MN4310 – Scenario Thinking

**MODULE TYPE/SEMESTER:** Senior Honours/Option (20 Credits)/Semester 2

**PRE-REQUISITE(S):** MN2001 and MN2002

**MODULE CO-ORDINATOR:** Professor Brad Mackay

**CONTACT DETAILS:** Email: rbm2@st-andrews.ac.uk

**AIM:**
Scenario thinking allows strategy to be developed in a robust way, by considering the irreducible complexity, dynamism and ambiguity of the contextual environment. Through the exploration of alternative narratives of the future, individuals and their organizations can develop reflexive, adaptive capabilities to deal with unpredictability in their operating environment(s). Scenario thinking does not take the place of formal, analytical models in the process of generating strategy, but adds an important element of creativity that formal analysis cannot provide.

To use the scenario process to understand how individuals can engage with uncertainty in operating environments in order to develop creative and resilient strategies. In addition, to use the scenario process to integrate a number of important organizational development concepts that help to provide organizations with future vision and adaptability: imagination; action learning; narratives and ‘storying’; competencies and dynamic capabilities; reflexive practices.

**OBJECTIVES:**
(a) To build scenarios that balance evidence and creative insight, in a process of disciplined imagination
(b) To develop strategic options and evaluate the robustness of options in relation to potential futures
(c) To understand how to develop and retain the potential for reflexive strategizing in organizations
(d) To understand organizational development concepts and processes and how these can assist a particular organization engage effectively with potential futures
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Relevant Knowledge and Understanding:

(a) Managing scenario exercises
(b) Developing resources to support group processes
(c) Producing outline strategic consulting reports
(d) Understanding of strategic management concepts

Skills:
(e) Leading and facilitating team processes
(f) Synthesising information and developing arguments
(g) Presentation
(h) Consulting and strategy development
(i) Analytical and persuasive writing

COURSE OUTLINE:

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Session Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is scenario planning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Scenario Workshop I: Drivers</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Scenario Workshop II: Narratives</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Group Research Week</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Scenario Workshop III: Scenarios-to-Strategy</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Presentation Preparation Week</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Scenario Presentations</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Scenario I Seminar: De-Brief and Critical Reflections</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Assignments II: Group Report Due</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Assignment III: Individual Learning Journal Due</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Seminar II: Cognition &amp; Scenarios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment III: Individual Essay Due</td>
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TEACHING FORMAT:
Extensive reading, 24 hours of integrated class lectures and workshops, electronic based research on key issues.

If students have laptops/tablets, they are encouraged to bring them to class with them for use in group work.

ASSESSMENT:
Formative - Workshop participation and weekly seminars
Summative - Four items of classwork, as specified below

- *Group presentation* = 10%
- *Group report* = 20%
- *Individual learning journal* = 20%
- *Individual essay* = 50%
CORE READING LIST:
Students will be guided in engaging with articles and other resources during the first workshop. Extensive reading will be required during the module, but you are requested NOT to undertake any pre-reading before the module commences.