

# Columbia University

## PSYCH 2235 Thinking and Decision Making Fall 2006

**Meeting Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:40-3:55 pm  
**Room:** 501 Schermerhorn

***Instructor:***

Elke Weber

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 9-10 and by appointment  
419 Schermerhorn Hall (4-9889 and 4-4427)  
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***Teaching Assistants:***

Kerry Milch

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 4-5 and by appointment  
355D Schermerhorn (4-5309)  
[kmilch@psych.columbia.edu](mailto:kmilch@psych.columbia.edu)

Jonathan Rotner

**Office Hours:** TBA  
**Room:** TBA

## Course Requirements and Grading

***Textbook and Other Readings:***

Plous, S. (1993). *The Psychology of Judgment and Decision Making*. McGraw Hill (available at the University Bookstore)

Selected articles and book chapters listed below (on reserve in Psychology Library and electronically at <https://courseworks.columbia.edu/>)

***Grades:***

Your course grade will be based on a midterm exam (Oct. 19; 25%), a final exam (50%), and a decision diary (25%).

***Decision Diary:***

In the first week of the course, I will introduce you to a range of qualitatively different ways in which people have been found to make decisions. From then on and throughout the course, I want you to become more aware of *how* you make decisions and how those decisions turn out. To encourage you to pay attention to your own decision making, I will ask you to reflect in writing on three (relatively) major decisions during the course of the semester. Each analysis will be relatively short (2-3 pages). Each should illustrate a different decision mode used by you to reach your decision. The three entries are due by the last day of September, October, and November, respectively, and should be submitted by email to Kerry Milch ([kmilch@psych.columbia.edu](mailto:kmilch@psych.columbia.edu)).

# Course Topics and Reading Assignments

## Week 1:

### Introduction and Course Overview

Plous, Chs. 1-4

Baron, J. (2000), *Thinking and Decision Making*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Ch. 3: “Good thinking: The nature of rationality”

## Weeks 2-4:

### Normative Theories of Judgment and Choice

Plous, Chs. 7-8

Baron, Ch 10: “Normative theory of choice”

## Weeks 5-6:

### Descriptive Theories of Judgment

Plous, Chs.10-14

Baron, parts of Ch. 15: “Quantitative judgment”

Fischhoff, B., Gonzalez, R. M., Lerner, J. S., & Small, D. A. (2005). Evolving judgments of terror risks: Foresight, hindsight, and emotion. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 11, 124-139.

## Weeks 7-9:

### Descriptive Theories of Choice

Plous, Chs. 5-6, 9

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1981). The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science*, 211, 453-458.

Thaler, R. (1992). Preference reversals. Chapter 7 in *The Winner's Curse: Paradoxes and Anomalies of Economic Life*. New York: Free Press.

McNeil, B. J., Pauker, S. G., Sox, H. C., & Tversky, A. (1982). On the elicitation of preferences for alternative therapies. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 306, 1259-1262.

## Weeks 9-11:

### The Social Side of Judgment and Decision Making

Plous, Chs. 16-20

Cialdini, Robert B (1998), *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, New York: Quill Ch. 5, “Liking: The Friendly Thief”

## Weeks 12-14:

### Social Dilemmas and Games

McMillan, J. (1992). *Games, Strategies, and Managers*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chs. 1-3

Baron, Ch. 18: “Social Dilemmas”

Plous, Ch. 21

- Dawes, R. M. & Thaler, R. H. (1988). Anomalies: Cooperation. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2, 187-197.
- Hardin, G. R. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 1243-1248.