

course announcement
Spring Term, 2009

Constructed Choice Theories: Application of Behavioral Economics to Local and National Issues

a special section of **PSYC W 4285**
Multidisciplinary Approaches
to Human Decision Making

David H. Krantz
Thursdays, 10:10 – 12:30, 405 Schermerhorn

In this seminar we first study the concept of “constructed choice” and a theory of human decision making based on the concepts of **goal** and **plan**. We then consider how this and perhaps other behavioral economics theories can be used to analyze and possibly to guide choices with respect to controversial issues that have been debated in national and/or local contexts recently.

Session 1 presents an overview of behavioral data, theory, and some issues that could be considered in later sessions. Session 2 reviews the laboratory and real-world data that led Paul Slovic (and others) to the concept of constructed choice by 1995. Session 3 reviews the goal/plan theory of constructed choice (Krantz & Kunreuther, 2007). Session 4 discusses how goals and plans can be used to analyze some environmental policy issues. In Session 5 (or earlier) we will focus on possible projects (to be completed individually or by teams) in which environmental and other policy issues will be analyzed.

I am open to consideration of any local, national, or international dilemma. The goal of the seminar is to investigate to what extent analysis of human decision processes can help in solving policy dilemmas. Analysis of decision processes can be based on a variety of concepts from the social sciences; the goal/plan theory may or may not be useful for any particular dilemma.

Sessions 6 through 12 will be largely student-led. Most likely, Sessions 6 to 8 will be devoted to preliminary reports and difficulties encountered, while Sessions 9 to 12 will be largely devoted to presentations of individual or team projects.