

## Psychology 271: Judgment and Decision Making

Spring 2015

Wednesday, Friday 3:10-4:30 in RKC 111

**Instructor:** Kristin Lane (lane@bard.edu)

**Office Hours:** W 10-11; F 1-2 and by appointment  
106 Preston



What career will you choose? Is the person across the street likely to be a criminal? How do public policies affect decisions to save for retirement, seek preventive medical care, or conserve environmental resources? John F. Kennedy captured a truth about human decision making when he noted that “[t]he essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer - often, indeed to the decider himself.” In this course, we will heed Kennedy's reminder that conscious reflection and verbal report often lead to inaccurate descriptions of the causes of our judgments and decisions. Our focus will be on trying to ascertain the underlying causes of these mental processes by relying on contemporary research in fields such as psychology, neuroscience, economics, and political science that offer the systematic study of how people make decisions given limited time and vast uncertainty. Sources will include empirical articles as well as review papers, videos, and case studies. We will consider applications of this work to domains such as finance, politics, the environment, and medicine.

### POLICIES

**Attendance.** Attendance will be noted and excessive absences will have a negative influence on your grade. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class. Consistent patterns of lateness will be addressed and will detract from your grade. Please be on time.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is unacceptable. In its most easily identifiable form, plagiarism represents copying someone else's words. This kind of offense is rare. More common are other, similarly damaging, ways to plagiarize. Use of someone else's ideas or words without citing them constitutes plagiarism, and is unacceptable. Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. When in doubt, check with me. No one ever got in trouble for citing too often. Unless explicitly stated, you must work independently on every assignment. You should review the section on plagiarism and academic dishonesty in the student handbook. Violations of academic integrity will result at a minimum in loss of credit for the assignment, and could result in failure in the course.

**Cell Phones and Laptops.** Please turn off all cell phones before class. No laptop computers will be allowed.

**Late Assignments.** Late written assignments will immediately lose 15% of their point value, and an additional 10% every 24 hours beyond the original deadline. Your written assignments will be posted on Moodle.

### **Goals**

By the end of the semester, you should:

- Understand the psychological influences on judgment and decision making;
- Have considered how the course material relates to everyday life and can influence public policy;
- Improved your facility with reading empirical research;
- Increased your effectiveness in oral communication; and
- Developed your scientific writing skills.

### **Materials**

Readings are posted on Moodle and must be printed out and brought to class. I suggest you buy a three-ring binder to keep these readings organized. Go to <http://moodle2.bard.edu>. The enrollment key is **deciderS15**.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Midterm Exams.** There will be two non-cumulative examinations. They will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions, and will be closed-book. Make-up exams will be 1 hour and 20 minute oral exams covering the material, and only offered with a written excuse from the Dean of Students. **80 points each (160 points total).** *If you need accommodation for the exams, please speak with me after the first class.*

**Class Participation.** Participation from everyone is crucial. The most participation need not be the best participation. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and topics. Class participation consists both of thoughtful speaking and careful listening - you should also respond with thought to your classmates' comments. If you are uncomfortable speaking in classes, please talk to me early in the semester to discuss ways to help you succeed. Occasionally I will ask you to complete a small in preparation for class, and consistent completion of these will count toward your participation grade. We will also conduct several case studies in class, and your contributions to them will be factored into your participation grade. **50 points.**

**Article Presentation.** You will present an additional article to your classmates. These articles will focus on applications of the theoretical material. This activity will increase our collective knowledge while keeping the reading list manageable, and will give us a chance to engage with translation of the academic work into practice. Each presentation should be between 12 and 15 minutes. Presenters should distribute (in hard copy) a summary of their article in "QALMRI" format to the class. You are encouraged to use any additional handouts or activities that will aid communication, and to be creative. You should use Powerpoint; your file must be: 1. saved as a .ppt or pptx document and 2. uploaded to Moodle by noon the day of your presentation. Studies from the presentations are fair game for the exams – listen to your classmates and ask questions. **20 points.**

**Heuristics and Biases Presentation.** In groups of three to four, you will creatively demonstrate a bias or heuristic. This presentation can take many forms – a skit, a movie, a song, etc. – as long as it clearly defines, illustrates, and explains the effect. You do not need to describe the specific studies in your paper, but your presentation should make clear *why* the effect occurs in addition to describe *what* the effect is. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long. You should also be prepared to answer questions about the article. **20 points.**

**Journal.** It is difficult not to see the principles of the class in the behavior of yourself and others. You will write three journal entries relating the material to your own experiences. These entries should show diversity of experience and of content. See more details at the end of the syllabus. **10 points each (30 points total).**

**Midterm and Final Papers.** You will complete two papers for the class. More details are at the end of the syllabus. **Midterm paper 40 points; Final paper 80 points.**

## GRADING

Grading is on a 400-point scale. Grades will be assigned based on total points earned within the following ranges – pluses and minuses will be assigned at the top and bottom of each range.

POINTS EARNED	GRADE	POINTS EARNED	GRADE
360 or greater	A	280-319.9	C
320-359.9	B	260-279.9	D
		Below 260	F

### SUMMARY OF DUE DATES (WRITTEN WORK TO BE UPLOADED TO MOODLE BY 11:00PM)

Journal 1	Sunday, March 01	Exam 2**	Friday, May 01
Heuristics & Bias presentation	Friday, March 06	Journal 3	Sunday, May 03
Exam 1	Wednesday, March 11	Paper 2	Tuesday, May 19
Paper 1	Monday, March 23	Article presentation	As scheduled
Journal 2	Sunday, April 05	**Held during Board Week if needed.	

## SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

Articles marked with \*\* are for presentations and are optional for all but the presenters.

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 – INTRODUCTION

No reading

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 30 – BIG IDEAS: DUAL SYSTEMS, “NUDGING”

Sanfey, A. G., & Chang, L. J. (2008). Multiple systems in decision making. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1128, 53–62.

Knott, J. (2013, October 1). The behavioural insight hothouse. Research-Live. Retrieved from <http://www.research-live.com/features/the-behavioural-insight-hothouse/4010551.article>

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 – RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Aronson, E. A., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M., & Fehr, B. (2006). *Social psychology* (6th ed.). New York: Prentice-Hall. Chapter 2, pp. 32-45.

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6 – READING EMPIRICAL ARTICLES

Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *The Self in Social Psychology* (pp. 461-470). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

QALMRI (Adapted from: Kosslyn, S.M. & Rosenberg, R.S. (2001). *Psychology: The brain, the person, the world*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.)

Kubota, J. T., Li, J., Bar-David, E., Banaji, M. R., & Phelps, E. A. (2013). The price of racial bias: Intergroup negotiations in the ultimatum game. *Psychological Science*, 24, 2498–2504.

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – BOUNDED RATIONALITY AND THE LIMITS OF INTROSPECTION

Simon, H. (1972). Theories of bounded rationality. In *Decision and organization*. (pp. 161-171). Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.

Wilson, T. (2002). *Strangers to ourselves: Discovering the adaptive unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 8: Introspection and Self-Narratives until p.175; pp. 175-end optional.

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13 – STATISTICAL REASONING**

Gilovich, T. (1991). *How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of reason in everyday life*. New York: The Free Press. Chapter 2: Something out of Nothing (Starting at “Cementing our Misperceptions with Causal Theories” – end; Chapter 3: Too Much from Too Little (up until “Self-Fulfilling Prophecies as a Special Case of the Hidden Data Problem”)

Belkin, L. (2002, August 11). The odds of that. *New York Times*.

Waldman, K. (2014, September 16). Apophenia makes unrelated things seem connected: Metaphors, paranormal beliefs, conspiracies, delusions. [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2014/09/apophenia_makes_unrelated_things_seem_connected_metaphors_paranormal_beliefs.html). Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2014/09/apophenia\\_makes\\_unrelated\\_things\\_seem\\_connected\\_metaphors\\_paranormal\\_beliefs.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2014/09/apophenia_makes_unrelated_things_seem_connected_metaphors_paranormal_beliefs.html)

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 – HEURISTICS AND BIASES: THE REPRESENTATIVENESS AND AVAILABILITY HEURISTICS**

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124-1131. Read pp. 1124-1128; 1130-1131

Plous, S. (1993). *The psychology of judgment and decision making*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill. Chapter 10: The representativeness heuristic.

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2008). *Social cognition: from brains to culture*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. pp. 167-169.

\*\*Schmidt, H. G., Mamede, S., van den Berge, K., van Gog, T., van Saase, J. L., & Rikers, R. M. (2014). Exposure to media information about a disease can cause doctors to misdiagnose similar-looking clinical cases. *Academic Medicine*, 89, 285–291.

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 – HEURISTICS AND BIASES (ANCHORING AND ADJUSTMENT)**

Hastie, R. & Dawes, R. M. (2010). *Rational choice in an uncertain world* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 4: The Fundamental Judgment Strategy: Anchoring and Adjustment.

Stewart, N. (2009). The cost of anchoring on credit card minimum repayments. *Psychological Science*, 20, 39-41.

\*\*Thorsteinson, T. J., Breier, J., Atwell, A., Hamilton, C., & Privette, M. (2008). Anchoring effects on performance judgments. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 107, 29–40.

\*\*Englich, B., Mussweiler, T., & Strack, F. (2006). Playing dice with criminal sentences: The influence of irrelevant anchors on experts' judicial decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 188-200.

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 – NO CLASS**

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 – CONSUMER DECISION MAKING**

ASSIGNMENT DUE: JOURNAL 1 BY SUNDAY, MARCH 1 AT 11PM

Bettman, J.R., Johnson, E.J., and Payne, J.W., 1991, "Consumer Decision Making," in *Handbook of Consumer Behavior*, Robertson, T.S., and Kassarian, H.H, (Eds.), Prentice Hall, 50-84.

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 – PROSPECT THEORY**

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, fast and slow. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. CHAPTERS 25 AND 26.

DeMartino, B., Kumaran, D., Seymour, B., Dolan, R.J. (2006). Frames, biases, and rational decision making in the human brain. *Science*, 13, 684-687.

It's Mine. (2008, June 21). It's mine, I tell you. *The Economist*, 387, 95-96.

Lakshminarayanan, V. R., Chen, M. K., & Santos, L. R. (2011). The evolution of decision-making under risk: Framing effects in monkey risk preferences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 689–693.

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 6 – STILL MORE HEURISTICS AND BIASES**

*In groups of 2-3 people, you will present one of the biases or heuristics described in the following articles. (You only need to read the article that is relevant to your group.)*

### The hindsight bias

Fischhoff, B. (1975). Hindsight ≠ foresight: The effect of outcome knowledge on judgment under uncertainty. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 1, 288-299.

### Sunk cost

Arkes, H. R., & Blumer, C. (1985). The psychology of sunk cost. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 35, 124-140.

### Counterfactual thinking

Medvec, V. H., Madey, S. F., & Gilovich, T. (1995). When less is more: Counterfactual thinking and satisfaction among Olympic medalists. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 603-610.

### The false consensus effect

Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The “false consensus effect”: An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 279-301.

### The halo effect

Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). The halo effect: Evidence for unconscious alteration of judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 250–256.

### The bias blind spot

Pronin, E., Lin, D. Y., & Ross, L. (2002). The bias blind spot: Perceptions of bias in self versus others. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 369-381.

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 – EXAM 1**

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 13 – “NUDGING”**

ASSIGNMENT DUE: PAPER 1 BY SUNDAY, MARCH 23 AT 11PM

Bell, C. (2013, February 11). Inside the coalition’s controversial “Nudge Unit.” *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9853384/Inside-the-Coalitions-controversial-Nudge-Unit.html>

Thaler, R. H. & Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness* (Rev. and expanded ed.). New York: Penguin Books. CHAPTER 16.

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 AND FRIDAY MARCH 20 – NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 – CASE STUDY: CARTER RACING**

*Read the material distributed in the last class and decide whether you would recommend proceeding with the race. Prepare a one page summary of your recommendation and reasoning (to be handed in). Come prepared to discuss your decision with a small group and the class as a whole.*

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 27 – TIME**

Surowiecki, J. (October 11, 2010). Later: What does procrastination tell us about ourselves? *The New Yorker*.

Berns, G., Laibson, D. and Loewenstein, G. (2007). Intertemporal choice—toward an integrative framework. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 11, 482-488. Do not need to read box “Modeling Preference Reversals”

\*\*Petry, N. M. (2001). Pathological gamblers, with and without substance abuse disorders, discount delayed rewards at high rates. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 110, 482–487.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 – VARIABILITY IN DECISION MAKING I**

Carr, P. & Steele, C. M. (2010). Stereotype threat affects financial decision making. *Psychological Science*, 21, 1411-1416.

Ersner-Hershfield, H., Wimmer, G. E., & Knutson, B. (2008). Saving for the future self: Neural measures of future self-continuity predict temporal discounting. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 4, 85–92.

Chumbley, J. R., Krajbich, I., Engelmann, J. B., Russell, E., Van Uum, S., Koren, G., & Fehr, E. (2014). Endogenous cortisol predicts decreased loss aversion in young men. *Psychological Science*, 25, 2102–2105.

\*\* Joshi, P. D., & Fast, N. J. (2013). Power and reduced temporal discounting. *Psychological Science*, 24, 432–438.

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 3 – VARIABILITY IN DECISION MAKING II**

ASSIGNMENT DUE: JOURNAL 3 BY SUNDAY, APRIL 5 AT 11PM

Simmons, J. P., LeBoeuf, R. A., & Nelson, L. D. (2010). The effect of accuracy motivation on anchoring and adjustment: Do people adjust from provided anchors? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*, 917–932.

Brandt, M. J., Evans, A. M., & Crawford, J. T. (in press). The unthinking or confident extremist? Political extremists are more likely than moderates to reject experimenter-generated anchors. *Psychological Science*.

Yamagishi, T., Li, Y., Takagishi, H., Matsumoto, Y., & Kiyonari, T. (2014). In Search of Homo economicus. *Psychological Science*, *25*, 1699–1711.

\*\*Parkinson, B., Phiri, N., & Simons, G. (2012). Bursting with anxiety: Adult social referencing in an interpersonal Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART). *Emotion*, *12*, 817–826.

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 – MORAL DECISION MAKING I**

Pinker, S. (2008, January 13). *The moral instinct*. New York Times.

Greene, J.D., Sommerville, R.B., Nystrom, L.E., Darley, J.M., & Cohen, J.D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, *293*, 2105-2108

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 10 – MORAL DECISION MAKING II**

Kern, M. and Chugh, D. (2009). Bounded ethicality: The perils of loss framing. *Psychological Science*, *20*, 378-384.

Li, M., Vietri, J., Galvani, A. P., & Chapman, G. B. (2010). How do people value life? *Psychological Science*, *21*, 163–167.

Tetlock, P.E. (2003). Thinking about the unthinkable: Coping with secular encroachments on sacred values. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, *7*, 320-324.

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15 – GROUP DECISION MAKING**

Baron, R. A., & Branscombe, N. R. (2012). *Social psychology* (13th ed.). Boston: Pearson. CHAPTER 11 (Selections).

\*\* Minson, J. A., & Mueller, J. S. (2012). The cost of collaboration: Why joint decision making exacerbates rejection of outside information. *Psychological Science*, *23*, 219–224.

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 17 – CASE STUDY: MOUNT EVEREST**

Roberto, M. A., & Carioggia, G. M. (2003). Mount Everest – 1996. *Harvard Business School*. Read carefully and come to class prepared to discuss in detail.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22 – NEGOTIATIONS I**

No reading. Come to class prepared to negotiate with a classmate.

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 24 – NEGOTIATIONS II**

Bazerman, M.H. & Moore, D. (2008). *Judgment in managerial decision making (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Chapter 9: Making Rational Decisions in Negotiation.

\*\*Maddux, W. W., Mullen, E., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Chameleons bake bigger pies and take bigger pieces: Strategic behavioral mimicry facilitates negotiation outcomes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 461–468.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 – IMPROVING DECISION MAKING**

Bazerman, M.H. & Moore, D. (2008). *Judgment in managerial decision making (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Chapter 11: Improving Decision Making

Bring the Mt. Everest (1996) case with you to class.

### **FRIDAY, MAY 1 – EXAM 2**

**(Note: If we fall behind or need to cancel class at some point during the semester, this exam may be held during board week. Please keep the class times free.)**

*ASSIGNMENT DUE: JOURNAL 3 BY SUNDAY, MAY 3 AT 11PM*

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 AND MAY 8 – NO CLASS: BOARD WEEK**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 AND FRIDAY, MAY 15 – NO CLASS: COMPLETION DAYS.  
MEET WITH KRISTIN ABOUT FINAL PAPER AS NEEDED**

*ASSIGNMENT DUE: FINAL PAPER BY TUESDAY, MAY 19 AT 11PM*

## **GUIDELINES: JOURNAL ENTRIES**

(Adapted from materials available at  
[http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ble/teaching/psy224/sp\\_journal\\_f2009.pdf](http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ble/teaching/psy224/sp_journal_f2009.pdf) and  
<http://www.umich.edu/~psychol/380/sommers/005journal.html>)

Three times during the semester, you should select a process, phenomenon, theory, or psychological tendency from the course content and connect it to an experience from your own life. The body of each entry should begin with a description of an event or interaction in your life in four or five sentences. A page-long story about how you spent your weekend is too long, and one line reading, "I went out with my friends" is insufficient. You should pick a specific event or interaction and describe it in enough detail so that your subsequent discussion will make sense to someone who was not there. Next you should describe how the specific topic you have chosen is relevant to this event. You should be very specific and clear with your terms. Each entry should be approximately 250 words – less than 200 is probably too short, and more than 400 is too long. These are relatively informal writing exercises, but you should still follow the rules of basic grammar, and be sure to spellcheck and proofread your work.

The following prompts may help you get started. Do not feel bound to only answer these questions. Similarly, do not feel like you must answer all of these questions in a single entry.

- How can the phenomenon you have chosen be seen in this interaction?
- How does your current awareness of this phenomenon change the way you interpret what happened during this event?
- If you (or others) had been aware of research about this phenomenon during the event, how might the outcome of the interaction have been changed?
- How will your learning about this phenomenon influence your attitudes/behavior/perceptions in the future?
- What questions do you now have after considering the event in light of psychological theory?
- What type of experiment(s) might help address these issues?
- If your interaction was not consistent with your chosen social principle:
  - How was it inconsistent?
  - Why do you think the outcome of this interaction seems to be inconsistent with the phenomenon you chose?
  - What aspects of the situation, if changed, would have resulted in a less surprising outcome?
  - What type of experiment(s) might help answer these questions?

## **GUIDELINES: ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS**

You will present a research article with one or more classmates that will have the following components:

- Each presentation should be between 10 and 12 minutes and should be structured based on the QALMRI format.
- Presenters should distribute to the class (in hard copy) a summary of their article in “QALMRI” format.
- Presenters should use Powerpoint; files should be uploaded to Moodle by 11:00pm the night before your presentation.

### **Grading Criteria**

- Presentations meet the guidelines above.
- The representation of the material is accurate.
- The audience can understand the material (e.g., an appropriate amount of detail is provided, speakers move at an appropriate pace, the group answers clarification questions well).
- The presentation is engaging (e.g., speakers are not reading from notes, make eye contact with the audience).
- Powerpoint is used to enhance understanding and engage the audience.
- All group members are prepared, contribute to the presentation, and understand the full article. Do NOT simply divide up the work so that one person does the Intro, one the Methods, and one the Results without talking to each other! Past experience has shown this is the fastest and easiest way to a weak presentation.

## MIDTERM PAPER

Through the first half of the semester, we will be learning about a wide variety of heuristics, biases, and psychological tendencies. Much of what we will read will treat these mental processes as invariant givens. Yet, the extent to which a person engages in these processes varies by many factors, including individual differences, culture, or situational factors. In this first paper, you will **take one of the topics that we have discussed and develop an argument as to why we might expect that it would vary cross-culturally.** (For reasons that should be clear after reading the next few paragraphs, you may not choose to write about loss aversion or the endowment effect.)

To begin, read the following article, which describes cultural variation in the endowment effect. You can use the Introduction as an organizational and conceptual model for your paper.

Maddux, W. M., Yang, H., Falk, C., Adam, H., Adair, W., Endo, Y., Carmon, Z., & Heine, S. J. (2010). For whom is parting with possessions more painful? Cultural differences in the endowment effect. *Psychological Science, 21*, 1910-1917.

Note how the Introduction is organized – your paper should follow this same structure. Numbers in parentheses are suggested page lengths for each section.

- Describe a psychological phenomenon (in the case of the target paper, the endowment effect); (1 page)
- Explain the putative mechanism underlying that phenomenon; (1 page)
- Describe group differences (the target paper compares East Asian and Western cultures); (1 page) and
- Integrate the literature reviewed to make a novel prediction about group differences in the tendency to exhibit the phenomenon. This prediction should be phrased as a theory (a general statement about what we would expect) and a hypothesis (a specific prediction about a testable hypothesis) (1-2 pages)

I will post material on general differences between East Asian and Western cultures that you can use to guide your theorizing. You may explore differences between another set of groups, but you are responsible for finding the background research to support your argument. Similarly, you may discuss a topic that we haven't covered, but are responsible for finding the relevant background research.

### Other Requirements

- Papers will be 4-6 double-spaced pages.
- Your work should be carefully proofread.
- Follow APA Style for in-text citations and end References. (I will provide a handout with these details.)
- Include page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

### Grading Criteria

- Accurate and clear description of the background literature (phenomenon, mechanisms, group differences).
- Clearly-developed argument about why we would expect group differences.
  - Can the reader follow the argument?
  - Is the argument backed up by empirical evidence?
  - Is the argument logically sound? (Ask yourself: Can I phrase my argument as “If X [and Y] are true, then I would expect Z?”)
- Prediction is clearly stated at the level of a theory (a general statement about what we would expect) and a hypothesis (a specific prediction about a testable hypothesis)
- The paper is well-written. (e.g., The prose is straightforward and easy to follow, ideas connect naturally, the paper is well-organized and has been proofread carefully.)

## FINAL PAPER

Our class has students from many different backgrounds and with diverse interests. My goal for the final paper is for you to explore your interests in the context of the class material. To that end, there are several options for the final paper, and within each one, quite a bit of choice about the domain. There are several common features and grading criteria:

- You will apply the course material to a novel situation (or person).
- You will analyze this situation or person in light of the theories and evidence we have explored this semester.
- You will consider how your analysis opens up avenues for research, and pose a research question that is testable with an empirical study or quantitative data.
- Papers will contain between 4-6 pages of careful analysis of the course material. Final papers will be somewhere between 6-12 pages; this wide range reflects the variability in how much time and space will be required to present background information to the reader.
- Papers should be double-spaced and carefully proofread, with page numbers in the upper right hand corner of each page.
- All papers should use APA Style for in-text citations and end References. (A handout is on Moodle with these details.)

### Grading criteria

- Does the paper meet the guidelines?
- Does the writer demonstrate analysis and application of the course material that goes beyond what we have discussed or covered in class? Is such analysis accurate?
- Is the author's logic clearly developed and articulated?
- Is the paper well-written? (e.g., Is prose straightforward and easy to follow? Do ideas connect naturally? Is it well-organized? Has it been proofread carefully?)

Option 1: Interview With a Decision Maker
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- 1. Choose a decision maker.** Identify someone for whom making clearly-defined decisions is a major, if not central, part of their professional role, and is willing to speak with you for 45 minutes to one hour. Although all employees make decisions in some form, the key notion here is that the decisions are discrete and a primary focus of the job. If you choose this option, you must email me a one-paragraph précis describing your plans by April 17. In this proposal, identify the person you plan to interview, and explain how making decisions is a central part of his or her job. Also indicate if you have contacted the person and if he or she has agreed to be interviewed.
- 2. Prepare for your interview.** Your pre-interview research should familiarize you with the kind of decisions your interviewee faces as part of his or her career. Sources for this will vary, but may include statistical overviews of the profession, published interviews with members of the profession, popular media or academic work. Based on your research, identify specific issues from class that might be relevant to this profession. Generate a list of questions that you plan to ask your interviewee that connect his or her particular job to the course material.
- 3. Conduct the interview.** Begin by asking the interviewee to describe his or her profession, and the major decisions he or she faces. Ask the interviewee to describe, in detail, a decision that was particularly difficult and/ or memorable. Probe for information that elucidates the underlying decision making process. Be sure to ask the questions that you generated in Step 2. Be sure to take notes.

- 4. Write the paper.** Your final paper should be a synthesis of material from the class and what you discovered in your interview. Your final report should contain the following elements:
- Describe the person you interviewed. Be sure to include a thorough description of his or her profession. Relate any characteristics of the job that are relevant to the decision-making process. Explain why you chose this person for your project. *1-2 pages.*
  - Describe the specific incident that he or she told you about. *1 page.*
  - Analyze and integrate what you learned from your interviewee with the course material. You should address between 3-5 different course topics in this section. For example: Did his or her behavior illustrate (or contradict) a particular decision-making process that we've discussed? Make clear that you understand the concepts and evidence from the course – explain them to the reader. *3-4 pages*
  - What did you learn from the interview about decision making? Connect this back to the empirical study of decision making by proposing a direction for future research. This section does not need to include a fully-fleshed out study, but it should pose a specific research question that could be tested with social scientific methods and quantitative data. State a hypothesis about the answer to this question, and explain your logic. *1-2 pages*
  - Include an Appendix with the questions you generated during your interview preparation.

Option 2: Case Study Creation
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- 1. Choose a situation.** Identify a specific situation that illustrates some processes that can lead people to use suboptimal decision making processes. The scenario can be a real life situation, a modification of a real life situation, or a situation that you create. Use this information to create a case study of the kind we will encounter in class (e.g., Carter Racing). Your goal is to create a situation in which a participant could take part in an experience that illustrates properties of decision making.
- 2. Your paper should have the following components:**
  - Participant experience.* In this part of the paper, you will create materials of the kind used in Carter Racing. This information should give the case-study participant 1. background on the situation he or she is facing; 2. relevant information or data needed to make the decision required; 3. information and data required to make a decision. *3-6 pages (intentionally wide because this may vary a great deal based on topic)*
  - Case study analysis.* In this part of the paper, you should analyze the case that you created. Think of this part of the paper as being “field notes” for a teacher who plans to use this case in class. Is there an objectively “right” answer based on the data given to case study participants? Are there particular decision making processes that you think will affect participants as they work through the case study? This section of the paper should be clear and detailed – define and explain each process. Elucidate very clearly how each one may influence decision making as participants work through the case study. You should engage with between 3-5 different course topics in this part of the paper. *3-4 pages*
  - What open questions does this case highlight about decision making? Connect this back to the empirical study of decision making by proposing a direction for future research. This section does not need to include a fully-fleshed out study, but it should pose a specific research question that could be tested with social scientific methods and quantitative data. State a hypothesis about the answer to this question, and explain your logic. *1-2 pages*

### Option 3: Situation Analysis

- 1. Choose a situation.** Identify a situation from real life in which people used suboptimal decision making processes. This situation should be specific; for example, rather than analyze “factors that contributed to the economic collapse” you might analyze “factors that led to the issuance of many sub-prime loans prior to the economic collapse.” You can think of this assignment as being akin to the “Mount Everest” case study we will do in class, in which we apply principles of the course to a novel, specific situation. Your chosen situation should be a complex and public occurrence rather than something from your personal life.
- 2. Research the situation.** You should gain a nuanced understanding of the facts of the event. What happened? Who was involved? What were the primary contributing factors to the event? Sources should be mainstream research and media outlets (e.g., academic journals, newspapers, public data of high quality, interviews with people involved, etc.). You should become an expert in the situation.
- 3. Your paper should have the following components:**
  - a. Describe the situation to the reader in detail. Assume that the reader is not an expert in the situation – your summary should be thorough, non-technical, and fair. *2-3 pages.*
  - b. Analyze the situation given the course material we have covered. Are there particular decision making processes that you think affected the outcome of the situation? This section of the paper should be clear and detailed – define each process and explain it. Elucidate very clearly how each one may have influenced decision making in this situation. You should engage with between 3-5 different course topics in this part of the paper. *3-4 pages*
  - c. What open questions does this example highlight about decision making? Connect this back to the empirical study of decision making by proposing a direction for future research. This section does not need to include a fully-fleshed out study, but it should pose a specific research question that could be tested with social scientific methods and quantitative data. State a hypothesis about the answer to this question, and explain your logic. *1-2 pages*