand real organizational issues like persuasion, giving feedback, building culture, working in groups, and work-life balance.

•CONTACT INFORMATION•

Professor:

Ed O'Brien, Ph.D. (eob@chicagobooth.edu)

Associate Professor of Behavioral Science

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Office hours by appointment

Teaching Assistants (send questions to the TA for your registered section):

Sect 03: Mary Donaldson (mdonald0@chicagobooth.edu), M.B.A. student, Booth

Sect 81: Reese Wilson (reese@chicagobooth.edu), M.B.A. student, Booth

•PREREQUISITES•

There are no course prerequisites. This course is for enrolled students only (no auditors).

•PROVISIONAL GRADES•

I will submit provisional grades for students graduating this quarter (if any) based on their 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.

•RECORDING POLICY•

Instructors have the discretion to record course sessions, except when recording is required to meet the needs of students granted an accommodation by the Office of Student Disability Services. Recordings in which students are identifiable will be managed in accordance with FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). This time-limited policy has been implemented to effectively deliver a remote education while safeguarding privacy and protecting rights in courses and instructional materials. By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that they will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course; (iv) share links to course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Course recordings, content, and materials are covered by copyrights held by the University of Chicago. Any unauthorized use of any of the course materials will violate such copyrights. Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.

•MATERIALS•

—Course website: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu/>

—Readings: I will provide all readings for you on our Canvas site (you don't have to purchase any books yourself—though I will be recommending some fantastic books for those who want to dive deeper outside of class). Note that all deadlines for readings are before each lecture. I will not summarize the readings in lecture. You will be expected to understand basic references about the readings. The readings lay the groundwork for some fundamental 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.

—Lecture slides: I will post the lecture slides after class is fully done each week. In other words, you will not have access to the slides before or during lecture. I promise this isn't to annoy you, but to enhance learning, keep the slides interesting, and allow the lecture to be as fresh as possible. Therefore, plan on spending your lecture time taking your own notes as I move along the material (the slides will be numbered during lecture, for your reference while taking notes). Per Booth policy, lecture slides (as well as all course material) 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•

***Note well!: For all assignments below, all deadlines (shown in red) are painfully literal: The submission portal will close at exactly at the due date (all times Chicago time zone). You won't be able to submit anything beyond this point, and you'll earn zero points (even if you're, literally, one second late). Emailing late work will earn zero points. You've been warned! No exceptions. I know this policy seems harsh, but it is the only way to 100% ensure equal fairness in grading each and every student.**

We're required to curve grades to meet Booth's enforced 3.33 class average. That is, note that the final course grade (averaged across all students) must not exceed a 3.33 (B+).

Please see Canvas to find detailed documents outlining each graded component of the course. To sum the key points here, your final course grade comprises these components:

—Thought Papers (x7), 20% of course grade: You will formulate your reactions to the previous lecture and/or the upcoming readings, based on questions 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. If you get a check: Good work. This means that you did a good job and met the high expectations that I have for Booth students. Keep it up. 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 without considering the psychological orientation of the class, or if you simply dashed off an answer without thinking much. Some papers may receive a “check-plus.” These are reserved for the best papers relative to your peers' papers from that week, which offer unique insight—that others would find useful after doing all readings and attending class. You will upload all thought papers online via our Canvas site.

• **DEADLINE**: Due each Monday by start time of your registered section.

—Exams (x2), 50% of course grade: You will complete two exams, once near the middle of the quarter and again near the end of the quarter (thus tapping into different material, comprising each half of the course). You will complete them online via our Canvas site.

• **DEADLINE, Exam 1**: Due Mon Feb 6 by start time of your registered section.

• **DEADLINE, Exam 2**: Due Mon March 6 by 11:59pm.

—Final Group Paper (x1), 25% of course grade: The final assignment is a paper, done in groups of 3-5 members (your choice). If you need help finding a group, our Canvas site has a sign-up sheet. Your job is to pick a real-world organization (including your own, if you so choose; you can anonymize where needed to maintain confidentiality) and write a list of recommendations for how to improve it, based on class concepts. No more than 10 double-spaced pages in total. Every group member will receive the same grade. You will upload a copy of the paper (one copy per group) via our Canvas site.

• **DEADLINE**: Due Wed March 8 by 11:59pm.

—Class Engagement (5% 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 engagement 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).

Merely being present is insufficient for leading the curve for Class Engagement. If we're reaching the end of the course and you've rarely communicated in any capacity, that doesn't bode well for your Class Engagement score, even if you showed up each week.

•MORE ON CLASS ETIQUETTE•

I expect Booth students to adhere to all standard classroom norms. Note that if your final course grade falls right on the border of a grade cut-off and requires manual correction, having been a good MiO citizen will likely earn you the benefit of the doubt (and less so for students who did these things less consistently throughout the quarter). This includes:

—Having empathy and being a supportive and constructive team player (e.g., respecting and never disparaging your classmates' comments). Snark is not welcome here. I want all my students to feel comfortable and as part of the same Social Psychology team. We're here to bring material to life *together*. You need to play your part to make this happen.

—Devoting full attention to lectures, and engaging with lecture activities (e.g., small group discussions). This means you won't be checking your phone or doing other things during class time (obvious exceptions aside, such as dealing with family emergencies).

—Arriving on time and staying in full. We will start each class promptly and end on time.

—Please, please, please: No chatting with neighbors. If you have a comment about the course, just raise your hand and I'll call on you; share it with the class. Otherwise, please keep to yourself. Just fall asleep if you can't sit still, but please don't start chatting with your neighbors. I deeply care about this because it disrupts the students sitting around you. They worked hard to be here, and are working hard to listen—don't ruin it for them.

—This last one isn't a "rule" but just a suggestion: I encourage my students to **not** use laptops/tablets/etc. for taking notes (if that's possible for you). Just watch and participate in the lecture without a machine, and take notes with pen-and-paper as we go along. You can transcribe them onto your machines later. There is a lot of research in educational psychology showing this is the best way to enhance your ability to learn the information.

•COURSE SCHEDULE•

Week 1 — No class, university holiday (Mon Jan 2)

Week 2 — The Power of the Situation (Mon Jan 9)

- Readings: (i) The Talent Myth (ii) A Tale of Two Plants
- In-class activity: NUMMI
- **Due Mon Jan 9 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 1

Week 3 — No class, university holiday (Mon Jan 16)

Week 4 — Mistaken Impressions: Receiving and Seeking Information (Mon Jan 23)

- Readings: (i) Made to Stick: Introduction and Chapter 1; (ii) How We Know What Isn't So: Chapter 4 and Chapter 6
- In-class activity: Carter Racing
- **Due Mon Jan 23 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 2 + Big Intro Survey

Week 5 — Sense Making: How Beliefs Create Reality (Mon Jan 30)

- Readings: (i) Pygmalion in Management (ii) How (Un)ethical Are You? (iii) Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome (iv) Ann Hopkins (v) Amicus Curiae Brief
- In-class activity: Ann Hopkins
- **Due Mon Jan 30 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 3

Week 6 — Motivation & Incentives: Knowing What Your Employees Want (Mon Feb 6)

- Readings: (i) The Better Boss (ii) On the Folly of Rewarding A, While Hoping for B (iii) Pick any 5 readings from “Working” and be prepared to discuss them in lecture
- In-class activity: Studs Terkel
- **Due Mon Feb 6 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 4 + Exam 1

Week 7 — Working Together: Smarter, Happier, & More Creative Groups (Mon Feb 13)

- Readings: (i) Groupthink (ii) The Abilene Paradox (iii) Creativity Under the Gun
- In-class activity: Subarctic Survival
- **Due Mon Feb 13 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 5

Week 8 — Changing Your Organizational Culture (Mon Feb 20)

- Readings: (i) Applying and Resisting Peer Influence (ii) Cult-like Cultures (iii) Is Yours a Learning Organization?
- In-class activity: Class Cultures
- **Due Mon Feb 20 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 6

Week 9 — Managerial Power: Getting Others to Follow Your Lead (Mon Feb 27)

- Readings: (i) The Necessary Art of Persuasion (ii) Harnessing the Science of Persuasion
- In-class activity: 12 Angry Men
- **Due Mon Feb 27 by your section start time:** Do readings + Thought Paper 7

Week 10 — EXAM WEEK (Mon March 6)

- No class, but *two* assignments due this week!
- **Due Mon March 6, 11:59pm:** Exam 2
- **Due Wed March 8, 11:59pm:** Final Paper

O'Brien, MiO 38001, Winter 2023: Quick-View Calendar
(all times Chicago time zone)

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
JAN 2023	1	2 Week 1 — No class (university holiday)	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9 Week 2 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 1	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16 Week 3 — No class (university holiday)	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23 Week 4 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Do Big Intro Survey	24	25	26	27	28
FEB 2023	29	30 Week 5 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 3	31	1	2	3	4
	5	6 Week 6 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Exam 1	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13 Week 7 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 5	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20 Week 8 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 6	21	22	23	24	25
MAR 2023	26	27 Week 9 — Class today <u>By section start time:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Do all readings <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Thought Paper 7	28	1	2	3	4
	5	6 Week 10 — Exam week <u>No class, but due by 11:59pm on Canvas:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Exam 2	7	8 Due by 11:59pm on Canvas: <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Final Paper	9	10	11