MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO HUMAN DECISION MAKING

Special topic:
Environmental Decision Making

Thursdays 4:10-6:30

Instructors:
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Office Hours: by e-mail appointment

Course Description:
This weekly seminar is not a “course” as such, but a discussion forum for postdocs, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates who are willing and able to contribute what they know about judgment and choice processes to the topic of environmentally-relevant decision making. The prerequisites stated below will be strictly enforced. We will jointly generate answers to the following list of questions: What are aspects of environmental decision making that distinguish it from decisions in other domains? What special challenges are posed by environmental decisions, and how can they be met? What do different disciplines, including psychology, ecology, economics, geography, history, environmental engineering, operations research, law, political science, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and neuroscience have to contribute to our understanding of environmental decision making, both from a descriptive and a prescriptive perspective?

We will jointly design a more specific plan for the course during our first meeting on January 21. I suspect that quite a few of our readings to be discussed will come from the edited volume “The Construction of Preference” by Lichtenstein and Slovic (2006). However, one of our joint objectives will be to come up with a reading list that will draw on the multiple disciplines listed above. (A fairly broad reading list in the field of judgment and decision making is being posted separately; it is not a reading list for this seminar, but some items may provide useful background.)
Our meetings will take several forms, including short introductions to topic areas by members of the seminar (Krantz, Weber, or advanced student volunteers), discussions of mutually agreed upon course readings, and occasional guest lectures that are part of the Center for Decision Science (CDS) Speaker Series.

**Prerequisites:**
PSYC 1490 or 2235 and permission of both instructors.

**Course Requirements:**
Graduate students and advanced undergraduates can register for 1-3 points, for repeated credit in different semesters, with the permission of the instructors. Everybody is expected to do any assigned readings and to participate in the general discussion during and following each topic presentation.

Students registered are also required to discuss a reading or research project with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and to turn in a final paper on their project, the scope of which will be proportionate to the number of credit points (3-page paper for 1 point, 6-page paper for 2 points, 9-page paper for 3 points). An accompanying document pages suggest some background reading as well as references to a subset of specific topics, but neither the reading list nor the topic list is in any way exhaustive. They are reference materials, not required readings.
Columbia University
PSYC G9180 or 4285y
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Background Readings on Judgment and Decision Making

General Background Books


Book Collections of JDM/BDT Papers


**Readings on Selected Specific Topics**

**History of JDM and BDT**


**Expected Utility, Prospect Theory, and Rank-Dependent Utility Theory**


**Constructive Preference**


**Utility Elicitation and Contingent Valuation**


**Confidence and Overconfidence in Judgments and Decisions**

Plous-book, Chapter 19


**Motivation and Goals in Decision Making**


**Recognition- and Categorization-Based Decision Making**

March-book, Chapter 2: Rule following.


**Reason-based and Explanation-based Decision Making**


Baron-book, Ch. 19, Reason-based choice.


**Emotions in Decision Making**


**Individual and Cultural Differences in Decision Making**


**Contingent Valuation**


**Impression Formation**


