

**Psych 179S: Thinking**  
**Summer, 2024, Session B**  
**(Updated on January 11, 2024)**

**Instructor :** Woo-kyoung Ahn  
e-mail: woo-kyoung.ahn@yale.edu

**Teaching Fellow:** Pinar Aldan  
e-mail: pinar.aldan@yale.edu

**Course Description**

A survey of research findings and theories of how we "think," and their real-life applications. This course fulfills the social science distribution requirement for Yale College, and social science (not core) requirement for Psychology majors at Yale University.

**Readings**

Readings are on Canvas. They are not required, but can be helpful in better understanding the materials covered during lecture. There is no textbook for the course. But you may find it useful to read "Thinking 101: How to reason better to think better" (written by the instructor based on prior lectures).

**Lecture Slides**

Lecture slides in PDF are available on Canvas under "Files Lectures".

**Format**

This course lasts five weeks. Although this is an online summer course, the expected workload is equivalent to a typical semester-long university class.

For each week, students will watch a series of short lectures that were taped in 2023. Watching the videos is essential, as they are largely distinct from the readings. Further, the lecture slides do not contain enough text to recreate the lecture if you have missed it. It is impossible to do well in this course without watching all the videos.

Each week, there are two meetings for online discussion and reviews, during the periods of Monday and Wednesday, 7 – 8:30 PM EST. Class participation is an essential part of this course. Students are expected to attend all sessions and participate (e.g., answer

discussion questions in the assignments, come with specific questions, contribute to discussion).

**Students are expected to watch the lectures needed for each online discussion before the online meeting time. In addition, students should have taken quizzes for the portions of the relevant lectures before the online discussion session.** (See “instructions and assignments” under each module on Canvas for details of what lectures to watch, what quizzes to take, and what discussion questions to answer before each meeting.)

### **Course Requirements**

**Exams (64%)** There will be two exams during the semester. Each will count for 32% of your final grade. Exam 1 will take place **7-9PM EST on Monday, July 15**. Exam 2 will take place **7-9PM EST on Wednesday, July 31**.

All of the information on the exams will come directly from what is presented in the lectures, and the exam questions are all derived from the discussion questions. Because of that, while preparing for the discussion sessions, you should write down your answers to the discussion questions and take a good note during the discussion sessions to correct or improve your answers.

Exam questions will test both factual knowledge and critical thinking. The exams will be non-cumulative and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and will cover all lecture materials and videos. The course material should not be too difficult but there is a large amount of information to understand and remember. Don't try to cram at the last minute!

**Quiz (20%)** There will be a quiz for each lecture, with a total of 20 quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes are not open-book, and each set of quizzes should be completed within 15 minutes. Download the lockdown browser and take the quiz through it. (Check [here](#) for the instructions.) You are allowed only one attempt to view the quiz, and thus do not start the quiz unless you are ready to take it.

As long as a student is paying attention to the lecture and understands the materials as they are covered, the student should be able to receive a full score without any prior preparation. All questions are about straightforward, factual information covered in the lecture, and they are mostly true/false judgments or multiple-choice questions. Each quiz will count for 1% of your final grade. Quizzes will be administered on Canvas, and

you may take them any time from 3 days to right before the online discussion session that covers the relevant lectures (see schedule below for the quiz numbers to be taken). Any quiz that is not completed before the online discussion session will be considered being late and there will be a 10% deduction of the score for each late day.

**Participation (16%)** There will be eight discussion sessions (worth 2% each). **To receive full credit, we expect you to 1) be promptly online at the section starting time, 2) have completed the viewing of the assigned lectures, 3) have taken the assigned quizzes, 4) have answers prepared for the questions on the Discussion Questions (Assignment) sheets, and 5) participate in the discussion.** (Again, see the “instructions and assignments” under each module for details.)

In preparing for each discussion session, write down your answers to all discussion questions for a given session and be prepared to present your answer in a concise and precise manner. Students will be randomly called on to answer the questions. If you could not answer some questions, be prepared to explain what part was confusing.

During the discussion sessions, students must have their cameras turned on and be in an appropriate location during the class. The discussion sessions will be recorded and placed on Canvas for your review. (The recording will be used only for the purpose of this course. Please let the instructor know right away if you have concerns about recording the sessions.)

### **Other policies**

**Missing discussion sessions. If you miss more than one discussion session, you will automatically fail the course, regardless of how well you do otherwise.**

**Make-up Exams.** A make-up exam will be permitted only in the event of extraordinary circumstances (i.e., medical emergency), and you must submit appropriate documentation. Make-up exams must be scheduled within three days of the missed exam.

**Extra-credit work.** Please note that, in order to maintain fairness and consistency for all students, we are unable to offer extra-credit work in this course.

**Questions about Grading of Quizzes.** If you have any questions about or disagreement with answers on quizzes, take a screenshot of the question or take a note of the question when the quiz is completed, and e-mail the instructor. If your argument is convincing, a partial / full credit

can be granted. Carefully describe your argument in your e-mail because you will have only one attempt to present it unless you are bringing up a new issue.

**Questions about Grading of Exams.** When you submit your exam answers, key answers to the exam questions will be displayed on Canvas. This is the only time that you can look at the key answers to the exams. The multiple-choice and true/false questions will be automatically graded by Canvas and the essay questions will be graded later and posted on Canvas in your private folder. If you have any petition or questions about grading of exams, please wait at least 24 hours after receiving the total score on the exam. This will allow time for students to critically and fairly think about the issue without an immediate emotional bias. Any inquiries about grading submitted before the 24-hour wait period will not be considered. Carefully describe your argument in your initial e-mail because you will have only one attempt to present it unless you are bringing up a new issue.

All communications regarding grading issues should be submitted in writing (such as e-mails) in a formal and thoughtful manner. We will not honor casually and hastily written e-mails to the instructor or the TF (such as an e-mail starting with “Hey”), because we treat them as a product of “System 1” (to be covered in class). As long as you are respectful in your correspondences, we will do our best to resolve any of your concerns.

### **Academic Honesty**

The exams and quizzes are closed-book. Obviously, use of any written materials or any form of collaboration is forbidden. Any case of suspected cheating will be referred to the Executive Committee of Yale College. The consequences can be severe, including suspension. In my experience, many episodes of cheating are due to stress and panic. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, *there are always better options than cheating*. If you are having problems in the course, you should always feel comfortable talking to me or to the TFs.

## Course Schedule

Date	Day	Lectures to watch	Readings	Quiz #
July 1	M	0. Introduction, 1. Decision-making (Part 1) 2. Decision-making (Part 2)	Baron Ch 10, 11	0, 1, 2
July 3	W	3. Judgments (Part 1) 4. judgments (Part 2)	Kahneman 2011, Ahn 2022 Chapters 5 and 8, Tversky & Kahneman	3, 4
July 8	M	5. Judgments (Part 3) 6. Rationality	<a href="http://Readthesequences.com">Readthesequences.com</a> , Ahn 2022 Chapter 4, Shafir	5,6
July 10	W	7. Confirmation Bias 8. Causal and Counterfactual Reasoning	Wikipedia Ahn 2022, Chapters 2 and 6 Byrne, Ahn 2022 Chapter 3	7,8
July 15	M	Exam 1		
July 17	W	9. Moral Reasoning 10. Fake News	Waldmann et al., Ahn 2022, Ch1.	9,10
July 22	M	11. Self-concept 12. Thinking about others	Epley's Mindwise, Ahn 2022 Ch. 7,	11, 12
July 24	W	13. Language and thought 14. deductive reasoning	Wolff & Holmes Halpern	13, 14
July 29	M	15. problem solving & creativity 16. Concepts and genetic essentialism	Lubart, Bassok & Novick, Ross & Spalding, Dar-Nimrod & Heine	15, 16
July 31	W	Exam 2		

## References

- Ahn, W. (2022). *Thinking 101: How to reason better to live better*, Flatiron Books.
- Baron, J. (2000). *Thinking and deciding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bassok, M., & Novick, L. R. (2012). Problem solving. *Oxford handbook of thinking and reasoning*, 413-432.
- Buehler, R., Griffin, D., & Peetz, J. (2010). The planning fallacy: Cognitive, motivational, and social origins. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 43, pp. 1-62). Academic Press.
- Byrne, R. M. (2016). Counterfactual thought. *Annual review of psychology*, 67, 135-157.
- Dar-Nimrod, I., & Heine, S. J. (2011). Genetic essentialism: on the deceptive determinism of DNA. *Psychological bulletin*, 137(5), 800.
- Epley, N. (2015). *Mindwise: Why we misunderstand what others think, believe, feel, and want*. Vintage.
- Halpern, D. F. (2013). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking*. Psychology Press.
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Macmillan.
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Ammirati, R., & Landfield, K. (2009). Giving debiasing away: Can psychological research on correcting cognitive errors promote human welfare?. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 4(4), 390-398.
- Lubart, T. (1994). Creativity. *Thinking and Problem Solving*, 289–332.
- Readthesequences.com, <https://www.readthesequences.com/An-Intuitive-Explanation-Of-Bayess-Theorem>
- Ross, B., & Spalding, T. L. (1994). Concepts and categories. In *Thinking and Problem Solving*
- Shafir, E., & LeBoeuf, R. A. (2002). Rationality. *Annual review of psychology*, 53(1), 491-517.
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1975). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. In *Utility, probability, and human decision making* (pp. 141-162). Springer Netherlands.
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation\\_bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias)
- Waldmann, M. R., Nagel, J., & Wiegmann, A. (2012). 19 Moral Judgment. *The Oxford handbook of thinking and reasoning*, 364.