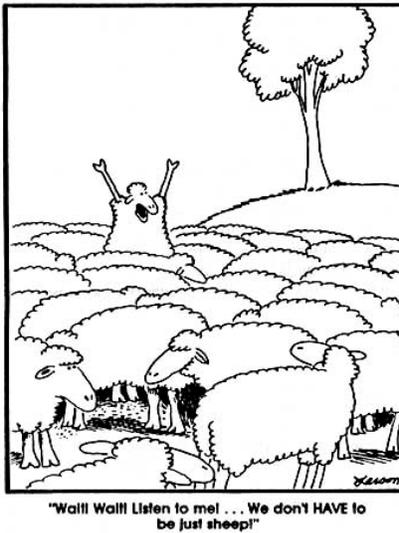


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Philosophy P105
Thinking and Reasoning
09:05A-9:55A SY001 (15630)
Course Syllabus



Course Description

What are we humans doing when we think and reason? What is the purpose of reasoning? How do we usually make decisions? How should we?

The primary goal of this course is to begin exploring these deep philosophical questions in an informal context. In the first half of the course, we will begin by learning some techniques to recognize arguments and understand their structures. We will then discuss good and bad forms of reasoning and learn to identify common fallacies. In learning how we ought to think and reason, however, we should begin with a firm understanding of the ways that we *actually do* make decisions, and how those natural forms of decision-making succeed and fail. In the second half of the course, we will review recent work in psychology on intuitive judgment, discussing intuition's strengths and weaknesses. In these discussions, we will talk about decision problems in a wide variety of contexts, from picking the optimal investment portfolio and best public health policy to deciding whom to marry and what to eat for dinner.

Required Texts:

1. Selections from Oncourse (must be printed and brought to class on the day assigned)
2. *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, Thaler & Sunstein
3. *Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious*, Gigerenzer

Grades

Homework and Quizzes	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Group Project	20%
Final*	20%

* **NOTE:** If you have an average course grade of 93.5 or above and are happy with your grade going into the final, you can opt **NOT** to take the final exam.

Grade Scale

The grade scale is as follows:

96.5+	A+	93.5-96.5	A	90-93.5	A-
86.5-90	B+	83.5-86.5	B	80-83.5	B-
76.5-80	C+	73.5-76.5	C	70-73.5	C-
66.5-70	D+	63.5-66.5	D	60-63.5	D-

Homework

Each week, I will assign a homework related to material covered in that week's lecture. Approximately every two weeks, I will collect homework and select some exercises to grade. I will not give advance warning as to when homework will be collected nor which exercises I will grade; bring your homework to class every day and do all of the problems. On days when I do not collect homework to grade, we will briefly check answers in groups. Of course, we can always work on these problems together in class (time permitting), and you can also bring any questions or problems to my office hours.

Quizzes

Every Friday we will have a short quiz, on material covered in the previous week. This will help me assess understanding of key concepts in the course on a regular basis.

Group Projects

The group project (groups of 4-5 persons each) will consist of an "issue brief" which will be turned in to me (5-6 pages) and a class presentation. Each group will choose a decision problem, such as purchasing food at the grocery store, making investment decisions, buying a house or car, voting in an election etc. After thoroughly researching the issue, each group will turn in one brief, a document which should summarize the issue, discuss briefly the psychological processes that people are likely to use to engage the problem and the ways in which those processes are likely to succeed and err (and/or even be purposefully manipulated!). Then, I would like you to analyze the issue from the perspectives of both the Libertarian Paternalists (Thaler & Sunstein) and the Simple Heuristics researchers (Gigerenzer). What would each group say about the typical approach to the problem? What solutions would they recommend? Are there important points of disagreement? Finally, the group should present their "verdict" on the issue, a decision-procedure which is both effective and efficient. The last few class periods will be devoted to group presentations, where each group will give a 20 minute presentation summarizing their research and presenting their verdict.

Important Notes

1. Make-up exams are restricted to documented, extreme situations.
2. Misconduct will be dealt with according to official university policies; this includes plagiarism. See <http://www.indiana.edu/~college/plagiarism/index.shtml> to review those policies.
3. No electronic devices are allowed during class unless I explicitly say otherwise.

Tentative Class Schedule

Students are expected to have read the chapters indicated in brackets in the assigned books or material posted on Oncourse by that class period. Classes with an asterisk indicate that an in-class quiz will likely be held that day.

Date	Lecture	Topic
30 Aug (M)	1	Syllabus, Introduction
01 Sept (W)	2	Recognizing Premises and Conclusions [Reading: Premises and Conclusions - Oncourse]
03 Sept (F)	2	Recognizing Premises and Conclusions *
06 Sept (M)	3	Diagramming Arguments [Reading: Diagramming Arguments - Oncourse]
08 Sept (W)	3	Diagramming Arguments
10 Sept (F)	3	Diagramming Arguments *
13 Sept (M)	-	Class Cancelled
15 Sept (W)	4	Truth, Validity, and Soundness [Reading: Truth, Validity, and Soundness - Oncourse]
17 Sept (F)	4	Truth, Validity, and Soundness *
20 Sept (M)	5	Fallacies [Reading: Fallacies - Oncourse]
22 Sept (W)	5	Fallacies
24 Sept (F)	5	Fallacies *
27 Sept (M)	6	Probabilistic and Statistical Reasoning [Reading: Probabilistic and Statistical Reasoning – Oncourse]
29 Sept (W)	6	Probabilistic and Statistical Reasoning
01 Oct (F)	6	Probabilistic and Statistical Reasoning *
04 Oct (M)	Test 1	All material from Lectures 1-6
06 Oct (W)	7	Introduction to Heuristics & Biases [Reading: Heuristics & Biases – Oncourse]
08 Oct (F)	7	Introduction to Heuristics & Biases *
11 Oct (M)	8	Humans & Econs [Reading: <i>Nudge</i> , Introduction and CH1]
13 Oct (W)	8	Humans & Econs

15 Oct (F)	8	Humans & Econs *
18 Oct (M)	9	Herding and Resisting [Reading: <i>Nudge</i> , CH2-3]
20 Oct (W)	9	Herding and Resisting
22 Oct (F)	9	Herding and Resisting *
25 Oct (M)	10	The Virtues of Frugality [Reading: <i>Gut Feelings</i> , CH1-2] Guest lecture-Peter Todd
27 Oct (W)	10	The Virtues of Frugality
29 Oct (F)	10	The Virtues of Frugality *
01 Nov (M)	11	Choice Architecture & Nudges [Reading: <i>Nudge</i> , CF4-5]
03 Nov (W)	11	Choice Architecture & Nudges
05 Nov (F)	11	Choice Architecture & Nudges *
08 Nov (M)	12	Intuition, Evolution, and the Brain [Reading: <i>Gut Feelings</i> , CH3-4]
10 Nov (W)	12	Intuition, Evolution, and the Brain
12 Nov (F)	12	Intuition, Evolution, and the Brain *
15 Nov (M)	13	Adapted Minds and Optimization [Reading: <i>Gut Feelings</i> , CH5-6]
17 Nov (W)	13	Adapted Minds and Optimization
19 Nov (F)	Test 2	All Material Lectures 7-13; Group Projects Assigned
22 Nov (M)	14	Heuristics in Action: Health Care [Reading: <i>Nudge</i> , CH10-12]
24 Nov (W)		Thanksgiving Break
26 Nov (F)		Thanksgiving Break
29 Nov (M)	14	Heuristics in Action: Health Care [Reading: <i>Gut Feelings</i> , CH9]
01 Dec (W)	14	Heuristics in Action: Health Care
03 Dec (F)		Group Presentations
06 Dec (M)		Group Presentations
08 Dec (W)		Group Presentations
10 Dec (F)		Group Presentations
13 Dec (M)	Final	5:00-7:00 PM Mon, Dec 13