

**Experimental Approaches to Social and Strategic Decision-Making**  
Issues in Microeconomic Policy (Econ 443)/ Selected Topics in Psychology I (Psyc 398)  
Winter 2021

**Course Details**

*CLASS DAYS, TIMES.* Wednesday 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm (lectures)  
Friday 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm (lab sessions & TA help hours)

*LOCATION.* Course content will be delivered remotely and (mostly) asynchronously; see timetable for dates & deadlines; material and detailed instructions will be uploaded to the course website (onQ)

*INSTRUCTOR.* Anita Tusche

*CONTACT INFORMATION.* email: [anita.tusche@queensu.ca](mailto:anita.tusche@queensu.ca); Office: Humphrey Hall 344

*OFFICE HOURS.* I will host a virtual office hour each week on Thursdays 5-6 pm via Zoom. The link each week will be <https://queensu.zoom.us/j/95097221290?pwd=UnA4eC9jSDDdNOXBkMEV2aGRZeFJaZz09> (Passcode: 532254). Email me when you enter the “Waiting Room” so I know you are waiting and to give me a chance to verify that you are a student in the course. I will speak with one student at a time while other students wait in the “Waiting Room.” I might also include questions from students (anonymized) and my answers in the video that I will post at the beginning of each week.

*TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TA).* John-Denis Parsons (psychology); [jddp@queensu.ca](mailto:jddp@queensu.ca)

*TA OFFICE HOURS.* By Appointment

*ACCOMMODATIONS.* Email address to be used for accommodations: [jddp@queensu.ca](mailto:jddp@queensu.ca)

**Course Description**

This course examines experimental approaches to social and strategic decision-making. This is a multi-disciplinary class for undergraduate students in psychology and economics. If you are interested in learning more about powerful tools from neighboring research disciplines, this course is for you. A prime objective will be to examine the use of standardized experimental economic games to study social behavior and to test psychological and economic theories. Topics will include lab-based approaches to study human altruism, the impact of social identity, social norms (e.g. reciprocity, fairness) and ‘punishment’ to reinforce norms. Students will also learn about factors that have to be considered when designing experimental studies. The course adopts a mixture of lectures and hands-on laboratory sessions, and focusses on experiential learning on these topics. Students will also be expected to work in cross-disciplinary teams to design their own experiment on a topic covered in class, write instructions, and develop an analysis plan.

**Course Goals/Intended Student Learning Outcomes**

The course has three learning goals:

1. Students should be able to describe, execute, analyze and interpret the results of standardized experimental measures used to study social decision-making (*assessed in laboratory sessions and Problem Sets*).
2. Students should be able to work in inter-disciplinary teams to achieve common goals (*assessed in the Empirical Research Project and Team Presentation*).
3. Students should be able to *critically evaluate* the strengths and potential pitfalls of experimental approaches to study social decision-making, *apply* this ability when designing their own experiment, and *communicate* perceived strengths and shortcomings of experiments in a constructive, respectful and effective manners to their peers (*assessed in the Empirical Research Project and Peer Feedback*).

**Grading Scheme** (\* see Assignments for further details)

Participation	10%	Discussions and lab sessions (see timetable)
Problem Sets	25%	Lab sessions 2-6 (see timetable)
Team Presentation	20%	March 8
Empirical Research Project:	35%	April 14
Peer Feedback/Critique	10%	March 12 and April 7 (see timetable)

**Grading Systems**

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 as shown below:

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

**Assignments**

**(a) Participation (total: 10%):**

- Discussion forums (detailed instructions posted on onQ)

**(b) Problem Sets (total: 25%, 5 problem sets \* 5%):**

- Participate in online demonstrations of standardized experimental measures (if applicable)
- Analyze behavioral data (R, code will be provided, no prior knowledge of R is necessary)
- Complete and submit 'Problem Sets' (onQ, see timetable)

**Group Assignments (c-e).**

You will be assigned to groups of four students in the fourth week of class. You will complete two assignments together over the course of the semester. Teams will consist of two psychology students and two economics students. This is designed to facilitate cross-disciplinary cooperation among students. Team composition will depend on the final class roster and might be subject to change. Detailed instructions and grading criteria for all group assignments will be posted on onQ.

**(c) Team Presentations (total: 20%)**

- Prepare and submit a team presentation (topics announced in week 5 on onQ)

**(d) Empirical Research Project (total: 35%)**

- Develop a research question and hypothesis
- Design (laboratory or field) experiment(s) to test them

- Develop instructions
- Develop an analysis plan
- Submit Outline (onQ, see timetable)
- Submit Research Proposal (onQ, see timetable)
- Incorporate Peer Feedback & Re-submit the revised proposal (onQ, see timetable)

**(e) Peer Feedback & Critique (total: 10%)**

- Team Presentations (4%)
- Research Project (6%)

**Text**

Required and optional reading will be uploaded to the course website (onQ).

**Timetable and Reading Material**

*\* Tentative (subject to modification). Any changes made will be communicated to you via announcements on onQ (together with an updated syllabus).*

Date	Topic	Assignment
<b>Part I: Lab-based experimental assessments of social and strategic decision-making</b>		
1	Wed. Jan. 13	Lecture: Introduction 1. Introduce yourselves 2. Video & Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Jan 15, @ 6 pm
2	Fri. Jan. 15	Lab: Online Demonstration <i>* synchronous session</i> Fri. Jan 15 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
3	Wed. Jan. 20	Lecture: Altruism and Cooperation <i>* Reading: Peysakhovich (2014) &amp; Engel (2011) section 3 &amp; 6</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Jan 22, @ 6 pm
4	Fri. Jan. 22	Lab: Data Analysis & Interpretation <b>Problem Set 1</b> Deadline: Fri., Jan. 22 @ 6 pm
5	Wed. Jan. 27	Lecture: Fairness and Bargaining <i>* Reading: Oosterbeek (2004)</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Jan. 29, @ 6 pm
6	Fri. Jan. 29	Lab: Data Analysis & Interpretation <b>Problem Set 2</b> Deadline: Fri., Jan. 29 @ 6 pm
7	Wed. Feb. 3	Lecture: Public Goods and Punishment <i>* Reading: Fehr &amp; Gaechter (2002)</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Feb. 5, @ 6 pm
8	Fri. Feb. 5	Lab: Data Analysis & Interpretation <b>Problem Set 3</b> Deadline: Fri., Feb. 5 @ 6 pm
9	Wed. Feb. 10	Lecture: Nudges and Framing <i>* Reading: Capraro (2019)</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Feb. 12, @ 6 pm
10	Fri. Feb. 12	Lab: Data Analysis & Interpretation <b>Problem Set 4</b> Deadline: Fri., Feb. 12 @ 6 pm
	Wed. Feb. 17	Reading Week (no class)
	Fri. Feb. 19	Reading Week (no class)
11	Wed. Feb. 24	Lecture: Social Identity and Social Distance <i>* Reading: TBD</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Feb. 26, @ 6 pm
12	Fri. Feb. 26	Lab: Data Analysis & Interpretation <b>Problem Set 5</b> Deadline: Fri., Feb. 26 @ 6 pm
13	Wed. Mar. 3	Lecture: Well-Being and Social Signaling <i>* Reading: TBD</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Mar. 5, @ 6 pm
<b>Part II: Developing experimental studies: choices and pitfalls</b>		
14	Fri. Mar. 5	Develop (finalize) Team Presentation Team meeting <b>Submit Team Presentations</b> Deadline: Mon., Mar. 8 @ 6 pm
15	Wed. Mar. 10	Presentation (Team 1 – 4)
16	Fri. Mar. 12	Presentation (Team 5 – 8) <b>Submit Peer Feedback (Presentations)</b> Deadline: Fri, Mar. 12 @ 6 pm
17	Wed. Mar. 17	Lecture: ecological validity of lab-based measures <i>* Reading: Galizi (2019)</i> <b>Submit Outline (Research Proposal)</b> Deadline: Wed., Mar. 17 @ 6 pm
18	Fri. Mar. 19	Lecture: online data collection <i>* Reading: Hauser (2019)</i> Discussion Forum Deadline: Fri., Feb. 19, @ 6 pm
19	Wed. Mar. 24	Develop (finalize) Research Proposal Team meeting
20	Fri. Mar. 26	Tutorial: R (data visualization & analysis)
21	Wed. Mar. 31	Tutorial: R (data visualization & analysis) <b>Submit Research Proposal (for Peer Feedback)</b> Deadline: Wed., Mar. 31 @ 6 pm
22	Fri. Apr. 2	Good Friday (no class)
23	Wed. Apr. 7	Critique of Research Proposals Team meeting <b>Submit Peer Feedback (Proposals)</b> Deadline: Wed., Apr. 7 @ 6 pm

24	Fri. Apr. 9	Lecture: Wrap-up	Team meeting: incorporate peer feedback (revise research proposal)
			<b><i>Submit Revised Research Proposal</i></b>
			Deadline: Wed., Apr. 14, 2021 @ 6 pm

### **Late policy**

Late assignments will receive a penalty of a drop of 10% (for that particular assignment) for each 24-hour period it is late. Assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the due date. Exemptions to the late penalty may be made for documented extenuating circumstances. Please email me and the TA as soon as you know you will be needing an extension.

### **Acknowledgement of Territory**

Queen's is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. We are grateful to be able to be live, learn and play on these lands. To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it and whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today. The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community and there are First people from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today. To read more about the history of the land, see the Queen's Encyclopedia at <http://www.queensu.ca/encyclopedia/t/traditional-territories>.

### **Notice of Recording**

Synchronous (live) classes will be delivered in this course through a video conferencing platform supported by the University [MS Teams, Zoom]. Steps have been taken by the University to configure these platforms in a secure manner. Classes will be recorded with video and audio (and in some cases transcription) and will be made available to students in the course for the duration of the term. The recordings may capture your name, image or voice through the video and audio recordings. By attending these live classes, you are consenting to the collection of this information for the purposes of administering the class and associated coursework. If you are concerned about the collection of your name and other personal information in the class, please contact the course instructor to identify possible alternatives. To learn more about how your personal information is collected, used and disclosed by Queen's University, please see the general [Notice of Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information](#).

### **Copyright of Course Materials**

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's expressed consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

### **Turnitin Statement**

This course makes use of Turnitin, a third-party application that helps maintain standards of excellence in academic integrity. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to through onQ to Turnitin. In doing so, students' work will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading. Turnitin compares submitted files against its extensive database of content, and produces a similarity report and a similarity score for each assignment.

A similarity score is the percentage of a document that is similar to content held within the database. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process.

Please read Turnitin's Privacy Pledge, Privacy Policy, and Terms of Service, which governs users' relationship with Turnitin. Also, please note that Turnitin uses cookies and other tracking technologies; however, in its service contract with Queen's Turnitin has agreed that neither Turnitin nor its third-party partners will use data collected through cookies or other tracking technologies for marketing or advertising purposes. For further information about how you can exercise control over cookies, see Turnitin's Privacy Policy.

Turnitin may provide other services that are not connected to the purpose for which Queen's University has engaged Turnitin. Your independent use of Turnitin's other services is subject solely to Turnitin's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, and Queen's University has no liability for any independent interaction you choose to have with Turnitin

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values 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 (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1>), on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people 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. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016 (see <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/ACADACCOMMPOLICY2016.pdf>). If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

### **Academic Consideration for Students with Extenuating Circumstances**

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time, not to exceed three Friths. Students receiving academic consideration must meet all essential requirements of a course. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances was approved at Senate in April, 2017 (see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/ACADACCOMMPOLICY2016.pdf>).

[tees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf](#))

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 a request can be submitted at: <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations>. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.