

# Communication 3331: Communication & Decision-Making [Online]

Autumn 2020

Instructor	Email	Online office hours:
<b>Dr. Emily Davidson</b> <b>(Students in groups 1 – 3)</b>	Davidson.536@osu.edu	<b>TR 12 – 3 p.m. or by appointment</b>
<b>GTA: Lisa Rhee</b> <b>(Students in groups 4 – 6)</b>	Rhee.104@osu.edu	<b>Monday 2 – 5 p.m.</b>

## General Information

### Course Description

How do we make decisions? What factors influence the process of judging whether, when, and how we should act? This course will provide an overview of the psychological processes that determine decision-making, with a focus on communication contexts. We will review literature and research in communication and social psychology to understand how cognitive, affective, and motivational factors influence how we perceive meaning and (sometimes) influence how we construct our preferences. As a fully online course, online readings, lectures, and discussions will drive our interpretation of the material.

### Course Goals

Students should end the course with:

1. An increased understanding of the cognitive and affective factors that influence decision-making.
2. An appreciation for the role of these factors in behavior and decision-making in students' own personal and professional lives.
3. The ability to critically analyze and evaluate decisions before, during, and after making them.

## Course Materials

### Required Text

- All readings to be provided as digital copies on Carmen. **There is no textbook for this class.**

### Recommended Text:

- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

## Course Expectations

### Opening Questionnaire – 10 pts

A quick survey of items relating to some of the individual differences in information processing and decision making. Complete honestly and before getting into any of the readings for a quick 10 points. Results will be used anonymously as a basis for discussion and is a prerequisite to starting the course.

### **Weekly discussions – 100 pts**

Since this course is entirely online, your participation in weekly discussion threads will help you to connect with the material and one another's perspectives on the concepts we're covering. After the initial introduction post (10 pts), you will have 7 separate discussions guided by a prompt (15 pts each). **The lowest score will be dropped.**

### **Writing Assignments\* – 75 pts**

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments are due by **11:59 PM** on their listed due date. **Please submit a digital copy on dropbox in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format.**

**There will be three graded papers in this course. These will be chosen from five prompts throughout the semester.**

- **Reflection Papers – 25 pts each**

Five writing prompts will be posted on Canvas during the semester. You will write concise (approximately 700 to 750 words) reflection papers **for three of them** applying the material covered in class and in the readings. These reflection papers will provide you with an opportunity to thoughtfully discuss how the concepts we discuss might be applicable to your own personal and professional life, and how you might incorporate your new knowledge to better your own decision-making. Reflection papers will be graded for content, clarity, grammar, syntax, and APA style.

*\*A Note on Formatting: Should you choose to do additional research for any of these papers, all references and citations should be formatted according to the style manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Resources to assist you in the research and formatting process are available through the OSU Library system ([library.osu.edu/find/resources/](http://library.osu.edu/find/resources/)). I will also provide materials to help with APA in-line and reference section citations.*

### **Exams – 40 pts each**

We will have two exams this semester, consisting of multiple choice questions. The exams will cover the material discussed in class and the readings. Examinations are not cumulative. Exams are to be taken on the designated exam dates. It is your responsibility to note the day/time of exams/assignments NOW and make sure you will be able to complete them both in the allotted time. If you have any schedule conflicts, you should either rearrange your schedule so that you can complete all of the work or drop the class. No make-ups are allowed except in the case of an emergency. Having more than one exam on a particular date does not qualify as an emergency.

\*\*\*In the rare event that an emergency arises, it is the student's responsibility to 1) inform the instructor *prior* to the exam time, and 2) provide the instructor with written documentation of the emergency (e.g., medical note from certified physician) or an explanatory statement for absence form (available at <http://www.shc.osu.edu/posts/documents/absence-excuse-form.pdf>).

**Extra Credit** – You will have opportunities during the semester to earn extra credit by participating in research studies through C-REP. I will post specific instructions on Canvas to help you set up an account

with C-REP if you have not yet already. You may earn up to 8 points of extra credit on your overall grade.

Item	Points each	Total points
<b>Quizzes (2)</b>	5	10
<b>Opening questionnaire</b>	10	10
<b>Self-introduction</b>	10	10
<b>Discussions (7)</b>	15	90*
<b>Reflection papers (3)</b>	25	75
<b>Exams (2)</b>	40	80
		<b>275</b>

*\*lowest score dropped*

## Grade Scheme

Grades for all components of the course will be converted to percentages and averaged using the weights given above. Your final grade will be computed using the OSU standard grading scheme summarized below.

E	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A
<60%	≥60%	≥67%	≥70%	≥73%	≥77%	≥80%	≥83%	≥87%	≥90%	≥93%

## Additional Information and Resources

### Communications:

I will post class updates, extra credit opportunities, and/or additional materials as announcements on Canvas and by email. Please check Canvas daily and read your email regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) because you are responsible for this information.

### Late Assignments:

There are no late submissions accepted for discussion posts and responses. Written assignments must be submitted *no later than 11:59 p.m.* on the assigned due date. Written assignments may be accepted late up to 3 days after the due date, but will receive a 10% grade penalty based on the following:

Assignment submission date	Maximum grade (% of total possible points)
1 day late	90%
2 days late	80%
3 days late	70%
4 days or more late	no credit

### Online Decorum

This course will often expose students to other experiences and points of view. At all times, respect of different backgrounds, ideas, and viewpoints is encouraged and expected. Showing and receiving respect is a life skill to be practiced throughout the semester. Racist, homophobic, sexist, and ableist language will not be tolerated.

## Challenging a Grade

I am happy to discuss a grade with you, but there is an official way to go about it. If you wish to challenge a grade you must follow these steps:

1. Read the accompanying comments and think about their validity (including in-line comments – click the View Feedback button on your Canvas submission)
2. Email within one week of receiving the grade to make an appointment on Zoom or in-person (COVID-19 may affect in-person meetings)
3. Bring along the assignment in question and a written explanation of why the grade should be altered. The resulting review of the grade may result in the grade being raised or lowered.

## Academic Misconduct

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct. If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html>)

## Disability Services

**Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 098 Baker Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.**

## Mental Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the semester are encouraged to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Services (614-292-5766; <https://ccs.osu.edu/>) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential.

## Final Note

This syllabus, like most, is tentative. Things come up: we may get behind or we may really like a topic and want to explore it more deeply. Any changes to the syllabus or schedule will be posted on Canvas and emailed to the class.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date range	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due Paper Discussion Exam Other
1 <i>Introduction</i>	8/25– 8/28	Introduction to Decision-Making	Kahneman (2011) Chapter 1	<b>Opening Survey</b>
		Tools of Choice Architecture	Newell, et al. (2014) Chapter 1	<b>Self-introductions due Fri 8/28 (responses by Mon 8/31)</b> <b>Syllabus quiz</b>
2 <i>Influencing factors</i>	8/31 – 9/4	Framing	Plous (1993) Chapter 6	
		Bias & Stereotyping	Steele (1997)	<b>Discussion 1 due Weds 9/2 (responses by Friday 9/4)</b>
3 <i>Influencing factors (cont.)</i>	9/8 – 9/11	Ego Depletion	Baumeister (2014)	<b>Reflection Paper Prompt 1 due Friday 9/11</b>
				<b>Discussion 2 due Weds 9/9 (responses by Friday 9/11)</b>
4 <i>Cognition</i>	9/14 – 9/18	Attitude Accessibility		
		Consistency & Cognitive dissonance	Cialdini (1993) Chapter 3	
5 <i>Dual processing models</i>	9/21 – 9/25	Elaboration Likelihood Model		<b>APA quiz due 9/26</b>
		The architecture of attention		<b>Discussion 3 due Weds 9/23 (responses by Friday 9/25)</b>
6 <i>Dual processing (cont)</i>	9/28 – 10/2	Prospect theory	Kahneman (2011) Chs. 25 - 26	<b>Reflection Paper Prompt 2 due Wednesday 9/30</b>
		Exam #1		<b>Exam #1 Friday 10/2</b>

7 <i>Social norms</i>	10/5 – 10/9	Theory of planned behavior		
		Attribution Theory	Chopra (2018)	<b>Discussion 4 due Weds 10/7 (responses by Friday 10/9)</b>
8 <i>Social norms (cont)</i>	10/12 – 10/14 Autumn break 10/15 – 10/16	Social media & Self-presentation	Hogan (2010)	
9 <i>Political decision making</i>	10/19 – 10/23	Groupthink	Raven (1998)	<b>Discussion 5 due Weds 10/21 (responses by Friday 10/23)</b>
		The third person effect		<b>Reflection Paper Prompt 3 due Friday 11/6</b>
10 <i>Emotions</i>	10/25 – 10/30	The huge role of emotions	TBD	
11 <i>Emotions and perceptions</i>	11/2 – 11/6	Standpoints and emotions	Lerner, et al. (2015)	<b>Discussion 6 due Weds 11/4 (responses by Friday 11/6)</b>
		Risk perception	Slovic, et al. (2005)	
12 <i>Risk</i>	11/9 – 11/13 Veteran's Day 11/11	Overconfidence	Kahneman (2011) Chapter 24	<b>Reflection Paper Prompt 4 due Friday 11/13</b>
		Exam #2		
13 <i>Application</i>	11/16 – 11/20	Self-fulfilling prophecies / Fallacies		<b>Exam #2 Friday 11/20</b>
14 <i>Application</i>	11/23 – 11/24 Thanksgiving break			
15 <i>Wrapping up</i>	11/30 – 12/4	Tricky decisions	<i>Paradise Lost</i>	<b>Discussion 7 due Fri 12/4 (responses by Tues 12/8)</b>
	12/7 – 12/9	Wrapping up		<b>Reflection Paper Prompt 5 due Weds 12/9</b>

Thanks for reading the syllabus. Take the syllabus quiz to prove it!