

Judgment and Decision Making (PSYC10) Syllabus

Fall 2019

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Professor

Dr. Yoel Inbar

Office Hours:

Thursdays 11-12 PM, SW569

TAs

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Introduction

This course has two objectives. The first is to improve the quality of students' decisions. Students will learn to be aware of and to avoid common inferential errors and systematic biases in their own decision making. The second objective is to improve students' ability to predict and influence the behavior of others. By understanding how other people decide and behave, students will be better able to motivate desired behavior in others.

This course accomplishes this by expanding the toolbox provided by standard economics (incentives and education) to include tools of influence prescribed by a realistic understanding of human behavior. We will cover classic and contemporary theories and empirical findings in judgment and decision-making, including perspectives from social and cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, decision analysis, and other fields.

Readings

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, there is a list of required readings, which are posted on Quercus according to their due dates. Whenever possible, I have chosen readings that are well-written, accessible, and apply the core concepts of this course to real-world issues.

Grading Criteria

Midterm Exam: 35%

Final Exam: 35%

Quizzes: 5%

Online Surveys and Data Collection Assignment: 10%

Short Paper: 15%

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm and final exam will each count for 35% of your grade. The midterm covers the material (readings and lectures) from weeks 1-5, and the final covers weeks 6-10 (i.e., the final is not cumulative). Exams may include short answers, essays, and multiple-choice questions. The midterm will be held in class on October 10. The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar.

Quizzes

Starting in Week 2 (September 12) there will be a 50% chance of having to take a short quiz that tests your knowledge of the readings assigned that day. Whether or not you have a quiz will be determined by a coin flip, which means that having a quiz one week is not predictive of whether you will have a quiz the next week (i.e., don't fall prey to the gambler's fallacy!). These quizzes are designed to test whether you have carefully read all that you have been assigned to. As long as you read carefully and retain the most important information, you should not have to study for these quizzes. Most of the quizzes will require you to summarize one (or more) of the readings, but other quiz

formats (e.g., multiple choice; short answer) are possible. Each quiz will be graded on a scale ranging from 0 to 2. You will receive a score of zero if you are absent or late for a quiz. However, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped, so you can miss one without penalty.

Note: if you would like to see your quiz after it's been graded, you have a week after grades are posted to contact the TA who graded it. After this time, I may not be able to accommodate requests to see past quizzes.

Online Surveys, Data Collection, and Short Paper

During the semester, I will ask you to do online surveys and to collect data out of class. I will also ask you to write a short (2-page) paper applying what you have learned. These assignments will be described in more detail later in the semester.

Quercus

The course Quercus website will be your one-stop resource for all course documents, lectures, announcements, and supplementary information. Full PDF copies of the slides will be available on the course site the evening AFTER each lecture. Outline slides will be available the evening BEFORE each lecture. You are highly advised to regularly check course announcements because you are solely responsible for staying on top of all course announcements made through Quercus.

Screen Policy

I ask that you put away all digital devices during lecture. This includes laptops, phones, tablets, e-readers, smartwatches, etc. Basically, if it has a screen it should be in your bag. I am instituting this policy because a) screens are distracting for you and your neighbors; b) research suggests that you will remember more information if you hand-write your notes rather than typing them (the latter allows you to mindlessly transcribe what I say, the former does not). I encourage you to simply take notes on key points and look over the slides later. However, I will also post outline slides before each lecture for you to print, if you like.

Any exceptions to this policy MUST be cleared with me in advance.

Office Hours

Office hours are a great way to get answers to specific questions you may have. I will hold office hours each week except for the Fall Reading Week, beginning the week of September 9. (I may have to cancel certain office hours due to travel, but if this is the case there will be an announcement posted.)

List of Lectures and Readings

Week 1: Sept. 5 Introduction & Experimental methods

- *Complete introductory online survey this week*
- Thinking About Thinking (Watts)

Week 2: Sept. 12 Statistical reasoning

- Fairness and Justice (Watts)
- The Odds of That (Belkin)

Week 3: Sept. 19 Statistical reasoning II; Heuristics and biases

- *Complete Survey 2 this week*
- Going Viral (Lewis)
- Connecting the Dots (Gladwell)

Week 4: Sept. 26 Overconfidence & Motivated reasoning

- Dr. Drug Rep (Calat)
- Are You Smarter than a Television Pundit? (Silver)
- Why Good Accountants Do Bad Audits (Bazerman)

Week 5: Oct. 3 Intuitive vs. Statistical decision-making

- Big and Bad (Gladwell)
- Who's on First? (Thaler)
- The No-Stats All Star (Lewis)

Oct. 10 Midterm (in-class)

Oct. 17 Fall Break

Week 6: Oct. 24 Aggregating Opinions

- *Complete Survey 3 this week*
- The Wisdom of Crowds (Surowiecki)

Week 7: Oct. 31 Value construction I

- Reversals (Kahneman)
- Bernoulli's Errors (Kahneman)

Week 8: Nov. 7 Value construction II

- Prospect Theory (Kahneman)
- Risk Policies (Kahneman)

Nov. 14: No class (Prof. Inbar out of town)

Week 9: Nov 21 Nudges

- Nudge, pp. 1-14 (Thaler)

- You Need Hands (Underhill)
- When Doctors Make Mistakes (Gawande)

Week 10: Nov 28 Fairness

- What Seems Fair (Thaler)
- Fairness Games (Thaler)

Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency:

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must submit their request for accommodations **within three (3) business days** of the deadline for the missed work. Students must submit **BOTH** of the following:

1. A completed **Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form** (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), and
2. **Appropriate documentation** to verify your illness or emergency, as described below.

Appropriate documentation:

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to **ILLNESS**:

- Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with an **original** copy of the official UTSC Verification of Illness Form (uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form) or an **original** copy of the record of visitation to a hospital emergency room. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.
- Note: If an end date of "ongoing" is specified, the medical note will be assumed to cover a period of two weeks. If no end date / an "unknown" end date is specified, the note will be assumed to cover a period of three business days (starting from illness start date.)

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to **ACCESSABILITY REASONS**:

- Meet with your **AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) detailing the accommodations required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **ILLNESS**:

- Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with a **hardcopy** of the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form (uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form).

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to **ACCESSABILITY REASONS**:

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 3 days), submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>) and attach a copy of your letter. **Specify how many days extension you are requesting** on the request form.
- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (ex. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" but you need more time than that) you will need to meet with your **AccessAbility consultant** and have them email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) detailing the accommodations required.

For missed term tests or assignments in **OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**:

Submit the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), along with:

- In the case of a **death of a family member or friend**, please provide a copy of a death certificate.
- For U of T varsity-level or professional **athletic commitments**, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to Keely Hicks

- (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **well in advance** of the missed work, detailing the dates and nature of the commitment.
- For **religious accommodations**, please email (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) **well in advance** of the missed work.
 - For circumstances **outside of these guidelines**, please email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) on or before the date of the test / assignment deadline to describe your circumstances and ask what documentation would be appropriate. Documents covering the following situations are NOT acceptable: medical prescriptions, personal travel, weddings/personal/work commitments.

Procedure:

Submit your (1.) [request form](#) and (2.) [medical/self-declaration](#)/other documents in person **WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed term test or assignment.

Submit to: Keely Hicks, Room SW420B, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4 PM. (Slide forms under door if out of office.)

After submitting your documentation, within approximately one to five business days, you will receive a response from your instructor detailing the accommodations to be made (if any).

You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.

You should continue to work on your assignments to the best of your ability, as extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency.

If an accommodation has been granted but you are unable to meet the conditions of the accommodation (ex. you need a longer extension, or you missed a make-up test), you will need to repeat the missed term work procedure and submit additional forms to request further accommodation. Note that in the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.

Completion of this form does NOT guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.

Missed Accommodations

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting the requirements of your accommodation, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations.

(E.g.) If you miss a make-up midterm, you would need to submit another Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations form. If your original medical note / documentation included the date of the make-up midterm, then only the Request form is required. If the date of the make-up midterm fell outside of the dates indicated on your original medical note/other documentation, then a new medical note/other appropriate documentation must also be submitted.

Importance of Three Business Day window:

If you are unable to submit your documents in-person within the three business day window, **you must email Keely (keely.hicks@utoronto.ca) within the three business day window** to explain when you will be able to bring your documents in person.

Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under **exceptional circumstances**. Attach scans of your documentation, and be prepared to bring your documents to Keely in-person as soon as you are well. Late documents may not be accepted.

NOTE: Assignments due at end of term

Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, you would need to file a petition with the Registrar's Office (<https://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>).

NOTE: Final Exams

This policy applies only to missed assignments and term tests. Missed final exams are handled by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

AccessAbility:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [416-287-7560](tel:416-287-7560) or email ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
- Making up sources or facts;
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test;
- Misrepresenting your identity; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

Note:

You may see advertisements for services offering grammar help, essay editing and proof-reading. Be very careful. If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

It is much better and safer to take your draft to the Writing Centre as early as you can. They will give you guidance you can trust. Students for whom English is not their first language should go to the English Language Development Centre.

If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

TurnItIn

Normally, students are required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.