

It's on the Syllabus: Building Your Best Course Outline



**THOMPSON
RIVERS
UNIVERSITY**

Centre for
Excellence in
Learning & Teaching

Thompson Rivers University campuses are on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops campus) and the T'exelc (Williams Lake campus) within Secwépemc'ulucw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc. The region TRU serves also extends into the territories of the St'át'imc, Nlaka'pamux, T'silhqot'in, Nuxalk, and Dakelh, and Métis communities within these territories.



Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Oppression

Racism is dehumanizing.

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching is committed to overcoming racism by working toward eradicating discrimination and bigotry in education.

We are learning and unlearning and actively working towards a better future.

Overview

- Discussion: what do you want your course outline to do?
- Expectations
- Do they even read it?
- The graphic syllabus and liquid syllabus
- The promising syllabus
- Syllabus under construction

Discussion

Given that most courses will be delivered through an alternative mode of delivery, what do you ultimately want your course outline to do?

Please answer in the chat or verbally 😊.

Expectations

- Defining your expectations—and those of your institution, program, and department
- Determining student expectations
- The power of positive language
- Creating a positive class culture
- The course outline as a “motivational tool” (Bowen, 2012)
- The course outline as an introduction to disciplinary practice (Nilson, 2007)

Do They Even Read It?

- Weimer (2013): “Do less telling so students can do more discovering”
- Avoid “going over” the course outline in a synchronous session if possible
- Send or post it in advance and give them a chance to ask questions
- Lang (2010): Ask them to find a partner for a syllabus-related activity—you could create breakout groups or private discussion forums for this
- Bowen (2012): Provide the outline in advance and tell them there will be a brief quiz on Moodle
- Other strategies?

The Graphic Syllabus

- Text-only syllabi can be difficult for some students to grasp

Figure 1.2
How Students Might See a Syllabus

Organization of Course BLAH 300: "Something I Gotta Take"

Week 1: Overview of Something I Gotta Take

Week 2: The Composition of Apple Peel

Week 3: Introduction to Giraffe Consciousness

Week 4: Cooking with Sugar and Eggs

Week 5: Sugar and Eggs Continued: Challenges and Solutions

Week 6: The Modern Car: The Carburetor

Week 7: The Modern Car: Seat Belts

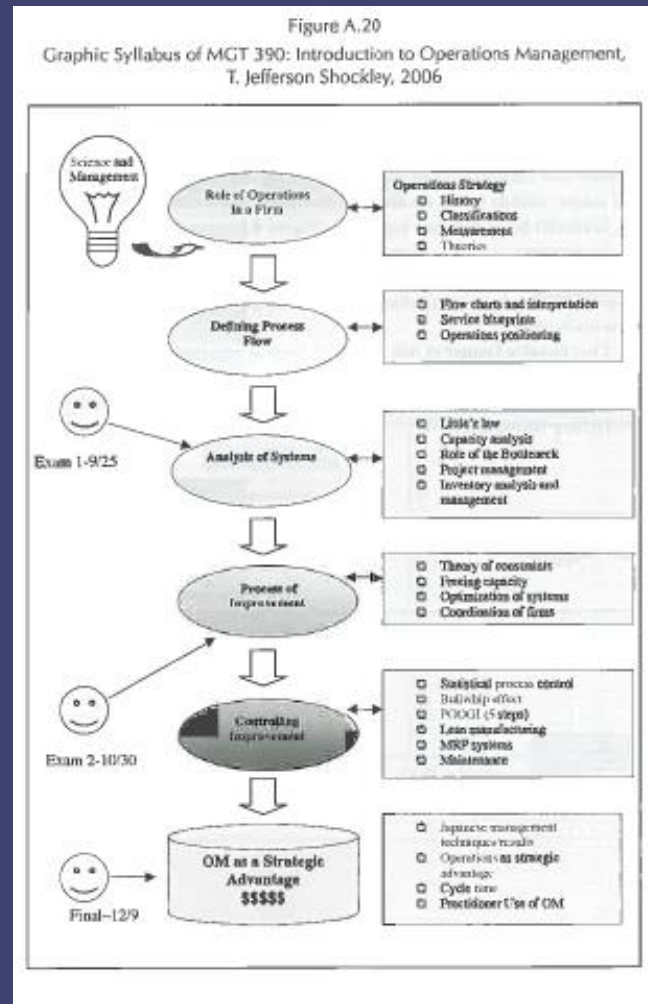
Week 8: Advanced Giraffe Consciousness and Introduction to Pineapples

Week 9: The Relationship Between Pineapples and Buses

The Graphic Syllabus

- Nilson (2007): If possible, provide a concept map or other visual road map of the course so students can share your vision (and maybe develop their own)
- An online syllabus can be presented as “liquid syllabus”—using “a website tool rather than a tool for document creation to create a welcoming, supportive syllabus with visuals and, of course, a friendly welcome video of yourself” (Pacansky-Brock, 2020)

The Graphic Syllabus



(Nilson, 2007)

The Graphic Syllabus

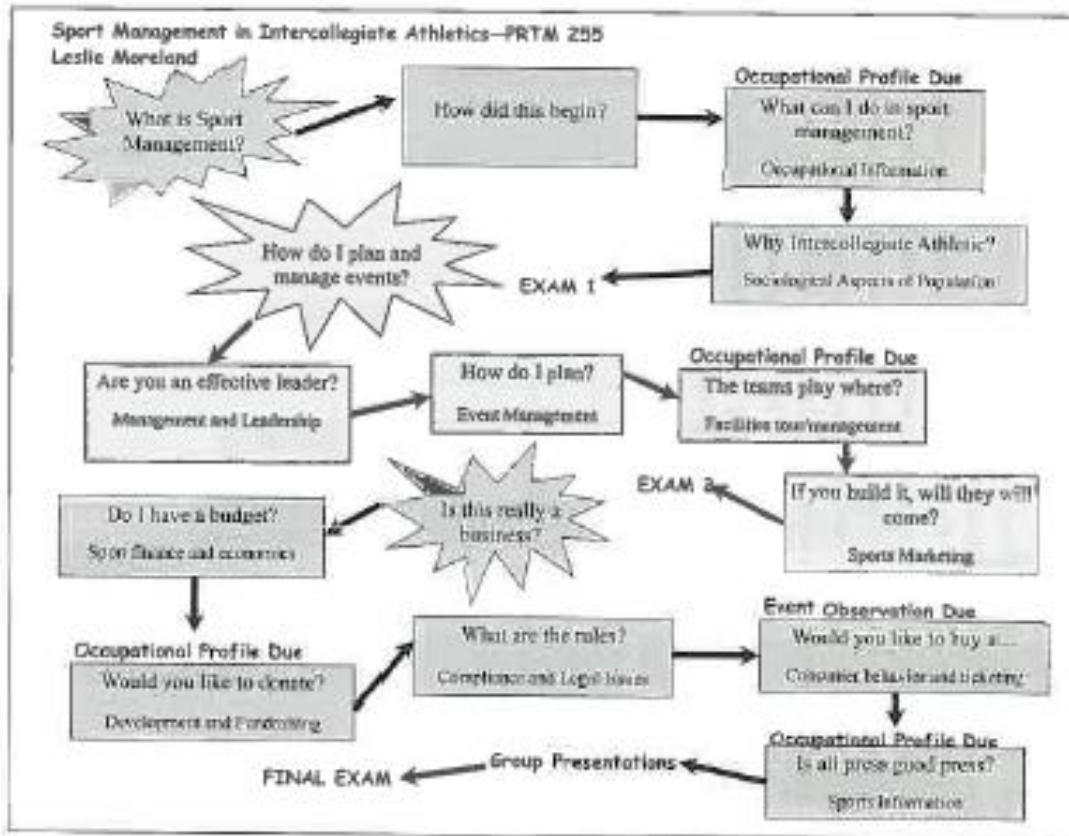


Figure A.22
 Graphic Syllabus of PRM 255:
 Sport Management for Intercollegiate Athletics,
 Leslie Moreland, 2006

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
Decision Analysis and Modelling
 BUSN 6250 Section: 01 • (3,0,0)
 Winter Term 2020

School of Business and Economics • Department of Management, Information and Supply Chain

What is this course about?

How are business decisions made? Go with what 'your gut' says? Most votes around a committee table? Do what we did last time???

In this course we'll take **quantitative approach** to business decision making – using business data and mathematical models to develop information to support our decisions – 'Decisions with Numbers' if you will. We will use spreadsheets extensively in this course – the modern business 'power tool.'

Course Logistics & Grading

We'll meet **Wednesdays 2.30PM to 5.30 PM** in the International Building (IB 2006) computer lab.

Since we only have one class meeting per week, it is **imperative** that you attend every class!

In this course, you'll **learn** decision analysis by **doing** decision analysis. How? Cases / scenarios (6% each) to be completed roughly **each week**. Multiply that by 10 weeks and you've got 60% of the course. We'll wrap things up with a Final Exam (40%) at the end. All work in this course is individual.

What do I need to succeed?

This is a hands-on skills-based course and as such there is no textbook for this course. Most of what you require you can find on the Internet. **Moodle** will be used as a repository resource as well – most everything from class will be posted there. Feel free to add your favourite resources to it for future students!

Your Course Instructor:



Trent Tucker, MBA, PhD
 Email: tucker@tru.ca
 Phone: (778) 471-8546
 Office: IB 2040
 Office Hours: Wed. 11:00 – 2:00,
 Thu. 3:00 – 5:00, or by appointment.

I was in industry for a number of years before becoming an academic; often as a systems analyst or business analyst – forcing numbers into wee spreadsheet cells to get them to reveal their secrets!

Course Description

From the TRU Academic Calendar: 'Students learn to integrate personal judgment and intuition in realistic business situations with the most widely applicable methodologies of decision and risk analysis, probability and statistics, competitive analysis, and management science. Topics include an introduction to decision analysis and modelling; spreadsheet engineering and error reduction; framing decision analysis problems; framework for analyzing risk; data analysis; resource allocation with optimization models; multi-period deterministic models; multi-factor deterministic models; regression modelling; strategic interactive decisions; and interpreting models, data, and decisions.'

Prerequisite: BUSN 5010 & 5030 or equivalent.

Note: To successfully complete this course, you **must obtain** at least 50% on the final exam and at least 70% in the course overall.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Class Meeting:	Assignment:
Week 1 • Jan. 8 th • Introduction to the course: overview, objectives; intro to decision making, DM-Continuum, etc.	None.
Week 2 • Jan. 15 th • Spreadsheet 'engineering' / error reduction FAST modelling standard	Case #1 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 3 • Jan. 22 nd • Take up case #1 Framing Decision Analysis Problems	Case #2 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 4 • Jan. 29 th • Take up case #2 Framework for Analyzing Risk (scenario analysis, etc)	Case #3 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 5 • Feb. 5 th • Take up case #3 Simulation – a Risk Analysis Tool	Case #4 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 6 • Feb. 12 th • Take up case #4 Data Analysis (sources & reliability, descriptive stats, etc.)	No case this week.
Feb. 19 th • No classes today 🤗 – Reading Week 📖 📖 📖	
Week 7 • Feb. 26 th • and now for something completely different Resource Allocation – Optimization Models	Case #5 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 8 • Mar. 4 th • Take up case #5 Deterministic Models – Multi-Period	Case #6 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 9 • Mar. 11 th • Take up case #6 Deterministic Models – Multi Factor	Case #7 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 10 • Mar. 18 th • Take up case #7 Forecasting – predicting the future (time series; regression)	Case #8 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 11 • Mar. 25 th • Take up case #8 Presenting the results, dashboards and visual representation	Case #9 out – due @ start of next class.
Week 12 • Apr. 1 st • Take up case #9 Data and decisions - a management consultant perspective	Last case (#10) out – due @ start of next class.
Week 13 • Apr. 8 th • Take up case #10 Course wrap-up; final exam review...	None.
Final Exam (Apr. 14 th to 25 th) → To be scheduled by Registrar's Office	Cumulative; Covers weeks #1 to #13

***Note:** Due to the nature of this course the actual schedule is somewhat fluid – it **may** and **likely will** change! Expect the unexpected. Moodle will contain the most up to date information.

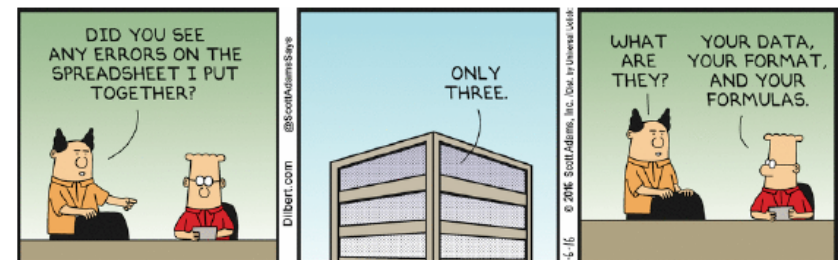
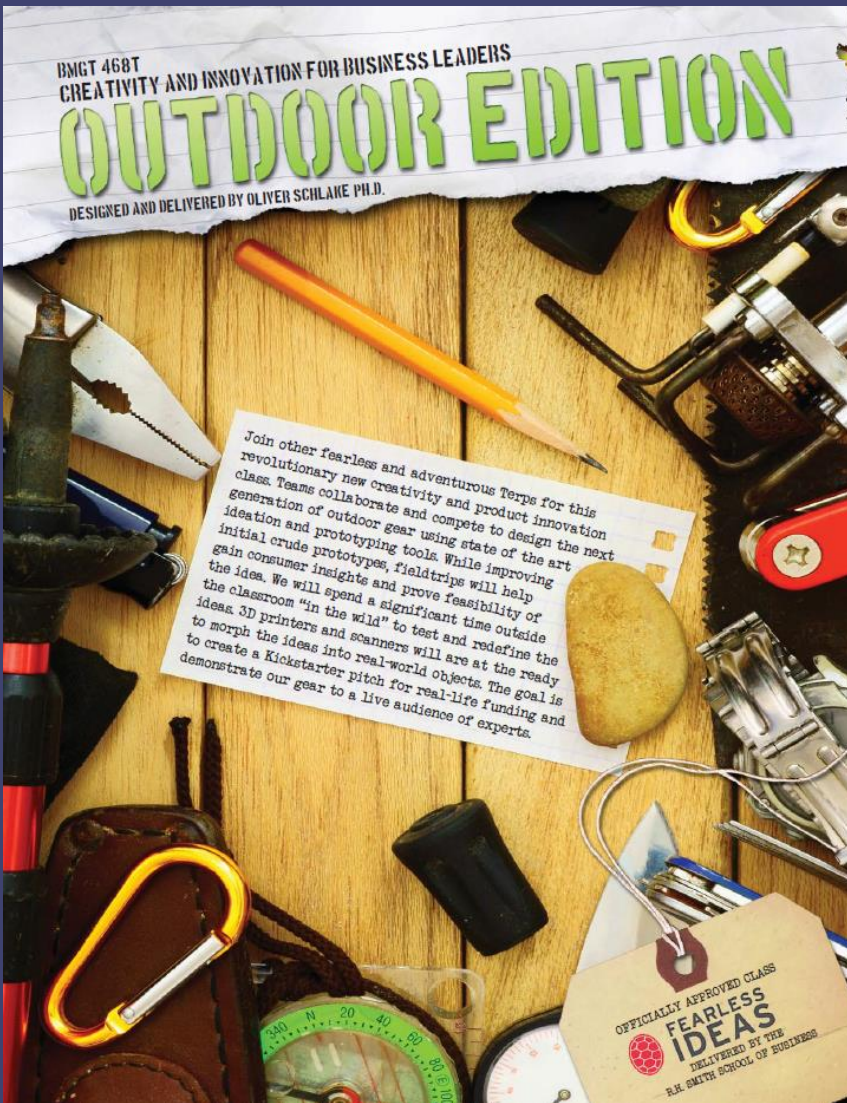


Image source: Dilbert.com website. Presented here under the Universal Uclick Educational/Classroom Usage guidelines.



BMGT 468T
CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION FOR BUSINESS LEADERS
OUTDOOR EDITION

DESIGNED AND DELIVERED BY OLIVER SCHLAK PH.D.

Join other fearless and adventurous Terps for this revolutionary new creativity and product innovation class. Teams collaborate and compete to design the next generation of outdoor gear using state of the art ideation and prototyping tools. While improving initial crude prototypes, fieldtrips will help gain consumer insights and prove feasibility of the idea. We will spend a significant time outside the classroom "in the wild" to test and refine ideas. 3D printers and scanners will be at the ready to morph the ideas into real-world objects. The goal is to create a Kickstarter pitch for real-life funding and demonstrate our gear to a live audience of experts.

OFFICIALLY APPROVED CLASS
FEARLESS IDEAS
 DELIVERED BY THE
 R.H. SMITH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

METHODS

OUTDOOR AS A CANVAS FOR LEARNING

Outdoor environments improve creative problem solving skills. Several research projects have proven that being "disconnected" for a while improves creativity by up to 50% in a controlled test.

HANDS-ON PRODUCT DESIGN AND PROTOTYPING

Prototyping is essentially an early stage product development process. Even for non-engineers, prototypes can be an effective tool for selling ideas to stakeholders. Furthermore, prototypes allow for initial product testing and customer acceptance of the idea. A prototype instantly generates emotional feedback and provokes immediate user interaction with the idea.

FIELD-TRIPS

Field trips enhance practical learning from the real-world. They also created a change in the learning environment. This class uses a field trip to get closer to the target audience: retail customers in outdoor product stores.

CREATIVITY SKILLS AND TOOLS

Techniques for idea generation will be introduced to induce out-of-the box solutions. Creativity is a universal skill that can be taught and enhances student performance across the curriculum. Teaching these skills is hands-on, collaborative, spontaneous and fun.

INTERACTIONS IN THE REAL WORLD

Students are able to apply learning immediately through interactions with real-world actors and environments. The class will expose them to outdoor retailers, experts, the product user environment and other stakeholders.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

Adventures are ventures. Focusing the class on building viable business ideas allows for a multidisciplinary class population (business, engineering, communication, computer science, etc.) and focuses the learning on an overall goal: Getting things done and make money!

INSTRUCTOR

Oliver Schlake, Ph.D. is a Distinguished Tyser Teaching Fellow at the Robert H. Smith School of Business. He joined Smith in 2006 and teaches Innovation Management, Entrepreneurship, Business Strategy and Creativity from the Undergraduate to the Executive Education level. He is also the faculty director for the Entrepreneurship Fellows Program at the Shady Grove campus. Before joining Smith, Oliver was CEO of a strategy and technology consulting firm, advising clients of new markets, new technology and innovative product designs.

He has traveled extensively around the world, many times off-the-beaten-track with limited equipment. During his time in the German Army he served as survival trainer since the topic was not well known to the military at the time. He was inspired by Ruediger Nehberg, a German adventurer, survival expert and human rights activist. Both became friends after Oliver interviewed him for a newspaper article. Bear Grylls is merely at the apprentice level compared to Nehberg.

This class brings together his love for the outdoors and a passion for gadgets. Not only does nature stimulate creative thought, nature is also a relentless judge: can't make a fire in the rain and you will stay cold: instant feedback.



Liquid Syllabus Examples

<https://sites.google.com/view/ethnicstudiesbyfabiolatorres/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/hosp-welcome>

The Promising Syllabus

“‘The promising syllabus,’ Bain wrote to me via e-mail, ‘fundamentally recognizes that people will learn best and most deeply when they have a strong sense of control over their own education rather than feel manipulated by someone else’s demands’” (Lang, 2006).

The Promising Syllabus

- According to Bain and Lang, a promising syllabus does three main things:
 - It explains the course's promise to the students
 - It describes the activities that will help them fulfill the promise
 - It begins a conversation about how the instructor and student would best come to understand the nature and progress of the student's learning

Syllabus Under Construction

- As we saw in spring, our best plans can be upended by circumstances beyond our control—how can we create flexibility in our outlines?
- Is there an opportunity for students to provide input into the course?
- The amount of student control may vary dramatically depending on the course, its level, and the program it is in (Lang, Bain, Hudd)

Final Thoughts

From Lang (2006): “In putting together the syllabus, Bain says, and possibly ceding some of your control of it to the students, you have to ask yourself the only question that really matters: ‘What will help them learn?’”

More Examples of creative course outlines

<http://www.thetattooedprof.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/332.syllabus.Fall2012.pdf>

<http://www.thetattooedprof.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/349.syllabus.Fall2014.pdf>

<http://faculty.sites.uci.edu/ajenks/files/2013/08/Jenks-Anth-102-Fall-12-syllabus.pdf>

<http://wsu.tonahangen.com/fysroadside/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/193.Roadside-revised.Fall15.pdf>

<http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/us2/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/112.Spr11.pdf>

Resources

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- Bowen, José Antonio. *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*. 1 edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012. Print.
- Hudd, S. “Syllabus under Construction: Involving Students in the Creation of Class Assignments.” *Teaching Sociology* 31.2 (2003): 195–202. Print.
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- --. *On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching*. 1 edition. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010. Print.
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