

PSYC 4220: The Psychology of Choice Fall 2019

Room: SA 7202

Time: Tues. & Thurs. 10:50 – 12:05

Website: Moodle

Instructor: David Logue

Instructor's email: david.logue@uleth.ca

Instructor's office: SA 8380

Instructor's office hours: Tuesday 3:30 – 5:00

TA: April Takahashi

Instructor's email: april.takahashi@uleth.ca

Instructor's office: UH C480

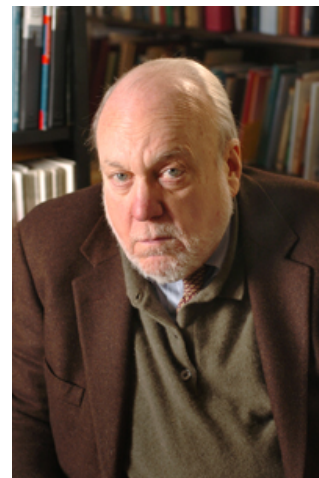
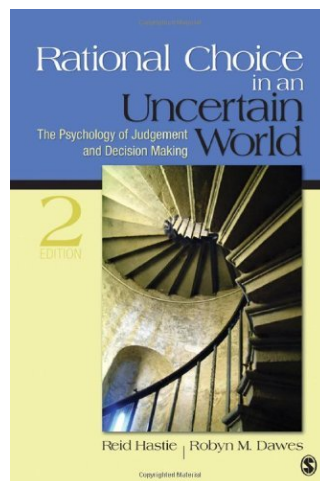
Instructor's office hours: By appointment

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 by many different fields including Economics, 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.

Book

Rational Choice in an Uncertain World by Hastie and Dawes, second edition. Buy it.



Weekly schedule

Tuesdays

Pre-Quiz (15 min) Each Tuesday's class will begin with a short quiz on the assigned chapter from Hastie and Dawes. Study the chapter carefully before coming to class. Students who arrive late will not be given extra time.

Chapter review (60 min) We will then discuss the chapter. One student will be assigned to be the "expert" on each section. Each student will serve as an expert three 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. Experts should not summarize their section. Rather, they should lead discussion of the most important ideas by (1) stating key ideas in their own words, (2) asking thought-provoking (as opposed to knowledge-testing or mundane) questions, and (3) interpreting challenging material, including graphs or math. Experts should come prepared with detailed notes, including several discussion questions. Their goal is to facilitate 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. I will grade experts on a 3-point scale, with up to one point awarded for each of the following categories: (1) Concisely explaining key ideas, (2) asking thought provoking questions, and (3) interpreting challenging material (if applicable). All students are encouraged to participate in the discussion. This is how you get your participation points on Tuesdays.

Thursdays

Student lectures (45 min) Over the course of the semester, each student will give one 10-minute lecture on a reading that compliments 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 PowerPoint presentations to Moodle before class. Ten minutes is not very long, so you'll have to distill these down to the key points. You don't have to cover everything, but do your best to teach your peers about the most important ideas in the paper. There will a few minutes for questions after each student lecture. I exhort student lecturers to visit office hours to discuss their lectures with me beforehand. The grading scheme is explained on the posted rubric.

OR

Group project presentations (45 min) In other weeks, student groups will spend up to 10 minutes presenting their projects. I will assign projects about two weeks in advance. Students must post their PowerPoint presentations to Moodle before class. All group members will receive the same mark, but group composition will change for each assignment. The grading scheme is explained on the posted rubric.

Grading

Grade breakdown

- 25% Weekly quizzes
- 10% Participation
- 15% Expert sections
- 15% Student lectures
- 20% Group exercises
- 15% Comprehensive exam

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

A+ > 95	C+ = 69 – 72
A = 90 – 95	C = 64 – 68
A- = 85 – 89	C- = 60 – 63
B+ = 81 – 84	D+ = 55 – 59
B = 77 – 80	D = 50 – 54
B- = 73 – 76	F < 50

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. Discreetly step out of the room if you need to use your device.

Students wishing to meet with David or April should do so during office hours. We will only schedule meetings outside of office hours if the student cannot meet during office hours. (We like meeting with students, but we're very busy, and there are a lot of you.)

Weekly schedule

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

Date	Chapter topic	Content
Thurs Sept. 5	Thinking and deciding	Syllabus, Quiz, Chapter 1 (abbreviated), "Lecture lecture", Sign up for student lectures online
Tues Sept. 10	Intro to decision making	Chapter 2 Assign: Decision tree exercise
Thurs Sept. 12		<u>SL: Freedom to choose</u> Soon et al. 2008 (and Supplement) Harari 2015 Harris & Harris 2017
Tues Sept. 17	The Lens Model	Chapter 3
Thurs Sept. 19		Decision tree exercise Assign: Lens model exercise
Tues Sept. 24	Anchor and Adjust	Chapter 4
Thurs Sept. 26		<u>SL: Hidden influences on choice</u> Haidt 2001 Mishra et al. 2017 Johnson & Goldstein 2004
Tues Oct. 1	Decision Heuristics	Chapter 5
Thurs Oct. 3		Lens model exercise
Tues Oct. 8	Chance and Cause	Chapter 7 (note, we skip chapter 6)
Thurs Oct. 10		<u>SL: Choice and conformity</u> Iyengar & Lepper 1999 Ariely & Levav 2000 Iyengar & Lepper 2000
Tues Oct. 15	Thinking Rationally	Chapter 8
Thurs Oct. 17		<u>SL: Amount of choice</u> Redelmeier & Shafir 1995 Schwartz et al. 2002 Assign: Bayes theorem exercise
Tues Oct. 22	Preferences	Chapter 9
Thurs Oct. 24		<u>SL: Violations of rationality</u> Gigerenzer & Goldstein 1996 Lea & Ryan 2015 Rodd et al. 2001 Assign: Choice strategies exercise
Tues Oct. 29	From Preferences to Choices	Chapter 10

Thurs Oct. 31		Bayes theorem exercise
Tues Nov. 5	Expected Utility Theory	Chapter 11
Thurs Nov. 7		Choice strategies exercise
Tues Nov. 12	No class	
Thurs Nov. 14	No class	
Tues Nov. 19	Prospect Theory	Chapter 12
Thurs Nov. 21		<u>SL: Choice in non-human animals</u> Chittka et al. 2009 Bateson & Healy 2005 Logue & Forstmeier 2008
Tues Nov. 26	New Directions	Chapter 13
Thurs Nov 28		<u>SL: Collective decision making</u> Couzin et al. 2005 Sasaki & Pratt 2011 Reid et al. 2016
Tues Dec. 3		Comprehensive exam