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THIS IS A TENTATIVE SYLLABUS, IT MAY
CHANGE PRIOR TO THE START OF THE
SEMESTER

Thinking & Decision Making

Psychology W2235

*"Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than
to be able to decide." – Napoleon Bonaparte*

Jonathan Westfall, Ph.D.
Fall 2011

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 4:10 – 5:25 PM
Schermerhorn 614

Professor:*Jon Westfall**Uris 310G**440.377.4732**jon@jonwestfall.com**(Email is the best for communication as I do not check my phone messages while out of the office)***Office Hours & location:***To Be Announced**Other days and times by appointment.**Feel free to email, stop by, etc...***Teaching Assistants:***To Be Announced***Course Website:***To Be announced.*

Course Philosophy

In many ways, the ways that we make decisions are dependent on factors we seldom consider. This course will discuss how individuals make decisions, with an understanding that this is seldom a proscribed behavior easily codified, but more often a journey of situational factors, individual differences, and slight variations with non-linear effects. Welcome to Thinking & Decision Making!

Textbook & Required Materials

Hardman, David. (2009). *Judgment and Decision Making: Psychological Perspectives*. Wiley-Blackwell.

ISBN: 978-1-4051-2398-3

iClicker Remote (ISBN: 978-0-7167-7939-1)

Instructor Background

I've been teaching for over 10 years, presenting a wide range of information to students (from preparing them to take a certification quiz in computer maintenance and operation to teaching advanced undergraduates a course in my own area, cognition). I strongly believe in open lines of communication between students and faculty, and see my role as more of a facilitator than a simple instructor. I encourage you to feel free to email either myself or the TAs with any questions you may have over lecture material, assignments, or activities.

I also strongly believe that while the instructor has the responsibility of providing information to the student in a concise and effective manner, the student still holds the bulk of responsibility for their own grade. Translation: Come to class, be attentive, and do the required assignments.

Tentative Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule. **The schedule on the course website is updated throughout the semester and should be considered authoritative** in the rare case that a difference between what is below and what is posted online occurs. **AT THIS TIME, REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS HAVE NOT BEEN DETERMINED. ON AVERAGE, ASSUME 1 JOURNAL ARTICLE PER WEEK WILL BE ASSIGNED TO READ.**

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Assigned Reading
1	9/6/2011	Introduction, Class Survey	
	9/8/2011	Rationality	Ch 1
2	9/13/2011	Social Judgment Theory	Ch 2
	9/15/2011	Probabilistic Mental Models	
3	9/20/2011	Representativeness & Availability	Ch 3
	9/22/2011	Support Theory / Judging Conditional Probabilities	
4	9/27/2011	Anchoring & Adjustment	Ch 4
	9/29/2011	Hindsight Bias	
5	10/4/2011	Assessing Evidence & Evaluating Arguments Decision Diary 1 Due.	Ch 5
	10/6/2011	Judgments of Association & Causation, Counterfactual Thinking	Ch 6
6	10/11/2011	First Exam (Covers Chapters 1-5, and readings)	
	10/13/2011	Decision Making under Risk	Ch 7
7	10/18/2011	Decision Making under Uncertainty	
	10/20/2011	Constructed Preferences	Ch 8
8	10/25/2011	Mental Accounting & Emotion and Choice	
	10/27/2011	Confidence and Optimism	Ch 9
9	11/1/2011	Choice over Time	Ch 10
	11/3/2011	Affective Forecasting Decision Diary 2 Due.	
10	11/8/2011	No Class – University Holiday	
	11/10/2011	Dynamic Decision Making	Ch 11
11	11/15/2011	Dynamic Decision Making Cont.	
	11/17/2011	Second Exam (Covers Chapters 6-11, and readings)	
12	11/22/2011	Risk	Ch 12
	11/24/2011	No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!	
13	11/29/2011	Risk (Cont.), Structure and Process of Decision Making in Groups & Teams	Ch 13
	12/1/2011	Techniques, Leadership, & Advice	
14	12/6/2011	Game Theory	Ch 14
	12/8/2011	Coordination Decision Diary 3 Due.	
15	12/13/2011	Intelligence & Dual Systems Theories	Ch 15
	12/15/2011	Self-Insight & Neuroscience Perspectives on Rationality	
16	12/20/2011	Final Exam (Covers Chapters 12-15, and readings): 4:10 – 7 PM	

Material & Grading

You are responsible for all material in the book and lecture *unless otherwise noted*. It is the student's duty to keep up on reading as noted on the course schedule at the beginning of this syllabus.

Grades will be determined by the following:

Participation (Utilizing the Clickers)	28 classes @ 5 points each, 3 classes dropped (25 x 5)	125 points
Midterm Exams	2 Exams @ 50 points each	100 points
Final Exam	75 points	75 points
"Decision Diaries"	3 @ 25 points each	75 points

Exams

Exams will be given in class and will be a mix of multiple choice questions, short answer questions (requiring a paragraph or so to answer) and essay questions (requiring 2-3 paragraphs to answer). Exams are non-cumulative, and cover the portion of material outlined on the tentative schedule. Exams will cover the assigned readings, and thus do not expect to see only material discussed in lecture!

Decision Diaries

Students are expected to complete 3 "decision diaries" which focus on important decisions in their lives and the elements of class material they believe played a roll in each decision. 1 of the 3 diaries are to be completed individually, the other 2 can be completed in groups. Details will be posted on the course web site about each diary assignment. There will be multiple ways to complete each diary, such as written submissions, video submissions, and/or alternate forms of expression as allowed by the instructor. These exercises are meant to be fun ways of applying class information to daily decision making.

Grade Scale

The following grading scale will be used:

367.5 points – 375 points = **A+**

348.75 points – 367.49 points = **A**

337.5 points – 348.749 points = **A-**

326.25 points – 337.499 points = **B+**

311.25 points – 326.249 points = **B**

300 points – 311.249 points = **B-**

288.75 points – 299.99 points = **C+**

273.75 points – 288.749 points = **C**

262.5 points – 273.749 points = **C-**

251.25 points – 262.499 points = **D+**

236.25 points – 251.249 points = **D**

225 points – 236.249 points = **D-**

0 points – 224.99 points = **F**

Grade Policies

- **All Exams must be taken during the proscribed time on the syllabus unless previous arrangements have been made and approved by the instructor.**
- Attendance is *required*. You will be penalized for all unexcused absences past three. Excused absences will receive attendance credit (Excused absences are normally for deaths in the family, illness, religious holiday, or at the instructor's discretion. You will be asked to provide documentation). You may notify me through email (be sure that I reply), phone message, or in writing of an unavoidable absence. You will receive 5 points for each day you attend the full class period (or are excused), or 2 points for any day you arrive more than 5 minutes late, or leave before the instructor dismisses class. Additionally, any evidence suggesting that a student is signing in another non-present student will result in both students losing attendance points for the given day.
- Most work, with the exception of the exams, will be submitted through the course website. Therefore it is vital to either have a working computer or plan time to use computers provided by the University throughout the open computer labs on campus.
- Aside from announced extra credit opportunities, extra credit is NOT available. **Do not ask for "special" extra credit to make up for a bad grade.** Instead ask for ways to improve your grade on the next exam or assignment. Extra credit may be available at some point. Check the website for details throughout the semester.
- Assignments are due on the dates in this syllabus or the online calendar. If, for whatever reason, I forget to remind students that an assignment is due the next class, the due date still stands!

General Policies

Tape Recording Policy

It is the policy of this instructor to prohibit all recordings of this class unless permission is secured in advance. If you wish to record the lectures, please make arrangements with the instructor before or after class privately. The Instructor reserves the right to record lectures for personal use.

Original Work Policy

It is the policy of this instructor to require all students submit original work. Plagiarizing, or claiming credit for another's work, is unacceptable and constitutes academic dishonesty. Working in groups on assignments that do not allow group work also constitutes academic dishonesty. Be sure to keep sources for all research assignments and be able to provide them to the instructor upon request. Should the originality of an assignment be questioned and original sources not provided to the instructor or not available for any reason, an alternate assignment may be given in place of the original assignment **or the student may receive a grade of zero for the assignment at the instructor's discretion. Continued enrollment indicates assent to this policy.**

Non-Hostile Learning Environment Policy

It is the policy of this instructor to maintain a productive, non-hostile learning environment. Some subjects discussed in class (i.e. controversial topics, personal issues, etc..) have had the ability of turning a mild-mannered student into a very hostile and aggressive debater. It is not my job to act as defendant by proxy for Sigmund Freud, James Watson, B.F. Skinner, or any other person in the field you wish to attack. Nor am I currently, or have ever been, personally related to Satan. Therefore, if useful debate degrades to confrontation and/or disruption to class activity, the instructor may ask a student to leave the class meeting.

Respect for the Lecture Policy

It is the policy of the instructor that all students attending lecture pay attention. ***If a student is engaged in activities beyond the scope of this course (e.g. using a cell phone or conversing with others), the instructor may ask that student to leave WITHOUT warning. Attendance points for that day will be forfeited.*** Nothing annoys me more than to see students disinterested in class. If you don't want to be here, consider this class a waste of your time, or generally just want the grade (not the knowledge) then leave now.

Cellular Phones / PDAs / Pagers / MP3 Players / Carrier Pigeons

Strangely enough, these things ringing don't tend to annoy me too much. However, be prepared for me to call attention to you if they do go off, in a joking fashion. It may be best, therefore, for you to silence these ringing and beeping monsters before class (Of course, if you're waiting on important news, use your own good judgment). Student use of a cell phone while in class for any reason is unacceptable. If you must take a call, get up and leave the room. As long as you return or explain the urgency of the call, attendance points will not be forfeited.

Disclaimer & Copyright

This syllabus is subject to change due to circumstances beyond the instructor's control, despite his best efforts to prevent such changes. Illness, car problems, alien abduction, sudden spontaneous combustion, and other acts of God/Allah/Vishnu/Ahura Mazda/Leprechauns/Metro-North/etc.. may contribute to dates changing, assignments changing, etc... In the event that I cannot come to class, I will attempt to secure a substitute. If finding a sub is unsuccessful, I will try to notify you via phone or email. The easiest way for me to contact students is through e-mail and/or the course website. Therefore, it is a good idea to check it frequently to make sure you are aware of what is going on!

All textual materials distributed in class are to be assumed to be original works of the instructor except where other copyright notice exists. The exception to this are PowerPoint slides, which are generally provided by the publisher (and hence under copyright) but modified by the instructor.