

PSY 458 - Decision Making

Summer, 2013

M/Tu/W/Th, 8:30-10:20, 301 Condon

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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.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Homework assignments: 1-3 essay questions, twice per week, due Tuesdays and Thursdays

2. Quizzes: You will complete quizzes twice per week (on Blackboard), given on Mondays and Thursdays
3. Summary Paper: One 3-5 page paper summarizing current research involving decision making. Due on Tuesday of Week 3.

GRADING

Exams (2):	40%
Quizzes (6):	20%
Homeworks (7):	20%
Summary Paper:	15%
Participation:	5%

- Exams will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions, completed during class time.
- Homeworks will be short questions or problems that will be answered in an essay format. It is expected that your answers will be 1-1.5 standard page (double-spaced, 12 point font).
- Quizzes will be 5-10 multiple-choice questions administered on blackboard. You will get 2 chances to complete the quiz and receive the higher of your two scores.
- For the Summary Paper, you will find some current research in the field of decision making and summarize the findings in approximately 3-5 double-spaced pages. You will have to use at least 1 peer-reviewed article published within the last 20 years as your main source (excluding any of the assigned readings). After that, you can supplement with more peer-reviewed articles, or other sources (magazine/newspaper articles). The paper will be written in standard APA format.
- This is a small class, and your participation will be valuable. I will make note of when you make contributions during class (asking questions, expressing opinions, etc.) and that will figure into your grade.

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.

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. 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), all quizzes, 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

Cell Phones and Laptops

Please put your cell phone on silent before coming into class. Please also be respectful of the course and the students around you and refrain from using the phone until after class time.

Laptops are great tools to taking notes and looking up information in class. BUT, they are also tremendous distractions. **Multi-tasking is a myth**—if you take a class in cognitive psychology

you will learn this. Please only use your laptops as note-taking tools while in class. Otherwise, it is very distracting for you and the students around you.

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>