

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HCA 574: DECISION MAKING IN HEALTH CARE – ONLINE

March 20 to May 5, 2023

**Instructor Information**

William Mkanta, Ph.D.

Academic Complex, Room 131

Phone: (270) 745-5260

Email: [william.mkanta@wku.edu](mailto:william.mkanta@wku.edu)

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM or by Appointment

**Course Information and Materials**

**Prerequisite:** HCA 540 – Health Care Organization and Administration or permission from the instructor. It can also be taken concurrently with this course.

**Required Text:** None – as a reflection of the changing practice patterns in health care and the practical nature of decision making. As we experience the effect of so many views about the Affordable Care Act, this course derives most of its content from recently published articles and reports related to decision making processes in the industry. In addition, news clips, relevant speeches, and round-table discussions would be periodically used as part of the course content. The course instructor will be responsible for supplying contemporary facts and giving directives to the students about multi-media sources for course/module information.

**Statement on COVID-19**

All students are strongly encouraged to **get the COVID-19 vaccine**. In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. [www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill](http://www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill)

**Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's **Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** (#0.070) and **Discrimination and Harassment Policy** (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination,

harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's **Counseling and Testing Center** at 270-745-3159.

### **Disability Policy:**

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

### **Course Description**

Decision making has become one of the tools of paramount importance in healthcare because of the complex and the changing environment and processes occurring at different levels of the industry. Timing of the decisions, ethical and moral issues involved and focus on beneficiaries of the decisions made are some of the key areas involved in decision making experiences. Recently, shifting of healthcare approaches from volume- to value-based strategies makes the art (or science?) of decision making even more thought-provoking when most of the forecasts are not based on numbers (volume) but quality (value) of the services provided. Most organizational or managerial concerns (such as those involving cost, treatment choices, conflicts, accessibility, etc.) emanating from the process of care may require several alternative (complex) decisions *to meet value expectations*, and so it is critical for those involved in the decision-making processes to be capable and trustworthy in finding optimal and adaptable alternative(s). Students in this course will learn how to integrate scientific evidence, health care stakeholders' preferences, and learned opinions to conduct decision analyses that can potentially help health care managers recognize the most favorable alternatives in both clinical and non-clinical settings.

### **Competencies Developed in the Course**

1. Relationship management
2. Communication Skills
3. Facilitation and Negotiation
4. Conflict Resolution
5. Leadership Skills and Behavior
6. Communicating Vision and Managing Change
7. Effective Decision Making
8. Integrity and Ethical Behavior
9. Stakeholders
10. Consumer's Perspective
11. Data Analysis and Innovation

These competencies will be developed and assessed in both individual and group settings through course assessments and activities.

### **Learning Outcomes**

It is expected that upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. *Identify* and *discuss* about important decision analysis tools and mechanisms (competencies 2, 7, 11).
2. *Propose* plans to effectively incorporate evidence into decision making in both clinical and non-clinical decision processes (competencies 1, 5, 7, 9, 11).
3. *Describe* the structure of decisions made in health care and unique challenges faced by health care providers and managers in decision-making tasks (competencies 3, 5, 6, 10).
4. *Analyze* different types of conflicts arising in health care processes and explore methods to effectively address the conflicts (competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10).
5. *Develop* new and *apply* learned solutions to existing and emerging decision problems in the process of care and in healthcare leadership (competencies 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10).

### **Attendance/Participation Policy**

This is an online class, yet my philosophy of “learning and teaching” at graduate level courses will still be maintained. So, to facilitate the learning process for everyone in class, students are expected to participate in all class activities. I believe the online option gives

you a great opportunity to engage in interactive learning. The course has been designed with this fact in mind; class participation by itself is worth 10% of the total grade.

### **Course Content**

This course will last for seven weeks, and it has been divided into four modules running from March 20 to May 5, 2023. Each module will be guided by a specific theme accompanied by selected articles/reports reflecting the theme.

There will be four main areas of assessment: discussion forums, journal entries, case studies and article critique/term paper. Each of these components is described below with its requirements and grading criteria.

### **Course requirements**

#### **1. Discussion Forum**

There will be **four discussion items posted on Blackboard during the term**. Each discussion item **will remain open for the duration of the module; it will close at 11:55PM on the last day of the module**. Students are expected to make their contributions by way of reading and responding or providing feedback on the posted opinions of classmates. You may send questions to the instructor through the discussion board if you would like to get their opinion on any of the ongoing discussions. Frequency of participation (distinct days of postings per module period) as well as content will be used for assessment. The four discussion items will contribute 10% of the total grade.

**Requirements:** Full credit is possible if a student **posts comments in at least three distinct days in each module**. Each discussion item will carry 10 points; the items will be scored as follows: **0: Not posted; 1-4: Needs to improve; 5-7: Good; 8-9: Very Good; 10: Excellent.**

#### **2. Case Study**

Two case studies on health care decision analysis or health care scenario that requires alternative decisions will be attempted. Each case study is worth 10% of the total grade. Sufficient time will be given for students to complete the case studies. Students may choose to engage in informal group discussions about a case study through an open forum (**a discussion board opened throughout the term**), but the final work will be graded individually based on individual efforts and creativity in responding to the case.

**Requirements:** Between 3 and 5, typed, double-spaced pages in MS Word format. APA style required. Case studies will make 20% of the total grade.

### **3. Journal Entries**

Students will be required to submit **three journal entries (modules 2-4)** covering topics of interest in healthcare decision making concepts and processes. The journal entries will echo the module themes. The instructor will provide the topic or information requiring response for each round of journal entry. Journal entries are expected to show students' understanding of the module content or general understanding of handling of the relevant factors in the process of making decisions. Again, emphasis will be placed on decisions that reflect on the importance of value-based care. Each entry will be worth 20 points that would be allotted based on writing skills (grammar, punctuation, structure, etc.), clear expression of opinion/thoughts, and applicability of the covered materials.

**Journal entries must be submitted by 11:55PM on the last day of the module in which they appear.**

**JE Requirements:** At least **two full** typed double-spaced pages per journal entry. Use MS Word files to submit your entries. Entries should have 1-inch margins throughout and typed using a 12-point *Times New Roman* font type. Failure to submit entries on time or to follow the required format may result in penalty. APA style required. Journal entries will contribute 20% of the final grade.

### **4. Article Critique/Term Paper**

Students are required to read and critique a journal article on decision making for their term paper. The critique should include (i) summary of the article; (ii) critique of the decision tool/concept used; (iii) demonstration of student's alternatives and their impact; (iv) listing of areas of strength of the article; (v) statement of any ambiguity in the article and supportive explanation; and (vi) preparation of a constructive feedback to the authors. The critique article will be made available by the second week of the term.

**Term Paper Requirements:** Between 7 and 10 double-spaced, typed pages in MS Word format. The assignment will carry 30% of the final grade. APA style required.

### **5. Video Conference**

Three synchronous video sessions will be held during the term. The third session will be used for group presentations on a DM case that will be provided to the students. The sessions are mandatory and will be held on Thursdays, March 23, April 13, April 27, and May 4 from 6:30PM to 8:30PM (CST) on each day. Students are responsible for making all the necessary arrangements for their participation in the video conference. This component will comprise 20% of the total grade, assigned as:  
session 1 (2%); session 2 (3%), session 3 (5%), and session 4 (presentation 10%)

## Grading Policy

Activity	% of Grade
Discussion Board	10%
Journal Entries	20%
Case Studies	20%
Term Paper	30%
Video Conference	20%
Total	100%

**Grading Scale: A: 90 – 100% B: 80 – 89% C: 70 – 80% D: 60 – 69% F: Below 60%**

Instructor will reserve the right to alter the grading scale based on the class performance.

## Course Outline: March 20 to May 5, 2023

Modules and Assignments	Topics	Course Objectives	Competencies
<b>Module 1: Decision Making: Theories &amp; Tools – 03/20 to 03/26</b>			
1.1 Readings posted on Blackboard			
1.2 DB1 available on Blackboard			
1.3 Video Session 1, March 23, 2023,			
<b>Module 2: Decision-Making in Health Care – 03/27 to 04/09</b>			
2.1 Readings posted on Blackboard			
2.2 DB2 posted			
2.3 JE1 posted			
2.4 Case Study 1 and Article for critique – available week of March 27			
<b>Module 3: Evidence Based Decision-Making 04/10 to 04/23</b>			
3.1 Readings posted on Blackboard			
3.2 CS1 due by 5PM on 04/14/2023			
3.3 DB3 posted			
3.4 JE2 posted			
3.5 CS2 – available week of April 10			
3.6 Video Sessions 2&3, 4/13 & 4/27			
<b>Module 4: Leadership &amp; DM in Health Care – 04/24 to 05/05</b>			
4.1 Readings posted on Blackboard			
4.2 DB4 available			
4.3 JE3 available			
4.4 CS2 due by 5PM on 04/28			
4.5 Video Session 4: Presentations, May 4, 2023.			
4.6 Term paper due by 5PM on 05/05			

**NOTE:** The official end of the course will be on Friday, May 5, 2023. All assignments should be completed by 11:55PM on this date. No extension will be granted for any late submissions.

**HCA 574: DECISION MAKING IN HEALTH CARE** contributes to the development of the following competencies in health administration:

WKU MHA Competency Model	HCA 574		
<i>Beginner (B); Intermediate (I); Advanced (A)</i>	<i><b>B</b></i>	<i><b>I</b></i>	<i><b>A</b></i>
<b>Domain 1: Communication and Relationship Management</b>			
a) Relationship Management		X	
b) Communication Skills		X	
c) Facilitation and Negotiation		X	
d) Conflict Resolution		X	
<b>Domain 2: Leadership</b>			
a) Leadership Skills and Behavior		X	
b) Organizational Culture			
c) Communicating Vision and Managing Change		X	
d) Effective Decision Making		X	
e) Strategic Management and Planning			
<b>Domain 3: Professionalism</b>			
a) Professional Development			
b) Community and Professional Engagement			
c) Integrity and Ethical Behavior		X	
<b>Domain 4: Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment</b>			
a) Healthcare Systems and Organization			
b) Stakeholders		X	
c) Population Health			
d) Consumer's Perspective		X	
e) Data Analysis & Innovation		X	
f) Health Policy			
<b>Domain 5: Business Skills and Knowledge</b>			
a) Financial Management			
b) Human Resource Administration			
c) Marketing			
d) Risk Management and Quality Improvement			