Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.

The syllabus for the course when you enroll may be different.

Use the syllabus provided by your instructor for the most up-to-date information. Please refer to your instructor for more information for the specific requirements for a given semester.

Feel free to contact the Psychology Advising Office for any questions regarding psychology courses either by email (psychadvising@osu.edu) or phone (614.292.5750).

Thank you!
Overview

In this course, we will discuss some “descriptive” psychological models of how people actually make judgments and decisions, as well as some “normative” models of how people should make judgments and decisions. The emphasis will be on empirical research rather than on making you a better decision maker, but I hope you will find some of the material to have significant practical value. Some questions we will address are:

- How do we choose among various options, such as apartments, jobs, or investments?
- How do we make predictions and other judgments?
- Are our judgments and choices rational? What does “rational” mean, anyway?
- Are our judgments and choices prone to systematic biases?
- How can we improve our judgments and decisions?

This course counts toward the Cognitive Science minor. Information regarding the minor and its requirements may be found online at https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/academics/programs.

Objectives

Upon completing this course, students should:

- Understand and be able to think critically about many of the theories and results in the field of judgment and decision making.
- Understand the empirical methods used by psychologists and others to study judgment and decision making.
- Be familiar with some applications of JDM theories and results.
- Have acquired some general, practical skills in judgment and decision making.

Expectations

Things I expect from you

- Respect for the views and backgrounds of everyone in the class, demonstrated through appropriate speech and behavior.
• Doing the work required for the course in a timely manner. For a 3-credit course like this one, that means about 9 hours of work per week: about 3 hours in class (attendance and participation in discussions) and about 6 hours devoted to reading, problem sets, preparing for exams, and other activities.

• Open communication, including asking for assistance if and when you need it.

• Honesty and integrity in completing assignments and exams.

Things you can expect from me

• Respect for you, your situation in an academic environment that is still not back to normal, your perspective, and your contributions to the course.

• Timely and sincere efforts to address your questions or concerns.

• Help in mastering the course material.

• Fairness.

Prerequisites

This course is designed for advanced undergraduates. Some exposure to other content areas in psychology is useful but not necessary. Although the lectures, discussions, and text will not emphasize complex mathematical formulations, some math (e.g., probabilities and algebra) is required. Exposure to experimental design and interpretation is also helpful. For these reasons, students should have taken an introductory statistics course such as Psych 2220 and an introductory research methods course such as Psych 2300.

Required Textbook and Readings


• I will also assign additional articles to read. These will be posted to Carmen as PDF files and are listed at the end of this syllabus.

• Many topics and examples will be covered both in the lectures and in the readings, but some will be covered primarily or only in the lectures and others will be covered primarily or only in the readings.

Grading Policies

*The Big Picture*

• Grades will be determined on the basis of the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem sets</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>25% (could be 20%, 25%, or 30%; see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>25% (could be 20%, 25%, or 30%; see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25% (could be 20%, 25%, or 30%; see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities leading to presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and online activities</td>
<td>3% Extra credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Grades for all components of the course will be converted to percentages and averaged using the weights given above. Your final grade will be computed using the scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≥93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A–</td>
<td>≥90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A–</td>
<td>≥87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>≥83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>≥80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B–</td>
<td>≥77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>≥73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>≥70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C–</td>
<td>≥67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>≥60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If class performance is lower than expected, I may lower these cutoffs at the end of the semester. I will not raise the cutoffs.

Flexible Grading Percentages

• For the two exams and the presentation, the item that you do best on (in percentage terms) will be weighted 30% and the item that you do worst on will be weighted 20%. The other item will be weighted 25%. These weights will be determined separately for each student at the end of the semester. The total is 75% no matter how you slice it. This policy is intended to take a bit of the sting out of one poor performance, but it won’t do much for a string of low scores.

• Carmen cannot deal with the flexible grading scheme just described. I’ll post your grades on Carmen so that you can see them, but don’t trust any final grades that Carmen calculates.

Problem Sets

• There will be six problem sets during the course. These are intended as practice and will often involve calculations. Except for the first problem set, they will posted on Carmen at least a week ahead of time. Often, some of the material required for the problem set will be covered after the problem set becomes available. The anticipated due dates (Wednesdays or Fridays at 11:59 p.m.) are listed in the tentative schedule below.

• Each problem set should be uploaded to Carmen as a single Word or PDF file. Do not submit a separate photo for each page and do not submit a screenshot of a spreadsheet separately from the rest of the assignment.

• Collaboration on problem sets is encouraged, but you should turn in your own work. You can also ask us for help. The only exception is the first problem set, which is a questionnaire that is to be completed individually.

• At a minimum, “turn in your own work” means that you should write or type every answer you submit, in your own words or with your own math. No copying or pasting and no jointly produced files are allowed. It is okay if you write or type your answers in the files provided.

• Problem sets will be graded on a 10-point scale. They will be given equal weight, regardless of their length.

• Late problem sets will incur a 10% penalty if less than 24 hours late, a 20% penalty if 24–48 hours late. No credit will be given after that.

• Your lowest grade on these problem sets will be dropped. If you miss a problem set for a legitimate reason, just count that one as your drop grade.
**Exams**

- Exams will be in class, closed book, and closed notes. Questions will be a mix of multiple-choice, short-answer, and discussion. Some calculations will be required, so bring a calculator (but not a cell phone or a laptop).

- The second exam will focus on material covered in the relevant parts of the course, so they will not be a “cumulative” by design. However, it will be at least somewhat cumulative by necessity (e.g., you shouldn’t forget about decision trees just because they were covered early in the course).

- I am happy to consider written requests for re-grades, if those requests are received within one week of my returning the graded exam. I will re-grade only that portion of the exam specified in the written request.

**Presentations**

- Each student will be required to give a **10-minute** oral presentation in class.

- Students will be assigned to presentation days and times by random lottery. If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to present on a particular day, please let me know as early as possible, so that I can be accommodating.

- Presentations should be submitted to Carmen as a Microsoft PowerPoint file by 9 a.m. on the day of your presentation.

- Presentations must explain at least **two** empirical studies and provide numerical results. This is a minimum requirement designed to discourage completely nonscientific efforts. Presentations should include a list of at least **eight** references, formatted in APA style.

- The quality of slides and their content is important and will affect presentation grades. Quality includes spelling and proofreading, clarity of expression, good sentence or bullet structure, logical organization, clear graphs with legible text, and many other intangibles.

- Additional instructions regarding citations and exact quotations: You MUST use citations when you use the ideas from an article, even if you do not use the original authors’ exact words. If you do use the authors’ exact words, then a simple citation is not enough. In that case, you MUST ALSO put the authors’ words in quotation marks or set off the text in a block quote. You should also provide a page number in addition to the year, as in (Arkes & Blumer, 1985, p. 109). Although using quotations properly can help you avoid plagiarism, a presentation that has lots of quotations strung together with other bits of text is probably not a good presentation. So put the ideas in your own words, and use quotations sparingly, for effect or clarity, if at all. If you have a question about how to cite or quote a source, please ask.

- To ensure that everyone stays on track with their presentation, students will be required to submit two intermediate written assignments:

  1. February 16 (tentative date): A **one-paragraph** description of your proposed topic and a list of **six** research articles that you think might be useful. A “research article” is an article that appears in a scholarly journal or edited volume and either reports new empirical research or reviews previous empirical research. One rule of thumb is that if you can purchase it at a magazine stand, it is not a scholarly journal. *Psychology*
Today is not a scholarly journal, but Psychological Science and the Journal of Behavioral Decision Making are.

The six references should be formatted in APA style (I’ll provide a guide). You do not need to say anything else about the articles at this time, but they should be clearly related to your proposed topic.

2. March 30 (tentative date): A one-page description of your proposed topic and a list of eight research articles that you think might be useful. Relative to the first assignment, the description should reflect additional thought and research into your topic.

The eight references need not be the same ones that were submitted for the first assignment. As before, they should be formatted in APA style. In addition, you should provide, for each article, an annotation indicating how the article will fit into your paper or presentation. Each annotation should be at least two sentences long and should convey more than just the topic or conclusion of the article, which you can get from the abstract. Say how you will use each article (e.g., as background, for key results or corroborating evidence, to suggest a possible application of the results). Before doing this assignment, you should read each of the articles in full and think about how they might fit together. Almost certainly, you will need to read or investigate more than ten articles before completing this assignment.

These two assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale. A 10% penalty will be assessed for each day they are late, up to 10 days (no credit).

- Finally, we will all rate the student presentations at the end of the quarter, using a common set of rating forms. Presentation grades will be an equally weighted combination of my ratings (1/2) and these peer evaluations (1/2). To ensure that peer evaluations are not biased by extreme ratings, I will trim the highest and lowest few ratings before computing the peer average.

- Peer ratings for each day will be collected and graded like a homework assignment. In other words, attendance at presentations is mandatory (if you want the points). The three days of ratings will count as one homework assignment. However, this grade will not be dropped, even if it is your lowest.

Attendance and Online Activities

- On several occasions during the semester, I will take attendance. If we are meeting online, you can type “Hi” or something else in the chat. Being present when attendance is taken will add a small amount to your final average. If you are present on at least 2/3 of the occasions on which I take attendance, you will get full credit. This is a bonus. There is no penalty for not attending. PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL.

- There will be a couple additional activities to provide data for upcoming lectures. The anticipated dates are listed in the tentative schedule below. Completing these activities will add a small amount to your final average. This is a bonus. There is no penalty for not completing the activities.

- In all, you can earn up to 3 percentage points of extra credit.
Exceptions Due to Legitimate Illness, Injury, or Serious Emergency

Students missing an exam or other deadline because of legitimate illness, injury, or serious emergency must do both of the following things:

1. Contact me in person, by email, or by phone (I have voice mail) before the exam or deadline.

2. Provide written documentation of your illness, injury, or emergency from an authoritative source (e.g., a physician’s note, a police report, a funeral announcement).

Remedial actions are at my discretion. Make-up exams are not guaranteed, even if both of the above actions are taken. Make-up exams typically involve different questions and problems than those on the original exam.

Sleeping through an exam is not considered a legitimate excuse.

Compared to exams, the problem sets are relatively small stakes. No make-ups for problem sets will be offered, though you can drop one score. In the case of extreme circumstances having a substantial impact on your ability to complete multiple course components, please contact me as soon as possible. I will do my best to be reasonable and fair.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/cse/.

For good, concise, plain-English advice on how to stay out of academic trouble, see Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity.

Copyright for Instructional Materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environment

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.
Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu.

Students with Disabilities

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university’s request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu; 614-292-3307; VRS (Video Relay Service) 614-429-1334; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue. To ensure fairness to all students, requests for special accommodations will typically not be granted in the absence of SLDS certification.

Mental Health and Stress

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ecs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Health and Safety Requirements

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/), which includes following university mask policies and maintaining a safe physical distance at all times. Non-compliance will be warned first and disciplinary actions will be taken for repeated offenses.
Tentative Course Outline

*Note:* This schedule is tentative. In particular, the dates of the problem sets or even the exams may change. There may also be changes to the list of readings. “H&D #” refers to chapters in the *second edition* of the Hastie and Dawes text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Event</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 11 (T)</td>
<td>Overview of Course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 13 (Th)</td>
<td>Thinking and Deciding</td>
<td>H&amp;D 1 (skip 1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 14 (F)</td>
<td><strong>Problem set 1 due, 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 18 (T)</td>
<td>What is Decision Making?</td>
<td>H&amp;D 2, Arkes &amp; Blumer (1985)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 20 (Th)</td>
<td>A Rational Decision Theory (Subjective Expected Utility Theory)</td>
<td>H&amp;D 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 25 (T)</td>
<td>Challenges to SEU</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 26 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Problem set 2 due, 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 27 (Th)</td>
<td>A Descriptive Decision Theory (Prospect Theory)</td>
<td>H&amp;D 12, Camerer (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 1 (T)</td>
<td>A Descriptive Decision Theory (Prospect Theory, cont.), Experienced Utility</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 3 (Th)</td>
<td>Experienced Utility (cont.)</td>
<td>H&amp;D 9 (read 9.4–9.5), Gilbert &amp; Wilson (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 4 (F)</td>
<td><strong>Problem set 3 due, 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 8 (T)</td>
<td>A General Framework for Judgment (The Lens Model)</td>
<td>H&amp;D 3, Murder trial description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 9 (W)</td>
<td>Extra-credit activity due, 11:59 p.m.</td>
<td>Gigerenzer &amp; Goldstein (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 10 (Th)</td>
<td>Reasoning the Fast and Frugal Way</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 15 (T)</td>
<td>Reasoning the Fast and Frugal Way (cont.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 16 (W)</td>
<td><strong>One-paragraph description of presentation topic with six references due, 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 17 (Th)</td>
<td>Anchoring and Adjustment</td>
<td>H&amp;D 4, Stewart (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 22 (T)</td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>H&amp;D 5 (read 5.1–5.6), Li et al. (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 23 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Problem set 4 due, 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 24 (Th)</td>
<td>Basic Probability Theory, Representativeness</td>
<td>H&amp;D Appendix (read A.1–A.4), H&amp;D 8 (read 8.1–8.4 and 8.6–8.7), H&amp;D 5 (read 5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 1 (T)</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1, in class</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 3 (Th)</td>
<td>Representativeness (cont.), Bayes’ Theorem</td>
<td>H&amp;D 8 (read 8.5 and 8.8–8.10), H&amp;D 5 (read 5.8–5.10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 8 (T)</td>
<td>Bayes’ Theorem (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 9 (W)</td>
<td>Extra-credit activity due, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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</table>
Tentative List of Additional Required Readings

Note: This list may be updated during the course. I may add an article, drop an article, or substitute a different article in place of one that is listed here.


Camerer, C. F. (2000). Prospect theory in the wild: Evidence from the field. In D. Kahneman & A. Tversky (Eds.), Choices, values, and frames (pp. 288–300). New York: Cambridge University Press. Skip the slightly more complicated sections titled “Savings and consumption: Insensitivity to bad news” and “Racetrack betting: The favorite-longshot bias.”


**Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Hal Arkes, Simon Dennis, Dan Gigone, Ian Krajbich, Seth Miller, and Tom Nygren for allowing me to borrow and adapt materials from their courses on Judgment and Decision Making.