Overview

This course is an introduction to the scientific study of the interplay between emotion, judgment, and choice. “Why did I choose to attend CU?” “How much does my social anxiety impair my ability to think clearly when speaking publicly?” “Why do my emotions sometimes get the better of me?” “How come I’m not very happy even though I own so many nice things?” This course will explore the scientific study of these types of questions. We will examine such topics as how people intuitively think about social information in everyday life, how emotions influence people’s thoughts, how people's thoughts and behaviors influence their emotions, and how the complexities of everyday life can sometimes pose a barrier to happiness and well being. The core idea is that people think and feel heuristically rather than systematically, using use various mental "short cuts" to make inferences about the causes and consequences of their emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. Although these strategies often yield accurate inferences, they also give rise to mistaken self-assessments, bad choices, and can pose a barrier to happiness. There are weekly class meetings in which students will discuss the topics in a seminar fashion. Toward the end of the term, students will also conduct their own research project regarding emotion, judgment, and choice.

Objectives and Requirements

Objectives. This course has two primary objectives: (a) to provide students with an understanding of basic psychological processes underlying the interplay between emotion, judgment, and choice in everyday life; and (b) to sharpen students’ ability to think critically about and evaluate psychological research.

Expectations. This course will be run as a seminar. Although the instructor will typically offer limited comments providing an overview and background information about the topic at hand, all students are expected to have informed and critical discussions of the readings. Student preparation and participation is essential for this format to work. Students are expected to have completed all the assigned readings before class, and to be ready to discuss the readings.

The course requires a considerable time commitment. Following University of Colorado guidelines, students should plan to spend three hours of class-related activities (studying, research, writing) per week for each credit hour. Given that the class is a three credit course, plan to spend nine hours per week outside of class. If you choose not to devote this time, you may be disappointed with your performance in class.
Prerequisites. The prerequisites for this course are Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1001), Introduction to Social Psychology (PSYC 2606), and Introduction to Statistics (PSYC 3101). Students are expected to be familiar with major theories and central constructs in Social Psychology. Students are also expected to have a working knowledge of descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency (mean, median), variability (standard deviation, standard error), and association (correlation). Students should also be familiar with inferential statistics such as t-tests and ANOVA. You will need this knowledge to understand the assigned empirical journal articles.

Policies

Disability. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the instructor from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices.

Religious observances. Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom behavior. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html.

Honor code. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html.
Grades

*Participation (20%).* Participating in discussions is critical to your learning in this course. Students are assumed to have done and be prepared to discuss all the readings assigned each week. Also, students should recognize that education is interactive: Classes with little or no student participation are boring and unproductive for everyone.

*Research Project (25%).* Students will form groups of four or five to conduct a research project on the interplay between emotion, judgment, and choice. As will be discussed, there are many project possibilities, including research surveys, experiments, or analyses of current or historical events from the perspective of the material covered in class. Groups will present their project on the last day of class and will write a final paper (8–10 double spaced pages of text) to be handed in at the final class.

*Examinations (25% midterm; 30% final).* The exams will be identification, short answer, and essay format (no multiple choice). No make up exams will be given, except in the case of medical emergency or conflict with religious holidays. Please bring a blue book to the exam.

*Final Grades.* Students earn points according to the following distribution:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Grades are based on the points earned according to the following:

- A: ≥ 94
- A–: ≥ 90
- B+: ≥ 87
- B: ≥ 84
- B–: ≥ 80
- C+: ≥ 77
- C: ≥ 74
- C–: ≥ 70
- D+: ≥ 67
- D: ≥ 64
- D–: ≥ 60
- F: < 60
Required Readings


Additional readings will be available for download from the course website.

Class Schedule

Class 1, 30 Aug  Introduction and overview

Part I  Thinking intuitively
Class 2, 6 Sep  Cognitive biases
Gilovich, chapters 1-4

Class 3, 13 Sep  Motivational biases
Gilovich, chapter 5 and 8

Class 4, 20 Sep  Social and emotional biases
Gilovich, chapters 6 and 7

Part II  Self-insight
Class 5, 27 Sep  Adaptive unconscious
Wilson, chapters 1-3
Class 6, 4 Oct  Self-knowledge
Wilson, chapters 4-6

Class 7, 11 Oct  Self control
Wilson, chapter 10

Class 8, 18 Oct  Midterm examination
Bring a blue book

Part III  Internal barriers to happiness

Class 9, 25 Oct  Subjectivity
Gilbert, chapters 1-3

Class 10, 1 Nov  Naïve realism
Gilbert, chapters 4-7

Class 11, 8 Nov  Rationalization
Gilbert, chapters 8 and 9
Wilson, chapter 8

Class 12, 15 Nov  Correction
Gilbert, chapters 10 and 11
Wilson, chapters 9 and 10

22 Nov  Fall break and Thanksgiving
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part IV</th>
<th>External barriers to happiness</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class 13, 29 Nov</strong></td>
<td><em>When and how we choose</em></td>
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<td>Schwarz, chapters 1-4</td>
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<td><strong>Class 14, 6 Dec</strong></td>
<td><em>Suffering from comparison and choosing wisely</em></td>
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<td>Schwarz, chapters 7-10</td>
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<td><strong>Class 15, 13 Dec</strong></td>
<td><em>Student research presentations</em></td>
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<td>Final paper due</td>
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<td><strong>Final exam, 16 Dec</strong></td>
<td>1:30–4:00, Muenzinger D156</td>
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<td>Bring a blue book</td>
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