



**Course Title:** Decision Mapping: Make Business Decisions with Less Stress and More Clarity

**Course Code:** BUS 188W

**Instructor Name and Bio:** Michelle Florendo, Decision Engineer and Executive Coach

Michelle Florendo is a decision engineer and executive coach for Type-A professionals. She is passionate about helping professionals make decisions with intention - from the big strategic macrodecisions about what direction to take a business, to the small consistent microdecisions made over time that govern how you show up as a leader.

Over the years Michelle has led workshops both domestically and internationally, showing hundreds of driven professionals how to use the principles of decision engineering to tackle complex decisions with less stress and more clarity. She helped redesign the decision making curriculum in Stanford's famous Design Your Life course, is a faculty coach for Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute, and hosts the podcast, [Ask A Decision Engineer](#).

Michelle is a member of the Society of Decision Professionals as well as INFORMS Decision Analysis Society. She holds certifications from Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute, the International Coaching Federation, and New Ventures West. Michelle earned her BS in Management Science and Engineering from Stanford University and her MBA from UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business.

You can learn more about Michelle's work at [michelleflorendo.com](http://michelleflorendo.com)

### **Class Sessions and Recording**

Meeting days and times: Weekly discussion session on Tuesdays 10am - 11:30am Pacific Time, April 18 - May 23  
Meeting location: Zoom

Live attendance strongly encouraged at discussion sessions. The main room discussions are recorded but breakout discussions are not; student attendance is highly recommended due to the interactive nature of class sessions.

### **Course Features:**

- Asynchronous lecture recordings

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305  
[continuingstudies@stanford.edu](mailto:continuingstudies@stanford.edu)  
650-725-2650

- Weekly supplemental learning materials assigned in Canvas, possibly including excerpts from texts, articles, audio recordings, and videos
- Live weekly discussion session
  - Requires interaction and active participation
  - Group discussion and exercises
  - Q&A
  - Possible guest speakers
- Instructor will hold occasional office hours
  - Informal drop-in times for student Q&A will be offered weekly
  - Individual conferences available by request and as instructor availability permits
- Assignments & Coursework
  - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
  - Required asynchronous discussions in Canvas
  - Weekly assignments

## Course Summary

Decision making is a critical skill for any leader in business, yet sometimes the most commonly taught tools still fall short. Return-on-investment calculations work when optimizing financials, but what happens when there are other criteria to consider? Pro-con lists may give a picture of the positives and negatives, but once you chart them out, what are you supposed to *do* with them?

This six-week course will teach students how to use concepts from the field of decision science and apply them to decisions they are currently tackling at work. Students will also learn how to tap into their emotional and somatic awareness for data that can help them get unstuck and make decisions more quickly. The concepts students learn in class will be useful in tackling decisions where they have decision-making authority, but also support discussion about decisions in shared decision-making environments. This course includes a combination of recorded lectures, supplemental learning materials, and in the discussion sessions, interactive large-group discussion, and smaller breakout discussions.

Unlike in traditional decision analysis, no knowledge of statistics or advanced math is required for this course.

*\*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

## Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305  
continuingstudies@stanford.edu  
650-725-2650

- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Student must participate in at least 4 of the weekly discussions on Canvas and submit at least 4 of the weekly decision journal assignments
  
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Grade is based on completion of weekly discussions in Canvas, completion of weekly decision journal assignments, and cumulative written assignment. Student must submit a cumulative decision journal assignment to receive a grade.
  - Participation in a weekly discussion on Canvas is worth 5 points
  - Completion of a weekly decision journal assignment is worth 15 points
  - Students must submit a cumulative decision journal assignment, plus earn
    - At least 90 points for an A
    - At least 80 points for a B
    - At least 70 points for a C

*\*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

### **Textbooks/Required Materials**

No required textbooks. Most materials will be made available via Canvas. Some readings that reside behind a paywall may be assigned.

### **First Assignment**

Complete the pre-class survey (available in Canvas) prior to April 18.

### **Tentative Weekly Outline**

Prior to the first class, complete the pre-class survey made available in Canvas.

#### **Week 1: Key Frameworks for Breaking Decisions Down into Manageable Parts**

- Emotions in decision making - why they should not be ignored
- Myth vs. Truth about decision quality
- How to think about decision framing
- Introduction to the 3 components of every decision

Homework:

- Post in the Week 1 discussion board
- Supplemental reading/listening/watching (refer to Canvas)
- Complete Decision Journal Assignment 1

**Week 2: Deep Dive on Objectives**

- How the pro-con list should really be used
- How to use the pro-con-list-with-a-twist
- Why having clear and specific objectives supports decisiveness
- Benefits of using emotional and somatic data to validate objective lists

Homework:

- Post in the Week 2 discussion board
- Supplemental reading/listening/watching (refer to Canvas)
- Complete Decision Journal Assignment 2

**Week 3: Deep Dive on Options and Deep Dive on Information - Part 1**

- The importance of moving beyond binary options
- Key phases in considering options: divergent and convergent approaches
- Objectives, options, and information on one page: how to use a decision matrix

Homework:

- Post in the Week 3 discussion board
- Supplemental reading/listening/watching (refer to Canvas)
- Complete Decision Journal Assignment 3

**Week 4: Deep Dive on Information - Part 2**

- Information gaps and what to do about them
- Uncertainty and Risk
- Identifying and mitigating bias

Homework:

- Post in the Week 4 discussion board
- Supplemental reading/listening/watching (refer to Canvas)
- Complete Decision Journal Assignment 4

**Week 5: Group Decision Making**

- Decision Roles and how to use them to make meetings more effective
- Different models for group decision making

Homework:

- Post in the Week 5 discussion board
- Supplemental reading/listening/watching (refer to Canvas)
- Complete Decision Journal Assignment 5

**Week 6: Honing Decision-Making Skills Over Time**

- Fostering a commitment to action
- Evaluating decision quality
- Your personal plan of action for continued skill-building

Homework:

- Post in the Week 6 discussion board
- If taking the course for a grade, submit your cumulative decision journal assignment.