

PSYCH 4850A: The Psychology of Choice Spring 2014-2015

Class room: C620

Time: Weds 3:00-5:50pm

Instructor: David Logue

Email: david.logue@uleth.ca

Office: D858

Office hours: Monday 2:00-4:00 pm (in person or via Skype)

Website: Moodle

Description

Choice is an integral component of adaptive behavior in humans, other organisms, and even computer programs. The mechanisms of choice (*how* agents make choices) have been studied, more or less independently, by many different fields including Philosophy, Psychology, Neuroscience, and Evolutionary Biology. In this seminar course, we will study choice research across disciplines, with the goal of synthesizing a coherent framework for understanding this fundamental mechanism of adaptive behavior.

Prerequisites

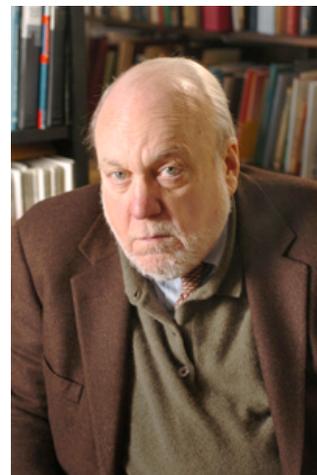
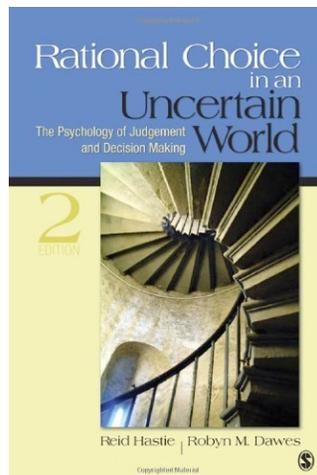
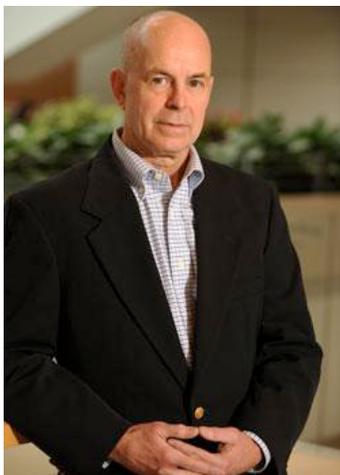
4th year standing

Evolution and Behaviour (Psychology 2700)

Two 3000-level courses in Psychology

Book

Rational Choice in an Uncertain World by Hastie and Dawes, second edition. It should be available at the bookstore by the first day of class.



Daily schedule

1. Pre-Quiz (15 min) Each class will begin with a short quiz on the assigned chapter from Hastie and Dawes, so everyone should study the chapter carefully before coming to class. Students who arrive late will not be given extra time.

2. Chapter review and paper discussion (60 min) We will then discuss the chapter of the week. One student will be assigned to be the “expert” on each section. Each student will serve as an expert four times during the semester. The expert list can be found on Moodle. Consult this list as soon as possible and note the sections for which you are responsible. The expert should be prepared to lead discussion and answer questions on *everything* in his or her section.

Experts should not summarize their section. Rather, they should lead discussion of the most important ideas by interpreting particularly challenging material, building bridges to other ideas, and asking thought-provoking (as opposed to knowledge-testing) questions. Experts should come prepared with detailed notes, including several discussion questions. The expert’s goal is to moderate an interesting conversation, without dominating it. Each chapter will be covered in one hour, but some have more sections than others. Therefore, some expert sections will have to be covered more quickly than others. Take this into account when you are planning your expert section. I will grade experts on a five point scale, with up to one point awarded for each of the following categories: (1) Addressing the most important points (given the time allotted), (2) demonstrating understanding, (3) leading conversation, (4) asking thought-provoking questions, (5) all-around excellence.

3. Student lectures (50 min) Over the course of the semester, each student will give two 12-minute lectures on readings that compliment the material from the textbook. The readings are on Moodle. Students will sign up for readings on the first day of class. Students must post their presentations (in Powerpoint) to Moodle before class. Twelve minutes is not very long, so you’ll really have to distill these down to the key points. There will be three minutes for questions after each student lecture. I exhort student lecturers to visit office hours to discuss their lectures with me beforehand. Grades on student lectures are based on presentation design (20%), teaching effectiveness (30%), and content (50%).

4. Discussion questions (45 min) Groups will form, and I will give each group one or more questions to discuss. After a period of group discussion, groups will take turns presenting their answers to the class.

Participation All students can earn up to one point of participation credit each day for contributing meaningfully to the discussion, student lecture, or discussion questions. Take a lot of notes as you read the chapter so that you remember what you want to say during the discussion.

Grading

Grade breakdown

25% Quizzes

25% Participation

25% Expert sections

25% Student lectures

Quizzes and student lectures are graded on a 0-100 scale. Students receive up to one point each day of class for satisfactory participation (chapter discussion and discussion questions).

Marks

95 – 100% = A +

85 – 95% = A

80 – 85% = A -

77 – 79% = B +

73 – 76% = B

70 – 72% = B -

67 – 69% = C +

63 – 66% = C

60 – 62% = C -

57 – 59% = D +

53 – 56% = D

50 – 52% = D -

< 50 = Fail

Final grades will be rounded to the nearest percent. I reserve the right to increase all grades by a set amount (but don't count on it).

Other Course Policies

The classroom is an environment of mutual respect. Expect to be treated with respect by your classmates and your professor, and understand that they expect the same from you. We are all adults who are responsible for our actions.

Make-up assignments are for promptly communicated, documented emergencies only. They will be harder than the original assignments.

Please do not use electronic devices when the professor or other students are talking or for any off-topic purpose. You are free to discretely step out of the room if you have an urgent need to use your device.

Students with special needs should discuss this with me after class today.

Weekly schedule

The schedule may change in response to changes to the academic calendar or if we get behind.

Date	Topic	Chapter	Student lectures
Jan 7	Probability, Deciding	Appendix, Ch 1	Syllabus, sign up for student lectures
Jan 14	Decision Making	Ch 2	<u>Decisions and search strategies in animals</u> Bradbury & Vehrencamp 2011 279-282 http://sites.sinauer.com/animalcommunication2e/chapter08.01.html Bradbury & Vehrencamp 2011 283-286 http://sites.sinauer.com/animalcommunication2e/chapter08.03.html Janetos 1980
Jan 21	A Framework for Judgment (The Lens Model)	Ch 3	<u>Choice in non-human animals</u> Shafir 1994 Jennions & Petrie 1997 Miller & Todd 1998
Jan 28	Anchor and Adjust	Ch 4	<u>Cognitive sensory biases</u> Rodd et al. 2001 Bateson & Healy 2005 Akre & Johnson 2014
Feb 4	Decision Heuristics	Ch 5	<u>Choice and conformity</u> Ariely & Levav 2000 Witte & Ryan 2002 Pronin et al. 2007
Feb 11	Explanation-Based Judgments	Ch 6	<u>Hard choices</u> Chang 2002 Markman & Medin 1995 Logue & Forstmeier 2008
Feb 25	Chance and Cause	Ch 7	<u>Freedom to choose</u> Soon et al. 2008 (see also Supplement) Brembs 2010 Dennett 2013 (not yet posted)
Mar 4	Thinking Rationally	Ch 8	<u>Hidden influences on preference and choice</u> Zajonc 1968 Zajonc 1980 Berger et al. 2008
Mar 11	Preferences	Ch 9	<u>Evolutionary basis of preference</u> Milinski & Bakker 1990 Ryan & Rand 1990 Endler and Basolo 1998
Mar 18	From Preferences to Choices	Ch 10	<u>Amount of choice</u> Redelmeier & Shafir 1995 Iyengar & Lepper 2000 Schwartz et al. 2002

Mar 25	Expected Utility Theory	Ch 11	<u>Violations of rationality</u> Haidt 2001 Houston et al. 2007 McNamara et al 2012
Apr 1	Prospect Theory	Ch 12	<u>Frames</u> Tversky & Kahneman 1986 Johnson & Goldstein 2004 Callander et al 2012
Apr 8	New Directions	Ch 13	<u>Collective decision making</u> Couzin et al. 2005 Conradt & Roper 2005 Sasaki & Pratt 2011 Reid et al. 2015
Apr 15	In Praise of Uncertainty	Ch 14	<u>Odds and ends</u> Loewenstein & Prelec 1993 Iyengar & Lepper 1999 Chittka et al. 2009