

BA 520

Critical Thinking and Business Ethics

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Office Hours: By Appointment via Zoom

Course Overview & Learning Objectives

This course will explore the importance of rethinking and reevaluating our assumptions, beliefs, and mindsets in the context of business and leadership. Drawing from Adam Grant's book, *Think Again*, students will learn how to challenge their own thinking, embrace change, and become more effective leaders in their respective fields. The course explores concepts of rethinking, unlearning, and embracing intellectual humility to foster innovation, resilience, and strategic decision-making in a rapidly changing business landscape.

The successful completion of the course indicates a student's ability to:

1. Understand the importance of rethinking and reevaluating assumptions

- Identify the benefits of questioning established beliefs and practices in business and leadership
- Comprehend strategies for encouraging a culture of rethinking within organizations

2. Embrace change and adaptability in leadership

- Apply the role of adaptability in effective leadership
- Analyze techniques for managing change and fostering resilience in the face of uncertainty

3. Challenge assumptions and beliefs

- Recognize deeply held beliefs and assumptions in business and leadership
- Evaluate the importance of intellectual humility in leadership

4. Develop empathy and perspective-taking skills

- Describe the perspectives of others and their impact on decision-making
- Apply strategies for fostering empathy and perspective-taking in the workplace

5. Promote a culture of learning and growth

- Comprehend the importance of continuous learning and growth in business
- Analyze practices for promoting a culture of learning and growth within organizations

6. Analyze case studies and apply the course material

- Evaluate real-world examples of organizations and leaders who have successfully embraced change and reevaluated their assumptions
- Create a plan to apply the principles of *Think Again* to personal and professional leadership roles and career paths

Instruction Materials:

The Big Red Backpack program is the title of WKU's partnership with Barnes & Noble College for their First Day Complete initiative. Big Red Backpack is a course materials delivery program that ensures students have their required course materials on the first day of class and may reduce the costs of materials for many of their courses. Enrollment in the program occurs automatically when students register for classes. Students may opt out of the program each semester, as long as they choose to opt out for all of their classes. Students **MUST** carefully and completely follow all instructions regarding the Big Red Backpack Program. Those instructions will be provided by:

1. An email to all Topper email addresses from the Big Red Backpack Program one month prior to the start of classes.
2. The Big Red Backpack Program site: <https://www.wku.edu/bigredbackpack/>.

Students should refer to the Big Red Backpack Program site referenced above for opt-out deadlines and any additional details.

Breakdown of Cost of Course Materials for this course:

Option 1: Cost for Course using Big Red Backpack (BRB): \$72

Option 2:

Required Materials:

Packback Bundle

******This is an online platform that we will use for weekly discussions and paper submissions.

Cost directly from the company's platform: \$49

Book: Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know by Adam Grant

ISBN-10 : 1984878107

ISBN-13 : 978-1984878106

Cost on Amazon: Approximately \$15

*While the cost for this course is slightly cheaper not using BRB, please be sure to **evaluate the costs of all of your other courses** before opting out of BRB. If you opt out of BRB, you are solely responsible for obtaining the course materials.*

Grading Policies

Point equivalent (600 points)

Weekly Packback Discussions (6)	(20%)	120
Weekly Content Quizzes (6)	(20%)	120
Reflection Assignments (5)	(20%)	120
Organizational Evaluation	(20%)	120
Personal Think Again Plan	(20%)	120

Basis for Final Grades

90's = A, 80's = B, 70's = C, 60's = D, below 60 = F

or using point equivalency

> 895 = A, > 795 = B, > 695 = C, > 595 = D, below 594 = F

Students are expected to be familiar with Western Kentucky policy on Academic Honesty. In this class academic dishonesty on an exam or a paper will result in an "F" for the course, and will be reported to the proper officials. Dishonesty on any other exercises may result in punishment ranging from a zero on the assignment to failure of the course – at the discretion of the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Packback Discussions

We will be using discussion activities on the PackBack platform to allow you all as students to learn and share with one another via an online format. Each week, you will make one original post, as well as add to two other students' posts. Guidance for discussions each week will be related to that week's assigned content. Your Packback discussions must achieve a curiosity score of 70% or greater to receive credit.

Weekly Chapter/Content Quizzes

Each week you will complete a content quiz over the assigned chapter readings and Blackboard content. The quizzes will be found on Blackboard under their respective weekly folder.

Reflection Assignments

You will be given reflection prompts to personally apply the assigned week's chapter learnings and assigned content. I encourage you to draw as much value as you can from each of these smaller reflection assignments, as they will better prepare you for completing the Personal Think Again Plan during Finals Week.

Organizational Evaluation

You will be asked to identify and evaluate an organization and its abilities (or inabilities) to embrace the unlearning and relearning process.

Personal Think Again Plan

You will develop your own personal & professional plan for engaging in the rethinking process at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational level.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Late Policy

Late assignments will only be accepted at the instructor's discretion. Late assignments that are accepted will be subject to a penalty in points.

Grade Appeals

You have one week from the time grades are posted on Bb to inquire about a specific grade.

Changes to the Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the syllabus, tentative course outline, etc., if needed. Students will be provided no less than one-week notification of any changes if at all possible.

Course Climate

University education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information and ideas. In this course, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Some of us will have emotional responses to the course materials; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the course materials; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of your peers.

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ADA Accommodations

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. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Title IX/ Discrimination & Harassment

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 or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. 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.

WKU Counseling and Testing Center

The university experience should be challenging, but not overwhelming. To this end, the WKU Counseling Center provides a variety of services to help strengthen students’ capacity to tolerate distress, form healthy relationships, and seek healthy expressions of their ideals and values. If you would like to speak with someone, you may contact WKU’s [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159 or use their Here To Help service at <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/heretohelpemail.php>. If you need immediate help, please visit the Counseling Center in 409 Potter Hall or call the 24-hour emergency help line at 270-843-4357.

The Learning Center Peer Tutoring Services

The Learning Center (TLC) provides free tutoring services that empower students to achieve academic success. Trained peer tutors are available to review course content, answer questions, and demonstrate effective study strategies. TLC offers individual appointments and group sessions (PASS) for hundreds of undergraduate courses. For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.wku.edu/tlc.

Inclusion Statement

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to ensuring all members of our campus community have access to equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving communities. Consistent with our campus purpose statement and creed, this classroom will be a respectful space, welcoming all sexes, races, ages, national origins, ethnicities, gender identities/labels/expressions, intellectual and physical abilities, sexual orientations, faith/non-faith perspectives, income levels and socio-economic classes, political ideologies, educational backgrounds, primary languages, family statuses, military experiences, cognitive styles, and communication styles. If at any time during this course you are excluded or feel a sense of alienation from the course content, please feel free to contact me privately without fear of reprisal.