

# Columbia University

## PSYCH 2235 Thinking and Decision Making Fall 2010

**Meeting Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:35-11:50 pm  
**Room:** 501 or 614 Schermerhorn (TBA)

***Instructor:***  
Elke Weber

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 9-10am and by appointment  
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***Teaching Assistants:***

**Steen Sehnert**      **Office Hours:** Mondays, 12:30 – 2:30 pm  
Schermerhorn 329  
[scs2134@columbia.edu](mailto:scs2134@columbia.edu)

**Lee Carlin**      **Office Hours:** TBA  
Schermerhorn TBA  
[Lec2126@columbia.edu](mailto:Lec2126@columbia.edu)

## Course Requirements and Grading

### ***Textbook and Other Readings:***

Hardman, D. Judgment and Decision Making: Psychological Perspectives. BPS Blackwell (available at the University Bookstore)

Selected articles and book chapters listed below and posted on <https://courseworks.columbia.edu/>

### ***Grades:***

Your course grade will be based on a midterm exam (Oct. 19; 25%), a final exam (40%), and three short assignments (30%).

### ***Assignments:***

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 (no longer than 2-3 single-spaced pages). A more detailed assignment will spell out which points you should cover and that you should try to analyze decisions from different domains, with at least two of them having some environmental implications. The three entries are due by the last day of September, October, and November, respectively, and should be submitted by email to Steen Sehnert ([scs2134@columbia.edu](mailto:scs2134@columbia.edu)).

# Course Topics and Reading Assignments

## Week 1:

### Introduction and Course Overview

Hardman, Chs. 1, 15

Weber, E. U. & Johnson, E. J. (2009). Mindful judgment and decision making. Annual Review of Psychology, *60*, 53-86.

## Weeks 2-3:

### Normative Theories of Judgment and Choice

Hardman, Ch. 2

Baron, Ch 10: "Normative theory of choice"

## Weeks 4-5:

### Descriptive Theories of Judgment

Hardman, Chs.3-6, 9 (overconfidence), 12

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 5-7:

### Descriptive Theories of Choice

Hardman, Chs. 7, 8, 10

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

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.

Weber, E. U., Johnson, E. J., Milch, K., Chang, H., Brodscholl, J., & Goldstein, D. (2007). Asymmetric discounting in intertemporal choice: A query theory account. Psychological Science, *18*, 516-523.

## Weeks 8-11:

### The Social Side of Judgment and Decision Making

Hardman, Chs. 12, 13

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*. Oxford U. Press, Chs. 1-3.

Hardman, Ch. 14

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.