All other things being equal, the simplest solution is always best.
- Frederick of Occam, late 1300s, Occam’s Razor

A thing is either yes or no, it is the thinking that makes it so.
- Shakespeare, late 1500s

The greatest enemy of truth is very often not the lie – deliberate, contrived, and dishonest – but the myth – persistent, pervasive, and unrealistic.
- John F. Kennedy, early 1960s

Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.
- James Madison, 1822

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Office Location:</th>
<th>Communication:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Bullis, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Lokey Education Building 102J</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bullism@uoregon.edu">bullism@uoregon.edu</a> 541-346-1640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommerville-Knight Professor EMPL</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Office Hours: W, 2-4 pm or by appointment.

| Josh Kahn PhD Candidate EMPL | Office Hours: by appointment | jkahn@uoregon.edu 646-303-8141 |

OVERVIEW

We all make decisions. Some decisions are relatively minor, such as deciding where to buy coffee in the morning or where park your car, to major, life changing decisions, such as where to enroll in graduate school or who to marry. Many people believe that the way we make those decisions – from minor to major - is random or idiosyncratic. Although it is true that some decisions made some of the time by some individuals on a whim or through blind guesswork will be wildly successful, the simple fact is that most of the time decisions made that way will not be as “good” as they could be. Conversely, decision-making processes that are complex and time consuming also can be ineffective.

Over the past half-century researchers from numerous disciplines from psychology to business to the military have studied the way in which decisions are made, and made
effectively. This body of work has resulted in thousands of publications, from the rigorous and scientific to those based in pop-psychology with no theoretical, objective foundation. Ironically, there has been little research on how educators make decisions.

OUTCOMES

The purpose of this course is to introduce the basic concepts of evidence-based decision-making. I should emphasize that my definition of “evidence” includes both quantitative data – numbers – and the almost ineffable “feeling” (that I believe can be quantified in some form) one has when placed in so many decision-making situations.

The course introduces the basic decision-making process; students may take other with courses based on this introduction in their programs in EMPL or other departments. Classes include lectures, presentations, and discussions. Experts may present during class time. The content of their lectures and any readings they may assign will, or could, be included in the required assignments and work.

This course is designed for graduate students, and likely will attract students beginning their graduate programs to those advanced students who are nearing completion of their degrees. The greatest challenge a new graduate student probably will face will rest in understanding how to apply the material to the professional setting.

EXPECTATIONS

I assume that you all will read the assigned materials on a regular basis and I seldom will lecture directly from those readings. You are responsible for keeping to the schedule, reading and studying the assigned materials, participating in class discussions, and turning in assigned work on time. Please know that I will call on as many of you as possible, prepared or not, to render an opinion or answer a question.

The course maintains a social science perspective by discussing (a) a theoretical framework for critical thinking and decision-making, (b) basic statistical applications specific to the decision-making process, (c) common thinking and decision-making errors, and (d) ways to involve groups in making decisions. Homework assignments are focused to the readings and will reward those of you who carefully read and understand the materials.

Those taking the 2-credit option for this course must complete all of the homework assignments and review other student’s ppts on their research projects.

Those taking the 4-credit option must complete all of the homework assignments, review other student’s ppts on their research projects on decision-making, and develop a research proposal on decision-making. The proposal is to be finalized in written format and also presented in class on ppt. The specifics of the project are discussed below.
**PREREQUISITES**

The prerequisite for the class is EDUC 614 – Educational Statistics I (4) or the equivalent introductory statistics course, which could be taken concurrently. It also will be advantageous to have completed EDUC 611 - Survey of Education Research Design (4) and EDLD 560 – Educational Measurement, or their equivalents. I do assume that students in the class have a working knowledge of basic statistics. I will discuss multiple regression as it pertains to decision-making, cut scores, and the analysis of decisions in terms of the 2 x 2 table, but my treatment of those issues is decidedly conceptual.

**READINGS**

There is no text for the class; instead, I have assigned specific readings relative to the different topics. References required for specific classes are listed after the class schedule. At the end of this syllabus, I also include a list of recommended readings and movies that carry decision-making themes that I have either read or seen over the years. I believe all are informative and, by and large, entertaining – at least to me.

I will have guest speakers come into class to talk about situations in which they have addressed challenging situations and the way they made decisions related to those situations. It is possible that the guest speakers will assign additional, required readings.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will complete homework assignments outside of class time. Those assignments are designed to reward you for reading the assigned articles and largely are composed of objective items. Some of the questions, however, call for you to respond with an opinion or to describe a study regarding how you would apply a decision-making rule or tool to a problem.

The number of points for each assignment varies; in total, the homework assignments are worth roughly 200+-points.

**DECISION-MAKING PROJECT**

Students taking the 4-credit option for the course will develop a decision-making project composed of two parts: no longer than (a) 10-page written proposal and (b) 30-minute ppt presentation. The proposal is to be typed (12-point font and 1” margins) and conform to APA style and will be due during the Monday of finals week by 5 pm. The ppt describing the study will be given in class, likely in classes 9 and 10 of the term.

There are two acceptable topics for the project: a research proposal on decision-making or a critique of a situation in which decision-making figured prominently. Overviews of each option and grading templates are presented in the back of this syllabus. There may be other options for the project, which will have to be negotiated and confirmed in writing by Class (week) 6 of the term. In any case, all students taking the 4-
credit option must meet with Josh and/or me to negotiate their respective projects by Class (week) 6.

Students will receive grades for both the paper and the ppt presentation. The paper is worth 100-points, an A grade will receive 990-100-points, a B will receive 80-89-points, and a No Pass will receive 75-points. The ppt is worth 25-points, an A grade will receive 25-points, a B will receive 20-points, and a No Pass will receive 15-points.

**GRADING**

The final grade for this course will be based on the total points you earn in the course of the class. I will use the following standards in assigning grades. I reserve the right to modify this grading plan should circumstance and reason indicate a need to do so.

A = 90% to 100%
B = 80% to 90%
No Pass = less than 80%

**SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
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<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Decision-making Models</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thinking Errors</td>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mapping the Decision-making Process</td>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Defining the Problem</td>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
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<td>Gathering Data/Group Decision-making</td>
<td>Assignment 6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Expert Decision-making/Instruction</td>
<td>Assignment 7</td>
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<td>Statistical Analyses</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>ppt</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>ppt</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finals Week</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Written Project – Monday by 5 pm</td>
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</table>

* Required readings for each class listed below.
  When accessing readings from an off-campus site, be sure to use VPN:

[http://library.uoregon.edu/systems/connect-offcampus.html](http://library.uoregon.edu/systems/connect-offcampus.html)
**READINGS**

**Class 2**


**Class 3**


**Class 4**


http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20179

**Class 5**


http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00461527809529193

Class 6

http://search.proquest.com/docview/201100222/fulltextPDF?accountid=14698

http://search.proquest.com/docview/218327643/fulltextPDF/A10586E6ADFB48/AEPQ/1?accountid=14698


Class 7

http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/64/6/515.html


*Class 8*


[http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/34/7/571.pdf](http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/34/7/571.pdf)


Available at Knight Library 2nd-4th Floor (BF698.4 .W53 1973)

**POLICIES**

*Attendance*

Attendance is necessary to succeed in this course and master the course material. Please note that although I will *not* take attendance, but the *only* way to receive credit for assignments and the project is to turn them in or complete the activity “in vivo” during the designated class. I will, however, allow late work that conforms to the policy described below.

*Incompletes*

The assignment of an INCOMPLETE or "I" grade is discouraged and will be used only in cases of extreme emergencies where satisfactory progress has been demonstrated and a passing grade may be earned. Should an "I" grade be required, students should notify me at the time such circumstances exist. A course completion contract must be developed with me and approved by me by Class (week) 9 of the term.

*Late Work*

Students must contact me *no later* than the day prior to the day of the class in case of illness or emergencies that preclude attending class sessions and/or turning in
assignments. Merely telling me that you will not be able to attend class does not guarantee that late work will be accepted, we must come to a mutual agreement regarding the work that will be completed.

My agreement to accept late work must be confirmed in writing and a date by which the work is to be completed must be agreed upon; an e-mail record between you and me will suffice for this purpose. If no prior arrangements have been made and/or a written agreement is not in place, the assignment in question will be graded down and may be assigned the grade of 0.

*Academic Misconduct Policy*

All students are subject to the UO Student Conduct Code: [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx)

This code represents a compilation of important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students of their rights and responsibilities during their association with this institution, and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University.

*Conflict Resolution*

Several options, both informal and formal, are available to resolve conflicts for students who believe they have been subjected to or have witnessed bias, unfairness, or other improper treatment. It is important to exhaust the administrative remedies available to you including discussing the conflict with the specific individual, or seeking assistance from the course instructor, the EMPL department head or the COE associate dean.

Outside the college, you may contact:
UO Bias Response Team: 541-346-1139 or [http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm](http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm)
Conflict Resolution Services 346-0617 or [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/SupportandEducation/StudentConflictResolutionServices/Services/tabid/135/Default.aspx](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/SupportandEducation/StudentConflictResolutionServices/Services/tabid/135/Default.aspx)

*Documented Disability*

I will provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with me by the end of Class (week 2) of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Disability Services in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. For more information on Disability Services, please see [http://ds.uoregon.edu/](http://ds.uoregon.edu/)
Expected Classroom Behavior

- Participate in class activities.
- Respect the diversity of cultures, opinions, and viewpoint in the classroom.
- Listen to other students, professors, and lecturers with respect.
- Arrive on time, prepared for class.
- Do not use your phone or laptop during class time to access personal or work contacts and/or correspondence.
- Racist, homophobic, sexist, and other disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.

Diversity

It is the policy of the University of Oregon and the College of Education to support and value diversity. To do so requires that we as a college and class:

- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals;
- promote a culture of respect throughout the University community;
- respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others;
- reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind;
- practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others; and
- promote the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds that are the lifeblood of the university.

Language used in assignments and class discussions (written and spoken) should be respectful and professional at all times. Use "people first" language in speaking and writing about people with disabilities or other elements of diversity.

Inclement Weather

In the event the university operates on a curtailed schedule or closes, UO media relations will notify the Eugene-Springfield area radio and television stations as quickly as possible. In addition, a notice regarding the university’s schedule will be posted on the UO main homepage (in the “News” section) at http://www.uoregon.edu.
**SCORING TEMPLATE: PROPOSAL – SITUATION CRITIQUE**

Student: ____________________________________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________________

**Required Elements (yes/no)**

- ✔ Narrative no more than 10-pages _____
- ✔ Prepared in APA style ______
- ✔ All required sections are evident _____

**Description of the issue/problem to be addressed. (A   B   NP)**

How did you identify that issue/problem (e.g., personal experience, interview with an administrator), reading? (A   B   NP)

What is the history of the issue/problem (e.g., describe the situation surrounding the issue/problem)? (A   B   NP)

Who was responsible for addressing the situation? What other individuals were involved in the situation? (A   B   NP)

What steps were taken to resolve, or attempt to resolve, the issue/problem (be sure to describe how you identified the steps – e.g., interview, reading, etc.)? (A   B   NP)

Was the issue/problem resolved successfully? How and why or why not? (A   B   NP)

What would you have done differently to address the issue/problem? Be sure to include problem definition, generation of alternatives, data used or that should have been used, group involvement in the issue/challenge, etc. (A   B   NP)

**Strengths**

**Areas for Improvement**
SCORING TEMPLATE: PPT – SITUATION CRITIQUE

Student: ____________________________________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________________

Required Elements (yes/no)
✓ No more than 15 ppt slides _____
✓ Presentation no longer than 30-minutes _____
✓ All required sections are evident _____
✓ Appearance _____

Description of the issue/problem to be addressed. (A B NP)

How did you identify that issue/problem (e.g., personal experience, interview with an administrator, reading)? (A B NP)

What is the history of the issue/problem (e.g., describe the situation surrounding the issue/problem)? (A B NP)

Who was responsible for addressing the situation? What other individuals were involved in the situation? (A B NP)

What steps were taken to resolve, or attempt to resolve, the issue/problem (be sure to describe how you identified the steps – e.g., interview, reading, etc.)? (A B NP)

Was the issue/problem resolved successfully? How and why or why not? (A B NP)

What would you have done differently to address the issue/problem? Be sure to include problem definition, generation of alternatives, data used or that should have been used, group involvement in the issue/challenge, etc. (A B NP)

Strengths

Areas for Improvement
RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The research proposal addresses and describes a topic of your choosing related to the decision-making process. The document should reflect care in its preparation and use either a group experimental, quasi-experimental, social comparison, or measurement design. If you choose to conduct a measurement project, I will adapt the template to that effort. Be sure that the paper is no more than 10-pages long (excluding title page and tables or figures) and follows APA style (1” margins, double spaced, and 12-point font).

Title Page

The title page should present the title of the study as well as your name and identifying information. The title should be no more than 12-words and should not be boring.

Introduction

In this section you need to make the case for the importance of the topic you will address. In order to make this case, you will need to develop a brief literature review. Conclude with a purpose statement that presents the research question or questions you will answer in your study. For a paper of this length, I anticipate that you will present no more than two questions.

Method

This is where you state how it is you will address the questions you present in the Introduction. Be sure to include the following sections in the proposal; you may need to reorder the sections depending on your topic.

Overview

Summarize exactly what it is you will do as briefly (i.e., 1 or 2 paragraphs) as possible.

Setting & Participants

Describe where the work will be conducted. Include a short rationale for the selection of the site(s). Describe if the subjects are to be selected randomly or recruited. Describe how the subjects will be selected to participate in the study and how they will be assigned to treatment or control groups. Address the issues of random selection, random assignment, or—if these procedures are not possible to implement—discuss why not and what that means for your study.

Design

Describe the research design for the study and include a figure presenting the design. It is advisable to discuss how the design will be applied to the topic at hand. Be sure to include a figure presenting the design.
Independent Variable

Describe what the intervention will "look like." Be sure to discuss fidelity of implementation.

Dependent Variables

List the measures you will use in the study. It is advisable to select the measures from Buros or from some reputable research source, and to include a brief summary of the reliability of each instrument. If the measure is to be a particular behavior (e.g., incidents of criminal activity), describe how these data will be collected and how the reliability of these indices will be established.

Analysis

You must describe the analyses you will use and how those comparisons will address the research question(s). State in clear language what it is you are comparing to what, and to state the null hypothesis that will be tested for each comparison. For example --

**Question #1: xxx.** To address this question I will conduct a xxx statistical comparison in order to examine the performance of the treatment and control groups’ mean performance on the xxx dependent measure. The null hypothesis (there will be no difference between the groups) will be tested at the .05 alpha level

Anticipated Results

State briefly what you think you may find, and what these results may mean for practice and for further research.

Weaknesses of the Study

Identify and discuss the problems in the study. No research is perfect, and it is ethical to recognize where the weaknesses are in your work. A clear description of the shortcomings of the proposal will demonstrate your understanding of the material.
SCORING TEMPLATE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Student: ____________________________________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________________

Required Elements (yes/no)
✓ Narrative no more than 10-pages _____
✓ Prepared in APA style ______
✓ All required sections are evident _____

1. Introduction: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ Makes the case for the importance of the study
 ✓ Presents a clear purpose statement
 ✓ Ends with a research question(s)

2. Overview: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ 1 or 2 paragraph summary of the study

3. Setting & Participants: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ Description of the setting in which the study will take place
 ✓ Description of subject recruitment
 ✓ Description of subject assignment to experimental conditions

4. Design: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ Design “fits” the research question(s)
 ✓ Description of the design
 ✓ Figure (placed outside of text) presenting the design

5. Independent Variable: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ IV “fits” the research question
 ✓ Description of IV (e.g., length of intervention & classes)
 ✓ Description of implementation (i.e., who will administer the intervention)
 ✓ Fidelity of Implementation

6. Dependent Variables: (A  B  NP)
 ✓ DVs “fit” the research question
 ✓ Psychometric characteristics of each DV
 ✓ Administration procedures for each DV
7. Analysis: (A B NP)

- Analysis “fits” the research question(s)
- Description of each comparison
- Null hypothesis for each comparison
- Alpha level for each comparison

8. Anticipated Results: (A B NP)

- Description of anticipated results
- Implications for research
- Implications for practice

9. Weaknesses of the Study: (A B NP)

- Threats to internal validity

Strength(s):

Weakness(es):
SCORING TEMPLATE: PPT – RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Student: ____________________________________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________________

Required Elements (yes/no)

✓ No more than 15 ppt slides _____
✓ Presentation no longer than 30-minutes _____
✓ All required sections are evident _____
✓ Appearance _____

1. Introduction:       (A  B  NP)

✓ Makes the case for the importance of the study
✓ Presents a clear purpose statement
✓ Ends with a research question(s)

2. Overview:           (A  B  NP)

✓ 1 or 2 paragraph summary of the study

3. Setting & Participants:  (A  B  NP)

✓ Description of the setting in which the study will take place
✓ Description of subject recruitment
✓ Description of subject assignment to experimental conditions

4. Design:          (A  B  NP)

✓ Design “fits” the research question(s)
✓ Description of the design
✓ Figure (placed outside of text) presenting the design

5. Independent Variable:  (A  B  NP)

✓ IV “fits” the research question
✓ Description of IV (e.g., length of intervention & classes)
✓ Description of implementation (i.e., who will administer the intervention)
✓ Fidelity of Implementation

6. Dependent Variables:  (A  B  NP)

✓ DVs “fit” the research question
✓ Psychometric characteristics of each DV
✓ Administration procedures for each DV
7. Analysis:  

✓ Analysis “fits” the research question(s)
✓ Description of each comparison
✓ Null hypothesis for each comparison
✓ Alpha level for each comparison

8. Anticipated Results:  

✓ Description of anticipated results
✓ Implications for research
✓ Implications for practice

9. Weaknesses of the Study:  

✓ Threats to internal validity

Strength(s):

Weakness(es):
RECOMMENDATIONS

Books


ISBN: 978-1-62681-226-0


**Movies**

*13 Days* – The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when the world stood on the brink of nuclear war and mass destruction

*Draft Day* – Deciding which player to select #1 in the National Football League’s draft of college football players

Moneyball – Statistical applications in America’s national game of baseball

The Lion in Winter – My absolute favorite movie, intrigue in the late 1100s among Henry Plantagenet, King of England, Ireland, and half of France; Henry’s estranged Queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine; their sons – Richard the Lionheart and Prince John; and King Phillip of France