



HARVARD Kennedy School
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Behavioral Science for Inclusive Organizations

MLD-310/Fall 2017

Mondays, 4:15 pm – 7:00 pm

Classroom: L-230

Faculty

Iris Bohnet, Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School (iris_bohnet@harvard.edu)

Support

Faculty Assistant: **Kelsey Heroux**, Kelsey_heroux@hks.harvard.edu

Research Assistant: **Anisha Asundi**, anisha_asundi@hks.harvard.edu

Office Hours

By appointment. Please contact Kelsey_heroux@hks.harvard.edu

Course Policy

MLD-310 is offered at Harvard Kennedy School, with a limited number of seats reserved for cross-registrants from HBS and from across Harvard. Space permitting, auditors are welcome.

For Kennedy School students: please enroll using the standard HKS-process; for cross-registrants and auditors: please email Kelsey_Heroux@hks.harvard.edu by August 30, 2017 that you would like to enroll/audit the class and include a short motivational statement.

Course Aims & Objectives

This field course uses insights from behavioral science to promote organizational health, in particular, as it relates to equality, diversity and inclusion. Getting and staying healthy includes preventing undesirable events from happening, detecting issues when they arise and mitigating against the consequences as they occur. To promote healthy behaviors, organizations typically rely on “soft” instruments such as awareness raising and appeals through training programs and information sharing, or “hard” instruments such as command-and-control through rules, carrots and sticks. This course argues that behavioral design or “nudges” offer a middle ground to establish healthy behaviors, often more powerful than awareness raising and less costly than shoves. In working with organizations across the sectors, we will design nudges promoting desired behaviors regarding effective talent management, organizational design that levels the playing field for all and inclusive culture.

We treat lack of diversity and inclusion as a “want-should” dilemmas, where people know what they should be doing but then, do not get around to doing it. Behavioral design helps people bridge this intention-action gap. The course emphasizes evidence-based reasoning. Students will learn how to diagnose the “behavioral health” of an organization, design potential treatments for what is broken, and rigorously evaluate their impact, using big data analytics and experimentation. Students will work in groups and partner with an organization—a tech start-up having developed behaviorally inspired software to help organizations address these issues or an organization (company, government or International Organization) interested in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion through the use of behavioral design.

Course Format, Procedures and Policies

The course consists of three modules:

1. Introduction to Behavioral Design and Bias in Organizations
2. De-biasing Talent Management
3. Designing Inclusion

This is a field course. Field Courses are customized according to individual faculty research and are designed to enable students to take an active role in the construction of their learning. In many instances, these courses are built with a specific focus in mind and teams of students are called upon to collaborate directly with local partners to scope projects, collect data and organize work plans during the course. Field courses tailor learning via classroom experiences, and work in teams together with the instructor and/or the partner organization.

The course will meet in 9 double-sessions in class and 5 scheduled group sessions (2 with the instructor, 2 with the partner organization and 1 with both). During class, in addition to discuss research and engage in case analyses and simulations, we will meet with representatives from the private and the public sector who either have developed or are using behavioral tools to de-bias talent management and/or create inclusive work environments. The core of the class will be student projects where groups of 5-7 students will address a design problem posed by one of the organizations. Our partner organizations are: Applied, the City of Cambridge, Goodwin, the IMF, Jaba Talks, L’Oréal, Parexel, pymetrics, and UNICEF.

There are no prerequisites for taking this class.

Grading

Final grades will be determined based on performance in the following

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| (1) Group project | (60%) |
| (2) Class conduct | (40%) |

Note: Students will be evaluated by the instructor as well as by their peers.

Group Project: Presentation and Briefing to Your Client

Students are expected to fully participate in the work of their group, including attending all group meetings, whether with the group alone, with the instructor or the partner organization, and assume responsibility for discrete parts of the group project. To maximize team performance and benefit from all individual contributions, team members will evaluate each other at the end of the project, in terms of the quality and the quantity of their individual contributions, their (emotional, social and technical) ability to advance the work of the team as a whole and their behavior and conduct. Students are expected to treat each other with respect, making the collaboration an inclusive experience for all.

Your assignment is to produce a presentation and briefing report to your client that provides helpful insight on using behavioral design to assist your partner organization achieve a more effective and measurable performance.

You will be graded on the usefulness of the report to your partner organization. Some of the things that a useful report might do include:

- Define the problem or challenge
- Analyze—do not merely present—the relevant evidence
- Use behavioral insights to generate alternative approaches to addressing the problem
- Develop a set of recommendations on how to test the best of your ideas
- Test or make suggestions for the partner organization on how they can test or implement your ideas

Students should expect to regularly work as a project team, with meetings with their partner organization (in person or via video conference) and Professor Bohnet as detailed in the schedule below, culminating in a presentation to their partner organization and Professor Bohnet by December 20th.

The briefing report is due by December 8th. The briefing report should be sent to both the Partner Organization and Professor Bohnet. If the partner organization only requests a presentation and no written report, the report is still required for class.

Class Conduct

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings/cases, participate in simulations and have an informed exchange with our guests. The goal is to make comments that significantly advance the class discussion, so quality is more important than quantity (but some

quantity is necessary for quality to be judged). Students are expected to treat each other with respect, making the class a safe space for all to flourish. The class will be run based on the following norms: punctuality, no technology in class, attendance and presence during entire class, no unnecessary externalities (e.g., extensive meals), cold calling. To maximize class effectiveness, students will be asked to nominate three people who most advanced the learnings in class at the end of the course.

Integrity

All course activities, including class meetings and the group project are subject to HKS academic codes and codes of conduct. If you need to miss class, please let me know as early as possible and, unless this is an emergency, plan ahead to make sure you stay in the loop. Unexcused absences will affect the class participation grade.

Course Materials and Access

Required Readings

Students should read two books and carefully study the readings in preparation for class:

Iris Bohnet, [*What Works: Gender Equality by Design*](#) (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2016).

Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, [*Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*](#), Revised & Expanded edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

Course Website

All enrolled students have access to the course website at canvas.harvard.edu. The course calendar and links to the required readings can be found there.

Course Schedule

Note: Class sessions marked in blue. Deadlines marked in red. Group meetings marked in green.

September 11, 2017

Class 1: Introduction

Preparation:

1. What Works: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

September 18, 2017

Deadline: Sign up for group project

Class 2: Diagnosis and Treatment (1): Data and Behavioral Design

Preparation:

1. What Works: Chapters 6 and 7
2. "Hiring Tool Uses Behavioural Science to Stop Recruitment Bias," New Scientist, accessed July 19, 2017, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2122323-hiring-tool-uses-behavioural-science-to-stop-recruitment-bias/>
3. Kate Glazebrook, "Hiring, Honeybees and Human Decision-Making," Finding Needles in Haystacks, June 29, 2017, <https://medium.com/finding-needles-in-haystacks/hiring-honeybees-and-human-decision-making-33f3a9d76763>

Guest: Kate Glazebrook, CEO and Co-founder, [Applied](#)

September 19, 2017, 5pm

Deadline: Sign up for a 45 min. group meeting with Professor Bohnet on Sept. 20, 21 or 22.

September 20-22, 2017

Group Meeting 1

Meet with Professor Bohnet in the Women and Public Policy Program suite on the ground floor of Taubman building at HKS.

September 25, 2017:

Class 3: Diagnosis and Treatment (2): De-biasing Practices and Procedures

Preparation:

1. What Works: Chapters 8 and 9
2. Dan Kopf, “More Economists Should Use Machine Learning to Do Their Jobs Better,” *Quartz*, accessed July 19, 2017, <https://qz.com/1026941/more-economists-should-be-using-machine-learning-to-do-their-jobs-better/>
3. Richard Feloni, “Consumer-Goods Giant Unilever Has Been Hiring Employees Using Brain Games and Artificial Intelligence — and It’s a Huge Success,” *Business Insider*, accessed July 19, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/unilever-artificial-intelligence-hiring-process-2017-6>.

Guest: Frida Polli, CEO and Co-founder, [pymetrics](#)

October 2

Class 4: Evaluation

Preparation:

1. Nava Ashraf et al., Evaluating Microsavings Programs: Green Bank of the Philippines (A, B and C).
2. Prime Minister and Cabinet, “Behavioural Economics,” (April 22, 2016), <https://www.pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/behavioural-economics>

Guest: Michael Hiscox, Founding Director of the Behavioral Economics Team (BETA), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government

October 9

No class

Deadline: Finish reading Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, [Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness.](#)

October 16

Group meeting 2

Meet for approx. 2-3 hours, ideally during class time, with your partner organization (in-person or via Skype, self-organized but let Kelsey know via email when and where the meeting will take place, incl. if you meet on a different day/time)

October 23

Class 5: Uptake

Preparation:

1. What Works, Chapters 3, 4 and 5
2. Nava Ashraf, Natalie Kindred, and Richard Sedlmayr, Uptake of Malaria Rapid Diagnostic Tests, 911007-PDF-ENG (2011). <https://hbr.org/product/uptake-of-malaria-rapid-diagnostic-tests/911007-PDF-ENG>
3. Eli Wald, Biglaw Identity Capital: Pink and Blue, Black and White, 83 Fordham L. Rev. 2509 (2015). Available at: <http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol83/iss5/14>

Guest: Laura Acosta, Goodwin

October 30, 2017

Class 6: Diversity in Teams

Preparation:

1. What Works: Chapters 10 and 11
2. (Re)Building a Global Team: Tariq Khan at Tek, Harvard Business School Case 9-414-059. <http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=46002>
3. Fernandes, Catarina, and Jeff Polzer. "[Diversity in Groups.](#)" In *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*, R. A. Scott and S. M. Kosslyn (eds.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2015. Electronic.

Guest: Michelle Gadsden-Williams, Accenture

November 3, 2017, 5pm

Deadline: Sign up for a 45 min. group meeting with Professor Bohnet, November 7-16.

November 6, 2017

Class 7: Designing Diversity

Preparation:

1. What Works, Chapters 12 and 13
2. John Beshears, Iris Bohnet and Jenny Sanford, Increasing Gender Diversity in the Boardroom: The United Kingdom in 2011 (A), Harvard Business School Case (draft)

Guest: Aida Sabo, PAREXEL

November 7-16

Group Meeting 3

Meet with Professor Bohnet in the Women and Public Policy Program suite on the ground floor of Taubman building at HKS.

November 13

Group Meeting 4

Meet with your group during class time (Nov. 13) and check-in with your partner organization (via email or Skype, self-organized)

November 20

Class 8: Designing Inclusion

Preparation:

1. Google Project Oxygen: Do Managers Matter, Harvard Business School Case 9-313-110.
<https://hbr.org/product/google-s-project-oxygen-do-managers-matter/313110-PDF-ENG>
2. Laura Sherbin and Ripa Rashid, "Diversity Doesn't Stick Without Inclusion," *Harvard Business Review*, February 1, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion>
3. Jeff Green, "Deloitte Thinks Diversity Groups are Passé." Bloomberg. Accessed July 31, 2017
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-19/deloitte-thinks-diversity-groups-are-pass>

November 27

Class 9: Discussion of Group Projects

December 8, 2017

Deadline: Group project due

December 11- 20, 2017

Group Meeting 5

Present your final project to your partner organization and Professor Bohnet (scheduled by Kelsey)

SEPTEMBER 2017

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
				1	2/3
4	5	6	7	8	9/10
11 Class 1: Introduction to Behavioral Design	12	13	14	15	16/17
18 Class 2: Diagnosis & Treatment (1): Data and Behavioral Design Deadline: Sign up for group project	19 Deadline: Sign up for a 45 min. group meeting with Professor Bohnet on Sept. 20, 21 or 22	20	21	22	23/24
25 Class 3: Diagnosis & Treatment (2): De-Biasing Practices & Procedures	26	27	28	29	30

Group Meeting 1: Meet with Professor Bohnet in the Women and Public Policy Program suite on the ground floor of Taubman building at HKS.

OCTOBER 2017

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
					1
2 Class 4: Evaluation	3	4	5	6	7/8
9 No class Deadline: Finish reading Nudge by Thaler and Sunstein	10	11	12	13	14/15
16 Group meeting 2 Meet for approx. 2-3 hours, ideally during class time, with your partner organization	17	18	19	20	21/22
23 Class 5: Development and Promotion	24	25	26	27	28/29
30 Class 6: Diversity in Teams	31				

NOVEMBER 2017

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
		1	2	3	4/5
6 Class 7: Designing Diversity & Inclusion (1)	7 -- Group Meeting 3: Meet with Professor Bohnet in the Women and	8	9	10	11/12
13 Policy Program suite on the ground floor of Taubman building at HKS-- Group Meeting 4 Meet with your group during class time and check-in with your partner organization	14	15	16	17	18/19
20 Class 8: Designing Diversity & Inclusion (2)	21	22	23	24	25/26
27 Class 9: Discussion of Group Projects	28	29	30		

DECEMBER 2017

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
				1	2/3
4	5	6	7	8 Deadline: Group project due	9/10
11	12	13	14	15	16/17
----- Group Meeting 5: Present your final project to your partner organization and					
18	19	20	21	22	23/24
Professor Bohnet (scheduled by Kelsey) -----					
25	26	27	28	29	30/31

Additional Readings

Students interested in further exploring behavioral science may wish to consult:

1. Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*, 1 Exp Rev edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).
2. Dan Ariely, *The Honest Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone--Especially Ourselves*, Reprint edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013).
3. Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, 1 edition (New York: Delacorte Press, 2013).
4. Max H. Bazerman and Don A. Moore, *Judgment in Managerial Decision Making*, 8 edition (New York: Wiley, 2012)
5. John Beshears and Francesca Gino, "Leaders as Decision Architects," *Harvard Business Review*, May 1, 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/05/leaders-as-decision-architects>.
6. Laszlo Bock, *Work Rules! Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead*, First edition (New York: Twelve, 2015).
7. Atul Gawande, *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*, Reprint edition (New York: Picador, 2011).
8. Francesca Gino, *Sidetracked: Why Our Decisions Get Derailed, and How We Can Stick to the Plan* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013).
9. Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them*, Reprint edition (Penguin Books, 2014).
10. Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Reprint edition (New York: Vintage, 2013).
11. David Halpern, *Inside the Nudge Unit: How Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference*, Reprint edition (Virgin Digital, 2015).
12. Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Reprint edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).
13. Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: The New Science of Having Less and How It Defines Our Lives*, Reprint edition (Picador, 2014).
14. Michael Lewis, *The Undoing Project: A Friendship That Changed Our Minds*, 1 edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016).
15. Christine Pearson and Christine Porath, *The cost of bad behavior: How incivility is damaging your business and what to do about it* (Penguin, 2009).
16. Cass R. Sunstein and Reid Hastie, *Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014).
17. Cass R. Sunstein, *Simpler: The Future of Government*, Reprint edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).