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## MANAGEMENT OF COMPLEXITY in Fall 2019 (BA5062)

<b>Course Code</b>	BA5062	<b>Professor(s)</b>	Albert Cath
<b>Prerequisites</b>	None	<b>Office Number</b>	G-2A03
<b>Class Schedule</b>	W: 13:45-15:05 in Q-A101	<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment. Room G-2A03
<b>Credits</b>	2	<b>Email</b>	acath@aup.edu
<b>Semester</b>	Fall 2019	<b>Office Tel. Ext.</b>	Please use e-mail

## Course Description

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**PREREQUISITES:** *Graduate Standing* - Graduate student in the MSIM program

**Coping with complex issues is the most fundamental and unmet challenge facing management in the 21st century.**

This course explores and elaborates on complexity and emergence in the context of contemporary management and the practices of managing. The course engages students with advanced interdisciplinary 'Management of Complexity' themes in strategy, organizational behavior and leadership. In this theory and case-driven course, students examine the management of complexity in terms of specific cultural and organizational contexts and management frameworks.

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This course confronts the students with the different perspectives on managing complex issues. Complex problems can be characterized by the fact that there is little scientific, social, economic and political agreement on the myriad of issues they entail and that there is a high level of uncertainty about the problem. The course will rotate around core contexts for leadership and decision making. Mainstream management concepts and models largely describe and prescribe the simple contexts of managing and organizational structures. At most, mainstream organizational concepts address "complicatedness" rather than complexity. Management of Complexity refers to coping with the unpredictability of "emergent practice" that invites managers to different approaches of decision making and leadership.

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This course opposes the orthodoxy of management discourse that adheres to the worldview of simplicity informing most mainstream management theories and practices. We will focus on the following question: are mainstream management models that were developed and tested over the past seventy years still adequate to cope with the complex issues that confront management today? We will focus our inquiry on the consequences of global warming (climate change). Climate Change is a wicked, untamed, complex, ongoing phenomenon that has no simple solution. We will study the different approaches proposed by the Cynefin Framework through case studies that address the complex sustainability challenges today's businesses and policymakers currently face.

The course engages students with advanced interdisciplinary 'Management of Complexity' themes that put strategy, organizational dynamics, and leadership (both in theory and in practice) into the foreground. We will take a critical approach to understand how theory influences practice and how our perceptions of leadership, management, and strategy evolve over time and circumstance. Through readings, in-class activities, assignments, and cases, the course will explore how the Management of Complexity influences the direction of organizations and businesses. The course follows a participative model, so students are expected to be prepared and attend each course meeting. Moreover, students will have more opportunities to build their own skills through high levels of participation in class activities.

## Course Learning Outcomes

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To understand conventional and critical approaches of complexity in management theory and practices.

To develop the ability to analyze complex ("wicked") problems, where great uncertainty is present, in a management context.

To investigate some of the common historical narratives of complexity and explore how these influence our current perceptions of management theory and practice.

To explore contemporary organizational complexity concepts and apply them to management issues.

To acquire practical experience in dealing with wicked, complex management issues.

## General Education

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[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE

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COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

## Course Outline

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**\* This course plan is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard \***

### **TEXTBOOK & ARTICLE READINGS & FILMS & CASES & ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Week 1**

Course Introduction + Profile and Interest Form + Film Ralph Stacey Matrix and Case in class.

#### **Week 2**

Lecture on Part 1; Ch 3 & 4 of the textbook: thinking simplicity (the origins of management and strategy thinking).

Lecture: How to write a Text.

Introduction Case.

#### **Week 3**

Lecture on thinking about strategy from a systems view (Chapter 7).

Monitoring the Case.

Film.

#### **Week 4**

Submitting case. Feedback on case and starting a new case.

Lecture Chapter 8 & 9: a review of systematic ways of thinking about strategy and organisational dynamics: key challenges for alternative ways of thinking.

#### **Week 5**

Lecture CH 10 & 11: the complexity sciences.

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Film: Jos de Blok +

Monitoring Midterm progress.

PERSONAL MID TERM PAPERS DUE XY AT NOON BY EMAIL.

### **Week 6**

Submitting case.

Debrief on Midterm.

Lecture on Articles of Snowden, introducing the Cynefin Framework for Managing the Complex.

### **Week 7**

Feedback on Midterm Exam.

Lecture Chapter 12 and 13 (interplay of intentions and local communitive interaction).

Complex Responsive process theory and starting a new case.

### **Week 8**

Lecture Chapter 16 and 17 (Power and strategy narratives).

Complex Responsive process theory continued.

Monitoring Case.

Film.

### **Week 9**

Feedback on Case.

Lecture Chapter 18: Complex responsive processes: implications for thinking about organizational dynamics and strategy.

New Case.

### **Week 10**

Lecture on Social Complexity Management (Letiche et al.) +Film + monitoring

New Case Starting the Final Exam Paper + Guide Line.

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## Week 11

Lecture on Chapter 2 Solace in Complexity a case study.

In class discussion.

START OF PERSONAL PAPER

## Week 12

Lecture on Chapter 3 Solace of Complexity; the Dialogical Square of Complexity.

In class discussion.

MONITORING PERSONAL PAPER AND SUBMITTING CASE

## Week 13

LAST CLASS: WRAP UP OF SEMESTER PART

MONITORING PERSONAL PAPER

## Week 14

Reading Days

Final Exams

## Week 17

All grades due

## Textbooks

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Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics 7th Edition	Ralph D. Stacey and Chris Mowles	Pearson	9781292078748	Yes

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# Attendance Policy

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## **COURSE ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance will be taken in the first ten minutes of the course. Attendance may be taken through a sign-in sheet. If a sign-in sheet is used, it is the student's responsibility to sign in. In general, students are expected to avoid disturbing the class by arriving late and leaving early. This is a two credit course that meets once per week for 80 minutes. Our time is precious. **Two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence.** Please avoid unnecessary departures while the course is in session.

**Students are expected to attend all course sessions. Missing an exam or a presentation will result in a failing grade for that item. Attendance will have a significant impact in the calculation of final grades. Students with excessive absences (regardless of medical or personal reasons) will not receive credit for the course.**

Exceptions to this policy may be made for legitimate medical or family emergencies at my discretion, provided that the student has been proactive about staying up-to-date on assignments, readings and cases and has contacted me and collected the required documentation.

Cultural study trips offered by AUP will be excused automatically, but only for the days that the study trip is scheduled. Days taken before or after a cultural study trip for personal travel, or any other form of personal, non-emergency travel, will not be considered as an exception to the attendance policy.

Assignment instructions are available well in advance of the deadlines. Illness or personal problems that emerge around the deadline date will not result in an extension on your assignments.

**If a student is signed in on the attendance form and is not present in the course, it is a violation of the university's academic integrity policy and will result in a failing grade for the course, as well as other disciplinary actions to be determined by the Dean of the University.**

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

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Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

## Grading Policy

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### **GRADING:**

Student Performance will be evaluated based on the following factors:

#### **Class Participation**

Based on attendance and participation with (group) presentations, discussions and in-class projects, as well as group peer evaluations.

- Attendance: this is not simply a matter of being present, but also involves arriving on time and being prepared for each course session. Please bring the textbook to each class as well as any other materials that you may need.
- Course Presentations: Student (groups) will be selected at random to present their analysis of a short case assignment intermittently during class. These presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes, although the specific duration will change based on the presentation assignment. There will be no student presentations during the first week of class. Please refer to the course calendar for due dates.
- Course Discussions: Various activities, full class and small group discussions are an essential part of the learning experience in this course. Students are expected to actively participate by providing input and feedback to other students and by listening when other students are speaking.
- Peer Evaluations: Student group members may be expected to evaluate one another for

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the depth and effectiveness of their contribution to in-class activities and the final presentation. Evaluations will be cross-referenced for consistency and fairness.

### Individual Assignments

Individual essay assignments are due throughout the course, the midterm assignment and the final assignment. These must be submitted before the course commences on the due date *through the Safe Assign system*.

### Midterm Assignment

The midterm assignment will cover readings, lectures and class discussions through the course sessions until midterm exam. The personal assignment should be 5-7 pages in length.

### Final Paper

The final essay will cover a topic of the student's choice, incorporating the cases and readings covered during the course. These papers must be a minimum of 2500 words (approximately 8-10 pages at 300 words per page). Criteria for these papers will be discussed following the course midterm.

### Grade Allocation

Final grades will be weighted based on performance within the various criteria as follows. These calculations may be adjusted slightly as we progress through the semester:

Class Participation and Group Work	15%
Case Presentations	25%
Mid-Course Analysis Paper	25%
Final Analysis Paper	35%

### Grading Scale

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Passing	Unsatisfactory
100-95 A (4.0)	89-87 B+ (3.4)	86-84 B (3.0)	79-77 C+ (2.4)	73-70 C- (1.7)
90-94 A- (3.7)		83-80 B- (2.7)	76-74 C (2.0)	69-67 D+ (1.3)
				66-64 D (1.0)
				60-63 D- (0.7)
				Under 60 F (0)

All graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 to be in good academic standing at the University. Students with a GPA less than 3.00 will be placed on probation. A student receiving a grade of "C-" or lower will be required to retake the course.



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Graduate students are allowed only two grades of “C+” or lower during their program.

To give you a better understanding of what the grading scale means, let’s take a quick look at the typical student profile for each category:

**Excellent:** Reserved for students that display superior quality and outstanding performance throughout the course, including the extensive use resources other than the textbook and assigned readings to complete assignments and presentations. It also means that the student participates fully in course discussions and group activities, maintains excellent attendance, and performs extremely well on course exams and assignments. An ‘A’ student is highly motivated to learn the material and completes the course readings in advance of the lecture, showing strong skills in critical thinking, global learning, and exceptional informational literacy on all of the assignments, projects and exams. The student also takes a proactive role in group projects and consistently responds to the presentations of other student groups. My goal is to see every student perform this well.

**Good:** The student provides work that is above average in quality. Maintains good performance on exams and in class discussions, including the effective use of assigned readings and above average course participation. Assignments are turned in on time and to a good level of quality. There is some evidence of additional research and critical thinking on core topics. Attendance, while not perfect, is still good. The student shows evidence of critical thinking, global learning and information literacy through their engagement in the course.

**Satisfactory:** Adequate and acceptable work in meeting course requirements and average performance in assignments, exams and projects. There is little use of external resources beyond the required texts. The student shows some engagement with the course, but participates at a minimal level. Meets the minimum attendance requirements. Displays some critical thinking, global learning and/or information literacy in assignments and group projects.

**Unsatisfactory:** Failed to meet basic course requirements, below average performance and attendance. The typical profile for such students: they often show up late to class, are often unprepared for class, and/or are frequently absent. The student is rarely prepared for group presentations or discussions. Assignments are missing, late, or copied or paraphrased directly from general sources that can be found on the internet. The student probably spends an inordinate amount of time in class on their smartphone. Such students are encouraged to withdraw and try again when they have improved their academic skills or they decide to put more effort into their studies.

**A significant amount of studying outside of the course meetings is expected from all students who expect a ‘B’ grade or higher in the course. This means AT LEAST two hours of reading, and research outside of class for every hour you spend in class - much more if the expected grade is an ‘A’. I expect students to use resources other than the required materials to complete assignments. Outstanding and good performance will be awarded to those students who go beyond the required and suggested readings in their final projects, assignments and presentations.**

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Students with unsatisfactory performance will be notified at the midterm point so that we may mutually assess the likelihood of successful course completion. If I contact you for a meeting at the midterm point, please do not ignore my request. Often, we can work out an academic study plan to get you back on track. However, please be reminded that excessive absences are often the cause of poor performance and this is difficult to remedy.

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Various essays and presentations are assigned throughout the course. Presentations are to be completed on a personal basis, while the essays are to be completed on an individual basis.

### **Analysis Assignments**

To ensure that you have a strong understanding of key sustainability concepts, analysis papers will be assigned:

- Your analysis paper must be completed on an individual basis and represent your own work.
- Cite any sources that you use and quote text if using another text directly.
- Please adhere to the minimum required response length and use a 10-12 point font with double spacing.
- **Assignments must be submitted via the email system at least thirty minutes before the course meeting where it is due.**
- Include your full name on and course section in all your assignments, in the file name and at the top of the essay itself.

It is the responsibility of the student check on the course sign-in sheets and the grading center on Blackboard to ensure their assignments have been received and graded.

**The onus is on you, the student, to ensure that your assignments have properly received.** I will not chase down your missing assignments. If your paper is not properly send to me by email by the deadline (at least 30 minutes before the course meeting in which the paper is due), for whatever reason, the assignment will be marked as late. Please plan your assignment submissions accordingly.

### **Essay Assignment Submission Guidelines:**

#### **1. Format**

- Include your name (on the top of the first page) as well as page numbers. For group assignments, all group member names and the group number should be included.  
**Papers missing names will not be graded.**
- Format the document using a 10-12-point font, double spacing is preferred but not required.
- The minimum word count is only a guideline, but if you find your work to be significantly below that, then chances are your essay is far too short to offer a much of a response to

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the assignment question(s) or problem(s).

### **Presentation Submission Guidelines:**

Please send your PowerPoints, outlines, or other written materials via e-mail to [acath@aup.edu](mailto:acath@aup.edu) at least 30 minutes before the start of the course meeting where it is due.

- Please name your files with your id number and case name.
- If you have chosen not to use a visual presentation, please send an outline in .DOC or .PDF format.
- Many students in the past have opted to use PREZI or other online presentation services. Please be aware that these often do not allow you to work offline from the classroom workstation. If there is a network problem, please be ready to use your own laptop or be prepared to present without visuals.
- Make sure that you are prepared. Reading directly from the slides is highly unprofessional.

## **Other**

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These goals will be realized through the course structure based on an integrative learning framework that is built into the curriculum. It is my hope that students in the course will be able to further exercise and develop their core life, educational and professional skills along the following lines:

- Civic Engagement
- Critical Thinking
- Complexity Thinking
- Ethical Reasoning
- Change and Innovation
- Inquiry and Analysis
- Oral Communication
- Problem Solving
- Written Communication

### **GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:**

1. **Laptops & Mobile Phones:** Laptops should be not be used during classes unless specifically necessary for an in-class project. Exceptions may be made for students with physical and learning disabilities, with instructor permission only, for the purposes of taking notes. **Mobile phones are to be turned off and put away at all times while class is in session. Please do not send or receive text messages during class, even on silent mode.** Students regularly observed texting underneath their desks during class will be remembered when I issue final grades. Moreover, mobile phones are

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not allowed in the room during exams under any circumstances. Students found to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device during exams will be asked to leave and will automatically receive a failing grade. No exceptions.

2. **Communication:** We will use Blackboard for this course. **Students are expected to check the Blackboard site, as well as their AUP email during the course for updates.** All assignments will be posted here as well as course reader materials and other resources. You can also track your grades in the 'grading center'. If you need to reach me outside of class, please contact me via email for an appointment or come during my office hours.
3. **Attendance:** This is not just a matter of "being present" for during class, but also involves arriving on time and being prepared for each course session. Attendance is taken in the first 10 minutes of each class, and late students will be marked as late. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are signed in for each class. Moreover, I will not excuse any absences, for any reason, with the sole exceptions being if the student is enrolled in an official AUP Cultural Study trip or has a note from a certified physician that indicates they were unable to attend class on the specific dates of the absence. Other reasons for absence should be reported by email and it is upon my discretion to decide whether the absence is excused or not. Students that experience significant health or personal problems must inform the Student Affairs Office immediately so that we can begin to work out a plan to help you maintain your academic performance. Personal travel, visiting relatives and friends, and other non-emergency excuses will not be accepted. (See the section on Course Attendance above.)
4. **Assignments:** Students are expected to turn in all course assignments on time through the email system. Late submissions will be marked down one full grade level for being late for each course session where the assignment still has not been submitted, making the highest possible grade a 'B' after missing the course deadline. It is the student's responsibility to make sure assignments have been received. Plagiarized or copied assignments will result in a failing grade for the course.
5. **Food and Drinks:** Students may drink beverages in class if they are in spill-proof containers that can be completely sealed. Please do not consume any other food or beverages in the classroom.
6. **Professional Behavior:** Students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times during the course. Please avoid disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn during lectures and presentations. Academic dishonesty on assignments or exams - including copying another student's work, plagiarism, or using instructor grading keys - will result in a failing grade for the course. Other disciplinary actions up to, and including, removal from the course, suspension or expulsion from the University, may also result from violating course and university policies. Likewise, harassing or threatening behavior in class will not be tolerated. Please uphold professional standards at all times while you are in the university program.
7. **Other Policies:** For all other policies and procedures, students are bound by the University's general policies and procedures. Copies of the University policies on absences and academic dishonesty were given to each student at registration. Students are responsible for adhering to these policies.
8. **Know the Syllabus:** It is your responsibility to read and understand this document as it clearly outlines the course policies, schedule of readings and assignments, as well as

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the course expectations. If you experience academic problems during the course because you have not been following the course policies, then telling me “you didn’t know” is going to be a completely ineffective excuse. **I make no exceptions to my course policies unless explicitly stated in this document or through prior arrangement with the Office of Academic Affairs.**