

SYLLABUS: COMM 3331-0010 (18138) COMMUNICATION AND DECISION MAKING OSU UNIT ONLINE TERM

Instructor: Matthew Grizzard

Email address: grizzard.6@osu.edu

Office hours: ZOOM (see Carmen for links and hours)

Teaching Assistant: Tim O'Neil

Email address: oneil.236@osu.edu

Office hours: ZOOM (see Carmen for links and hours)

Course Overview

This class examines the intersection of communication and decision-making. We will explore and dissect what a decision is and what “decision-making as a process” means. In addition, we’ll compare interpersonal and group decision-making contexts. The central idea for the class is to develop an understanding of descriptive and prescriptive models of decision-making so that students will come away with an understanding of how to improve their decision-making.

Course description

This course will be delivered in asynchronous time, 100% online. This course examines decision-making processes. How do individuals and groups make decisions? What factors influence the decision-making process? How can communication complicate or simplify decision-making? What leads individuals to make good vs. bad decisions?

To examine these questions, we will explore the psychological mechanisms and processes that underlie decision-making. We will complete case studies throughout the semester to help us identify what a decision is, how we evaluate the pros and cons of alternatives, and the pitfalls that lead individuals and groups to make sub-optimal decisions.

Presented in an online format, this course will take a dynamic approach to learning. We will venture through various aspects of decision-making theory. Although all assignments are completed individually, you should engage with other students through online discussions. Thus, certain technologies are required for taking this course (see Course Technology section).

Throughout the 15 weeks of class, you’ll develop a more thorough understanding of what constitutes a decision; methods of thinking through decisions in a systematic and scientific manner; why decisions are often less than optimal; and, through this endeavor, how communication can improve decision making.

Course learning goals and outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Be able to define what constitutes a decision.
- Understand what psychological factors influence decision-making.
- Describe and implement basic decision-making methods, such as the Lens Model.
- Comprehend how communication can help avoid common pitfalls in making individual and group decisions.

Students will develop these competencies through various online quizzes, tests, and a term paper.

Mode of delivery

This course will be presented fully online with asynchronous lectures and videos and a synchronous professor/TA check-in each week (Mondays 1PM; dates may vary).

The professor and TA will answer student questions during the check-in and may work through course examples. The weekly check-in will be held on Zoom (see Carmen for link).

How this course works

- **Online lectures**
Recorded lectures will be uploaded with all other materials every Monday. More than one lecture may appear in the upload. The videos are short to provide the most optimal viewing experience and to increase attention and engagement. Watch a lecture, take a break, come back to the next.
- **Readings**
All readings should be completed prior to viewing the lectures.
- **Online Check-in**
The professor will check-in with students each week for approximately 30 minutes on Zoom. The Zoom link is provided on Carmen.

Course materials

Required

The texts for this class represent both a high-level theoretical approach to decision making (i.e., Hastie & Dawes, 2010) and a more grounded applied understanding of typical real-world decisions (i.e., Ariely, 2009). These texts are some of the best of the last 30 years on decision-

making theory and practice. They will provide both breadth and depth for the students' understanding of decision-making processes.

Hastie, R., & Dawes, R. M. (2010). *Rational choice in an uncertain world* (2nd Edition). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Available from The Ohio State University Bookstore and Amazon
<https://www.amazon.com/Rational-Choice-Uncertain-World-Psychology/dp/1412959039>

Ariely, D. (2009). *Predictably irrational, revised and expanded edition: The hidden forces that shape our decisions*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Available from The Ohio State University Bookstore and Amazon
https://www.amazon.com/Predictably-Irrational-Revised-Expanded-Decisions-ebook/dp/B002C949KE/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1544020705&sr=1-1&keywords=predictably+irrational

Packback - Packback Questions is an online community where you will ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications. Packback may require a paid subscription. Refer to www.packback.co/product/pricing for more information.

An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don't receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to <https://questions.packback.co> and clicking "Sign up for an Account"
Note: If you already have an account on Packback, you can log in with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Looking to join a community you don't see here?" section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.

Community Lookup Key: **78c865a0-8f0d-4857-aa78-6e3bf9aa4093**

Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

*** In the interest of facilitating an up-to-date course and fostering learning, other course materials may be made available during the semester. If so, these materials (or how to obtain them) will be provided on Carmen. No additional costs will be incurred to access these materials. ***

Grading and faculty response

Grading

Following are the point values and/or percentages for each assignment:

Assignments	Points and/or Percentage
12 Online Discussion Posts	150 points (15%)
11 Online Quizzes	200 points (20%)
2 Tests	400 points (40%)
Term Paper Milestone 1	30 points (3%)
Term Paper Milestone 2	70 points (7%)
Term Paper	150 points (15%)

Assignments

- Online Discussion Posts through Packback (15%)
 - Each week you will participate in online discussions with some of your fellow classmates through the Packback Questions platform (see Materials section of Syllabus).
 - The weekly deadline for submission is Thursday at 11:59PM EST.
 - Each week, you are required to submit:
 - 1 open-ended question with a minimum curiosity score of 50, worth 5% of the weekly points.
 - 2 responses with a minimum curiosity score of 50, worth 10% of the weekly points.
 - Half credit will be provided for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.
 - The Online Discussion component of the course is intended to help you synthesize knowledge gains across weeks, pose questions to your fellow students and the instructors that you are wrestling with, and facilitate general involvement with the course materials. For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: <http://vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions>

- 11 Reading Quizzes (20%)
 - Open-book/note quizzes will be administered throughout the semester on a weekly schedule.
 - Each quiz covers the previous week's material.
 - Quizzes will be posted on Monday. All quizzes are due by 11:59PM EST on the following Tuesday.
 - The quizzes represent a check-in point for the students and the professor. They ensure that students are keeping up with the readings and that the students are understanding the basics of each reading. The quizzes also present—in an abbreviated format—questions similar to those that will be found on tests.

- You will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz.
- You may take each quiz twice.
- I will drop the lowest quiz grade.
- Each quiz is equally weighted toward the final grade.
- 2 Tests (40% of grade total)
 - 2 tests will be administered during the semester: Test 1 is during Week 8, and Test 2 is during Week 15.
 - The tests will assess students' knowledge of the readings and lectures as well as their ability to apply their knowledge to related contexts.
 - Tests will be open book and open note. There will, however, be a time limit for the tests of 90 minutes.
 - Each test is weighted equally toward the final grade.
- Term Paper (25% in total)
 - The individual term paper will ask each student to write a paper that provides an up-to-date synthesis of current research on any topic we cover in class.
 - The final paper should:
 - Be between 9 and 11 pages long (double-spaced; excluding references). Papers will be penalized 5% for failing to adhere to the length requirement.
 - Relate to at least one decision-making model/method/theory we cover in the class.
 - Provide an overview and synthesis of at least 5 peer-reviewed empirical articles from the last decade. Empirical articles are those that present data. The papers you review must present a study and analyses of original data.
 - These articles can be found on Google Scholar or a computer database (e.g., PsycINFO).
 - Describe the current state of the scientific literature.
 - What questions are researchers asking through their studies?
 - How are they researching them?
 - What are they finding?
 - What are the proposing that future research on the topic should look like?
 - Note: References should be provided in American Psychological Association (APA) 7th format. **Note:** You will not lose points for small deviations but do your best in terms of reporting your sources.
 - Information and a rubric will be provided in Carmen at the time of each assignment.
 - There are two milestone assignments related to the term paper. These milestone assignments will help you stay on track and hopefully produce a higher-quality paper.
 - Milestone Assignment 1 (3% of final grade) is due during Week 5.
 - This assignment asks students to: (a) identify the topic/model of interest, (b) provide an overview of any research they have done to

- date, (c) present a plan for how they will continue their research on the topic, and (d) an annotated bibliography of at least two papers that they have already found and that they to use in their final paper.
- Milestone Assignment 2 (7% of final grade) is due during Week 11.
 - This assignment is an outline of your term paper.
 - By this point, students should have completed the primary research needed to write the term paper (or be very close to having completed it) and identified all five scientific papers that they will use.
 - The outline should provide a road map of the paper. It should describe the structure of the argumentation that will be used, which topics/papers will be presented in which order, and have enough detail that the professor/TA has a firm understanding of what the student will present in their final term paper.
 - The Final Term paper (15% of final grade) is due during exam week.
 - The final paper should begin with a brief description of the model in question and what it is intended to predict/describe (~1-1.5 pages).
 - Following this the paper should present the five articles they are reviewing addressing each article in turn (~1 page per article).
 - The paper should end with the conclusions you can make regarding the main questions of the assignment:
 - How is the model/topic typically studied? (Look for similarities/differences between the papers in terms of methods).
 - What is the current state of the literature? (Look for similarities/differences in the take-away messages of the papers).
 - What does the future look like for research on the model/topic? (Look for similarities/differences between the future research directions proposed by the studies. What do the authors think should come next?).
 - Extra Credit (Bonus of up to 3%)
 - Students may also choose to earn extra credit by completing research studies through C-REP, the communication research pool. Each research credit earned on C-REP equals 1% of extra credit. Please see the C-REP document on Carmen for additional information.
 - If you have a circumstance that will prevent you from participating in studies to earn the extra credit, there are alternative assignments that you can complete. See C-REP document on Carmen for additional information.

Late assignments

Due dates are provided in the course schedule. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day (with a maximum of 10%).

Extensions and other accommodations will be provided if absences or late assignments are the result of medical emergencies. In these cases, an alternative assignment may be substituted by the professor.

Grading scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70–72.9: C-
67–69.9: D+
60–66.9: D
Below 60: E

Please note: Carmen and Buckeyelink do not round up grades. Your grades will be exactly what is earned and will not be rounded up. Extra credit opportunities are offered and you should complete all extra credit assignments if you want to ensure that you earn the highest grade possible.

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Credit hour and work expectation

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Student participation requirements

There is no formal attendance policy for this course. However, you should always view lectures and complete readings for this class.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

General Questions

If you have questions about course content, please attend office hours.

Grading and feedback

For assignments, you can generally expect grading to be completed within 10 days. Online quizzes and tests will be graded immediately and will be posted once all students have completed the quiz/test.

E-mail

All emails should be sent to the TA and Instructor through Carmen. You can expect a reply to your email within **24-48 hours on weekdays and within 24 hours following a weekend.**

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** This course is intended to prepare you for future communications as a professional. Assignments should be approached in this manner. Please proofread, edit, and include appropriate language.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Furthermore, rude or impatient communications are generally not appreciated in professional situations. Please consider your words as if you were a professional when communicating with other students, the instructor, and the teaching assistant.
- **Citing your sources:** When requested, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
 - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
 - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
 - **This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and**

multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- [Carmen accessibility](#)
- **Carmen Zoom:**
 - Office hours will be held through Ohio State’s conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
 - Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
 - [Carmen Zoom](#) help guide
- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743
- **Packback:** If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: Current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone
 - Webcams or devices with webcams may be available to our grad students. The School of Communication has a small pool of iPads and laptops that are available for faculty/staff/grad students needing a device to check out. If you need such a device, submit a request to the School of Communication’s technical support personnel (asctech@osu.edu).

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Other course policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources

at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at titleix@osu.edu

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

University COVID policies

This is a placeholder for policies to be announced by OSU.

Student illness or absence

If *you* are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings and slides. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged.

Continuous engagement with this course is essential to learning the material. Students are expected to attend class and engage with assignments and discussion prompts for every scheduled meeting, participating at least once per week for courses with fully remote participation. Students who need to miss class or who are not able to participate due to illness (COVID-19 or other illnesses), exposure to COVID-19, care for family members exposed to COVID-19 or other reasons are expected to contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for accommodation. Students in special situations or those requiring specific, long-term or other accommodation should seek support from appropriate university offices including but not limited to: Student Advocacy (<https://advocacy.osu.edu/>), Student Life Disability Services (<https://slds.osu.edu/>), and the Office of Institutional Equity (<https://equity.osu.edu/>).

Instructor illness or absence

If the *instructor* is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus

This syllabus represents a contract in the works. Events that transpire over the semester may require me to modify the administration of this course and therefore the syllabus. In the event I need to modify the syllabus, I will announce the modification in class and on Carmen. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; <http://slds.osu.edu>; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Course schedule (tentative*)

* This syllabus represents a contract in the works. Events that transpire over the semester may require me to modify the administration of this course and therefore the syllabus. In the event I need to modify the syllabus, I will announce the modification in class and on Carmen. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. Please note that modifications will only occur that will increase the quality of learning.

Week	Day	Assignment(s) Time assignments are due is always 11:59PM EST	Readings <i>RC</i> = Rational Choice <i>PI</i> = Predictably Irrational	Topic(s)
1	24-Aug		Syllabus RC – Ch. 1 & 2	Class Structure and Expectations Thinking & Deciding; What Is Decision Making?
2	30-Aug	Reading Quiz 1 (due Tues.) Packback 1 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 3	General Framework for Judgment
3	6-Sep	Reading Quiz 2 (due Tues.) Packback 2 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 4	Anchoring and Adjustment
4	13-Sep	Reading Quiz 3 (due Tues.) Packback 3 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 5	Judging Heuristically
5	20-Sep	Term Paper Milestone 1 (due Fri.) Reading Quiz 4 (due Tues.) Packback 4 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 6 & 7	Explanation-based Judgments; Chance and Cause
6	27-Sep	Reading Quiz 5 (due Tues.) Packback 5 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 8	Thinking Rationally about Uncertainty
7	4-Oct	Reading Quiz 6 (due Tues.) Packback 6 Posts (due Thurs.)	None	Research and Review Week: Extended online check-in will be held with professor and TA.
8	11-Oct	Test 1 (due Fri.)		Test 1
9	18-Oct	Packback 7 Posts (due Thurs.)	Online	Modeling Decisions: How are the topics from the first 7 weeks used?

10	25-Oct	Reading Quiz 7 (due Tues.) Packback 8 Posts (due Thurs.)	PI – Ch. 1-4	Relativity; Supply & Demand; Cost of Zero Cost; Social Norms
11	1-Nov	Reading Quiz 8 (due Tues.) Packback 9 Posts (due Thurs.) Term Paper Milestone 2 (due Fri.)	PI – Ch. 5-9	Arousal; Procrastination; Endowment Effect; Options; Expectations
12	8-Nov	Reading Quiz 9 (due Tues.) Packback 10 Posts (due Thurs.)	Online	Groupthink
13	15-Nov	Reading Quiz 10 (due Tues.) Packback 11 Posts (due Thurs.)	Online	Methods to Improve Decision- making
14	22-Nov	No Class - Thanksgiving and Indigenous Peoples' Day	None	None
15	29-Nov	Reading Quiz 11 (due Tues.) Packback 12 Posts (due Thurs.)	RC – Ch. 11 & 12	Descriptive and Prescriptive Decision Theories
16	6-Dec	Test 2 (due Wed.)		
		Term Paper		