

Psych 179S: Thinking
Summer, 2025, Session A
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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 Tuesday and Thursday, 3 – 4:30 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.)

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.)

Course Requirements

Exams (67%) There will be two exams during the semester. Each will count for 33.5% of your final grade. Exam 1 will take place **3-5PM EST on Tuesday, June 10 for Session A. and July 15 for Session B.** Exam 2 will take place **3-5PM EST on Thursday, June 26 Session A and July 31 for Session B.**

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 (17%) There will be a quiz for each lecture, with a total of 17 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 one week 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, each worth 2 points. The following grading criteria will be used:

1. Be present online promptly at the start time of the section.
 - Deduction of 0.5 points for being more than 5 minutes late.
 - Deduction of 2 points for absence without a documented acceptable excuse. We will adhere to the Academic Regulations of Yale College to determine acceptable excuses. For summer courses, only the following four cases will be considered acceptable. If your circumstances fall into one of these categories, promptly submit the relevant documents to the instructor via email.
 - a. Incapacitating illness or incapacitating condition of any kind
 - b. Death of a family member
 - c. A comparable emergency
 - d. Observance of religious holy days
 - If there is a documented acceptable excuse, submit your answers to the discussion questions to our TF within 24 hours from the end of the missed session. Depending on the quality of the answers, 0 to 2 points will be granted.
 - If you miss more than one discussion session, regardless of whether you have acceptable excuses, you will automatically fail the course.

2. Students will be randomly called on to answer questions. Therefore, in preparation for each discussion session, write down your answers to all the discussion questions for that session and be ready to present your answers in a concise and precise manner. If you could not answer some questions, be prepared to explain what part was confusing. Based on the quality of the answers, deductions will range from 0 for perfect answers to 1 point for incorrect or irrelevant answers.

3. Participate in the discussion. Deductions will range from 0 for active participation to 1 point for complete lack of participation.

Other policies

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 TF.

Course Schedule

The discussion sections in gray will be hosted by Pinar Aldan, and those in white will be hosted by Woo-kyoung Ahn.

Date for Session A	Date for Session B	Day	Lectures to watch	Readings	Quiz #
May 27	Jul 1	Tue	0. Introduction, 1. Decision-making (Part 1) 2. Decision-making (Part 2)	Baron Ch 10, 11	0, 1, 2
May 29	Jul 3	Thur	3. Judgments (Part 1) 4. judgments (Part 2)	Kahneman 2011, Ahn 2022 Chapters 5 and 8, Tversky & Kahneman	3, 4
June 3	Jul 8	Tue	5. Judgments (Part 3) 6. Rationality	Readthesequences.com , Ahn 2022 Chapter 4, Shafir	5,6
June 5	Jul 10	Thur	7. Confirmation Bias 8. Causal and Counterfactual Reasoning	Wikipedia Ahn 2022, Chapters 2 and 6 Byrne, Ahn 2022 Chapter 3	7,8
June 10	Jul 15	Tue	Exam 1		
June 12	Jul 17	Thur	9. Moral Reasoning 10. Fake News	Waldmann et al., Ahn 2022, Ch1.	9,10
June 17	Jul 22	Tue	11. Self-concept 12. Thinking about others	Epley's Mindwise, Ahn 2022 Ch. 7,	11, 12

June 19	Jul 24	Thur	13. Language and thought 14. deductive reasoning	Wolff & Holmes Halpern	13, 14
June 24	Jul 29	Tue	15. problem solving & creativity 16. Concepts and genetic essentialism	Lubart, Bassok & Novick, Ross & Spalding, Dar-Nimrod & Heine	15, 16
June 26	Jul 31	Thur	Exam 2		

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