

## **PSY 458 – Judgment and Decision Making**

**Spring, 2016**

**T/TH, 4-5:20, 245 Straub Hall**

**Instructor: Marcus Mayorga, M.S.**

**Office: Straub 331**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 10-Noon or by Appt.**

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### **COURSE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES**

This course examines human psychology in judgment and decision making. How do we form judgments? How are values and preferences constructed? How do value and judgement translate or inform our decisions? What factors can influence or bias our decisions? This course will explore both normative (how we should behave) and descriptive (how we actually behave) accounts of decision making. We will also explore how to use decision making research to improve decisions, by reflecting on decision patterns and designing decision environments appropriately.

My goal is that by the end of this course, you will have a good foundational understanding of major decision theories and current state of decision research. I also hope that you will learn more about your own decision making processes and how you can use the current research to “real-world” benefit. This course will request your participation and you will be making several decisions relevant to the course content.

This course is research based and, as such, requires you to use your knowledge from PSY 302 and PSY 303 in interpreting the readings and participating in class. You have basic training as a psychological scientist and this course will require that you “think like a research psychologist”.

### **ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION**

My goal is to provide a learning environment that is adaptive and supportive of varying learning styles. If you have a documented learning barrier and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible. Please request that the counselor from the Accessible Education Center send a letter verifying your learning barrier.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Readings:** The required readings for this course are Rational Choice in an Uncertain World by Reid Hastie and Robyn Dawes. We will read the majority of this book and I think it is an easy read and a great resource. There will also be journal articles that will be available on Canvas which will be more challenging to interpret. There will be required readings for nearly every class. Please complete the readings assigned for the BEFORE coming to class. However, if you are unable to complete the readings, do please come to class and complete them afterward.

**Class participation:** You will be expected to attend class. Some topics will only be covered in class. However, I will not be keeping attendance and will not be grading for participation. There will be opportunities to earn extra credit in class via quizzes and class activities. There will NOT be opportunities

to make up in-class activities or quizzes. So, it is in your best interest to attend if you wish to do well in the course.

**Exams (60% of final grade):** There will be two major exams. These exams will contain both multiple choice and essay questions. Exam questions will come from the lectures, textbook, other assigned readings, and in-class activities. Doing well on these exams will require that you do that readings, come to class, and participate. The final will be conceptually cumulative; you will be applying concepts and information from the first half of the course in the second half. However, there will not be specific questions from the first half of the class on the final.

**Exam Make-ups:** No make-up exams will be given without evidence of a valid excuse, and the final cannot be taken earlier or later than the time listed in the university final exam schedule. If unforeseen circumstances during the term prevent you from taking an exam, notify me immediately.

**Final Project (40% of final grade):** The goal of this project is to provide an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the topics beyond examination. There are three options for this project. Given that this is a course about decision making, you will need to make a decision (by Thursday of Week 2) for which of the three options will be the most successful for you to demonstrate your knowledge. This decision is FINAL (once you have chosen an option you will NOT be able to switch to a different option). I will provide a format for you to declare your choice starting on the first day of class. If you do not explicitly state which option you are choosing, you will be defaulted into Option A.

*Option A:* Research paper. This is a standard APA-style research paper assignment and should be 10-15 pages in length, including references. You will be expected to read several peer reviewed articles and use the articles to produce a coherent paper on a decision making topic of your choice (but I will offer some topic suggestions). You will need to draw upon your PSY 303 lab experience to write a successful paper. The final paper will be due on the Tuesday of Week 9.

*Option B:* Research proposal. This is opportunity for you to choose a topic in the course that interests you and design a psychological experiment(s) to test a hypothesis. You will produce a 6 page project proposal (25% of final grade, draft due Week 6) and a final draft with the experiment materials (15% of final grade; due Week 9).

*Option C:* Mini-papers. This option consist of four, 2-3 page papers that will be assigned and due periodically throughout the term. You will have one week to complete each paper. The catch is that I will decide the topics of the papers and you will not know the topics before they are assigned. Each assignment will make up 10% of your final grade.

#### Grading Summary

Midterm (30%)	75 points
Final Exam (30%)	75 points
Final Project (40%)	100 points
Participation & Quizzes	E.C.

Content schedule (subject to revision):

Week	Date	Topic	Assigned Reading
1	3/29	Introductions	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 1-3
1	3/31	Dual Process Models	<i>Thinking Fast and Slow</i> Chapters 1-4
2	4/5	Anchoring and adjustment	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 4
2	4/7	Encoding accessibility	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 5
3	4/12	Guest Lecture- Paul Slovic	Slovic (2010)
3	4/14	<b>NO CLASS- Reading only</b>	Yates & Tschirhart; Olivola & Shafir (2013)
4	4/19	Heuristics & Biases 1	Byant and Brockway (1997)
4	4/21	Heuristics & Biases 2	Gigerenzer (1991)
5	4/26	Explanations based judgments	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 6
5	4/28	Cause and chance	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 7 Listen to Radiolab segment
6	5/3	EXAM 1	Material up to 4/28
6	5/5	Uncertainty and Risk	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 8; Slovic (1987) <b>OPTN. B PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE</b>
7	5/10	Rationality & Prospect theory	Hastie & Dawes Chapter 11 & 12
7	5/12	Emotion and Decision Making 1:	Rottenstreich & Hsee (2001); Slovic, Finucane, Peters, & MacGregor (2007)
8	5/17	Emotion and Decision Making 2	Slovic (2007)
8	5/19	Lifespan decision making	Peters, Finucane, MacGregor, & Slovic (2000); Jacobs & Klaczynski (2002)
9	5/24	Neuroscience of decision making	Weller, Levin, Shiv, & Bechara (2007); Steinberg (2008) <b>OPTN. A &amp; B PAPER DUE</b>
9	5/26	Social influence & Group decision making*	TBD
10	5/31	Public Policy & Choice Architecture	Dickert,, Västfjäll, Kleber,& Slovic (2015); Thaler, Sunstein, & Balz (2014)
10	6/2	Review session	
11	6/9	FINAL EXAM	12:30pm

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. Please don't cheat or plagiarize. Doing so will result in serious consequences and will waste a lot of people's time & energy.

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/>

A quote from the 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 CANVAS

The web site for this course was constructed using Canvas. On the Canvas page, you will find general announcements for the class, all documents for the course (including this syllabus), on-line quizzes, links to relevant web sites, and more. I 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://canvas.uoregon.edu>

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

Office hours- Please make use of my office hours if you would like clarification or help with the course content or assignments. I am happy to answer questions via email and will do my absolute best to respond in a timely manner.

The Teaching and Learning Center- The final project will require you to write in a manner that is clear and concise. The TLC offers drop in writing tutoring to assist you with this. Go to <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/subjects/writing/> for more information.

Psychology Advising- It is easy to become engrossed in classes and learning and forget that graduation is just around the corner! Visit an advisor to check on your degree progress and explore post-grad options. For hours and information, go to: <http://psychology.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/advising/>