The main objective of this course is to help students explore and understand the basic theories and research findings in the field of judgment and decision making. Another objective is to help students improve their judgments and decisions. The course revolves around how we make judgments and decisions consciously and unconsciously. It also uncovers the debate between economists -- who believe that humans are rational and are able to make sound and perfect judgments and decisions -- and psychologists who find that humans are prone to a big basket of cognitive errors/biases that, under certain circumstances, makes them irrational judges and decision makers. Some sample topics include the role --in judgment and decision making-- of cognitive biases and heuristics, covariation and causation, and overconfidence/optimism.

Course Text


Course Format

Tuesdays: lectures and student participation

Thursdays: lectures and student participation

Course Assignment: small-scale project

One goal of this course is to help students investigate a topic in judgment and decision making. An exciting starting point to attain this goal is to do a small-scale empirical study and write it up. There are many interesting topics to choose from. As we cover various chapters of the textbook, you will be able to decide what you prefer to work on. The beauty of the research in judgment and decision making is its simplicity. You can conduct an experiment in a single one-hour session with a few participants --and equipped with only one or two simple questions! That’s it. After doing your study, you will write your masterpiece up and submit it to Blackboard. The paper is expected to
contain at least 1500 words, excluding the references. The report will consist of five main parts including a) Abstract and Introduction, b) Method, c) Results, d) Discussion, and e) References and Appendices. Each part will be assigned 4 points (4% of the final grade). So this assignment counts 20 points (20%) towards the final grade. The deadline for submitting the paper to Blackboard will be November 24, 2015. During the first weeks of the semester, I will talk about the assignment at length. You are also welcome to come see me and/or email me for consultation and discussion.

Quizzes and Exams

You will take two random unannounced quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam throughout the semester (see Course Assessment below). The quizzes and exams consist of multiple-choice items. The exams dates are specified in the course timetable (see below). Each quiz begins at 12 and takes 15-20 minutes to finish. Note that each question on the quizzes and exams counts one percent towards the final grade. Also, please keep in mind that the possibility of a quiz or exam makeup is zero. If you, for some reason, couldn’t attend a quiz or exam, let me know to deal with it.

Course Assessment

1. Quiz 1 5%
2. Quiz 2 5%
3. Midterm exam 25%
4. Final exam 25%
5. Small-scale project paper 20%
6. In-class activities 20%

Grading Scale

90% - 100% = A
80% - 89.9% = B
70% - 79.9% = C
60% - 69.9% = D
00% - 59.9% = F

Class Attendance and Participation

Class attendance is expected because you can learn better when you are physically present. Also, there will be two random unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Missing a quiz means losing an influential portion of the final grade.

Class participation is important and has its own points as shown below. Class participation involves two parts: Part 1) Showing such behaviors and attitudes as active listening to the lectures and other students, giving opinion during class discussions, asking questions, and being respectful to others and Part 2) Taking part in an activity I call “In a Cool Huddle”. In this
activity, students are expected to discuss some topics in groups of 4 and report the results of their discussions at the end of the class sessions.

**Classroom Behavior**

Please turn off your cell phone on arrival. Don’t talk when others are talking. If you want to ask a question or make a comment, raise your hand and try not to interrupt others as they speak. Don’t use your computer for irrelevant in-class activities such as emailing, visiting a social network profile, playing games, watching videos, listening to music and so on. These activities prevent you from focusing on lectures and other class engagements and may distract other students.

**Disability**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

**Academic Conduct, Discipline, and Integrity**

It is assumed that students are implicitly aware of the principles of academic conduct, discipline, and integrity. But having an explicit knowledge of the principles will be highly beneficial for anybody working within the realm of academia. The following link provides a wide-range information about academic conduct and discipline at UTEP. Please read the file carefully and enthusiastically:

http://admin.utep.edu/LinkClick.aspx?link=HOOP-Section+II.pdf&tabid=30181&mid=63285

**Course Timetable**

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**Week 1**

August 24: Introduction and Chapter 1  
August 26: Chapter 1

**Week 2**

August 31: Chapter 2  
September 2: Chapter 2

**Week 3**
**September 7:** No classes

September 9: Chapter 3

Week 4

September 14: Chapter 3

September 16: Chapter 4

Week 5

September 21: Chapter 4

September 23: Chapter 5

Week 6

September 28: Chapter 5

September 30: Chapter 6

Week 7

**October 5: Midterm Exam**

October 7: Chapter 6

Week 8

October 12: Chapter 7

October 14: Chapter 7

Week 9

October 19: Chapter 8

October 21: Chapter 8

Week 10

October 26: Chapter 9

October 28: Chapter 9

Week 11
November 2: Chapter 10
November 4: Chapter 10

Week 12
November 9: Chapter 12
November 11: Chapter 12

Week 13
November 16: Chapter 13
November 18: Chapter 13

Week 14
November 23: Chapter 14
November 25: Chapter 14

Week 15
November 30: Chapter 15
December 2: Chapter 15

December 11: Final Exam at 1 pm – 3:45 pm

This syllabus is subject to change.