



PSYCHOL 3727F (570)
Decision Making
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Marcie Penner
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Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description: Students face many difficult decisions. In this course, we will explore how we make decisions and why we sometimes make poor decisions. We will apply theories and findings from cognitive science and behavioural economics to help you make better personal and professional decisions and to positively influence others' decision making.

Prerequisite(s): [Psychology 2840F/G](#) (or [Psychology 2801F/G](#), [Psychology 2802F/G](#), the former Psychology 2800E, the former Psychology 2820E, [Psychology 2830A/B](#), [Psychology 2855F/G](#) or [Psychology 2856F/G](#)), and either [Psychology 2135A/B](#), [Psychology 2221A/B](#), [Economics 3351F/G](#), or [Economics 3357A/B](#), and registration in the third or fourth year of Honours Specialization in Psychology, Honours Specialization in Applied Psychology, Honours Double Major, Major or Specialization in Psychology, or registration in third or fourth year of Major in Analytics and Decision Sciences, Minor in Analytics and Decision Sciences, Honours Specialization in Economics, Major or Specialization in Economics, or permission of the Department of Psychology.

Antirequisite(s): None

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: PSYCHOL

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Psychology 3727A (570): **Decision Making**
King's University College at The University of Western Ontario
Fall 2026-2027

Calendar description

Students face many difficult decisions. In this course, we will explore how we make decisions and why we sometimes make poor decisions. We will apply theories and findings from cognitive science and behavioural economics to help you make better personal and professional decisions and to positively influence others' decision making.

Professor

Dr. Marcie Penner (she/her)

How to contact me: **Email:** mpennerw@uwo.ca (please include the course number in the subject line). I will try to respond within 2 business days (Monday to Friday, 9 am - 5 pm).

Office hours: Posted on Brightspace

Course Information

Class time: Consult your schedule or the course Brightspace site.

Location: Consult your schedule or the course Brightspace site.

Mode of instruction: In-person

Land acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our campus at King's University College is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation, as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.

Required textbook

Kim, N.S. (2025). *Judgment and Decision-Making in the Lab and the World*, 2nd Ed. Bloomsbury Press.

- Students need to purchase the 2nd edition. Older editions will not be sufficient.
- The cost of an eBook is \$69 from the [campus bookstore](#). Physical copies can be purchased at many online and brick and mortar bookstores (e.g., Indigo, Amazon, etc.) for about \$80.
- The textbook is also available for use in the library (FREE!).

Additional required readings are provided on the course Brightspace site.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary, research, theories, and concepts in decision making
- Describe the methods that scientists use to understand decision making
- Read and think critically about the theories, methods, and findings in decision making
- Identify cognitive biases that affect decision making
- Apply findings from decision making to inform their decisions
- Apply findings from decision making to positively influence others' decisions

Note: The purpose of this course is for **you** to achieve these learning outcomes, not a generative artificial intelligence (AI) system.

Expectations

You are expected to:

- Complete the assigned readings prior to class
- Attend all classes
- Actively participate in both in-class discussions and activities
- Act respectfully in all interactions with fellow students and the professor

Course evaluation

In-Class Activities	20%
Midterm Test	20%
Final Exam	30%
Capstone Proposal	10%
Capstone Project	20%

In-Class Activities. The weekly in-class activities will take many forms (e.g., case studies, problem-solving, discussion groups, etc.). The activities are a chance for you to creatively apply your course knowledge. To be successful, you will need to (1) prepare by doing the assigned readings, (2) attend class, (3) actively engage in the activity in a collaborative manner, and (4) complete an in-class reflection. Each activity is worth 2%, to a maximum of 20% for the course, with activities marked as pass/fail. You may miss one in-class activity without penalty. *Given this built-in flexibility, requests for academic consideration for in-class activities will be denied by the course instructor.*

Midterm Test. The midterm test will occur in class on October 22nd and will cover all readings, lectures, videos, and in-class activities to date. The format of the midterm test is written responses, varying from a sentence to a paragraph in length. *Academic consideration for the midterm test requires submission of formal supporting documentation to, and approval from, the Academic Advising Office.* For those students who receive academic consideration, the only make-up test will be offered during the Friday make-up session on November 6th. Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Final Exam. The final exam will occur during the December examination period (consult the exam schedule for date/time/location). The final exam is cumulative and will cover all readings, lectures, videos, and in-class activities in the course. The format of the final exam is written responses, varying from a sentence to a paragraph in length.

Capstone. To allow you to personalize your educational experience in this course, you will complete a capstone project wherein you apply research on decision making to a topic that interests you. This capstone project can take multiple forms, each with a framing and process informed by decision science. Options include: (1) a decision science **research proposal**, (2) a **prospective decision analysis** of a personal or professional decision, or (3) a **behavioural change plan** to positively influence the decision making of others, whichever best fits with your interest and goals. The capstone is broken into two components: proposal (with feedback) and final project. A workshop on the capstone will be provided in class on October 8th. The capstone proposal is due on Friday, October 30th at 5 pm and the final capstone project is due on Friday, December 4th at 5 pm. Students may elect to submit the capstone components by 9 am the following Monday, without penalty. *Given this built-in flexibility, academic consideration for the capstone components requires submission of formal supporting documentation to, and approval from, the Academic Advising Office.*

Course policy on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative AI tools may not be used for any assignments in this course. Preserving academic integrity in this course may occasionally require active verification; I therefore reserve the right to mandate a direct meeting to discuss any submitted assignment at my discretion. The use of generative AI in this course will be considered plagiarism, a scholastic offence, and will be reported. This course policy is consistent with the departmental policy (attached).

Notice of Turnitin analysis

The capstone components will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. The goal of this policy is to avoid having you inadvertently submit work that is not fully your own. **You will have the opportunity to, and are strongly encouraged to, view the Turnitin report and make any needed changes so long as you submit the final, revised version, by the assigned deadline.** Note: The ability to resubmit may not be true for extensions, due to software constraints. All assignments submitted for such checking may be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property Statement

- **All learning objectives in this course are to be met by the individual student, not outsourced to generative AI.** The use of generative AI in this course will be considered plagiarism, a scholastic offence, consistent with the departmental policy (attached).
- Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf (See also Appendix A below)
- Course content created by a professor is the professor's intellectual property; it may not be distributed, uploaded to generative AI, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member. Recording of lectures or in-class activities without the explicit consent of the professor is grounds for academic discipline.

Tentative Schedule**Note: Changes to the lecture schedule will be announced on Brightspace.**

	Before Class	In Class (with deliverables bolded)
Week 1: September 10	Read: Chapter 1	Introduction to the science of decision making In-class activity
Week 2: September 17	Read: Chapter 2	Availability and representativeness In-class activity
Week 3: September 24	Read: Chapter 3	Anchoring and primacy effects in judgment In-class activity
Week 4: October 1	Read: Chapter 4	Hindsight bias In-class activity
Week 5: October 8	Read: Chapter 5 Review: Capstone Assignment	Workshop: Capstone Project Risk perception In-class activity
	READING WEEK – No class on October 15th	
Week 6: October 22	MIDTERM TEST	
Week 7: October 29	Read: Chapter 6	Prediction In-class activity Capstone Proposal Due: October 30th at 5 pm
Week 8: November 5	Read: Chapter 7	Expected utility theory In-class activity
Week 9: November 12	Read: Chapters 8 & 9	Framing effects and prospect theory; Mental accounting and choice In-class activity
Week 10: November 19	Read: Chapter 10	Schemas and framework theories In-class activity
Week 11: November 26	Read: Chapters 11 & 12	Judging covariation, contingency, and cause; Hypothesis testing and confirmation bias In-class activity
Week 12: December 3	Read: Chapters 13 & 14	Belief; Emotional, social and group decision-making In-class activity Capstone Due: December 4th at 5 pm
Exam Period: Dec 11-22	FINAL EXAM (see exam schedule for date/time/location)	

Disclaimer: The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to better ensure student learning. Students will be notified of changes on the Brightspace site for this course and are responsible for attending to such changes.

Department of Psychology Policies Related to AI Tools

1. Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any submitted coursework unless express permission has been granted by your instructor.

Students **should not have AI tools write any part of their assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.** Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

Additional information: Students can use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask ChatGPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and outdated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

2. Policy on Use of Translation Tools*

The Department of Psychology views the unapproved use of translation or language applications as an academic offence.

Any usage of translation applications or language generation by students to complete specific assigned work for this course **must be approved** by the instructor **prior** to submitting the work **and noted by the student in the submitted work** itself.

Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve or translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own **constitutes plagiarism.** You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

Why do we have this policy?

- Translation is intellectual work and produces intellectual property, thus any text which is translated must cite the translator.
- Psychology endeavors to advance students' linguistic, analytic, and reasoning competencies – this can not happen outside of specific language competencies.
- Earning a university degree signals that an individual has advanced literacy and communicative skill in the language of instruction at the university; this is English at King's University College at Western University. If translation machines are used by students without regulation, we will have no way of certifying whether these competencies exist and fewer mechanism for encouraging students to do the hard work to develop them.

** Based on the policy developed by the Department of Child and Youth Studies*

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College:
<https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.