



## PRESENTATION

### Introduction and learning objectives

*“Every complex problem has a solution which is simple, direct, plausible — and wrong.” – H.L. Mencken (1920)*

*“The capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problem whose solution is required for objectively rational behavior in the real world or even for a reasonable approximation to such objective rationality.” – Simon (1957: 198)*

In 2018, the World Economic Forum published a report on “The Future of Work.” The report shows that complex problem-solving – identifying complex problems, reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options, and selling and implementing solutions – is among the top 10 skills for current and future workers. In addition, according to Zenger and Folkman (2014), problem-solving is the second most important competency for managers.

In life, as in business, we are confronted by a wide array of problems and situations, which require us to act. Some problems are relatively simple or structured. In simple problems, a formula can be followed and repeated with relatively little expertise and be expected to produce standard results (Glouberman & Zimmerman, 2002). In simple problems, a formula can be followed and repeated with relatively little expertise and be expected to produce standard results.

In business, however, most problems are not that easy. They often involve economic, technical, and human issues and can be quite complex and unstructured. They do not have a unique – “correct” – solution. Similar (different) solutions in different contexts (e.g., time and space) may produce very different (similar) results. Also, the presence of risk and uncertainty often play a key part in any choice of action. Solving such unstructured and complex problems is much of what managers do and the ability to solve them is often what sets apart great managers from the rest.

Aiming to prepare you to become a better manager and crack complex problems, the main objectives of the course are to develop your skills at:

1. Understanding what and how cognitive biases may affect and distort the way we interpret, define, and address complex problems.
2. Identifying and defining the right problem.
3. Structuring the problem to understand its underlying causes.
4. Testing the hypotheses or examining the issues to propose sound solutions to the problem.
5. Presenting and selling the solution.

- **Program:** Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA)
- **Module/Subject:** 7. Elective/ 7.2. Program specific elective
- **ECTS:** 3
- **Year/ Semester:** 2nd year, Fall Semester
- **Type of Course:** Required



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- **Language:** English
- **Coordinator:** José Antonio Alfaro (jalvaro@unav.es)
- **Professor:** María Galarza
- **Course schedule:** Wednesday, 17:00-18:30, Amigos Building P0-Aula05
- **Office:** Edificio amigos Torre 3060
- **Office hours by appointment,** sending email.

## COMPETENCIES

*This course will provide students with an opportunity to develop the following BBA competencies:*

**SSOP7:** Analyze current trends in the design of objectives and/or strategies in the company.

**SSOP8:** Develop objectives, strategies, and/or projects in the field of production, logistics, and marketing.

**SSOP9:** Identify new trends in the field of marketing, operations, and/or business models.

**SSOP10:** Develop practical cases that describe the strategy of a company and the key factors in the competitiveness of companies.

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## PROGRAM

1. Introduction to case analysis
2. Case Competition 1 - Diagnosis
3. Stating the Problem
4. Structuring the Problem: Pyramids and trees
5. Structuring the Problem: Analytical Frameworks
6. Solving the Problem
7. Selling the Solution
8. Case Competition 2 – Assurance of Learning

## FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

**Individual work:** 15 hours

**Teamwork:** 30 hours

**Discussion in class:** 30 hours

## ASSESSMENT

### ORDINARY CALL

The final grading scale is composed of the following grades:

5.1 Attendance & Participation (Individual) - 20%

5.2 Quizzes (Individual) - 30%



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5.3 Case Reports (Prepared in teams) - 20%

5.4 Case Competition 2 (Teams-Individual) - 30%

### **EXTRAORDINARY CALL**

**Extraordinary Exam: 100%**

(According to the University of Navarra Examination Policy)

### **OFFICE HOURS**

**Instructor: Professor María Galarza**

- **Office: 3060, Edificio Amigos, Torre, Planta 3**
- **Office hours by appointment, sending email.**

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Textbook:

Garrette, B., Phelps, C., Sibony, O. (2018). Cracked it! How to solve big problems and sell solutions like top strategy consultants. Palgrave Macmillan, UK. [Recurso electrónico](#)

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