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Wharton will fast track a course on managing business during a pandemic crisis

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

While the markets are imploding on the news of the coronavirus epidemic and even the bars and liquor stores are closing, the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania is corralling some of its top business professors to offer guidance.

The school is launching a live online course next week titled "Epidemics, National Disasters, and Geopolitics: Managing Global Business and Financial Uncertainty."

Initially, the class, to begin March 25, will be available only to degree-seeking students at Penn. Already the course has attracted 1,200 participants, according to international management professor [Mauro Guillen](#).

Eventually, Wharton will offer a good portion of the curriculum to the rest of the world, Guillen said.

“It’s a huge undertaking,” Guillen said. “We offered something similar after the 2008 financial crisis. But then we had three months to prepare. This time we only have 2½ weeks.” Among the topics: “how do you create incentives so people do the right thing and don’t panic,” he said.

Guillen said outgoing Wharton Dean Geoff Garrett approached him last week with an urgent request to organize top Wharton talent to offer lectures.

“We’re covering every topic we think is relevant from a business or economic perspective,” Guillen said. “The virus has become a global pandemic because we’re such an interconnected society. We’ll be looking at every possible angle.”

Sections of the course will be devoted to “Leading amid Unpredictable Rapidly Changing Events with Contested Facts”; “Financial Market Reactions to the Coronavirus and Disaster Risk”; “Emotional Contagion and Epidemics”; and “U.S.-China Relations after the Trade Wars and the Coronavirus.”



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