PHIL/PSYC 279 JUDGMENT AND DECISION MAKING (ONLINE)

Spring 2021

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Office: Any child-free room in my home  
Student Hours: Tuesdays 10:30a-12:30p (CST) via Zoom

**You can expect a response to emails within 48 hours, excluding weekends. Please send a follow-up if you don’t hear a response in this time as I may not have received your message.**

\*Please Note: Instructor Reserves the Right to Modify or Make Changes to the Syllabus\*

\*This course may be completed entirely [asynchronously](https://thebestschools.org/magazine/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-education/). Though we will have live discussions and other live review sessions, the review sessions are optional and there are alternate ways to complete discussions *asynchronously* by posting to the discussion forum.\*

This course examines the philosophical and psychological foundations of decision-making.

Our everyday conceptions of the way we think, make choices, and act often assume we exercise significant control and awareness. Many philosophical accounts of action and character make similar assumptions. But, current work in social psychology suggests we are prone to many cognitive biases and that our behavior is often influenced by minor situational factors rather than our conscious choices or character. These findings raise important questions pertaining to human agency as well as moral responsibility for action and character.

Throughout this course, we will read both philosophical and psychological literature on decision-making, focusing on how philosophical accounts can or cannot accommodate the various ways we are prone to err in our reasoning as well as the way in which unconscious factors often bypass our reasoning and affect our behavior. We will further examine the ethical implications of this picture of human psychology that arises from empirical research.

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied:

Tier 2 Philosophical Knowledge  
Neuroscience

Requirement: PHIL 130 is required for students admitted to Loyola University for Fall 2012 or later.  No requirement for students admitted to Loyola prior to Fall 2012 or those with a declared major or minor in the Department of Philosophy or Department of Political Science.

Student Outcomes***:*** There are 3 categories of student outcomes for this class and different assignments aimed at meeting or testing for these outcomes.

1. *Information-acquisition*: Students will be able to identify, explain, and evaluate the principles of judgment and decision making. Lectures and quizzes help meet and test for these outcomes. More specifically, students can expect to summarize and assess
   * The different positions in the free will debate
   * the various cognitive biases that affect reasoning and decision-making
   * the unconscious effect that environment has on behavior
   * and the relation between these things and ethical questions about responsibility, moral ignorance, and character.
2. *Critical Thinking and Writing*:Students will develop their critical thinking and reasoning skills via class discussions, and a group and final project.
   * Learn how to read and analyze difficult texts.
   * Learn how to craft a good argument in support of one’s view
   * Critically reflect on and assess one’s own views and other views.
3. *Self-Reflection*:Students will develop self-reflective capacities via group work and discussions.
   * See how philosophical thinking and reasoning affects one’s day-to-day life.
   * Reflect on how one can make better judgments and decisions.

Required Texts:

* Gilovich (2008) *How We Know What Isn’t So* New York: The Free Press
* All readings (including Gilovich’s book) will be available in PDF form on Sakai.

Assignments and Grading

Summary:There will be 11 quizzes, lowest one dropped, each are worth 2% of your final grade, students will participate in a small community discussion forum, 5 total, together worth 15%.  Discussion board posts or attendance at live sessions will constitute 30% of the final grade. Participation is worth 10%. In addition, there is 1 group presentation (10%) and one final project (15%). Further details on assignments are below.

Reading quizzes*:* Every quiz will be composed of 10 multiple choice questions (.5 points each) and you will have 15 minutes to take it. You can retake quizzes once and the highest score is recorded. Note that the reading quiz closes at 11:55pm (CST) on day it is due. Quizzes will auto-submit the last \*saved\* version if you run out of time (if 15 minutes is up or the clock strikes 11:55p CST)). When you complete the quiz, be sure to hit "Save" and then "Submit" to ensure none of your answers gets lost. The purpose is to measure your comprehension of the reading.  A course study guide will be provided that includes the topics for each quiz. Each quiz is 2% of your final grade, and the lowest score is dropped.

Class Discussion: The discussion questions are aimed at thinking more deeply about the material and applying it to concrete issues. Students will choose to either (1) attend a one-hour synchronous Zoom session or (2) make an initial post to the forum (250 words) and post two follow up responses (150 words). These will allow you and your classmates to engage with the ideas presented in the material and develop your own thinking and reasoning as you clarify and refine your ideas through discussion. See course schedule below for deadlines. Each class discussion forum is 7.5% (1 initial post and 2 responses or attendance at the week’s session). There are 4 of these.

Group VoiceThread Project:   You will create a VoiceThread presentation with group members I assign (with your input) at the beginning of class. The project involves together developing a reasoned response to or application of the ideas from material. The assignment is 10% of your grade and each group member will receive the same grade for the final product and separate grades based on peer-review of individual participation. See *Group VoiceThread Project* assignment sheet for more details, which is on the Week 7 lesson page and in the Resources->Handouts folder.

Community discussions: You will form a community group at the beginning of the semester that will serve as your sub-community as you make your way through the course. On five occasions you will post to these forums with either an analysis/application of a course idea or a workshop, and then respond to your community members. The goal is to build a sense of community in the class and to use each other as sources of knowledge and support.

This group will be the same as your group project and then will change mid-semester so you can meet new people. Email me if you would be like to be in the same group as someone else in the class.

Final Project:   You can choose amongst several options for creating your final project. These are to be completed individually and involve crafting a reasoned response to or application of the ideas from the class material. You can either: create a piece of visual art (painting, sculpture, photo, multimedia image, etc.), write a poem, rap, or short story, create a YouTube video, or write a traditional paper (6-8 pages). All visual or video options require an artists’/director’s statement that analyzes the piece and explains your critical position. Creative writing option will do this work in the footnotes of the piece. I encourage you to choose a medium you think will best express your intellectual and creative capacities and to speak to me by week 14 if you have an alternate idea. The assignment is 15% of your grade. See the *Final Project* assignment sheet for more details, which is on the week 15 lesson page and in the Resources->Handouts folder.

Participation*:* 10% of your grade will measure your participation in the course via smaller tasks.

Introduction and responses: 3%  
            Sakai profile picture: 2%

VoiceThread Comments (2): 5%

Grading Summary:

            10 Quizzes                              X         2%                   =          20%

            Class Discussions (4)              X         7.5%                =          30%

Group VoiceThread Project    X         10%                 =          10%

Community Discussion (5)     X         3%                   =          15%

Final Project                            X         15%                 =          15%

Participation                            X         10%                 =          10%

                                                                                    =          100%

A                     .934 - 1.0

A-                    .900 - .933

B+                   .866-.899

B                     .834-.865

B-                    .800-.833

C+                   .766-.799

C                     .734-.765

C-                    .700-.733

D+                   .666-.699

D                     .600-.665

F                      .599 and below

Extra Credit:Final grades that are borderline (those that are .5 pts. or fewer from the next highest grade) may be boosted to the higher grade only at the end of the term (e.g. a B- to a B). You must have completed **all** assignments in order to get a grade boost. More information on extra credit will be communicated through the course.

Classroom Policies

Diversity and Inclusion Statement: Philosophy is a field that is in a large way concerned with examining one’s presuppositions. One of the most efficient ways to become aware of one’s presuppositions is through exposure to contrasting ideas, values, attitudes, practices, or behaviors. Because of this, our class is benefited when we have an inclusive environment in which everyone is comfortable sharing different perspectives. When this is achieved, we can each learn much from one another. To that end, you are asked to share your personal experiences and ideas as they relate to the class and to respectfully listen to others who may present conflicting views. It is unlikely that any one of us has the full truth, but if we share openly, we might be able to piece together the fragments of truth we each contain. In addition to sharing personal views and experiences, it is also important that any obstacles to your learning are removed, and if not possible to remove, greatly mitigated. If you struggle in your coursework and do not already have accommodations through the Student Accessibility Center (SAC), you might look into getting them. Students use accommodations for a range of reasons: learning disabilities, vision/hearing disabilities, mental health reasons, physical limitations, etc. If anxiety makes it nearly impossible for you to complete a timed exam or if you sometimes experience last-minute physical or mental ailments that interfere with deadlines, please reach out to me and the SAC office (information below, under Student Resources) for help. There are also helpful resources through the Wellness Center (Note that SAC and the Wellness Center will not disclose your condition(s) to your instructors.). Additionally, if you work full time, care for children, elders, or others, are pregnant or nursing a child, or have any other additional responsibilities that may interfere with your ability to excel in our class, reach out to me for assistance. I am willing (and very happy) to find a way to help you succeed in the class, be it with extended deadlines, alternate assignments, extended time on quizzes/exams, or something else.

Technology: This course will require the use of technology. While students are not expected to own any specific technology for this course, they will be required to use technology to access course content, to finish and submit course work and to communicate with the Instructor and other students outside of designated class times.

* The University has provided each student with a Loyola network ID to access University resources. It is expected that electronic communication with the student will be via the Loyola ID and Loyola’s e-mail system, which can be accessed at: <https://outlook.luc.edu>.
  + If you choose to use another e-mail address you must re-route your Loyola e-mail to that address.
    - To do this, please visit <https://lpss.luc.edu/SelfService/>and follow the instructions to reroute your e-mail.
  + Your Loyola ID and password is your main resource for accessing Loyola systems. The Password Self-Service system allows students, faculty, and staff on the University network to reset their own network passwords quickly and independently.
    - Go to: <http://www.luc.edu/its/services/password-self-service.shtml> to learn more and to manage your password.
* Course materials will be provided via the learning management system Sakai, which can be accessed at: <https://sakai.luc.edu/>. It is expected that the student will access and send projects and other course work via the Sakai system using their Loyola ID and password.
  + Student instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: <http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml>
  + This course includes online activities including live (synchronous) and outside of designated class time (asynchronous) activities.
    - For online synchronous activities the instructor requires the use of computers with webcams and microphones. For these types of activities it is expected that students have access to and setup the necessary equipment before the online class.
    - To check your equipment (browser, webcam, microphone) prior to an online class, use the “Tech Check” utility provided at: <http://luc.edu/digitalmedia/trainingandsupport/techcheck/>.
    - To learn more about technology support for online course activities go to: <http://luc.edu/online/resources/technology/>.
    - Digital Media Services (DMS) manages and maintains several multimedia and digital media computer labs and services across the Lake Shore and Water Tower campuses. Student can visit the labs to; access and checkout various technologies, receive consultation, and access various types of training for coursework. More information and hours of operation can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/digitalmedia/>.
  + While the instructor will provide access to certain technologies and course materials within the Sakai learning management system, students may need additional technology support. The Information Technology Services Help Desk provides general technology support.
    - Please note that while the ITS Help Desk provides extended hours of support, it is not a 24-hour service.
    - To learn more about the Help Desk Services and the hours of operation please go to: <http://luc.edu/helpdesk/>.
* More information about Information Technology policies and guidelines can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/its/itspoliciesguidelines/index.shtml>
  + Students new to Loyola University Chicago should consider working through the “Technology Roadmap” for students located at: <http://www.luc.edu/technologyroadmap/newstudents/> .
* **Recording of Zoom class meetings**  
  In this class software will be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class when the course has concluded. *Students will be required to turn on their cameras at the start of class. Students who have a need to participate via audio only must reach out to me to request audio participation only without the video camera enabled.*The use of all video recordings will be in keeping with the University Privacy Statement shown below.
* **Privacy Statement**  
  Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use. **Recording Zoom meetings without the consent of the instructor is illegal under Illinois law and violations are subject to investigation and prosecution**.

Late Work: During this time, I intend to be very flexible when it comes to deadlines. Quizzes can be completed within a week of the deadline without penalty. After a week, quizzes close permanently and cannot be made up. If you miss the live discussion session, you must post to the forum or write a makeup paper to earn credit for discussion. Discussion posts are accepted up to 2 days late without penalty. After two days, you can only make up the points with an alternate assignment (a makeup paper).

Incomplete*s* are only given in extreme cases (e.g. the current pandemic) where a student must miss a large portion of the semester due to family emergencies, deaths, etc. Students must initiate an incomplete with me before the end of the class to receive one.

Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.  
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.  
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.  
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. (taken directly from: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\_academ](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml) [icintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml))

Producing academically honest work requires not only that you avoid 1-4 above, but that you ACTIVELY determine you have avoided plagiarism. This means that if you are unsure about how to cite something or unsure if something you’ve written counts as plagiarism, you should ask me before turning in any assignment. Any instance of plagiarism will at MINIMUM result in a grade 0 for the assignment, and depending on the severity of the case, may even result in an F for the course.

The following is a description of Loyola’s policy on and procedures for cases of plagiarism.

Plagiarism on part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of “F” for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a       hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct. (<http://luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml>)

Students with Accommodations

If you need accommodations for this course, please contact the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) office in Sullivan Center to make arrangements. You can visit their site at <https://www.luc.edu/sac/>. They will provide you with the proper documentation that I will need in order to make the appropriate accommodations. The sooner this is done, the better we can assure you will get the accommodations you need. I am not authorized to give accommodations before I receive the letter given to you by SAC and accommodations cannot be retroactively applied.

Student Support Sources

* Resources for Student Success Online
  + <https://www.luc.edu/sas/learningandstudentsuccess/ramblerresourcesforstudentsuccessonline/>
* ITS HelpDesk
  + [helpdesk@luc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@luc.edu)
  + 773-508-4487
* Library
  + Subject Specialists: <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>
* Student Accessibility Center
  + <https://www.luc.edu/sac/>
* Writing Center
  + <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>
* Ethics Hotline
  + <http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/>
  + 855.603.6988

Course Schedule

**Readings: All readings are on the Resources tool on Sakai and on the lesson pages.**

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE, SYLLABUS, EACH OTHER

Before you begin:

1. Watch (2) introductory videos, Deductive & Inductive Arguments video, and skim pp. 358-367 of the David Concepcion article on Welcome & Getting Started tool
2. Read through syllabus to get a sense of the structure of the course & deadlines
3. Post an Introduction to Discussion Forum by 1/20 at 11:59p (CST)
4. Upload **and share** Sakai profile picture by 1/20 (don’t forget to make your pic public!)
5. Respond to 2 classmates’ introductions by 1/21 11:59p (CST)

UNIT 1: PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF DELIBERATION, MORAL KNOWLEDGE, and RESPONSIBILITY: WEEKS 1-2 (Jan. 19-31)

Reading:

1. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1-5
2. Frankfurt, Harry. “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”
3. Strawson, Galen. “The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility”
4. *Elinor Mason and Alan T. Wilson* “Vice, Blameworthiness, and Cultural Ignorance”

Assignments:

*Week 1:*

1. Take Quiz 1 (Aristotle and Frankfurt) by Saturday 1/23 at 11:55p (CST)

*Week 2:*

1. Make initial discussion board post (250 words) to your group’s “Free Will” thread by Thurs. 1/28 at 11:59pm (CST) OR join live discussion on 1/28 from 12-1p (CST)
2. Respond to 2 peers (150 words each) by Sat. 1/30 at 11:59pm (CST) (not needed if you attended the live session)
3. Take Quiz 2 (Strawson and Mason & Wilson) by Sun 1/31 at 11:55pm (CST)

UNIT 2: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REASONING AND DECISION-MAKING: Weeks 3-9 (2/1-3/21)

Weeks 3-5 (Feb. 1-20)

*Reading:*

1. Gilovich, Chs. 1-9, 11

*Assignments:*

Week 3:

1. Take Quiz 3 (chs. 1-5) by Sun. 2/7 at 11:55p (CST)

Week 4:

1. Make first post to groups’ community forum by Monday, 2/8 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Respond to two group members by Wed. 2/10 at 4p (CST).

**BREAK 1: FEB. 10, 4P-FEB. 14**

Week 5:

1. Make initial discussion post to Cognitive Biases forum by Tues. 2/16 at 11:59p (CST) OR join live discussion on 2/16 from 12-1p (CST)
2. Respond to 2 peers by Thurs. 2/18 at 11:59p (CST) (not needed if you attended the live session)
3. Take Quiz 4 (chs. 6-9, 11) by Sat. 2/20 at 11:55p (CST)

Weeks 6-7 (Feb. 22-Mar. 5)

Week 6

*Reading:*

1. Tversky & Kahneman “The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice”
2. Johnson & Goldstein “Do Defaults Save Lives?”
3. Henrich, et al "Most People are not WEIRD"

*Assignments:*

1. Make second post to groups’ community forum with ideas for the group project by Tues. 2/23 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Read ALL of your group members’ posts and respond to two group members by Thurs. 2/25 at 11:59p (CST)
3. Take Quiz 5 (Tversky & Kahneman, Johnson & Goldstein, and Henrich et al) by Sun. 2/28 at 11:55pm (CST)

Week 7

1. **Group VoiceThread Presentation due Friday 3/5 by 11:59p (CST) (See assignment sheet for guidelines)**

**BREAK 2 MAR. 6-MARCH 10, 4P**

Weeks 8-9 (3/11-3/21)

*Reading:*

* + 1. G.L. Wells “Eyewitness Lineups: Data, Theory, and Policy
    2. Slovic “If I Look At the Mass I Will Never Act”

*Assignments:*

1. Watch other VoiceThread projects and leave 2 substantive comments on 2 different presentations by Friday 3/12 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Post up to 3 extra credit VoiceThread comments by 3/16 at 11:59p (CST)
3. Make initial discussion post to the 2020 Pandemic forum by Tues. 3/16 at 11:59p(CST) OR join live discussion on 3/16 from 12-1p (CST)
4. Respond to 2 classmates’ Discussion Forum posts by Thurs. 3/18 at 11:59p(CST) (not needed if joined live session)
5. Take Quiz 6 (Wells and Slovic) by Sun. 3/21 at 11:55pm (CST)

UNIT 3: SITUATIONISM (PSYCHOLOGY AND ETHICS): Weeks 10-15 (3/22-4/30)

Weeks 10-11 (3/22-3/31)

*Readings:*

1. Jules Holroyd (2012) “Responsibility for Implicit Bias”
2. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1-6, VI.5, 13
3. Milgram, Stanley (1963). “Behavioral Study of Obedience”
4. Darley and Batson (1973) “From Jerusalem to Jericho”
5. Isen and Levin (1972) “Effect of Feeling Good on Helping”
6. Latane, B., & Rodin, J. (1969) “A lady in distress: Inhibiting effects of friends and strangers on bystander intervention”

*Assignments:*

Week 10

1. Take any Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
2. Make third post to \*NEW\* Groups’ community forum by Thursday 3/25 at 11:59p (CST)
3. Respond to two group members by Sat. 3/27 at 11:59p (CST)
4. Take Quiz 7 (Holroyd, Aristotle, and Milgram) by Sun. 3/28 at 11:55pm (CST)

Week 11

1. Make fourth post to groups’ community forum by Mon. 3/29 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Respond to two group members by Wed. 3/31 at 11:59p (CST)
3. Take Quiz 8 (Darley & Batson, Isen & Levin and Latane & Rodin) by Wed. 3/31 at 11:55p(CST)

Weeks 12-13 (4/6-4/18)

*Reading:*

1. Harman (1999) “Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error”
2. Selections from Doris *Lack of Character* 2002 (pp. 18-25)
3. Annas’ Commentary on Doris’ *Lack of Character* (2005)
4. Kamtekar (2004) “Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character”

*Assignments:*

Week 12:

1. Take Quiz 9 (Harman and Doris) by Sun. 4/11 at 11:55p (CST)

Week 13:

1. Make initial discussion post to the Character forum by Thurs. 4/15 at 11:59p(CST) OR join live discussion 4/15 from 12-1p (CST)
2. Respond to 2 classmates’ Discussion Forum posts by Sat. 4/17 at 11:59p(CST) (not needed if joined live session)
3. Take Quiz 10 (Kamtekar and Annas) by Sun. 4/18 at 11:55p (CST)

Week 14 (4/19-4/25)

*Readings:*

1. Sabini and Silver (2005) “Lack of Character? Situationism Critiqued”
2. Taylor (2016) “Reclaiming Freedom”

*Assignments:*

1. Make final post to groups’ community forum with your project topic and/or plan by Thurs. 4/22 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Respond to two group members with critical feedback on their projects by Sat. 4/24 at 11:59p (CST)
3. Take Quiz 11 (Sabini and Silver & Taylor) by Sun. 4/25 at 11:55p (CST)

Week 15 (4/26-4/30)

1. Post Extra credit blog by 4/26 at 11:59p (CST)
2. Turn in all makeup work by 4/30
3. Individual meetings on final project (by request)

Finals Week (May 3-8)

**Final Project due Tues. May 4 at 11:59p (CST)**