Course Objectives and Description

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

Mondays: lectures and student participation

Wednesdays: 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. So this assignment counts 20 points (20%) towards the final grade. The deadline for submitting the paper to Blackboard will be **May 2, 2016**. 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  
10%
2. Quiz 2  
10%
3. Midterm exam  
20%
4. Final exam  
20%
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 and Lecture Topic

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Week 1

January 18: No classes

January 20: Chapter 1: Judgments, Decisions, and Rationality

Week 2

January 25: Chapter 1: Judgments, Decisions, and Rationality

Week 3

February 1: Chapter 2: The Nature and Analysis of Judgment

February 3: Chapter 3: Judging Probability and Frequency

Week 4

February 8: Chapter 3: Judging Probability and Frequency

February 10: Chapter 4: Judgmental Distortions: The Anchoring-and-Adjustment Heuristic and Hindsight Bias

Week 5

February 15: Chapter 4: Judgmental Distortions: The Anchoring-and-Adjustment Heuristic and Hindsight Bias

February 17: No classes

Week 6

February 22: Chapter 5: Assessing Evidence and Evaluating Arguments

February 24: Chapter 5: Assessing Evidence and Evaluating Arguments

Week 7

February 29: Midterm Exam

March 2: Chapter 6: Covariation, Causation, and Counterfactual Thinking

March 7: Spring Break

March 9: Spring Break

Week 8

March 14: Chapter 6: Covariation, Causation, and Counterfactual Thinking

March 16: Chapter 7: Decision Making under Risk and Uncertainty

Week 9

March 21: Chapter 7: Decision Making under Risk and Uncertainty

March 23: Chapter 8: Preference and Choice
Week 10

March 28: Chapter 8: Preference and Choice

March 30: Chapter 9: Confidence and Optimism

Week 11

April 4: Chapter 9: Confidence and Optimism

April 6: Chapter 10: Judgment and Choice over Time

Week 12

April 11: Chapter 10: Judgment and Choice over Time

April 13: Chapter 12: Risk

Week 13

April 18: Chapter 12: Risk

April 20: Chapter 13: Decision Making in Groups and Teams

Week 14

April 25: Chapter 13: Decision Making in Groups and Teams

April 27: Chapter 14: Cooperation and Coordination

Week 15

May 2: Chapter 14: Cooperation and Coordination

May 4: Chapter 15: Intuition, Reflective Thinking, and the Brain

May 13: Final Exam at 1 pm – 3:45 pm

This syllabus is subject to change.