

Psychology 343 Judgement and Decision-Making, Winter 2020

Basics:

Classroom: BioSci 1103

Hours: Tuesday 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM; Thursday 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Instructor: David Hauser (he/him)

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TAs:

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Office hours: by appointment

Required Texts:

Predictably Irrational by Dan Ariely (Revised and Expanded Edition, First Harper Perennial Edition published 2010)

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman (Anchor Canada Edition, published 2013)
(Before you ask – No, I do not know whether old versions of the textbook are “OK”. I am using the versions described above. If you wish to use an older version of these books, you are responsible for any discrepancies in content).

Course Overview:

This course is focused upon classic and current issues judgment and decision-making. We will draw upon and compare perspectives from cognitive and social psychology as well as behavioral economics. Many of the topics should help students improve the quality of their own decisions. Assignments will apply topics in the course to students’ everyday lives, helping students be aware of and avoid common inferential errors and systematic biases in their own decision making as well as improve their ability to predict and influence the behavior of others.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, a successful student should be able to:

1. Understand and evaluate major constructs in judgment and decision making, such as rationality, prospect theory, overconfidence, and incidental influences (midterm & final)
2. Evaluate how these constructs intersect (midterm & final)
3. Apply these constructs to their daily lives to become more wise decision-makers (paper 2)
4. Interpret new research findings in this field (paper 1)

Grading Scheme & Grading Method:

- Paper 1 – 10%
- Paper 2 – 10%

- Midterm – 30% or 50%
- Final – 50% or 30%

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Please note that there will be no “rounding up” of final grades (as in, a final percentage of 79.6 will receive a B+ and not an A-). The logic is as follows: to treat all students equally, whatever points I add to one student’s grade I must also add to all students’ grades. So, if I bump up a 79.6 to an A-, I effectively add .4 to that student’s grade, which I must then add to all students’ grades. After that, someone else will be on the cusp, and bumping them will put someone else on the cusp, etc, etc. Rinse and repeat and everyone has A+s. For these reasons, final grades receive no rounding up.

Assignment details:

Midterm and final exams

There will be two exams. These exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm will include material covered in the first half of the term while the final will concentrate on material covered in the second half. The emphasis of exam questions will be on material covered in lecture but some questions will be drawn exclusively from the readings. The exams will be weighted such that your best exam mark will count for 50% of the total course mark and your lowest exam mark will count for 30% of the total course mark. It is expected that students will write both exams. Students receiving permission to write a deferred midterm or final exam will be expected to do so during one of the Psychology Department’s centrally-administered deferred exam dates (usually on a weekend within a week or two of the exam). Requests for individualized deferred exam dates cannot be accommodated.

Location and Timing of Exams

The midterm will occur February 11th.

As noted in Academic Regulation 8.2.1, “the final examination in any class offered in a term or session (including Summer Term) must be written on the campus on which it was taken, at the end of the appropriate term or session at the time scheduled by the Examinations Office.” The exam period is listed in the key dates prior to the start of the academic year in the Faculty of Arts and Science Academic Calendar and on the Office of the University Registrar’s webpage. A detailed exam schedule for the Fall Term is posted before the Thanksgiving holiday; for the Winter Term it is posted the Friday before Reading Week, and for the Summer Term, the window of dates is noted on the Arts and Science Online syllabus prior to the start of the course. Students should delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted. Exams will not be moved or deferred to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans, or flight reservations.

Papers

There will be two paper assignments for this course, each worth 10% of the course mark. Both assignments will stress application of principles covered in lecture and the readings to understanding judgment and decision-making in student’s everyday lives. Homework assignments will be posted in onQ at least 3 weeks prior to their due date and will be submitted via onQ. If you wish to request a regrade of a paper assignment, please provide a compelling reason (or reasons) why you think your mark should be changed. As examples, “I lost points for this statement, but this study (citation) suggests it is correct” is a compelling reason while “I think my paper deserves a better grade than it got” is not a compelling reason.

Diversity and Inclusion

In an ideal world, science would be objective. However, much of science is subjective and is historically built on a small subset of privileged voices. In this class, we will make an effort to read papers from a diverse group of scientists, but limits still exist on this diversity. I acknowledge that it is possible that there may be both overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens with which it was written, even though the material is primarily of a scientific nature. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of science. I would like to discuss issues of diversity in JDM as part of the course from time to time. Please contact me (in person or electronically) or submit anonymous feedback if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that you prefer, please let me know!
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback (which will lead to me making a general announcement to the class, if necessary, to address your concerns).

I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option.)

As a participant in course discussions, you should also strive to honour the diversity of your classmates.

Accommodations:

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Wellness Services (SWS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the Student Wellness website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

In order to help myself and the TAs accommodate students, if you have a QSAS accommodation letter and you wish to use your accommodations for exams or assignments, please upload your valid QSAS letter to the onQ assignment named "Accommodations documents". This gives me and the TAs a central database of accommodations to work from - otherwise we are all tracking them separately and mixups can (and often do) occur.

While we understand that you are entitled to not disclose your accommodation requests at the onset of the semester, do be aware that reserving additional classroom space and proctors for accommodated midterms that run simultaneous with the class midterm is difficult. Making such arrangements is a multi-week process, and we can only request as many seats as we know will be filled. So, note that it is risky to withhold a request for an accommodated exam or assignment until the week of the exam or assignment. If you do, we will make every effort to meet your accommodations, but the administrative limitations may prove to be too much to overcome.

Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances:

The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances (<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslewww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf>) was approved in April, 2017. Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and which have a direct and substantial impact on their ability to meet essential academic requirements.

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where they submit a request at: <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations>. Students in other Faculties and Schools should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

Academic Integrity:

Queen's students, faculty, administrators, and staff all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honest, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org) and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing, and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a

foundation for the “freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas” essential to the intellectual life of the University.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the regulations concerning academic integrity. General information on academic integrity is available at Integrity@Queen's University, along with Faculty or School specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery, and falsification. Actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

Copyright of Course Materials:

The material presented in class is designed for use as part of the course on Judgment and Decision Making at Queen's University and is the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as the book chapters and articles found on onQ) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) can lead to a violation of Copyright law. Find out more about copyright here: <http://library.queensu.ca/copyright>.

Computers and electronics in class:

I recognize the benefit of being able to take notes and annotate papers using your laptop. Therefore, I won't expressly prohibit using these tools. However, one of the benefits of this class is being able to interact with your peers and engage in fruitful discussion on the topic, which laptops often inhibit. Also, research demonstrates that cognitive performance suffers dramatically with multi-tasking (but that the multitasker isn't usually aware of the detrimental effect). **Texting, gchatting, tweeting, instagramming, youtubing, fortniting, and the like are obviously not appropriate behavior during class.**

Changes to the syllabus:

In extreme circumstances, the syllabus and/or course schedule may be modified at my discretion. I will announce all changes via onQ.

Late policy:

One point (which translates to 10 percentage points) per day will be subtracted from late paper assignments.

Course Schedule:

Dates	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Jan 7 Jan 9	Introduction to JDM	A intro K intro, K1	
Jan 14 Jan 16	System 1 and system 2	K1 – K5	
Jan 21 Jan 23	Norms, confirmation bias, and quick judgments	K6 – K8	
Jan 28 Jan 30	Heuristics pt 1	K9 – K11 A2	HW 1 due Jan 30
Feb 4 Feb 6	Heuristics pt 2	K12 – K17	
Feb 11	Midterm		
Feb 13	Illusions of validity	K19 – K24	
Feb 18 (no class) Feb 20 (no class)			
Feb 25 Feb 27 (no class)	Illusions of validity (continued)	K19 – K24	
March 3 March 5	Prospect theory & its implications	K25 – K29 A8	
March 10 March 12	Misperceptions of importance	K30 – K34 A1, A3	
March 17 March 19	Experiencing vs remembering	K35 – K36	
March 24 March 26	Do we know what makes us happy?	K37 – K38 A7	HW2 due March 26
March 31 April 2	Hot vs cold decision-making	A6, A10	