



**„Negotiations Under Pressure -  
Managing Deadlocks, Emotions, and Irrationality: Theory and Role Playing”**

**Syllabus**

**Module Number:** 03SM22MO0276

**Dates:** Mo, 31.08.2026, 09.00-17.00 Uhr, UZH, room tbd  
Di, 01.09.2026, 09.00-17.00 Uhr, UZH, room tbd  
Mi, 02.09.2026, 09.00-17.00 Uhr, UZH, room tbd  
Do, 03.09.2026, 09.00-17.00 Uhr, UZH, room tbd  
Fr, 04.09.2026, 09.00-17.00 Uhr, UZH, room tbd

**Lecturers:** Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Uschi Backes-Gellner, Dr. Patricia Palffy, Matthias Schraner, N.N. (tba)

**Curricula Classification:** Bestandteil MA Wirtschaftswissenschaften: M: Wahlpflichtbereich Organization and Human Resources (BWL3), M: Minorbereich Managing Education (MEDU), M: Wahlbereich WWF

**ECTS-Points:** 3.0

**Course Webpage:**

<https://www.business.uzh.ch/de/research/professorships/emap/teaching/courses/Fall-Term-2026/Negotiations-Under-Pressure-.html>

**Contact:** For any questions please contact the seminar team (vhs@business.uzh.ch).

**Course Overview**

This course is designed for Master students who wish to develop both a theoretical and practical understanding of negotiations, with a particular focus on complex and irrational situations. The course combines theoretical insights from Bazerman and Neale’s “Negotiating Rationally” with a practice-oriented negotiations strategy for negotiations under pressure, the “Schraner Concept”: It structures the negotiation process into four phases: preparation, opening, leadership, and deadlock.

The course pursues two interconnected goals. First, students will explore the theory of rational negotiations including common decision-making biases, and the practical challenges of high-pressure negotiations. Second, they will apply this knowledge in practical roleplays and simulations by analyzing negotiation processes and outcomes, reflecting on strategies for managing emotions, overcoming deadlocks, and maintaining leadership under pressure.

**Course Objectives**

1. Develop a theoretical understanding of rational negotiation including common cognitive biases, and negotiation strategies under pressure.
2. Participate in negotiation role playing based on real-world negotiation scenarios by applying the four phases of the Schraner Concept: preparation, opening, leadership, and deadlock.
3. Analyze and reflect the complex negotiation processes and outcomes.
4. Practice managing emotions, irrational behavior, and high-pressure dynamics in negotiations.



5. Strengthen leadership skills for guiding negotiation processes and resolving deadlocks.

### **Course Prerequisites**

- Full attendance at all sessions
- Application letter and current transcript of records
- Good command of English
- Strong interest in the topic

### **Credit Requirements and Grading**

- Students are required to read the required readings before the course starts. For credit points students have to present a role playing summary and submit a “Diary of a Negotiator”.
- Full Attendance at all seminar sessions and active participation is mandatory and a necessary requirement for obtaining credit points. Absence in any session will therefore result in a “fail.”
- The final grade depends on active participation in the workshops, the presentation of a role playing summary, and your “Diary of a Negotiator.”

### **Application**

- The number of participants is limited. Please send your application including a current transcript, a motivation letter, and a short CV until 06.05.2026 to [vhs@business.uzh.ch](mailto:vhs@business.uzh.ch)

### **Reading and other Requirements for all Seminar Participants**

#### **Required Reading:**

- "Negotiating Rationally" von M.H. Bazerman und M.A. Neale (Bazerman, M.H.; Neale, M.A. (1992): Negotiating Rationally. New York: Free Press).
- „Das Schraner Konzept - Die neuen Prinzipien für Verhandlungen der Zukunft“ von Schraner, Matthias (2021). Berlin: Econ Verlag, 3. Auflage 2021. (“The Schraner Concept. New Principles for Negotiations of the Future.”).

*We expect you to have independently read and fully understood the required readings before the course starts. This is non-negotiable and compliance is expected from every participating student.*

#### **Further Readings**

##### **▪ Theory**

- Bazerman, Max H. (2020): Better, not perfect: a realist's guide to maximum sustainable goodness. Harper Business.
- Neale, Margaret A.; & Lys, Thomas Z. (2015): Getting (more of) what you want. Basic Books.
- Kolb, Deborah M.; Porter, Jessica L. (2015): Negotiating at work: Turn small wins into big gains. John Wiley & Sons.
- Voss, Chris; Tahl, Raz (2016): Never split the difference: Negotiating as if your life depended on it. Random House.

##### **▪ Real-World Examples of Negotiations under Pressure**

- <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/rapprochement-between-volkswagen-union-wage-talks-sources-say-2024-12-20/>
- [union-accepts-deutsche-bahn-offer-averts-strike/a-66652482](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/union-accepts-deutsche-bahn-offer-averts-strike-a-66652482)



- [US tariffs force Switzerland to rethink trade ties - SWI swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/us-tariffs-force-switzerland-to-rethink-trade-ties)

### **Additional Course Policies**

Given increasing digitalization of all walks of life, you may want to benefit from using laptops in class for example for taking notes during class. If you find such computerized note-taking useful, we tolerate it. However, not encouraged is the use of computers for email, tweeting, or blogging, etc. In any case, please use your laptop politely in class, without disturbing other students, and note that there may be session parts in which the use of digital tools is not permitted.

### **WWF Statutory Course Policies**

As *full attendance* at all dates is required in this course, check your *class schedule* for *possible conflicts* in dates with other courses. A proper scheduling is your own responsibility. To avoid overlap or heavy workloads, you have to coordinate your class schedule before the semester starts. Please arrange yourself by taking the respective classes only.

*Academic dishonesty* in any form will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating or engaging in unethical behavior will be reported to the Dean's office according to the guidelines on academic dishonesty set forth by the University of Zurich.

Any work presented by students only uses aids that are declared. Students accept full liability for the scientific integrity of their texts, irrespective of potential use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or other. All instances of direct quotes or paraphrasing from published or unpublished sources have to be properly attributed. You confirm that all work, in its current form or any similar version, has not been previously submitted, in whole or in part, as part of any other examination.

The information in this syllabus supports the official information in the electronic university registration tool (VVZ–Vorlesungsverzeichnis). In cases of doubt, the official information in the VVZ is decisive.