

## **PSY 458/558 - Judgment and Decision Making**

**Fall 2013**

**Tue/Thu, 4:00-5:20, 229 MCK**

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### **COURSE CONTENT/OBJECTIVES/PREREQUISITES**

This course examines the psychology of human decision making and judgment. How do we make judgments? What influences our choices? We will cover basic models and strategies of decision making and look at applications of these models in a variety of fields. We will try to integrate the study of judgment and decision-making with its psychological “neighbors,” social and cognitive psychology. We will touch on relative strengths and weaknesses and compare human judgment to various ideals and standards. In addition, we will look at possible ways that performance may be improved.

By the end of the course, you should have a good understanding of some of the major topics of study and how research in this field is conducted. The content of the course is research-based, meaning that the information taught is mostly derived from empirical research in the fields of judgment and decision making and cognitive and social psychology. Thus, you will not only study theories of judgment and decision making, but also study experiments and observations that have been carried out to test and demonstrate these theories. The readings in the reading packet are mostly “primary sources” -- that is to say, reprints of original journal articles. For this reason, Psychology 302 and 303 (Statistical Methods and Research Methods), or their equivalents, are required as prerequisites for this course.

In order to consolidate and reinforce your understanding of the topics in this course, you will be encouraged to look for examples of topics covered in class in the world around you. Take note of your own judgment and decision making and that of other people throughout the term.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. One cumulative paper will be written over the course of the term. At the end of most classes you will be given an essay question that you will answer by the next session and turn it in. A complete version of all answered and edited question will be submitted by the end of the term.
2. Two midterm exams will be given.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Graduate students will be asked to prepare and present a 45 minute power point presentation. If applicable, the graduate student will discuss decision making in the context of their graduate field of study. So for example a student in the marketing program might present on 'consumer choice', while a student in law school might discuss 'legal decision making'. It is the student's responsibility to seek approval for their topic from the instructor at least two weeks prior to the presentation date.

## **GRADING**

Paper: 100 points

Midterm: 2 x 50 points = 100 points

**Participation: 10%**

Attendance and participation: will not be graded formally. However, if your final score ends up to be on the threshold between two grades, attendance and participation will make the difference.

### Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and ***produced exclusively*** for this course. Members of the university community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. It is the official policy of the University of Oregon that all acts of alleged academic dishonesty by students be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs in the Office of Students Life.

If you are ever unsure about whether a behavior constitutes cheating, please ask me or one of the teaching assistants. There is more information about plagiarism at:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

Here is quote from that site:

*Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes.*

All writing assignments will be checked thoroughly with **anti-plagiarism software**. By enrolling in this course you grant the instructor permission to do so.

### **Using Blackboard**

The web site for this course was constructed using "Blackboard" software. This allows the web site to be extensive and interactive. On the web site, you will find general announcements for the class, all documents for the course (including this syllabus), on-line discussions, links to relevant web sites, and more. We hope that this web site will be a useful tool for you in learning the material for this class, and in further exploring topics you find interesting. You can get to the course web site by going to <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>. If you need help logging in or using Blackboard, see <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/local/usingbb/>. Also you can get help starting by going to the library Information Technology Center (ITC) and/or see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/kitc/faq/blackboard.html#help>.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

### **Talking in Class and Other Distractions**

In order to respect the rights of other students, please **do not talk** while I am lecturing. If only 5% of the class talks during class, it is equivalent to the racket generated at a reasonably sized party! Talking makes it hard for other students to hear the lecture. Arriving late, leaving early, personal grooming, physical acts of affection towards other classmates, snapping the pages of *The Emerald* and loud snoring distract me and interfere with my ability to present the material clearly. If you would really prefer to do these activities, please don't come to class (although keep in mind you are responsible for material covered in class). Even if you are not interested in what I am saying, other people in the class may be, and your actions will detract from my ability to provide a good learning experience for them. If I find your behavior extremely disruptive, I

may have to call attention to you to get you to stop or to ask you to leave. Please don't make me do this.

**Turn your cell phone ringers OFF before coming to class.**

Do not even think about taking or making a call during class unless you suspect terrorists have entered the classroom or one of your classmates is dying. Do not receive or send text messages during class. Do not make me ask you to stow your cell phone. Please, if you haven't realized by now, it is rude to be talking/texting while an instructor is teaching, no matter how boring you find the material to be, besides the fact that people are horrendously awful multi-taskers. If I ask you to put away your phone more than once, I may ask you to withdraw from the course or give you a failing grade for the class and ask you not to return. If a phone call is so important that you have to take it during class time, it is important enough to skip class for it – don't come to class if there is a phone call you know you must take (but keep in mind you are responsible for the material you miss in class).

**Classroom "Climate"**

It is my goal (although not always an achievable one) that you feel comfortable and respected – both by me and your peers – in this class. Please let me know if I or other students make you feel uncomfortable; ideally, something can be changed so you will feel more comfortable. If you feel that you or someone else has been the victim of bias in this class, you may consider contacting the Bias Response Team: <http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html>

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Class Date	Topic	Readings
10/1	Introductions/ What is Judgment & Decision Making	
10/3	Dual Process Models	Kahneman "Fast and Slow Thinking" (chapt. 1)
10/8	Theory: How economists think we make decisions Utility Theory	Hastie & Dawes - Rational Choice Chapter 11
10/10	The problem: Framing Effects	Kahneman (2002) LeBoeuf & Shafir (2003) DeMartino(2006)
10/15	Prospect Theory	
10/17	TBD	

10/22	Reality: How we really make decisions <b>Heuristics and Biases</b>	Scout Plous, chapter 10 -13 Kahneman, chapter 11-13 Kahneman & Tversky (1974)
10/24	Availability and Anchoring	Kahnemann, Chapter 11
10/29	Base Rate Neglect	Kahneman & Tversky (1974)
10/31	Randomness and Chance	Plous, chapter 14 Gilovich, Vallone, & Tversky (1985)
11/5	Midterm 1	
11/7	The big dispute: Gigerenzer vs. K &T	Gigerenzer et al. (2008)
11/12	Automatic Processes Judgment and Choice	Watch TED talk “Barry Schwarz”
11/14	Decision Making as a Resource Model	Vohs, Baumeister, et al. (2008) Pocheptsova et al. (2009)
11/19	Decision Making in Life Threatening Situations	Film
11/21	Affect and Decision Making	Slovic, Peters, et al. (2003) Lowenstein (2005)
11/26	Altruistic Decisions: Neuroscience	Weller (2007) Bechara et al. (1997)
<b>11/28</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>	
12/3	Review for Midterm 2	
12/5	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
12/11	Make up	