

**PSYC 495: Judgment and Decision Making**  
**Spring 2022**

**Lecture:** Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 am to 10:45 am, AH 3402  
**Instructor:** Dr. Jonathan Pettibone      **Email:** jpettib@siue.edu      **Phone:** 650-3346  
**Office:** AH 0119  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 11 to 12 am on Teams  
**Rented Text:** Hardman, D. (2009). Judgment and Decision Making: Psychological Perspectives. BPS Blackwell  
**Suggested Text:** American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

**Format:** This class is formatted for in person delivery, with all assignments, quizzes, and materials delivered on Blackboard. However, should we be asked to move online due to the pandemic (as we will be for Week 1), the class will meet online using Teams. We will also use Teams for communication across the semester. If you have not already been added to *PSYC 415-001\_SP22* please use the link below to request access:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3anPWdooAJMSGSysZvfrkbJJ0m29OIE3NnMav16LvK2PI1%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=9854df28-a9fb-4973-a686-61df435b13b6&tenantId=99f37d21-0b5c-43ea-9103-e16f02f5aecf>

**Description:** Across time, a common thread of humanity is the need to make decisions. These decisions have evolved from the basic, such as selecting a mate or choosing a place to live, to the complex, such as traveling into space or determining if someone has cancer, to the materialistic, such as choosing which brand of clothing to wear. Overall, humans have a finely honed ability to make adaptively rational decisions, as evidenced by our continued existence. Despite this, there are recognizable patterns of bias and irrationality in our behavior that can be used to gain an understanding of the cognitive and social processes that underly decision making.

This class will focus not so much on *what* we chose as humans, but on *how* we choose. Despite the diversity of decisions and scenarios we may find ourselves in, we often think about our decisions in the same way. We have a common set of cognitive skills, as well as limitations, that influence us. Society also plays a role, in that we rarely make decisions outside the presence of others. Others have suggested that economic principles provide all the information we need to understand and predict decisions. Further, despite the diversity of people, we often make the same decisions when placed in common situations.

No matter what perspective you take, decision making is a skill that we develop and hone as we go through life. Hopefully, in this course, you will learn a bit about how you and others make decisions and how you might improve them.

**Class Format**

This class will involve both lecture and discussion elements. Lecture material will come from the Hardman book, which provides a great, easy to read and get into background for the models of decision making that we will cover. We will start out lecturing, but I would prefer to move the course into discussion whenever possible. This depends upon you and how prepared you are for class each day. The discussion will serve to get you to think about critical issues in the field, but also about how the research we will cover applies to you. The more you participate, the more you will get out of the class. Weekly quizzes will be used to motivate you to do the readings and be prepared for discussion.

**Grading**

Exams	2 @ 100 pts. Each
Weekly Quizzes on Readings	Estimated 10 @ 5 pts. Each
Article Summary and Reaction Essays	2 @ 20 points each
Decision Analysis Project	50 pts.
Project Presentations	10 pts
Total	350 pts.

**Grades** You must earn the following number of points to get the following final grades:

A	315 - 350 (90% and up)
B	280 - 314.99 (80% to 89%)
C	245 - 279.99 (70% to 79%)
D	210 - 244.99 (60% to 69%)
F	209.99 and lower

## Exams

Exams will be composed of short answer and multiple-choice questions. Anything from my lectures or from the articles we will read is fair game.

## Weekly Quizzes

A quiz will be given each week based upon the readings from the textbook and any other assigned articles. Quizzes will have 5 to 10 questions and will be designed to test your knowledge of the assigned readings and to facilitate discussion. Each quiz can be taken twice and I will drop your lowest quiz score (including up to one 0). Quizzes will be given on Blackboard and are designed to be taken prior to the Thursday class so everyone is prepared for discussions.

## Decision Analysis & Biases Paper

To help you apply normative and non-normative theories to your own experience, you will be conducting an analysis upon a choice that you have made or expect to make in life. This is both a quantitative and a qualitative project, in that you will determine:

- 1) what *domain* will you be making a decision in (e.g. buying a car, choosing a romantic partner, selecting a day care)
- 2) what are the *dimensions* of the decision to be made that are important to you (e.g. mpg, sense of humor, distance from home)
- 3) How *important* is each dimension to you (e.g. weight, a value between 0 – 1 that sums to 1 across all dimensions)
- 4) What *alternatives* are available to you (Ford Focus, Hyundai Elantra, Chevy Cruze)
- 5) What *value* each alternative has on each dimension (scale value between 1 & 9)
- 6) What the *utility* of each alternative is (sum of weight X value for each dimension)
- 7) And finally, what decision you should make if you were a “rational” decision maker.
- 8) What biases may come into play when making this decision in the “real world”? Cite three biases, explain them and why they are relevant to your decision.

You will also be expected to reflect upon this process in a written form for each step of the process. Does the decision suggested by the analysis seem like the best decision for you? Would you have chosen something else? This is how economic models suggest we make decisions- does it seem like something you do? If not, what do you do? You get the idea! :^)

## Article Summary and Reaction Essays

To help you go deeper into the research in JDM, you will write 2 two to three page empirical research article summary and reaction papers using empirical 1<sup>st</sup> source articles of your choice. You may choose to write a 3<sup>rd</sup> for extra credit (Max: 5 pts). For each assignment, you should choose an article from a list provided to you on BB. I strongly encourage you to select articles that interest you, but you should also be sure that you choose topics that you understand. If you want to choose a non-listed article you need to clear it with me first. Essays should be double-spaced (approx. 500 words) but are not to exceed three pages (if you have more to state, reduce the font, spacing and/or margins). Summaries less than. Single page will not receive full credit- there is more to summarize for each article than that. The Article Summary and Reaction Essay should be divided into two sections (i.e., the Summary section and the Reaction section; 1 page each).

The **Summary** section should reflect not the facts of the article (e.g., background, method, details about the participants or procedure) but a deeper understanding of the contribution being made. This section should answer the following types of questions:

- o What is the main research question of the article?
- o What is the answer or conclusion that the article provides for this question?
- o What evidence is used in support of this conclusion? Is this evidence sound?
- o Are there specific strengths or weaknesses in the methodology, statistics or conclusions?

The **Reaction** section is not another summarization. It is intended to serve as an intellectual exercise that may take the form of an agreement, disagreement, elaboration, contrast, parallel, or critical analysis of the work selected. Here are some examples of sentences to get you started:

- o “I see a contradiction between Smith’s (2002) article and the section we read about...”
- o “A possible experiment that could be conducted to test the hypothesis described in Smith’s (2002) article involves...”
- o “The theory describe in Smith’s (2002) article could be used to improve productivity in work groups by...”

o “The theory in Smith’s (2002) article helped me to analyze an experience that I once had in a group conflict situation that was hard for me to understand at the time...”

o “I disagree with the interpretation of the findings described in Smith’s (2002) article...”

The Reaction section might also answer the following types of questions:

o What questions do I still have about this paper?

o What aspects of the paper remain unclear?

o Are there any other aspects of the article that draw criticism or cause concern?

Your reaction section should tie into the material we have discussed in class.

### **Presentations**

At the end of the semester, you will make a 5-minute presentation about your analysis and the decision you reached. Students will be encouraged to ask questions about what you did.

### **Attendance**

Class attendance will not be monitored. However, due to the participatory and interactive nature of this course, consider your attendance mandatory. One approach that we will employ during the course is a "hands on" type of experience. If you are not present, then you will not have benefited from that learning experience, nor will you have contributed to the collective effort of the class. Consequently, your absence will be detrimental not only to your own progress in the course, but to that of your classmates as well. Studies show that class time is the most efficient use of a student’s time when it comes to learning material. Unless by reason of extenuating circumstances or participation in religious or civic observances, your attendance is always expected.

### **Late Work & Missed Exams**

No late work will be accepted without prior consent. If you anticipate having to turn in an assignment late, you must talk to me in person. I cannot give permission over e-mail. If late work is accepted, there will be a one letter grade penalty for each day the work is late. Turning in work late on the day it is due will count as one day late. That means you must turn in your assignments before the beginning of class.

If you notify me in advance that you will miss an exam, you may make up the exam during the final exam period. This means you will be taking both the exam you missed and the final exam on the same day.

### **Academic Honesty**

All exams and other work are to be an individual effort on your part. Unless you are explicitly told you can work in a group, you should work alone. If you need help with the discussion questions or exams, you should see me. I encourage you to consult your college handbook for the University policy on academic honesty. For this course, the **minimum** penalty for ANY case of academic dishonesty (copying homework, cheating on an exam, plagiarism on a paper) is a 0 on the assignment/test AND a reduction of the final grade by one full letter grade (e.g., a B to a C). Please note that the recommended university policy is failure of the course, and that this policy, while harsh, is not as bad as it could be.

**Departmental policy on Incomplete grades, pass-no pass option, and withdrawal:** It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw from a course by the dates set by the University if the student is not intending to complete the course. Students who do not withdraw and have not completed the course will receive an Unauthorized Withdrawal (UW). Only under special circumstances a faculty member may agree to give a student an Incomplete (INC) grade in order to allow the student to complete the remaining work for the course not later than the end of the following semester. An INC is never automatic but must be approved by the instructor. If an instructor agrees to give a student an INC grade, the instructor and the student will fill out a form (Memorandum of Incomplete Grade) indicating why an INC is being given. One copy of the completed form will be given to the student, one copy will be given to the instructor, and one copy will be kept by the Department of Psychology secretary. If the work is not completed by the time specified on the Memorandum of Incomplete Grade form, the grade will be changed from INC to F.

**Statement on Disabilities:** SIUE offers a range of resources to support students with disabilities. At SIUE every effort has been made to eliminate barriers to learning and help you reach your educational goals. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services located in Rendleman Hall, Room 1218 (phone: 650-3726). I will make every effort to accommodate any requests. Please meet with me before the end of the first week of class to discuss accommodations.

**SIUE Statement on Diversity:** All societies and peoples have contributed to the rich mix of contemporary humanity. In order to achieve domestic and international peace, social justice, and the development of full human potential, we must build on this diversity. SIUE nurtures an open, harmonious, and hospitable climate that facilitates learning and work. Each member of the University is responsible for contributing to such a campus environment.

**SIUE Nondiscrimination policy:** Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) is a public comprehensive University committed to creating and maintaining a diverse community in which students, faculty, and staff can learn and work together in an environment free of discrimination and free from any form of illegal harassment. Such actions violate the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the University as an institution of learning. SIUE prohibits discrimination against employees, applicants for employment and students on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated; management and supervisory personnel, at all levels, are responsible for taking reasonable and necessary action to prevent discrimination.

## **COVID-19 Pandemic Policies Related to Classroom Instruction (Fall 2021)**

### **Health and Safety**

The measures outlined below are required and any student who does not comply may be in violation of the *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy*, as well as the University's *Student Code of Conduct*.

The full text of the *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy* can be found here:

<https://www.siue.edu/policies/Covid.shtml>

### **Classrooms, Labs, Studios, and Other Academic Spaces**

While in the classroom, lab, studio, or other academic spaces, students (regardless of vaccination status) shall wear face coverings that fully cover the nose and mouth and practice physical distancing measures to the extent practicable based on the specific classroom capacity and pedagogy. Classroom furniture should not be rearranged, and furniture that has been taped off or covered should not be used.

Students who forget to wear a face covering will be reminded of their obligation to comply with SIUE's *COVID-19 People-Focused Health and Safety Policy* and temporarily asked to leave the class until they are able to conform to the policy. Students who forget or lose their face coverings may be able to obtain replacements from a friend, a faculty member, or a nearby departmental office. Face coverings are also available for purchase in the Cougar Store (MUC).

Students who refuse to wear a face covering will be asked to leave the classroom and referred to the Dean of Students for non-compliance with community health and safety protocols. Repeated non-compliance may result in disciplinary actions, including the student being administratively dropped from an on-ground/face-to-face course or courses without refund if no alternative course format is available.

If a student has a documented health condition which makes wearing a face covering medically intolerable, that student should contact ACCESS to explore options with the understanding that ACCESS will not grant accommodations which excuse the need for a face covering while on campus or in the classroom. ACCESS will work with qualifying individuals to find reasonable alternatives, whenever such solutions are available. Please call or contact the ACCESS Office via email to schedule an online appointment to discuss potential alternatives. ACCESS office (Student Success Center, Room 1203, 618-650-3726, and [myaccess@siue.edu](mailto:myaccess@siue.edu)).

### **General Health Measures**

At all times, students should engage in recommended health and safety measures, which include:

- Conducting a daily health assessment. If you have [COVID-19 symptoms](#), but not yet tested positive, have had COVID-19 close contact exposure, or are COVID-19 diagnosed as presumptive or confirmed positive, stay home and contact your health provider or SIUE Health Service at [cougarcare@siue.edu](mailto:cougarcare@siue.edu) or 618-650-2842. More information on reporting procedures is available [here](#).
- Frequent washing or disinfecting of hands.
- Physical distancing.
- Face masks or face coverings that cover the nose and mouth are required in indoor public spaces regardless of the ability to maintain physical distance. Indoor public spaces include common spaces or community settings that anyone can access, such as reception areas with walk-in access, restrooms, hallways, classrooms, teaching and research laboratories, as well as common spaces in residence halls, conference rooms, lobbies, and break rooms.

- If present, adhere to directional signs and traffic flow patterns in buildings and offices. In many spaces, doors for entering and exiting buildings are designated.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the Student Academic Code (3C2) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. The full text of the policy can be found here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>.

### **Recordings of Class Content**

Faculty recordings of lectures and/or other course materials are meant to facilitate student learning and to help facilitate a student catching up who has missed class due to illness or quarantine. As such, students are reminded that the recording, as well as replicating or sharing of any course content and/or course materials without the express permission of the instructor of record, is not permitted, and may be considered a violation of the University's Student Conduct Code (3C1), linked here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>.

### **Potential for Changes in Course Schedule or Modality**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, there remains a possibility that planned classroom activities will need to be adjusted. Depending on circumstances and following state-issued recommendations, potential changes include changes in course modality (e.g., transition from face-to-face to online) or in course scheduled meetings. These changes would be implemented to ensure the successful completion of the course. In these cases, students will be provided with an addendum to the class syllabus that will supersede the original version.

### **And Finally...**

Rules need to be set for the good of order in the classroom. The above rules are for the purpose of maintaining high academic standards and encouraging your learning. However, I do understand that sometimes things happen that are out of our control. PLEASE do not hesitate to come see me if there is an issue affecting your performance in this class. I am more than willing to make accommodations to help you, but I cannot help you if I do not know an issue exists.

**Tentative Schedule (Always check BB/Teams for updates)**

Date	Class Material	Due Dates	Textbook Reading Assignment	Notes
Week 1 1/11 & 1/13	Introduction to the Class, JDM, and Rationality		Ch. 1	
Week 2 1/18 & 1/22	Understanding Judgment		Ch. 2	
Week 3 1/25 & 1/27	Judgments of Probability and Frequency		Ch. 3	
Week 4 2/1 & 2/3	Anchoring & Adjustment and the Hindsight Bias		Ch. 4	
Week 5 2/8 & 2/10	Evaluating Arguments & Convincing Others		Ch. 5	
Week 6 2/15 & 2/17	Association, Causation, & Counterfactual Thinking		Ch. 6	
Week 7 2/22 & 2/24	Risk and Uncertainty	<b>Article Review &amp; Critique 1 due (2/27)</b>	Ch. 7	
Week 8 3/1 & 3/3	<b>Mid-Term Exam (3/6)</b>			<b>No physical classes- Exam will be given online</b>
Week 9 3/8 & 3/10	Spring Break!			
Week 10 3/15	Preference and Choice		Ch. 8	<b>No Class 3/17</b>
Week 11 3/24	Preference and Choice			<b>No Class 3/22</b>
Week 12 3/29 & 3/31	Confidence and Optimism		Ch. 9	
Week 13 4/5 & 4/7	Judgment, Choice, and Time	<b>Decision Analysis Paper Due (4/7)</b>	Ch. 10	
Week 14 4/12 & 4/14	Risk and Risk Perception		Ch. 12	
Week 15 4/19 & 4/21	Special Topic: COVID	<b>Article Review &amp; Critique 2 due (4/17)</b>		
Week 16 4/26 & 4/28	Project Presentations			
<b>Final Exam: Wednesday, May 5th 8:00 am to 9:40 am</b>				