



# Yale SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

## PROBLEM FRAMING

**MGT 506**

**Evans 2200**

**Mon & Wed**

**10:10 am - 11:30 am**

Prof. Paul Bracken  
Evans 5526

paul.bracken@yale.edu  
203.432.5962

Course Ass't: Trish Guccione

trish.guccione@yale.edu

TA: Daniel Fernandez Palomares

daniel.fernandezpalomares@yale.edu

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

(All readings, cases, etc. are found on the web in Canvas Files, under MGT 506)

#### **Oct 21: Are You Solving the Right Problem?**

- Overview of the course
- Two kinds of leaders
- What is a problem frame?
- The two most useful problem framing techniques
- Introduction to multiframing.

#### **Readings:**

"The Framing Challenge, What Is the Real Problem?" HBS 6334BC

#### **Oct 23: Exercises in Problem Framing**

- Problem Frames can influence every stage of problemsolving
- In class exercise demonstrating the impact of problem frames

In Class Exercise: the Compass Diagram

**Oct 28:      Dealing with Groupthink**

*We are all taught to focus on certain information and think in certain ways. This class explores the impact of these tendencies on problem framing.*

- Narrow Bracketing – risk taking and overconfidence
- Reference points – risk taking, value, loss aversion
- Inexperience & the learning curve

Reading:    Case: “President Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs Invasion,” Kennedy School of Government HKS009

**Oct 30:      Trends**

Trends are the general direction in which something is developing or changing.

- Trends: what they are
- The two biggest mistakes in analyzing trends
- Megatrends
- Secular vs. cyclic
- S-shaped curves

Reading:

Herman Kahn, "On Studying the Future," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7

**Nov 4: Environmental Scanning**

- The multifold trend
- The confluence of trends: the cross impact matrix\_

Reading:    *Environmental Scanning, What It Is, How To Do It*

**Nov 6:        Forecasting**

- Forecasting, predictions, & projections (they're all different)
- Predictability of different kinds of trends
- Social forecasting
- Fashion forecasting in business

Case: “What Business is Zara In?” (HBS W15431)

**Nov 11:        Are Your Assumptions Correct?**

- Assumptions & defining the business
- Load bearing assumptions
- The Assumption Based Planning (ABP) Approach
- Signposts and indicators
- Early warning systems in business, war, & government

Readings:

Paul Bracken, “Assumption Based Planning”

Ronald Cohen, *The Second Bounce of the Ball, Turning Risk into Opportunity*, (London, 2007), pp. 95-123

**Nov 13:        Red Teaming – "Think Like the Enemy"**

- Thinking like the enemy
- Red teams in the military
- Business red teaming
- Relationship to war gaming

Reading:

Paul Bracken, "Red Teaming" 2015

**Nov 18: Dealing with Risk & Uncertainty**

“The Uncertainty Problem, How to Deal with Unknowns,” HBS 6372BC

Paul Bracken, “How to Build a Warning System” *Managing Strategic Surprise* (Cambridge University Press)

### **Nov 20: Scenario Methods**

- Scenarios and alternative futures in corporate strategy
- Scenario thinking isn't prediction

#### Readings:

Herman Kahn, "The Use of Scenarios"  
A Note on Scenario Planning (Darden 306 003)

### **Dec 2: Alternative Futures**

Skim the following:

- *Shell's Global Scenarios Guide*
- "[Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds](#)," Report of the National Intelligence Council, especially the Executive Summary and Alternative Worlds (this report is on the web, not in Files folder of Canvas)

### **Dec 4: Student Reports**

Students Project Reports In Class

### **Dec 9: Student Reports**

Students Project Reports In Class

Oct. 16, 2019