

DESIRES AND DECISIONS 88-386

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Time:	Tuesdays 6:30PM-9:20PM
Location:	226A Porter Hall
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 10:30AM-11:30AM (319F Porter Hall)
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Overview

Classic economic theory suggests that people make choices based on the anticipated utility (i.e., pleasure) they imagine alternatives to yield, and are accurate when predicting their future affect. In contrast to these assumptions, behavioral decision research has shown that people make systematic errors in assessment of utility, which lead them to choose options that are less desirable than their alternatives (Hsee & Hastie, 2006). This course examines how the desirability of experiences, ideas, consumer goods, and public resources is determined. By reading, critiquing, and discussing psychological research we will explore how preferences vary in accordance with perceiver's context, previous experience, memory, focus of attention, culture, and emotions. We will incorporate empirical research on strategic games, contingent evaluation, and quality of life measures into our exploration to see how our preferences match up with others', affect legal decisions, and shape public policy.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of current research on the subjective utility of experiences, consumer goods, and public resources.
2. Assess the quality of empirical research in the field of judgment and decision making.
3. Articulate a novel hypothesis related to the field of judgment and decision making, cite appropriate research supporting that hypothesis, and propose experiments to test it.
4. Write papers using the style of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Textbooks

There is no textbook. All readings are on blackboard.

Grades

Grades will not be curved.

Participation (25%)

As this is a seminar, you will be expected to attend all classes. If you miss more than one class, you cannot receive an A in this course. Additionally, you are expected to participate in discussions. If you do not regularly participate in discussions (i.e., participate each week), you cannot receive an A in this class.

Thought Papers (8%)

Each week you will bring a 1-2 page thought paper commenting on the readings to class (single spaced). It will be turned in at the end of class—late thought papers will not be accepted. Good thought papers notice flaws in logical arguments and experimental designs, or suggest novel research questions that are related to the reading assignment. You are strongly encouraged to raise points mentioned in your thought papers during class.

Research Participation (10%)

To understand and be able to critique the research you are reading about, you are required to participate in the Center for Behavioral Decision Research's research participant pool (RPP). To receive full credit you must earn three hours of RPP credit. You may sign up for RPP at <http://cbdr.cmu.edu/experiments/>. You may not receive monetary compensation for participation. However, you may earn money based on your performance in experiments. If you cannot participate in experiments for scheduling or personal reasons, please notify Professor Morewedge at least 2 weeks before the last class of the semester.

Review Paper (15%)

You'll write a short review of an area of research in the psychology of judgment and decision making. Please contact the TA prior to writing the paper to determine whether the topic you would like to review is appropriate. The paper will be 5-10 (double spaced) pages in length, not including the abstract, references, and title page. It will be written in APA format. In the review paper, you will demonstrate familiarity with current research conducted in the area of your choice and familiarity with the writing style of the American Psychological Association (APA). You must cite at least 10 peer-reviewed journal articles (e.g., Wikipedia is unacceptable). At least 6 of those articles must not appear in the syllabus.

Your review paper is to be submitted via blackboard by 3/3/09 at 11:59PM.

If you are insufficiently familiar with APA format after the in-class discussion, please refer to the 5th edition of the APA publication manual.

Research Presentation (17%)

Each student will present their research proposal to the class in one of the last two classes of the semester. You will have 10-15 minutes to present your hypothesis and the experiment you have designed to test that hypothesis. In the presentation, you clearly articulate your hypothesis, relevant existing research, the experiment you have proposed to test your hypotheses, the results you anticipate, and how those results would support your hypothesis and disprove its alternatives or negative.

Research Proposal (25%)

You will propose your own empirical research on a topic of your choosing that is related to the course in APA format. The proposal is to be 13 to 20 (double spaced) pages in length, including the abstract, references, and title page. In the paper, you will write an introduction reviewing the relevant literature, articulate a testable (novel) hypothesis, propose one or more experiments that would test that hypothesis, predict the results of those experiments, and discuss the implications of those experiments if your predictions were found to be true.

Your research proposal is to be submitted via blackboard by 5/1/09 at 11:59PM.

Late Assignment & Extension Policy

Late thought papers will not be accepted. Late Review Papers and Research Proposals will be penalized one full letter grade per day they are late. **No extensions will be granted.** If you miss or are unprepared to give your research presentation on the date you are assigned to present, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course and a referral to the Dean of Students' Office for further action. You must be the author of work you submit in this course. Please note that you may not submit or present any assignment completed in this class for credit in another course. Doing so will result in a failing grade in this course.

*Note that all readings appear on Blackboard under, "Course Assignments."

Date	Topic and Readings
1/13/09	<p>Course Overview/ Review of APA format/Discussion of Review Paper, Research Proposal, & Presentation</p>
1/20/09	<p>What do we desire?</p> <p>Gilbert, D. (2006). <i>Stumbling on happiness</i>. New York: Knopf. <i>Chapter 2</i> (pp. 27-54).</p> <p>Kahneman, D. (1999). Objective happiness. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwartz, <i>Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology</i> (pp. 3-26). New York: Russell Sage.</p> <p>McMahon, D. M. (2006). <i>Happiness: A history</i>. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press. <i>Chapter 1</i> (pp. 1-15).</p>
1/27/09	<p>Measuring Utility/How can happiness be measured?</p> <p>Gilbert, D. (2006). <i>Stumbling on happiness</i>. New York: Knopf. <i>Chapter 3</i> (pp. 55-74).</p> <p>Kahneman, D., & Riis, J. (in press). Living and thinking about it: Two perspectives on life. In (Eds.) F. Huppert, B. Keverne, & N. Baylis, <i>The science of well-being</i>. Oxford University Press.</p>
2/3/09	<p>Pleasure and Pain</p> <p>Rozin, P. (1999). Preadaptation and the puzzles and properties of pleasure. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwartz, <i>Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology</i> (pp. 109-133). New York: Russell Sage.</p> <p>Andrade, E. B., & Cohen, J. B. (2007). On the consumption of negative feelings. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>, <i>34</i>, 283-300.</p>
2/10/09	<p>Hedonic Adaptation</p> <p>Brickman, P., Coates, D., & Janoff-Bulman, R. (1978). Lottery winners and accident victims: Is happiness relative? <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, <i>36</i>, 917-927.</p> <p>Frederick, S. & Loewenstein, G. (1999). Hedonic adaptation. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwartz, <i>Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology</i> (pp. 302-330). New York: Russell Sage.</p>

2/17/09	<p>Why do we desire?</p> <p>Kubovy, M. (1999). On the pleasures of the mind. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwartz, <i>Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology</i> (pp. 302-330). New York: Russell Sage.</p> <p>Lee, L., Frederick, S., & Ariely, D. (2006). Try it, you'll like it: The influence of expectation, consumption, and revelation on preferences for beer. <i>Psychological Science, 17</i>, 1054-1058.</p>
2/24/09	<p>Are preferences stable?</p> <p>Hsee, C. K, Loewenstein, G. F., Blount, S. & Bazerman, M. H. (1999). Preference reversals between joint and separate evaluation of options: A review and theoretical analysis. <i>Psychological Bulletin, 125</i>, 576-590.</p> <p>Weber, E. U., & Johnson, E. J. (2006). Constructing Preferences From Memories. In S. Lichtenstein & P. Slovic (Eds.), <i>The Construction of Value</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press.</p>
3/03/09	<p>Review Paper Due. No Class</p>
3/17/09	<p>Choosing Experiences</p> <p>Botti, S., & Iyengar, S.S. (2004). The Psychological Pleasure and Pain of Choosing: When People Prefer Choosing at the Cost of Subsequent Outcome Satisfaction. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87</i>, 312-326</p> <p>Hsee, C., & Hastie, R. (2006). Decision and experience: Why don't we choose what makes us happy? <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 10</i>, 31-37.</p>
3/24/09	<p>Predicting Future Experiences</p> <p>Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2007). Prospection: Experiencing the future. <i>Science, 317</i>, 1351-1354.</p> <p>Loewenstein, G., & Lerner, J. S. (2003). The role of affect in decision making. In R. J. Davidson, K. R. Schnerer, & H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Affective Science s</i> (pp. 619-642). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Wirtz, D., Kruger, J., Scollon, C. N., & Diener, E. (2003). What to do on spring break? The role of predicted, on-line, and remembered experience in future choice. <i>Psychological Science, 14</i>, 520-524.</p>

3/31/09	<p>Remembering Experiences</p> <p>Kahneman, D., Fredrickson, B. L., Schreiber, C. A., Redelmeier, D. A. (1993). When more pain is preferred to less: Adding a better end. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 4, 401-405.*Read first.</p> <p>Morewedge, C. K., Kassam, K. S., Hsee, C. K., & Caruso, E. M. (in press). Duration sensitivity depends on stimulus familiarity. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: General</i>.</p> <p>Winkielman, P., & Schwartz, N. (2001). How pleasant was your childhood? Beliefs about memory shape inferences from experienced difficulty of recall. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 12(2), 176-179.</p>
4/7/09	<p>How do we value public goods?</p> <p>Kahneman, D. and Frederick, S. (2002). Representativeness revisited: Attribute substitution in intuitive judgment. pp. 49-81 in T. Gilovich, D. Griffin, and D. Kahneman [eds]. <i>Heuristics & Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment</i>. New York. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Tetlock, P. E. (2003). Thinking the unthinkable: Sacred values and taboo cognitions. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</i>, 7, 320-324.</p>
4/14/09	<p>Making it personal.</p> <p>Baumeister, R., & Vohs, K. (2004). Sexual economics: Sex as a female resource for social exchange in heterosexual interactions. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Review</i>, 8, 339-363.</p> <p>Heyman, J., & Ariely, D. (2004). Effort for payment: A tale of two markets. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 15, 787-793.</p>
4/21/09	<p>Presentations, part 1.</p>
4/28/09	<p>Presentations, part 2.</p>