

Application Form

Innovative Teaching Award 2021¹

APPLICANT
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Members of the working group, if applicable²:
GENERAL INFORMATION
Course level bachelor's
Course number: 6167 and 1933
Semester: summer semester 2020 and winter semester 2020/21
ECTS credits: 4
Course title: The internationalization of ... oh, there's a white mouse – The use of resources in a behavioral economics context
Further information on the course: This is a course V (Seminar IB Resources) of the specialization International Business (IB). As a pre-requisite, students (with the exception of exchange students) have to successfully complete courses I (Foundations of IB) and II (IB Applications).
If applicable links to the course's online environment: Link to session 5, which is taught as an offline element: https://learn.wu.ac.at/dotlrn/classes/pool/1933.20w/tlf-lrn/session_5 Link to one of the pre-class tasks: https://quizizz.com/join?gc=62058476

¹ Courses held during the 2020 calendar year (summer semester 2020, winter semester 2020/21) are eligible for the 2021 Innovative Teaching Award. Courses held over two semesters (WS 2019/20–SS 2020) can also be nominated.

² Please name all the people involved in the development of the course design. The people named in this field will also receive the award in case of a successful application.

Information on application

Please use the template on the following pages to describe your course. In part 1, please insert a short description of your course design (maximum of 180 words). If your course design is selected for the award, the short description as well as the application form will be published on the WU homepage and in the Teaching & Learning Academy.

The detailed description of your course design (part 2) is divided into three parts:

- 2a is intended to give the jury an overview of your course.
- In section 2b we would ask you to elaborate on the teaching methods and didactic elements.
- Section 2c is intended to highlight the innovative nature of your course in relation to this year's focus of the award.

The questions mentioned in each section are intended to support you in the description of your course design.

Please complete the template directly in word and send it as a .doc or .pdf file to lehrenundlernen@wu.ac.at by **February 10, 2021**.

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN (max. 180 words)

If your course is selected for an award, this text will be published on the WU website along with the submitted application form.

The course 'The internationalization of ... oh, there's a white mouse – The use of resources in a behavioral economics context' is part of the specialization International Business. It focuses on behavioral economics, a field that encourages better behavior in individuals for the overall good of society and reached popularity through a recent Nobel Prize win. The overall objective of the course is that at its end students are not only familiar with the theoretical background and can critically assess existing applications of behavioral economics, but are also able to develop their own applications, so called 'nudges', to tackle current issues. To reach this goal an innovative mix of different teaching methods combined with analogue and online as well as digital and offline learning environments is employed. The combination of the different elements creates a continuous learning environment that stretches beyond the confines of the actual or digital classroom. It encourages students to engage with the topic not only in class with the instructor and fellow course members, but also outside of it with friends, families or co-workers.

2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

2a.) Overview

- What are the learning outcomes to be achieved by the students?
- What are the content elements of the course and how is the course structured?
- What are the elements on which the final grade is based?
- How is the learning environment of your course designed?

The bachelor-level course 'The internationalization of ... oh, there's a white mouse – The use of resources in a behavioral economics context' is taught as a level V course within the specialization of International Business. While courses I and II convey the basics of International Business, courses III – V cover specific interests (such as finance or innovation) within a broader topic field. All courses V are linked to the topic 'resources' and this particular course explores the use of resources from a behavioral economics perspective. In times of Covid-19, the course is designed to qualify for a distance mode, a hybrid mode or regular teaching and switching between these three modes is of course possible on a very short notice. This course has also been taught in each of these three modes in previous semesters (summer semester 2020 – distance mode; winter semester 20/21 – hybrid mode).

On a daily basis, decisions are taken on individual, corporate or institutional levels, which directly affect different types of resources such as money, time or people. Despite the general intent of taking decisions in one's best interest, humans are prone to biases. These biases can lead to inefficient decision taking, which is in detail explored in the research field of behavioral economics. Richard Thaler's Nobel Prize win in 2017 put behavioral economics at the center of attention for companies, organizations, and institutions alike. Central to his work are so-called 'nudges', which entice people to take better decisions. Thereby, the research field intends to tackle some of society's grand challenges such as obesity, ageing population, or climate change.

This course explores theoretical key concepts of behavioral economics and combines them with practical insights on applications in different fields and countries. The learning outcomes are separated into hard and soft skills. Concerning the hard skills, at the end of the course students will be able to

- understand and critically discuss the theoretical key concepts in behavioral economics
- be familiar and able to critically assess existing applications of behavioral economics
- have the skills to employ theoretical concepts to real-life issues.

In regard to soft skills, during the course students learn how to

- work in diverse team-settings
- present clearly and convincingly in front of an audience
- be able to explain and present complex topics to an audience in an understandable way
- think outside the box to come up with new application fields

The course structure and content are set up to help students reach the learning outcomes gradually. To support this development, the grading consists of several components that measure students' development and active involvement in each of these steps (Figure 1 below provides an overview of the course structure and content as well as grading).

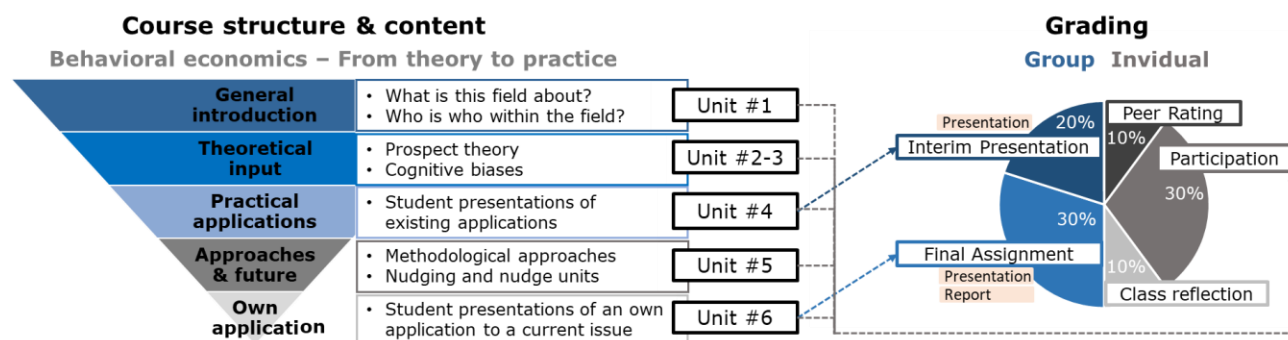


Figure 1 Course structure and grading

While session 1 is a general introduction to the course and topic, sessions 2 and 3 convey the theoretical key concepts. In session 4, students present their analysis of an existing application of behavioral economics. Session 5 goes into detail concerning different methodological approaches used in behavioral economics as well as nudging and nudge units. This forms the last step in preparation for session 6, which concludes the course with students' presentations of their own application of behavioral economics to an existing problem. The two assignments make up 50% of the grade (interim presentation in session 4: 20%; final assignment (report and presentation) in session 6: 30%). In each session, class participation is measured through active involvement as well as digital assignments. In sessions 1, 2, and 3 there are two digital assignments, one pre-class task as a simple preparation for the content in class and an after-class quiz that tests students' newly acquired knowledge. The after-class quiz is also part of session 5. In sessions 4 and 6 students have to review one of their peer groups' presentation on learn@wu as an after-class assignment. In total class participation accounts for 30% of the grade, which equals 30 points. Out of these 30 points, 18 points relate to in-class participation and pre-class tasks, while the other 12 points can be acquired through the after-class tasks. At the end of the course students evaluate their fellow group members in the form of a peer rating (10%) and submit a written course reflection (10%), where they reflect on what they learned and where they see the field's potential or their own potential within the field in the future.

Concerning the learning environment, sessions 1, 2, and 3 are taught live either online or in a hybrid mode due to the complexity of the content. They also include pre- and post-class tasks, which are available on the app Quizizz and offer flexibility in terms of time and space. The presentation sessions 4 and 6 take place live either online or in a hybrid mode and include a post-class assignment, which is handed in via learn@wu. In between the two presentation sessions is session 5, which is an offline module that consists of two videos each followed by a task, a quiz at the end of the class, as well as a coaching session. Students can take session 5 as a module any time and from anywhere within the timeframe of a week.

2b.) Teaching methods

- Which teaching methods do you use to help your students achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- What role does the learning environment, or more specifically the context in which students learn, play in your course design?
- Why did you choose this/these particular method(s)? What specific advantages does it/do they offer in your teaching? What do your students learn through the use of this/these method(s)?
- In which way do the students benefit from the teaching methods used in the course?

Behavioral economics and its application to pressing issues such as energy usage or eating habits in the form of 'nudging' is a highly debated topic. Several countries and institutions have so-called 'nudge units' to advise governments. Yet there is a thin line between setting incentives for better behavior for the overall good of society and manipulating people against their conscious will, which is called 'smudging'. Therefore reaching the ultimate learning outcomes of being able to 1) critically evaluate and assess existing applications and 2) develop an own application of behavioral economics to an identified issue, is of utmost importance. To reach this goal, a different mix of conventional and unconventional teaching methods is employed. Each method is paired with either an analogue and online or digital and offline learning environment to keep the lecture interesting, provide flexibility and offer a continuous learning process (Figure 2 below gives an overview of the different methods and environments).

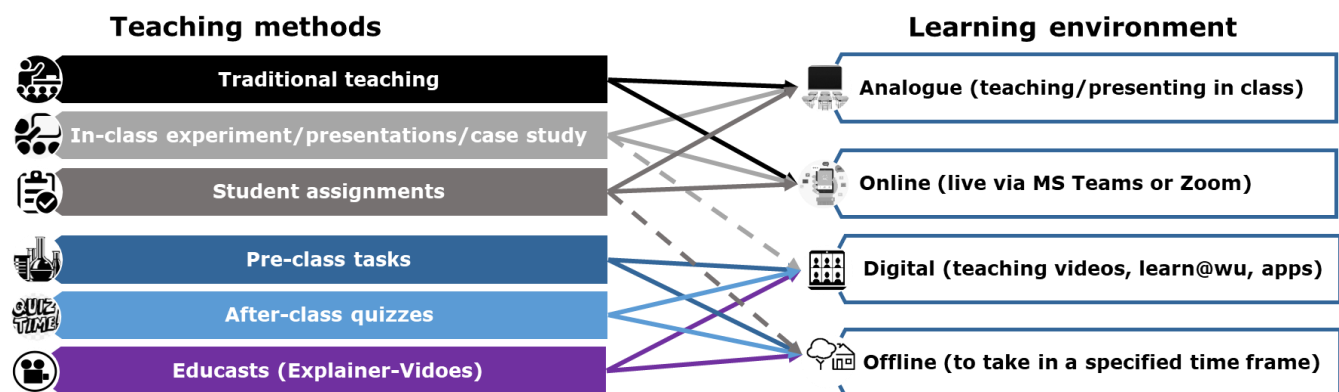


Figure 2 Teaching methods are combined with different learning environments

Conventional teaching methods in an analogue and online learning environment

The theoretical part of behavioral economics is complex (Daniel Kahneman received the Nobel Prize in 2002 for his and Amos Tversky's work on prospect theory and cognitive biases). It requires detailed explanations and plenty of room for questions. This is why I use **traditional teaching** to deliver this content (sessions 1-3) in an analogue and online environment (depending on the regulations either in distance mode via MS Teams or in hybrid mode, which means that half of the students are in class, while the other half joins online to engage in the course). The advantage of traditional teaching is that I can see students' reactions to the content and therefore directly know whether they have understood it or need further explanations. Understanding the key content is crucial for the students in order to reach the learning outcomes as all applications and developments in the field of behavioral economics build on it.

In each session with theoretical content, I use the last part of the session to let student apply the newly gained knowledge in practical activities. This can be in the form of an **in-class experiment or small presentations or a case study**. These activities help students not only to deepen their theoretical understanding of the concepts, but also to see how the theory connects to practical applications. The setting of these activities is relaxed, some are in teams to mix it up a bit and students receive immediate feedback on comments or presentations, which helps them to work towards the learning outcomes without feeling pressure. In line with the teaching of the theoretical concepts, these activities are mostly performed analogue and online, only the in-class experiment adds a digital component as it is conducted via learn@wu.

I employ **student assignments**, which also take place in an analogue and online learning environment (a digital and offline learning environment for the assignments (video format) was tested during the spring semester 2020; despite very creative submissions, students prefer the analogue and online one). Students receive coaching, but otherwise work independently in diverse teams on them. Together, these two assignments form the end of the course's learning process as with them students show both themselves and me that they reached the learning outcomes. In the first assignment, each group has to build on the

theoretical foundations to critically assess an existing application, while in the final one they develop their own. They have to present complex content in an understandable and convincing way. To come with creative ideas, they have to seek inspiration not only in the formal context of the course, but also in informal ones such as friends, co-workers or family.

At this point, I would also like to mention one last individual assignment that students receive at the end of the course, which is the course reflection. To conclude the learning process and the course, students get the time to reflect on the knowledge they have acquired, their ideas for the future of the field or if they can see themselves in it. After a continuous and, therefore, steep learning process filled with different elements in regard to teaching and learning, this last task which is both analogue and offline helps them to unwind.

Unconventional teaching methods in a digital and offline learning environment

As the theoretical content is challenging, I employ **pre-class tasks**. These tasks are digital (on the app Quizizz) and offline, meaning that students have a certain timeframe within which they can do them. The pre-class tasks consist of several questions that students have to answer. These questions are either compiled by me (session 1), or are taken from the original experiments (sessions 2 and 3). None of the tasks takes longer than 10 minutes and there are no right or wrong answers. The objective of these tasks is that students first get curious about the upcoming session and later on can personally relate to the theoretical content, as they themselves had to take the same decision. This type of experience helps to create a continuous learning process and significantly enhances the learning process.

To test students' knowledge of the content taught in class, I employ **after-class quizzes**. Just like the pre-class tasks, these quizzes are digital (on the app Quizizz) and offline. They are graded (two points per quiz) and take less than five minutes to complete. The advantage of these quizzes is that students have to revisit the material after class and that both they and I get timely feedback on their progress. In case of problems, I can react immediately and repeat the content in the next session or offer coaching. This again leads to continuous learning and enhances the learning process that ultimately leads to reaching the learning outcomes.

I also use **educasts or so called explainer-videos** in a digital and offline learning environment. For a whole session, they offer students complete flexibility in terms of time and space. I designed not only the videos, but also the session in close cooperation with WU's Digital Teaching Services so that the format best fits the content and objectives. The videos offer students the advantage to learn about methodological approaches and nudging and nudge units in a visually engaging format and at their own pace. The tasks make sure that they engage with the topic after watching the videos. The videos, especially the first one, provide them with methodological knowledge they need for the last assignment and the following task helps students to prepare for it. This assignment, in which they have to develop their own nudging approach, is a crucial part of the learning outcomes.

Overall, I can deduct from the course evaluations that students value the innovative combination of teaching methods and learning environments I employ in my course. Especially in times of Covid-19, it is important to provide students with a balanced mix of flexibility and live interaction, individual and group work as well as digital and analogue components to create a continuous learning process that helps them reach the learning outcomes.

2c.) Innovative character of the course

- In which dimension (see call section 2) do you place your submission?
- Which didactic elements of your course design do you consider particularly innovative with regard to the focus of this year's award "Seamless Learning: Designing Learning Environments"?
- Transferability: In which ways can your course design be adapted for other courses? Which didactic elements of your course can also be used in other courses?
- Which elements could be improved/reconsidered in a second edition of the course?

The innovative character of the course in light of this year's award lies in the balanced combination of different teaching methods with analogue and digital as well as online and offline learning environments that together create a seamless learning experience. This continuous learning encourages students to deal with the topic and reflect on their behavior not only in class, but also outside of it. This is best described by the following – although unconventional – student comment from this semester's course reflection: 'There's so much I have learned throughout the last weeks and it might sound a bit unusual but the whole topic is extremely convenient and can easily be brought up with friends during a long boozy night (I can actually recommend it, we came up with the most silly and creative ideas).' I dare to say that this shows the innovative character of the course design as it is a clear success if the format and content of the class inspire late night talks among friends and result in creative ideas.

Creative combination of digital and analogue elements

Especially in times of Covid-10 when an abundance of online sessions and self-learning can lead to fatigue, this is an essential point. The creative combination of digital and analogue elements is what keeps a lecture varied and interesting. In the case of my course, I embed the analogue elements in digital ones. Before coming to class students finish a digital assignment that prepares them and makes them curious about the content that will be taught in class as an analogue element. After class, they test what they have learned in class in form of a digital quiz, which provides them with direct feedback on their learning process. In the one session, which is completely offline, I also pair digital elements in the form of edcasts with tasks that are analogue. Through these combinations, I actively try to create a continuous learning experience and offer variety to battle the exhaustion students can experience in classes due to the ongoing lockdown and restrictions.

Facilitation of learning independent from time and space

In this course, I try to offer students as much flexibility in terms of time and space as possible, while at the same time also providing them a clear structure, live sessions, and social interactions among peers. The first lockdown, which required teaching in distance mode, hit both students and me on a very short notice. I still taught the theoretical content live, but decided to switch the presentation sessions to a video format to offer them more flexibility during the difficult situation. Despite very creative prerecorded submissions and an overall high quality, students complained that they missed the discussions and social interactions with their fellow class members. Considering this, I changed the format for the fall semester. While all sessions still include at least one digital element that can be taken offline and, therefore, independent of time and space and there is a whole class (session 5) offered as an offline element, I teach the other elements live. During the live elements, I focus on the challenging content and also provide as much social interaction not only with me, but also among peers as the circumstances allow with an in-class experiment, presentations, and a case study. The experience I gained from the last two semesters tells me that in this way I well balance the tradeoff between flexibility and loss of interaction with the instructor and fellow students.

Integration of knowledge gained from various contexts

Students receive feedback and coaching not only from me, but also from fellow students at various points throughout the course. They integrate the knowledge they gain from this formal context in class into their work. Although I do not have guest speakers, this course strongly encourages students to actively seek information and ideas from various contexts. To gather ideas for the final assignment in which students have to come up with an issue that requires a nudging approach and then offer solutions, they often use informal contexts such as friends, co-workers or family. Examples of topics students came up with in the final assignment include how to employ nudges to tackle procrastination in university and business contexts, to improve ecological buying behavior, or to reduce the number of cigarette butts lying around Vienna.

To conclude this section, I would like to point out that the innovative combination of different elements creates a seamless learning experience that in many students sparks a lasting interest in the topic even after finishing the course. I have taught the course for three semesters now and so far, a total of 12 students from these courses have written or are currently writing their bachelor thesis on topics in the field of behavioral economics.

Transferability

The course design and in particular the different teaching methods and learning environments can easily be transferred to other formats, although it has to be noted that it does require a high degree of creativity and engagement by the instructor. The pre-class assignments and after-class quizzes are especially helpful for courses that teach complex theoretical content. Although one may have the impression that the kind of pre-class assignments employed in this course only work with experiments, this is simply not true. For example, in the case of a course on 'internationalization' the pre-class assignment can confront students with the internationalization of a company and for each aspect of the internationalization (location, mode, etc.) they have different options to pick an answer from. In class it can be discussed how these questions relate to theory (Uppsala model, OLI framework etc.) and whether students behaved as predicted by theory. The gained knowledge can later on be tested in after-class quizzes. An offline element in the form of edcasts and tasks like in this course can also be used for other courses. Especially helpful in this regard are the colleagues from WU's Digital Teaching Services, who offer excellent advice on what elements to use and how to best structure the elements of the offline session. They are also a great help with renting out the necessary equipment.

Reflection on the course and room for improvement

I would like to note that this course is adapted to feedback on a constant basis as indicated by the example of the presentation sessions, which were changed from digital and offline to analogue and online after several comments of students in the course reflection.

Concerning the design of the course, the majority of students recognize the innovative character of a seamless learning environment that spans the whole course time and appreciate the advantages it offers. They enjoy the pre- and post-class assignments and happily engage with the topic outside of the classroom. Comments in the course evaluation such as 'everything stimulates you to study, not only during the course but even after finishing it', 'I also enjoyed that we needed to complete various tasks such as quizzes, feedback and group works that also made the class interactive' or 'very interactive design, insightful details on the topics, great learning atmosphere' illustrate this. However, a few students feel that this type of course is a far stretch from a classical course with a single exam at the end that determines the grade. Although very few in numbers, these students tend to not participate in pre- or post-class assignments. Direct feedback and encouragement from my side only slightly improved their engagement outside of the classroom. They perceive the different elements as 'too much "busy work", that did not really contribute to the learning and was weighted too heavily in the overall grade'. I have the impression that it would help if WU from an official side could more actively advertise different formats of lectures and also point out the advantages of a seamless learning experience that includes non-traditional elements such as quizzes, learning videos, experiments, or surveys.

The pre-class assignment and after-class quizzes are mostly conducted via the app Quizizz, whose use is also recommended by WU's teaching and learning academy (<https://learn.wu.ac.at/open/tlac/apps>). The app's advantages are its flexibility in terms of set-up, questions, timer, and overview of the results. Some students would prefer to see everything integrated in the learn@wu platform to have their points directly available in the grade book (the app also allows students to see their points at any time and I later on transfers them to the gradebook). For the upcoming semester, I am currently checking if the pre- and after- class tasks can be integrated into learn@wu without having to significantly alter the questions or set-up.

All in all, I can say that this class format with its integration of different elements to create an innovative and seamless learning experience is very rewarding in terms of the final outcome, which is of course of utmost importance for students. However, I also have to note that this course format requires a high degree of engagement and flexibility on the side of the instructor as feedback, coaching and general availability not only in class but also outside of it and during offline learning periods form an integral element of the course design.

Note: By sending the application form and documents, the applicant confirms that the course design has not received any other awards or grants.

Attachment: Evaluation of course 6167 and evaluation of course 1933