

Judgment and Decision Making (PSYC10) Syllabus

Winter 2022

Instructor

Nina Wang

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Lectures:

Wednesdays, 3-5pm ET

Zoom link will be posted on Quercus

Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 2-3pm ET

Zoom link will be posted on Quercus

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.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Recognize and be able to identify, discuss, and differentiate between heuristics and biases that affect human reasoning.
2. Recognize and be able to produce examples of common errors in statistical reasoning.
3. Understand ways in which value can be constructed and manipulated in decision-making contexts.
4. Understand and apply behavioural “nudges” that can be used to shift human behaviour.
5. Discuss the practical applications that psychological knowledge can have in public policy, consumer decisions, and other areas.
6. Critically analyze psychological studies in the field of judgment and decision making.

Delivery

This is an online **synchronous** course. We will meet on **Wednesdays, 3-5pm ET** via Zoom. Please be sure to refer to the due dates below to make sure you don't miss any deadlines. Materials for the course, including lecture slides, will be accessible via Quercus.

Readings

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, there is a list of required readings, which are posted on Quercus. Whenever possible, I have chosen readings that are well-written, accessible, and apply the core concepts of this course to real-world issues. Readings may deviate slightly from what is currently listed in the syllabus.

Grading Criteria

Short Paper 1: 25%

Short Paper 2: 25%

Short Paper 3: 25%

Lecture Discussion Posts: 10%

Data Surveys and Data Collection Assignment: 15%

- 3 surveys worth 3% each = 9% total
- Data collection assignment: 6%

Late penalties: 5% deduction each day the assignment is late. Late assignments without an approved extension will be accepted up to one week past the original due date.

Late penalty waiver: In addition to the Department of Psychology's extension policy (stated on p.6 of this syllabus), I am offering a two-day late penalty waiver for one assignment in the course. That is, **you can submit one assignment in the course up to two days late without late penalties**. Please put a comment on Quercus when submitting the assignment for which you use to this waiver. Regular late penalties apply after this two-day period or if you have already used your late penalty waiver on a previous assignment.

Lecture Discussion:

Each lecture will be accompanied by a Discussion Board available on Quercus, where you will be asked to respond to a prompt about the lecture. For example, I might ask you to make predictions, come up with an explanation for a phenomenon, suggest an experiment, etc. Each discussion post will be graded Credit/No Credit, and if your responses show that you are paying attention and thinking about the content, you'll get credit.

Online Surveys and Data Collection

During the semester, I will ask you to do online surveys and discuss the results in class. The link to each survey will be posted to Quercus at least a week in advance of the due date.

You will also do a data collection assignment, in which you will design a study and collect and analyze data. I will give more details on this in lecture.

Short Papers

You will be asked to write three short papers applying the course material. Together, these three papers are worth 75% of your total grade. Each paper should be no more than 3 single-spaced pages (in Times New Roman 12-point font). This is a hard limit and any text exceeding it will not be graded. (But don't feel obliged to use the whole three pages. Brevity is a virtue!) You do not need to include citations or references in any of your papers. For each paper, I will post a detailed guideline and rubric.

You will find the topic and rubric for each paper under “Assignments,” along with a link to submit your work. Due dates are in the “Due dates for assignments” table below.

Quercus

The course Quercus website will be your one-stop resource for all course documents, lectures, announcements, and supplementary information. The PowerPoint slides for each lecture will be available on Quercus as soon as the lecture is posted. You should also check course announcements regularly so that you don’t miss anything important.

Office Hours

Office hours are a great way to get answers to specific questions you may have. I will hold office hours each week on **Tuesdays, 2-3pm ET** via Zoom. If you are unable to make this time, please email me and we can schedule something else.

List of Lectures and Readings

Below is an overview of the lecture topics and readings for the course. Please note readings may be subject to minor changes as the course progresses – I will make an announcement about any changes, and the readings will be posted on Quercus before each lecture.

Lecture #	Topic	Reading
1 – Jan 12	Introduction & Experimental methods	<i>Thinking About Thinking</i> (Watts) <i>Causation and Experimental Design</i> (Chambliss & Schutt)
2 – Jan 19	Statistical reasoning	<i>Fairness and Justice</i> (Watts) <i>The Odds of That</i> (Belkin)
3 – Jan 26	Heuristics and biases/Intuitive vs. Statistical decision-making	<i>Going Viral</i> (Lewis) Hsee, C. K., Yang, Y., & Li, X. (2019). Relevance insensitivity: A new look at some old biases. <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i> , 153, 13-26.
4 – Feb 2	Overconfidence & Motivated reasoning	<i>Dr. Drug Rep</i> (Calat) <i>Are You Smarter than a Television Pundit?</i> (Silver) <i>Why Good Accountants Do Bad Audits</i> (Bazerman)
5 – Feb 9	Aggregating Opinions	<i>The Wisdom of Crowds</i> (Surowiecki)

No lecture Feb 16 Reading Week Feb 22-25		
6 – Mar 2	Value construction I	<i>Reversals</i> (Kahneman) <i>Bernoulli's Errors</i> (Kahneman)
7 – Mar 9	OPTIONAL: Professional Development Session	
8 – Mar 16	Value construction II	<i>Prospect Theory</i> (Kahneman) <i>Risk Policies</i> (Kahneman) Gal & Rucker (2018)
9 – Mar 23	Nudges	<i>Nudge, pp. 1-14</i> (Thaler) <i>When Doctors Make Mistakes</i> (Gawande) Fishbane, Ouss, & Shah (2020)
10 – Mar 30	Fairness	<i>What Seems Fair</i> (Thaler) <i>Fairness Games</i> (Thaler)
11 – Apr 6	Applications	Hall (2012) Baer & Schnall (2021)

Due Dates for Assignments

Date	Assignment Due
<i>Tuesday, Jan 18</i>	Complete Survey 1
<i>Monday, Jan 31</i>	Complete Survey 2
<i>Wednesday, Feb 2</i>	Data Collection Assignment
<i>Wednesday, Feb 9</i>	Short Paper 1
<i>Monday, Feb 28</i>	Complete Survey 3
<i>Wednesday, Mar 16</i>	Short Paper 2
<i>Wednesday, Apr 4</i>	Short Paper 3

Psychology Department Missed Term Work Policy, WINTER 2022

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedures outlined below.

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: travel for leisure, weddings, personal commitments, work commitments, human error.
- Missed Final Exams are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService: <http://www.uts.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>
- 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.uts.utoronto.ca/registrar/term-work>

Accommodations for Illness or Emergency:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, complete the following three-step process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#)
2. Declare your absence on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)
3. Email both the Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form AND a screenshot of your Self-Declared Absence on [ACORN](#) to the email address provided by your instructor on the course syllabus within 2 business days of the missed work.

Note: If you are unable to submit your documents within 2-business days, you must still email your instructor within the 2-business day window to explain the nature of the delay, and when you will be able to provide your documents. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.

Note: For this semester, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.

Accommodations for Academic Conflicts:

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (i.e. two midterms scheduled at the same time), please complete the following process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#), choosing "Other" and explaining the conflict in the space provided.
2. Take screenshots of your course homepages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to your course instructor at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

Note: Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Accommodations may only be possible in the case of quizzes and tests that are both scheduled during the same discrete period. Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts.

Note: Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who choose to register in two synchronous courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

Accommodations for Religious Conflicts:

For missed term work due to a **RELIGIOUS CONFLICT**, please complete the following process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#), choosing “Other” and noting “Religious conflict” in the space provided.
2. Email the form to your course instructor at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier.

Accommodations for Students Registered with AccessAbility Services:

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

- Contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them email your instructor detailing accommodations required.

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

- If your desired accommodation is within the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you need 3 days):
 1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
 2. Email the form and your Accommodation Letter to your instructor, specifying how many days extension you are requesting.
- If your desired accommodation is outside the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that):
 1. Contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them email your instructor detailing the accommodations required.

Accommodation Procedure:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. This form does not guarantee that you will be accommodated. 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. You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, do not wait for an instructor response to resume work on your assignment. Extension accommodations may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. You should complete your assignment as soon as you are able and email it your instructor.

For an anticipated event (e.g. scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period), submit a [Verification of Illness Form](#) completed by your doctor, AND this form to your instructor if you would like to request accommodations in advance of the

assignment deadline or midterm date. Declare your future absence on [ACORN](#) (absences can be declared up to 14 days in the future).

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. Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation. For example, if you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up midterm, you must submit another request 'Missed Term Work Accommodations' form and declare your extended absence on ACORN. ***Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not be provided.

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.

Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).