**OVERVIEW**
Whether choosing what to have for breakfast, whom to marry, or what career to pursue, our choices are based on judgments and decisions. In this course we examine the affective, cognitive, and motivational processes involved in human judgment and decision making, and the accuracy of human judgment and decision making.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**
By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the psychological processes involved in judgment and decision making, and when those processes lead to accurate and inaccurate judgments and optimal and suboptimal decisions.

2. Assess the quality of empirical research in the field of judgment and decision making.

3. Articulate a novel hypothesis related to the field of judgment and decision making, cite appropriate research supporting that hypothesis, and propose experiments to test it.

**TEXTBOOKS**
There is no textbook. All readings are on blackboard.
**Grades/Attendance**
Grades are not curved.

**Participation (40%)**
Attendance is mandatory. If you miss more than one class for non-professional reasons (i.e., job interview, conference presentation) you will not pass the course. If you do miss a class, please notify the instructor as far in advance as possible to discuss how you will make up the work.

**Weekly Critique and Proposal (10%)**
Each week, you must turn in 1-2 page (single spaced) paper in which you critique the readings assigned for that week or propose novel research at the end of class. You may not turn in your weekly critique after class. **You may skip one week without penalty.** As suggested by the previous instructor of this course (Robyn Dawes):

Ask yourself whether you find the conclusion or conclusions convincing. If so, why? Which particular data, analyses, or arguments convinced you? If not, why not? What is unclear, lacking, or outright wrong? What alternative interpretations or arguments might be plausible?

Further, if you are convinced (of course, that’s a matter of degree), what follows, or what applications might the conclusion have, or what experiment might be done next? If not convinced, what would be necessary (usually in the form of further observations, or experimental data) to convince you? Or if you find alternative interpretations or arguments more convincing, what might be done to support these-hopefully at the same time it refutes the author? (again a matter of degree, or perhaps refutes the author in some ways but not in others).

One trick I use: Negation. Insert a "not" in an assertion, or imagine the opposite result. Does it make sense? If not (i.e., if the "not" is not believable on prior grounds), then either the assertion or the result convey little or no information. For example, consider the argument that psychopathology is due to low self-esteem--supported by the finding that people who are drunk all the time, or abuse spouses or children, or who go in and out of mental hospitals don't have high self-esteem. Ask yourself whether a finding that such people have as high self-esteem as anyone else would be at all plausible. What sort of (social) world would that be? My conclusion: The finding proves nothing at all about the origins of pathological behavior. (All mathematical arguments that X implies Y can be phrased in terms of showing that if X didn’t imply Y then both Z and not-Z would be true. Since--accepting the Law of Contradiction--we believe that Z and not-Z cannot be both true, we accept that X implies Y by virtue of the impossibility it doesn’t. In our work, we must substitute implausibility for impossibility.)
Research Paper (40%)
The primary goal of this class is to increase your proficiency in research. Your research paper is thus your most important assignment for this class. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss the project you intend to propose. The meeting must take place by October 30th.

By November 25th at 7:20pm you will turn in a research paper (limit of 50 pages, double-spaced) in which you have articulated a novel hypothesis directly relevant to human judgment and decision making and have proposed rigorous experiments to test that hypothesis. The paper should be written in the style of the American Psychological Association and thus include an introduction, methods and anticipated results section for each experiment, and a general discussion. If you are unfamiliar with APA style, please refer to the 5th edition of the APA publication manual for guidance.

Research Presentation (10%)
After Thanksgiving, you will present your novel hypothesis and experiments in class. Please plan on giving a 20-minute presentation and answering questions for 5 minutes afterward. I strongly recommend practicing in advance.

Late Assignment & Extension Policy
If you are attending a professional conference you may ask for a one week extension on the paper assignment. Otherwise, a late paper will be penalized a full letter grade unless accompanied by a note from a doctor. The paper will not be accepted more than one week after it is due.

Laptop Policy
Laptop use is discouraged as it is most likely to distract you from participating in the discussion. You may bring a laptop to class if you agree to use it to take notes and refer to the readings.

Academic Honesty
You must be the sole author of work you submit in this course. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course and a referral to the Dean of Students’ Office for further action. Please note that you may not submit or present any assignment completed in this class for credit in another course, and you may not submit collaborative work (e.g., with another student or advisor). Doing so will result in a failing grade in this course.
Please read articles in the order that they are listed.

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<th>Topic and Required Readings</th>
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<td>8/26/09</td>
<td><strong>Day 1: Ingredients of judgments and decisions</strong></td>
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<td>9/9/09</td>
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### Further Recommendations:


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#### 9/16/09 Day 4: Hypothesis Testing


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### Further Recommendations:


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#### 9/23/09 Day 5: Evaluation – Unidimensional


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### Further Recommendations:


9/30/09  Day 6: Evaluation – Multi-dimensional


10/7/09  Day 7: Evaluation – Metacognition


Further Recommendations:


Day 8: Evaluation – Affect and Emotion


Further Recommendations:


Day 9: Evaluation – Motivation


Further Recommendations:


10/28/09 Day 10: Evaluation – Chance


Further Recommendations:


10/30/09 Deadline for receiving approval for your research topic.

11/4/09 Day 11: Accuracy of Inferences


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