Business Negotiations

OBHR 647 L01 | MBA Block Week | Summer 2023

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Public course overview adapted from the Summer 2023 course outline. This historical overview introduces the course to website visitors; the approved course outline governs enrolled students.

This Summer 2023 MBA offering was an intensive block-week course taught over five consecutive days. The schedule illustrates block-week delivery rather than a regular semester; a regular-semester version would require its own course outline.

Course Description

Negotiation is the art and science by which decisions are made, agreements are reached, and disputes resolved between two or more parties. Managers negotiate with individual employees, colleagues negotiate solutions to problems, representatives from different companies negotiate contracts, and companies often negotiate with representatives from government or regulatory bodies. This course is designed to be relevant to the broad spectrum of bargaining problems that are traditionally faced by managers. Successful negotiation is both an “art” and a “science”, and as such successful learning is prefaced upon active participation in experiential activities.

Course Objectives

The main objective of this course is for students to learn how to plan and carry out effective negotiations. You will learn how to assess the critical factors of a negotiation, and how to plan and conduct a negotiation.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Students will critically evaluate the key contextual factors that influence the choice of negotiation strategy and the negotiation process.
2. Students will identify interests, priorities, and reservation points that must be satisfied in negotiated agreements.
3. Students will examine different strategies for conflict resolution.
4. Students will be able to assess key skills necessary to effectively work in teams in organizations.

Learning and Assessment

Experiential negotiation exercises, readings, planning guides and reflective analysis connect negotiation concepts with practice. Students prepare for roles and learn through dyadic, team and multi-party negotiations.

Class contribution

30% · Individual and group planning

Active class participation is the norm in this course. Therefore, you are expected to arrive prepared to class and fully engage with class materials; evaluation of participation is based on your ability to articulate and work with your ideas and those of others.

Individual planning guides — 15%. Students prepare individual negotiation planning guides for Moms.com, Bullard Houses and Harborco, each worth 5%.

Group planning guide — 15%. Students prepare a group negotiation planning guide for MAPO and submit their conflict management style assessment.

Experimentation and learning

Use the exercises to experiment. Don’t be afraid to try things that you wouldn’t usually do, even though it makes you and/or your counterpart uncomfortable. As long as you stay within the (wide) range of what happens in reality, relatively extreme tactics and the tension they create are useful to the class—they provide grist for the mill of discussion. That said, good experiments are not done blindly; plan experiments that test hypotheses you have formed about negotiation dynamics in general or about your own tendencies as a negotiator. Because well-planned risk-taking and experimentation is encouraged, you will not be graded based on your negotiation outcomes.

Reading quizzes

40% · Four individual quizzes worth 10% each

The reading quizzes encourage preparation and provide a head start on class discussion. They cover readings and lecture materials from the previous day and contain approximately 15–20 questions each.

Reflective Self Appraisal

30% · Individual paper

For the individual assignment I am asking you to write a reflective self-appraisal paper (maximum 8 pages, excluding references). Your task for the self-appraisal paper is to assess your personal strengths and weaknesses as a negotiator, record key lessons from the class material and exercises, and suggest avenues for improvement. Please be as succinct as possible. It is my hope that you will reread this document after you leave the graduate program, to remind yourself of the most important lessons that you took away from the course.

Among the questions you should address in your self-appraisal are:

- What are your strengths as a negotiator? (be very specific)
- What are your weaknesses as a negotiator? How can you ameliorate them? (be very specific)
- What experiences from the simulations and exercises were especially memorable to you? What lessons did you learn?
- What lessons from lectures, readings, and/or class discussion had their biggest impact on you? Why?
- What did you find particularly surprising? In what ways (if any) has this course changed the way that you think about negotiation?
- Have you seen any lessons of the course play themselves out in either your personal or professional life?

I am not interested in a “play by play” account of your negotiations, nor am I interested in a simple summary of your outcomes. The best papers will fully integrate key concepts from the textbook and the readings, and will reflect on strengths, weaknesses, and the negotiation process from the view of both you and your counterpart.

Weekly Schedule and Readings

Core text: Bazerman, M., Gino, F., & Shonk, K. (2017). *Negotiation handbook*. Harvard Business Publishing.

Day and topics	Negotiation activities	Preparation and readings
Monday Distributive negotiation; planning and strategy	Buying a house (dyadic). Coast News (dyadic).	Course overview. Negotiation handbook, sections 1–2.1.2. McRae, B. (2005, May–June). The seven strategies of master negotiators. *Ivey Business Journal, 69*(5), 1–8.
Tuesday Integrative negotiation; team composition and individual differences	Moms.com (dyadic); individual planning guide. Cascade Manor (team). Reading quiz 1.	Negotiation handbook, sections 2.1.3–2.2.3. Malhotra, D., & Bazerman, M. H. (2007, September). Investigative negotiation. *Harvard Business Review, 85*(9), 72–78.
Wednesday Perception cognition and emotions	MAPO (team); group planning guide. Reading quiz 2.	Negotiation handbook, section 2.4.4. Brett, J. M., Friedman, R., & Behfar, K. (2009, September). How to manage your negotiating team. *Harvard Business Review, 87*(9), 105–109. Weiss, J., Donigian, A., & Hughes, J. (2010, November). Extreme negotiations. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(11), 66–75.
Thursday Using agents; disputes and third party help	Bullard Houses (dyadic); individual planning guide. Southern Electric (team). Reading quiz 3.	Negotiation handbook, section 2.4.2 (using agents) and section 2.4.1 (disputes and third party help).
Friday Culture and negotiation; best practice and wrap up	Harborco (multi-party); individual planning guide. International Lodging Merger (team). Reading quiz 4.	Negotiation handbook, section 2.4.3. Thompson, L., & Leonardelli, G. J. (2004). Why negotiation is the most popular business school course. *Ivey Business Journal, 68*(6), 1–7.