Course Descriptions None 2026-2027

Course Title	Social Psychology of Decision Making
Course Code	EBC4203
ECTS Credits	6,0
Assessment	Whole/Half Grades

Period

Period	Start	End	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2	26-10-2026	11-12-2026	X			X	

Level	Intermediate/Advanced
Coordinator	Julia Schnepf For more information:julia.schnepf@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Language of instruction	English
Goals	You will gain familiarity with the main concept of social psychology and learn to identify how social psychological concepts impact individual and group decision making processes. Furthermore you will learn to apply psychological decision making theory to a practical problem.
Description	This course will extend the previous course on cognitive psychology by placing the cognitive and affective processes that are important for decision-making in an interpersonal context. We will start by investigating the contextual factors such as cooperation, fairness, and group processes. Next, we will discuss how social decision-making takes place in the context of morality, social comparisons, and is subject to stereotyping and prejudice. Throughout the course students are encouraged to connect the theory to practical examples from our everyday lives; ranging from their own experiences with their friends – for example in hazing rites, advertisements on TV – for example how celebrities can make or break a brand, to political examples such as global warming. The different components of this course are designed to help students gain insights into social psychological theories, the specific research designs that are used to test these, and the application of these theories in our daily lives. Overall, this course should raise students' awareness of the extent to which all our decisions are context-dependent, and influenced by the (imagined) presence of other people. For this reason, it is important to understand the impact of the social context in order to improve decision-making to reach optimal outcomes for individuals, organizations, and society.
Literature	Ruff, C. C., & Fehr, E. (2014). The neurobiology of rewards and values in social decision making. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 15(8), 549-562. Cialdini, R. B. (2005). Basic social influence is underestimated. Psychological Inquiry, 16(4), 158-161. Harmon-Jones, E., Harmon-Jones, C., & Levy, N. (2015). An action-based model of cognitive-dissonance processes. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 24(3), 184-189. Camerer, C.F. & Fehr, E. (2006). When does "economic man" dominate social behaviour? Science, 311, 47-52. Van Dijk, E., & De Dreu, C. K. (2021). Experimental games and social decision making. Annual Review of Psychology, 72, 415-438. Barsky, A., & Kaplan, S. A. (2007). If you feel bad, it's unfair: A quantitative synthesis of affect and organizational justice perceptions. Journal of Applied Psychology, 92(1), 286-295. Skitka, L. J., Winquist, J., & Hutchinson, S. (2003). Are outcome fairness and outcome favorability distinguishable psychological constructs? A meta-analytic review. Social Justice Research, 16(4), 309-341. Kerr, N. L., & Tindale, R. S. (2004). Group performance and decision making. Annual Review of Psychology, 55, 623-655. Tsintsadze-Maass, E., & Maass, R. W. (2014). Groupthink and terrorist radicalization. Terrorism and Political Violence, 26(5), 735-758. Barkan, R., Ayal, S., & Ariely, D. (2015). Ethical dissonance, justifications, and moral behavior. Current Opinion in Psychology, 6, 157-161. Cikara, M., Farnsworth, R. A., Harris, L. T., & Fiske, S. T. (2010). On the wrong side of the trolley track: Neural correlates of relative social valuation. Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 5(4), 404-413 Moore, C., & Gino, F. (2013). Ethically adrift: How others pull our moral compass from true North, and how we can fix it. Research in Organizational Behaviour, 33, 53-77. Baldwin, M., & Mussweiler, T. (2018). The culture of social comparison. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 115(39), E9067-E9074. Fliessbach, K., Weber, B., Trautner, P., Dohmen, T., Sunde, U., Elger, C. E., & Falk, A. (2007). Social comparison affects reward-related brain activity in the human ventral striatum. Science, 318(5854), 1305-1308. Verduyn, P., Gugushvili, N., Massar, K., Täht, K., & Kross, E. (2020). Social comparison on social networking sites. Current Opinion in Psychology, 36, 32-37. Hodson, G., & Dhont, K. (2015). The person-based nature of prejudice: Individual difference predictors of intergroup negativity. European Review of Social Psychology, 26(1), 1-42. Lee, S. Y., Pitesa, M., Thau, S., & Pillutla, M. M. (2015). Discrimination in selection decisions: Integrating stereotype fit and interdependence theories. Academy of Management Journal, 58(3), 789-812. Milkman, K. L., Chugh, D. & Bazerman, M. H. (2009). How can decision-making be improved? Perspectives on Psychological Science, 4, 379-383. Wang, M., Rieger, M. O., & Hens, T. (2016). How time preferences differ: Evidence from 53 countries. Journal of Economic Psychology, 52, 115-135.
Prerequisites	
Transitional Regulations	
Teaching methods	PBL / Presentation / Lecture / Papers / Groupwork / Research
Assessment methods	Final Paper / Participation / Written Exam
Evaluation in previous academic year	For the complete evaluation of this course please click http://iwio-sbe.maastrichtuniversity.nl/rapporten.asp?referrer=codeUM

This course belongs to the following programme / specialisation

Master Human Decision Science	Compulsory Courses