Decisions & Judgment

PSY4930: Special Topics in Psychology
Spring 2023, Class # 17320, Section 23FD

Meetings:	Monday	8:30-10:25 AM	LIT 0201
	Wednesday	9:35-10:25 AM	NZH 0112
	(Zoom ID: 966 7401 4304, Passcode on Canvas)		
Instructor:	Dr. Peter Kvam		
Office:	Psychology 286 / Zoom ID: 850 352 1818		
Office hours:	Wednesday 8:30 - 9:30 AM or by appointment		
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TA:
Email:

Course Description

This course explores how people make decisions and how we study the psychological processes underlying their choices and judgments. The first part of the course will cover traditional theories of choice and how we "should" make decisions and judgments, as well as the mental shortcuts (heuristics) and biases that lead us astray. The second part will examine how we use experiences and affective information to learn to make better choices over time as well as the cognitive processes that are affected in different disorders and how they affect decisions. The final part of the course will examine social and strategic decisions, such as voting, as well as the neural underpinnings of these decision processes. Students will read primary source articles (provided) to learn about the various sources of experimental data used to study decision processes and how researchers use models to predict and explain the choices that people make.

Objectives

The goal of this class is to provide a background in the theory and practice of behavioral judgment and decision-making research, cover experimental research methods used to study cognition, and provide insights and tools that students can use to improve their own decisions. Students will also explore how work in this area connects to important social issues like voting and the psychology of substance use.

HyFlex Guidance

This course will be offered as both in-person and online (HyFlex), meaning that students may choose to attend online and/or in-person this semester. However, if you choose to participate online, you will still need to use the iClicker system or post "before & after" questions (see below) to obtain attendance credit.

Class Structure

We do not do any high-stakes exams in this course. Instead, your grade will be based on performance across 12 (roughly weekly) quizzes, 6 homework assignments, 6 activities,you're your participation in the course.

Quizzes will be administered weekly starting in Week 3 of the course, and be based on the content covered over the previous 2 weeks of the course. Quizzes will be open-book / open-note, but you will have only 25 minutes to complete each one from the time you start. Each quiz will be due at 9 AM on Monday morning, and made available 1 day prior to this due date. **The first 30 minutes of class time on Mondays (8:30-9:00AM) will be reserved for completing the quizzes and answering any clarification questions you have about the quizzes.**

Homework assignments and activities will be due by 11:59 PM Eastern on the specified due date.

Participation can be completed through (a combination of) two methods. The first is regular use of the iClicker system during class: link to iClicker system. We will be using this for interactive questions and polls (since this is a decision-making class, many will take the form of opinion / preference questions like "would you prefer A or B?"). Please make sure you have the software installed before the second week of class begins.

Alternatively, or in combination with the iClicker questions, you may also participate in class by answering discussion questions for each class. Each class will be centered around a "big question" – such as *What makes a decision good?* or *What does it mean to decide rationally*? You will respond to these questions during the semester, making a "before" (prior to class, what do you think?) and "after" (after that class, what do you think?) response to each one. These can be entered in the Discussion tab on Canvas.

In total, to earn full credit for participation, you should **have entered iClicker responses or written before & after questions for a total of 24 classes** before the end of the semester.

Each of these components of the course will be described in much greater detail on Canvas in the Assignments and Quizzes sections.

Grading

Grades will be determined based on completion of quizzes, assignments, and participation in class polls and activities. This is the breakdown of the contributions:

        Canvas quizzes: 40%
                Weekly quizzes (due Tuesdays @ 9AM Eastern) [12]   Each 4%
                    • Lowest 2 quiz scores automatically dropped
        Homework & activities: 36%
                Homework #1-6 [6]   Each 3%
                Taming Uncertainty (TU) Activities #1-6 [6]   Each 3%
        Participation: 24%

iClicker polls & questions (attendance)
Before & after discussion questions   Each 1%

Assignment of grade points will follow the standard definitions laid out by UF:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

Letter grading will follow this scale:

93-100%	**A**	**73-76.9%**	**C**
90-92.9%	**A-**	**70-72.9%**	**C-**
87-89.9%	**B+**	**67-69.9%**	**D+**
83-86.9%	**B**	**63-66.9%**	**D**
80-82.9%	**B-**	**60-63.9%**	**D-**
77-79.9%	**C+**	**0-59.9%**	**E**

Absences

The lowest 2 quiz scores will be automatically dropped – allowing students some flexibility for unplanned sickness, travel, or other events interfering with their availability. There are also only 24 attendance points required for approximately 29 class meeting days, meaning that you have some flexibility if you are not able to attend (iClicker) or complete before & after questions for some planned class meetings.

In addition, there are several acceptable reasons for missing class that will result in an excused attendance for the corresponding day(s). In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competitions, or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) will be excused. Other reasons also may be approved by the instructor.

Respect and non-discrimination

Respect for fellow students and instructors is expected of all class attendees. Intentionally disruptive or disrespectful conduct affecting other students may result in removal from the class session or from the course altogether.

Sexual Harassment. Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and a violation of state and federal laws as well as of the policies and regulations of the university. All UF employees and students

must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy which can be found here: https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/. Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy. As mandatory reporters, university employees (e.g., administrators, managers, supervisors, faculty, teaching assistants, staff) are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF's Title IX coordinator. You can also complete a Sexual Harassment Complaint Form (Title IX) here: https://titleix.ufl.edu/title-ix-complaint-form/.

Accommodation for Disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, https://disability.ufl.edu/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Other notes

There will be some math involved in this course, including basic ideas related to probability and functions. The quizzes may be difficult and require students to invest a significant amount of time outside of class in order to understand the material and perform well in the class. To assist with studying, there will be additional readings published on Canvas for each class, and the recordings of each lecture will be uploaded after each class. The instructor will also be available during office hours and by appointment to answer questions and assist in understanding the material, but cannot guarantee that this will result in a satisfactory grade.

Studying together is permitted, but all assignments turned in must be original and written in your own words. The University and instructors reserve the right to penalize any student who is guilty of academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, collusion, cheating, or discrimination or harassment in study groups.

In-class Recording

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to and for enrolled students who choose to attend online. Students who participate online with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Honor Pledge

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Course feedback

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Course schedule

Week	Topic	Assignment
1	(1/9) Course overview, introduction (1/11) Goals, utilities, and preferences	None – read the syllabus Work on "before" questions
2	**(1/16) No class – MLK Day** (1/18) Probabilities & risks	**None – MLK Day** Homework #1: A bad decision
3	(1/23) Gains & losses (1/25) Prospect theory	Quiz #1 TU Activity #1: Chapter 8
4	(1/30) Heuristics & biases II (2/1) Bounded rationality	Quiz #2 Homework # 2: Falsifying a theory
5	(2/6) Fast & Frugal heuristics (2/8) From heuristics to cognition	Quiz #3 TU Activity #2: Chapter 2
6	(2/13) Decisions from experience (2/15) Learning in decision-making	Quiz #4 TU Activity #3: Chapter 7-1
7	(2/20) Memory & confidence (2/22) Delays & impulsivity	Quiz #5 TU Activity #4: Chapter 9
8	(2/27) Emotion (3/1) Neuropsychiatry	Quiz #6 Homework #3: Personality
9	(3/6) Disordered decision making (3/8) Competition & selection	Quiz #7 Homework #4: Behavior
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS 3/13 OR 3/15		
10	(3/20) Strategic decision-making (3/22) Game theory & social dilemmas	**No Quiz** TU Activity #5: Chapter 12 OR 16
11	(3/27) Wisdom of the crowd (4/29) Judgments in context	Quiz #8 TU Activity #6: Chapter 13
12	(4/3) Multi-alternative choice (I) (4/5) Multi-alternative choice (II)	Quiz #9 Homework #5: Voting
13	(4/10) Voting (4/12) Consumer choice	Quiz #10 Homework #6
14	(4/17) Pricing & neuroeconomics (4/19) Unsolved mysteries	Quiz #11 Deadline for outstanding homework
15	(4/24) Career development **(4/26) Reading day – no class**	Quiz #12 Deadline for before & after Qs
16	(5/1) Grades finalized (11:59 PM)	**ALL** outstanding assignments must be turned in by this time

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR. PLEASE CHECK THE COURSE WEBSITE FOR UPDATED INFORMATION AND CURRENT VERSION.