



# Rotman Commerce UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## Course Outline

### RSM 340 H1F

The Opposable Mind: Approaches to Integrative Thinking  
Fall 2017  
Course Meets: Mondays 2-4 pm      WW120

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### Course Scope and Mission

More than ever, success in our global economy depends on the ability to wade through ambiguous challenges with flexibility, rigour and creativity. The integrative thinker, rather than choosing one option or one point of view, leverages the tension between ideas to generate new models – models better than those that already exist.

This course introduces the theory of integrative thinking and asks students to learn and practice the tools associated with it. Explicitly grounded in a business context, this course gives students the opportunity to apply the lessons of integrative thinking to complex problems that span traditional disciplines. Throughout the course, you will learn practical tools aimed at helping you integrate between models, build new models and create new value.

The questions we will address in this class include: What do you do when faced with a choice between two mutually exclusive, yet sub-optimal options? How do you react when dealing with a colleague whose understanding of the world seems to be fundamentally at odds with your own? How can you resolve the kinds of problems that seem to change as you attempt to solve them, the kinds of problems that seem to have no good answers? These clashes – between ideas and individuals, within ourselves and without – are the wicked problems you will almost certainly face in your business career. And how you deal with them can make the difference between a good career and a transformative one.

## Course Prerequisites

RSM/MGT 100 – Introduction to Management and completion of 10.0 full-course equivalents.

## Required Readings

All readings are posted on Blackboard.

## Evaluation and Grades

Grades are a measure of the performance of a student in individual courses. Each student shall be judged on the basis of how well he or she has command of the course materials.

| <u>Work</u>         |     | <u>Due Date</u>                         |
|---------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------|
| Class Participation | 10% | Ongoing                                 |
| Mid-Term Test       | 20% | October 30                              |
| Group Presentation  | 30% | December 7                              |
| Final Exam          | 40% | During Arts & Science Final Exam Period |

### *Class Participation (10%)*

The quality of this class and the learning that takes place are directly related to your willingness to engage in the discussion and activities. Your class participation grade will be assigned based on the substantive contributions you make to class discussions, considering the quality of your contribution to be more significant than the quantity. **We will take attendance every class.** You may also gain participation grades by sending us articles or materials that you think relate to integrative thinking and this class. Please email a link to the material, plus a short description of what you think is interesting about the article and how it connects to class concepts.

### *Mid-Term Test (20%)*

This will be an individual, closed book test. It will be scheduled for one hour, in our regular class time. The date for the mid-term test is Monday, October 30.

### *Group Presentation (30%)*

**In groups of 5**, choose a wicked problem for a specific organization and, using the tools of integrative thinking, craft a possible solution to the problem. This project is to be presented on Thursday, December 7. Each group will have 15 minutes to present, including questions. How you choose to split the time between presentation and discussion is entirely up to you. **You may select your own group** or ask to be assigned to one. **You must be in a group by Monday, November 13.**

The presentation will be graded on the following criteria:

- 1) Clarity: The extent to which your work is understandable and well explained (40%)
- 2) Comprehensiveness: The extent to which your analysis and solution effectively address the problem and demonstrate the tools from the class (40%)
- 3) The creativity of your analysis and solution (10%)
- 4) The quality and creativity of your presentation (10%)

**You must submit a project topic by Friday, November 17.** You are encouraged to select your own topic (please check with Darren before you proceed) or you may select one of the following topics:

- Should Canada embrace a multi-tier health-care system that allows those who can afford it to opt out of the free public system or stick with a single-tier, publicly funded model?
- Should the University of Toronto have the same tuition for all programs or charge market rates by program?
- Should Procter and Gamble focus only on producing brand-name products or should it also produce private-label products for retailers like Wal-Mart?
- Should Starbucks expand its product offerings or refocus on its core value proposition?
- Should Tesla go after the luxury car market only or diversify into the mid-tier and value segments?

***Final Exam*** (40%)

This will be a closed-book, 2-hour exam during the regular exam period. We will provide information about the structure of the exam in the last few weeks of classes. There will be an optional tutorial before the final exam.

**A NOTE ON GROUP WORK**

The group project requires students to work in teams of 5. Learning to work together in teams is an important aspect of your education and preparation for your future careers. That said, project-based teamwork is often new to students; to work well in teams, it helps to follow a set of core expectations to best succeed at your team projects.

1. Read the document entitled, “Working in Teams: Guidelines for Rotman Commerce Students” which is available on the RC portal under the Academic Services tab.
2. When working in a team, Rotman Commerce students are expected to:
  - Treat other members with courtesy and respect;
  - Honour the ground rules established by the team;
  - Contribute substantially and proportionally to the final project;
  - Ensure enough familiarity with the entire contents of the group project/assignment so as to be able to sign off on it as original work;
  - Meet the project timeline as established by the team.

3. Resolving conflicts:

Conflicts are part of the team’s process of learning how to work together. When handled well, it can generate creativity and bring-multiple perspectives to the solution.

Student teams are expected to work through their misunderstandings as soon as they arise (and prior to submission of the final project). When teams are unable to arrive at a solution that works for all members, the team must meet with the Rotman Commerce Team Coach\*\* as soon as possible. The Coach will listen to the team and help develop options for improving the team process. All members of the project team must commit to, and, utilize their action plans.

\*\*For an appointment with a Rotman Commerce Team Coach, please contact Nouman Ashraf at [nouman.ashraf@rotman.utoronto.ca](mailto:nouman.ashraf@rotman.utoronto.ca) Nouman is highly skilled at facilitating team dynamics and collaboration. Note that the Team Coach’s role is to provide guidance, support and advice on team matters – not to formally evaluate or assess teamwork for academic purposes.

## Weekly Schedule

| Session | Date    | Topic                                             | Readings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Sept 11 | Introduction to Integrative Thinking              | Martin, "How Successful Leaders Think." <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , June 2007.<br><br>Riel and Martin, "A New Way to Think" from <i>Creating Great Choices</i> .                                                                                                                                |
| 2       | Sept 18 | Thinking About Thinking                           | Ariely, "The Effect of Expectations" from <i>Predictably Irrational</i> .<br><br>Kahneman, <i>Thinking Fast and Slow</i> . Chapter 1.<br><br>Thaler and Sunstein, "Biases and Blunders" from <i>Nudge</i> .                                                                                          |
| 3       | Sept 25 | Understanding and Deconstructing Models           | Senge, "A Shift of the Mind" from <i>The Fifth Discipline</i> .<br><br>Sterman, "All Models are Wrong: Reflections on Becoming a Systems Scientist." <i>System Dynamics Review</i> , Winter 2002.<br><br>Lave and March, <i>An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences</i> , Chapters 1 and 2. |
| 4       | Oct 2   | Models in Tension                                 | Taleb, "A Bizarre Accounting Method," from <i>Fooled by Randomness</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | Oct 9   | <b>Thanksgiving – No Class</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5       | Oct 16  | The Integrative Thinking Process                  | Riel and Martin, "Integrative Thinking 2.0: A User's Guide to Your Opposable Mind." <i>Rotman Magazine</i> , Winter 2014.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 6       | Oct 23  | The Integrative Thinking Process – Practice Class | Case: Evolving the Model – Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts<br><b>You must read this case in advance of the class</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7       | Oct 30  | <b>Mid-Term Test</b>                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|         | Nov 6   | <b>Reading Week – No Class</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 8       | Nov 13  | Articulating and Examining Models                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9       | Nov 20  | Causal Modeling                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 10      | Nov 27  | Creativity, Collaboration and New Possibilities   | Brown, "Design Thinking." <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , June 2008.<br><br>Riel and Martin, "Integrative Thinking Three Ways: Creative Resolutions to Wicked Problems." <i>Rotman Magazine</i> , Spring 2012.                                                                                      |

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|----|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 | Dec 4 | Testing and Communicating our Ideas                                                                                                                                                 | Ries, "Test" from <i>The Lean Startup</i> .<br>Lafley and Martin, "Shorten your Odds" from <i>Playing to Win</i> .<br>Argyris, "Teaching Smart People How to Learn." <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , May-June 1991. |
| 12 | Dec 7 | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Class Presentations</b></p> <p>Note: This class will be 3 hours (2-5 pm). If you cannot attend the final hour, please speak to us in advance.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### **Missed Tests and Assignments (including midterm examinations)**

Students who miss a test or assignment for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may submit a request for special consideration. Provided that notification and documentation are provided in a timely manner, and that the request is subsequently approved, no academic penalty will be applied.

In such cases, students must notify Rotman Commerce on the date of the missed test (or due date in the case of course work) and submit supporting documentation (e.g. [Verification of Student Illness or Injury form](#)) to the Rotman Commerce Program Office within **48 hours** of the originally scheduled test or due date. Students who do not provide Rotman Commerce or the instructor with appropriate or sufficient supporting documentation will be given a grade of 0 (zero) for the missed test or course deliverable.

Documentation submitted in support of petitions for missing tests and assignments must be original; no faxed or scanned copies will be accepted

**Note that the physician's report must establish that the patient was examined and diagnosed at the time of illness, not after the fact. Rotman Commerce will not accept a statement that merely confirms a later report of illness made by the student to a physician.**

For a missed mid-term, the student will be given the option of taking a make-up exam within one week of the mid-term, or applying the mid-term weighting to final exam. The final would then be worth 60% of the total grade.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarships at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this

academic community ensures that the UofT degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

*The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm> outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the process for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes collaborating with others on assignments that are supposed to be completed individually).

On test and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to), medical notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the following procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have any question about what is or is not permitted in the course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have any questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from the instructor or other UofT resources such as College Writing Centres or the Academic Success Centre.

## **Email**

At times, the course instructor may decide to communicate important course information by email. As such, all UofT students are required to have a valid UTmail+ email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UTmail+ email address is set up AND properly entered on the ROSI system. For more information please visit <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/3/utmail.html>

Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that important messages from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

## **Blackboard and the Course Page**

The online course page for this course is accessed through Blackboard. To access the course page, go to the UofT Portal login at <https://portal.utoronto.ca/> and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in, look for the My Courses module where you'll find the link to all your course websites. If you don't see the course listed here but you are properly registered for the course in ROSI, wait 48 hours. If the course does not appear, go to the Information Commons Help Desk in Robarts Library, 1st floor, for help, or explore additional Portal Information for Students at <http://portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>.

## **Recording Lectures**

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission, and may not do so unless permission is granted (note: students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are, of course, excepted). This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Blackboard materials, etc.

If permission is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in anyway. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.