This course will be offered in-person. There will be no online/synchronous classes or recorded lectures.

**CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATION IN THE COURSE**

**Instructor and TA Information:**

Instructor: Professor Maggie Toplak  
Office: 126 BSB  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-11 am (before class) or by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Adam Burnett  
Office: 037 BSB  
Office Hours: By appointment.

**Email Protocol:** When you email the professor or TA, please include your Student ID and full name in the body of your email with “PSYC3255 Reasoning” in the subject line. We will not answer emails regarding issues covered in this syllabus – please read the syllabus before emailing.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C.
- HH/PSYC 2110 3.00 (Developmental Psychology) or HH/PSYC 2120 3.00 (Social Psychology) or HH/PSYC 2260 3.00 (Cognition)
- Completed at least 54 earned credits

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The study of human reasoning and judgment offers us tools to enhance our everyday decision making. Over the last 30 years, we have seen immense progress in our understanding of the cognitive science of how individuals make judgments and perform on measures used to assess reasoning and judgment. Current models and theories that have shaped this field will be discussed, including dual process models and individual difference perspectives. Performance on
several paradigms will be examined from the perspective of the Great Rationality Debate. Topics and paradigms will include: framing effects, overconfidence paradigms, probabilistic and statistical thinking, scientific reasoning and myside thinking. In addition, we will discuss the development of reasoning, judgment in special populations, clinical decision making, and training effects.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

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

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in several paradigms that have been empirically studied in the reasoning, judgment and decision making research fields.
2. Articulate current trends and models that are dominating current thinking in the fields of reasoning, judgment and decision making.
3. Express knowledge and understanding of how to design a research study related to improving human judgments and choices in every day activities.
4. Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings.
5. Demonstrate ability to relate the judgment and decision-making concepts to own and others’ life experiences through self-reflection exercises in the course.

**Specific Learning Objectives:**

The Learning Objectives of the course are to:

1. Discuss theoretical models and perspectives that have been used to frame the current study of human reasoning, judgment and decision-making, including dual process models and The Great Rationality Debate. This will include some of the classic theories and studies that have importantly framed the current literature include: the roots of thinking in the classic reasoning literature, the heuristics and biases tradition and prospect theory.
2. Key experimental paradigms will be examined, including: the Wason card selection task and falsification strategies, scientific thinking, probabilistic reasoning, cognitive reflection, belief bias syllogisms, myside bias, overconfidence paradigms and framing effects. An overview and empirical findings of these paradigms will be used to illustrate methodological issues in the study of reasoning, judgment and decision-making. We will also discuss how these paradigms can be used to understand real-world problems and potential applications of this work.
3. The purpose of the selected topics is to provide some breadth on this topic that will appeal to a broad range of students. The following topics will be included: developmental studies, individual differences in performance, clinical applications and real-world outcomes. The diversity in these topics is also intended for students to think about the broad range of applications of reasoning theories, and to stimulate their thinking about the research project that they will develop in this course.
4. This course will devote considerable attention and time to the topic of remediation of reasoning, judgment and decision-making. Some instruction will occur on training studies and on the concept of “environmental interventions” or nudges. Specifically, students will be encouraged to think about simple non-invasive changes in their own environment to prompt better judgment and decision-making.
5. Students will have a structured writing assignment in this course to develop a testable research project based on the concept of environmental interventions applied to an important problem in their own lives. Students will be asked to provide testable
hypotheses, take into account methodological controls in their design to enhance their methods, conduct an informal test of their intervention, report their findings and self-reflections and to take into account factors that may alter the interpretation of their findings.

6. Critical thinking skills will be an important part of each class. In addition to encouraging participation during the didactic lectures, several activities will be used to engage students in each of these topics beyond the course content, including consideration of how this research can be used to understand and address real-world problems. Included in each class, engaging students in discussion and analysis of methodologies and interpretations of paradigms used to assess reasoning, judgment and decision-making.

**COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS**

**Required Text:**

In addition, see readings below indicated in course schedule. These papers are available through the York library’s e-resources or through eClass.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Exercises</td>
<td>Classes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 (All completed outside of class)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td><strong>February 15, 2023 (during Class 6)</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Makeup Exam Date:</strong> Monday February 27, 2023 at 8 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structured Research Project</td>
<td>Due April 5, 2023 (Class 12) Submit on <em>eClass</em></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Exam Period TBD</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Description of Assignments:**

1. **Participation Exercises on OpenMind Program** 25%

- 8 Interactive Online Lessons (Classes 6 thru 10) X 2% each =16%
- 4 Peer-to-Peer Conversations (Classes 7 thru 11) X 2% each = 8%
- **BONUS:** Additional 1% for completing all of the lessons and conversations by Class #12.
2. **Examinations**

**Midterm Exam 20%**

**Makeup Exam Date:** Monday February 27, 2023 at 8 am (Location to be announced)

**Final Exam 30%**

Exams will be multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Exam questions will be primary based on the content covered in the lectures and textbook. Use the lecture content as a guide for directing reading and study efforts for the additional readings posted on eClass. Supplementary readings will not be covered on the exams. Final exam will NOT be cumulative (that is, will only include content covered after Midterm exam).

3. **Environmental Intervention Structured Research Project and Oral Presentation 25%**

Students will be asked to develop an “Environmental Intervention” or nudge that would improve some aspect of their personal lives. This will involve generating an idea, articulating testable hypotheses and conducting the study to evaluate the idea. Class time will be devoted to helping students develop their ideas in small groups. Each student will develop a personalized nudge strategy to be summarized in a table format. A template for the structured table will be provided ahead of this assignment. The structured table will be handed in on eClass on the last day of classes. This project is intended to provide training in applying the concepts taught in this course to real-world problems, practice thinking about research methodologies to develop testable hypotheses and to develop skills that will support scientific writing skills. Students will be asked to take into account methodological considerations in their design. Where appropriate, students should follow APA format in their written project.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

All of the classes will be taught in-person, unless there are extenuating circumstances. For example, if the university mandates online teaching or if the instructor is ill, we may shift to an online class for that week. For any online classes, there will be some technical requirements. First off, a computer equipped with a webcam and microphone, as well as high speed internet access are musts.

**eClass:** All course materials will be available on the course eClass (formerly Moodle), unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. This will be your central access point for course information and materials.

**Zoom:** Zoom will be used if there are any online classes, or possibly for meetings with the instructor or TA. It is hosted on servers in the U.S. This includes recordings done through Zoom. If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name and first initial of your last name when you join a session. The system is configured in a way that all participants
are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Tech: Following are some useful links for you regarding computing information and resources: Student Guide to Moodle (eClass) Zoom@YorkU Best Practices Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide Computing for Students Website Student Guide to eLearning at York University.

CLASS FORMAT AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

All classes and examinations will be conducted in-person. Students are expected to attend all classes. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on any missed content by asking a classmate in the event that a class is missed. Classes will not be recorded.

GRADING AS PER SENATE POLICY

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – Grading Scheme for 2022-23

MISSED/LATE ASSIGNMENTS

For any missed or late assignment, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology Undergraduate Office. At this time, due to COVID-19 an Attending Physician’s Statement (APS) is not required, however, a reason for missing an evaluated component in the course must be provided.

HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form link: https://psychology.apps01.yorku.ca/machform/view.php?id=16179

Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz or late assignment.

Reasonable considerations include unexpected medical circumstances. Non-medical circumstances will also be considered, including compassionate grounds, such as death in the family, accident or emergency travel.

Make up exams: Although the content coverage of a make-up exam is the same, the format may be different. Students may only write one make up exam.
INFORMATION ON PLAGIARISM DETECTION

To promote academic integrity in this course, you will be required to submit your written work (e.g., course paper) through Turnitin (within the course eClass). Turnitin reviews textual similarity and helps in the detection of possible plagiarism. By using this software, you are allowing your submitted material to be included as a source document in the Turnitin.com reference database, that will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. Terms applying to the University’s use of the Turnitin service are described on Turnitin.com.

ADD/DROP DEADLINES

For a list of all important dates please refer to: Fall/Winter 2022-23 Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Fall (Term F)</th>
<th>Year (Term Y)</th>
<th>Winter (Term W)</th>
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<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
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<td>Drop deadline: Last date</td>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>Mar. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Withdrawal Period</td>
<td>Nov. 12 -</td>
<td>Feb. 11 -</td>
<td>March 18 -</td>
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<td>(withdraw from a course</td>
<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>April 11</td>
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Add and Drop Deadline Information:

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are different, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the Refund Tables.

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may withdraw from a course using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The
withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR STUDENTS**

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#).

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services (SAS)](https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. **Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.**

[https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/](https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/)

**Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

**COURSE MATERIALS COPYRIGHT INFORMATION**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Psychology 3255 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.
IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) -
https://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust2012-.pdf

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty (https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/) and the Academic Integrity Website (https://www.yorku.ca/unit/vpacad/academic-integrity/).
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants (https://www.yorku.ca/research/human-participants/)
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities (https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-policy/; and https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-guidelines-procedures-and-definitions/)
- Religious Observance Accommodation (https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-religious-observances-policy-guidelines-and-procedures/)

STUDENT ETIQUETTE

You will sometimes be asked to engage with other students in small group exercises during class. This allows you to share your thoughts and questions about the course with one another. Appropriate and respectful behaviour in group discussions is essential.

Follow these guidelines to insure a safe space for all of you:

- Respect others. You, your peers, and the teaching team are real people who are affected by what you say and write. Be mindful of the opinions and feelings of others, even if they differ from your own. General rule: Don’t say or write anything online that you would not say publicly.
- Pause before you speak and proofread before you send. Before sending an email, sending a message to a chat or responding to a discussion, review your response to ensure that it is clear, concise and respectful.
● Avoid strong language, all caps, and excessive exclamation points. It is very easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Watch out for strong language, and try to identify and avoid potential confusions in your wording before sending messages.

● Avoid slang and use standard English. This is a work environment so please avoid slang terms (e.g., wassup) and texting abbreviations (e.g., u instead of you).

● Avoid the use of emoticons and emojis. Be careful with humour and avoid sarcasm. The tone of a message is often lost in a written message and do not assume that everyone understands where you are coming from.

● Personal information and confidentiality. Do not reveal confidential information about yourself or others. You are, of course, free to share some personal anecdotes about your life if they are relevant to the topic or question being discussed, but keep in mind that the online space is shared and viewed by others in the course.

● Don’t post or share inappropriate material. Be forgiving. Be mindful that for many students in this course, this will be a new way of interacting and that some may have more difficulty communicating in English. Be kind, patient, and understanding with your peers.

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**CALUMET AND STONG COLLEGES’ STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Calumet** and **Stong** Colleges aim to support the success of Faculty of Health students through a variety of **free programs** throughout their university career:

- **Orientation** helps new students transition into university, discover campus resources, and establish social and academic networks.

- **Peer Mentoring** connects well-trained upper-year students with first year and transfer students to help them transition into university.

- **Course Representative Program** supports the academic success and resourcefulness of students in core program courses through in-class announcements.

- **Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)** involve upper-level academically successful and well-trained students who facilitate study sessions in courses that are historically challenging.

- **Peer Tutoring** offers one-on-one academic support by well-trained Peer Tutors.

- Please connect with your Course Director about any specific academic resources for this class.

- Calumet and Stong Colleges also support students’ **Health & Wellness**, **leadership and professional skills development**, **student/community engagement and wellbeing**, **Career Exploration**, **Indigenous Circle**, **awards and recognition**, and **provide opportunities to students to work or volunteer**.

- For additional resources/information about Calumet and Stong Colleges’ Student Success Programs, please consult our websites ([Calumet College](http://calumetcollege.ca); [Stong College](http://stongcollege.ca)), email **scchelp@yorku.ca**, and/or follow us on Instagram ([Calumet College](http://calumetcollege.ca); [Stong College](http://stongcollege.ca)), Facebook ([Calumet College](http://calumetcollege.ca); [Stong College](http://stongcollege.ca)) and LinkedIn.

- Are you receiving our weekly email (Subject: “Calumet and Stong Colleges - Upcoming events”)? If not, please check your Inbox and Junk folders, and if it’s not there then please contact **ccscadm@yorku.ca**, and request to be added to the listserv. Also, make sure to add your ‘preferred email’ to your **Passport York personal profile** to make sure you receive important news and information.
**HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS COURSE**

Inspired by and adapted from Steven Pinker’s course on Rationality
([https://stevenpinker.com/classes/rationality-gened-1066](https://stevenpinker.com/classes/rationality-gened-1066))

Based on research in cognitive psychology and our experiences with practices of more and less successful students in past offerings of this and other courses, here is a list of recommendations for getting the most out of this course:

- Show up for the lectures, they are essential for your learning in this course. It is much harder to understand the concepts and the connections between concepts from the handouts, readings and notes taken by other students.
- Give the lectures your undivided attention. If you are using a laptop to take notes, turn off your Web browser and email program, and don’t turn them on again until the lecture is over. Many people believe in a myth called “multitasking”, but research in cognitive psychology shows that the brain is incapable of processing two streams of verbal material simultaneously.
- Consider taking notes on paper with a pen or pencil, rather than by typing into a computer file. Several studies have shown that people remember material better this way, probably because they can more easily use spatial and visual resources of a 2D page to organize the material, rather than relying only on strings of text. These resources include arrows, circling, underlining, text size, comments on diagrams, and so on.
- In addition, it is optimal to take your own notes. The notes of another student will reflect that student’s assumptions, background knowledge, habits and styles, and idiosyncratic associations, which can differ dramatically from your own.
- As you read and study, actively organize the material in your mind and don’t try to just memorize the content. Organize the material hierarchically, such as using the weekly roadmap presented in class to help make connections between the concepts and ideas. See if you can explain some of the concepts and ideas to someone else. Aim at a deep understanding of the ideas, not a superficial familiarity with the words and phrases. Can you paraphrase the material using different words from those in the text, lecture, or reading? You may need to read some of the chapters and sections in the textbook multiple times to get a deep understanding.
- Distribute your learning over time. Don’t cram or binge-read in an all-nighter the night before the exam.
- Ask and discuss. If you think you don’t understand something, it’s not a failing but rather an opportunity for learning. Ask your fellow students. Ask our TA during office hours. Ask your professor, especially right after the lecture or during office hours.
- Read the syllabus, assignments and rubrics carefully. We grade according to how well the students carry out the terms of the assignments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Weekly Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Class #1 January 11, 2023 | Part 1:  ● Course Overview and Review Syllabus  
Part 2:  ● Why should we care about reasoning, judgment and decision-making?  
● Defining *Rationality*. Introduction to the *Great Rationality Debate.*  
  | **Readings:**  ● Chapter 1 and 4 (p. 93-97)  
**Assignments:**  ● Read Course Syllabus Fully and Carefully  
● Ensure Access to eClass  
● Complete Qualtrics Sample Questions (Optional)  
|**Class #2 January 18, 2023** | Part 1:  ● Environmental Interventions or *Nudge* Lecture  
● Class Project Nudge Assignment  
Part 2:  ● Examples of *Nudges* Lecture  
● Nudge Assignment: Student Discussion Groups  
**Assignments:**  ● Hand in Nudge Assignment Worksheet #1  
|**Class #3 January 25, 2023** | Part 1:  ● Instrumental Rationality or *What to do*: Framing Effects and Temporal Discounting  
● Epistemic Rationality or *What is true*: Overconfidence  
Part 2:  ● Nudge Assignment: Student Discussion Groups  
  | **Readings:**  ● Chapters 2 and 3  
**Assignments:**  ● Hand in Nudge Assignment Worksheet #2  
|**Class #4 February 1, 2023** | Part 1:  ● The Role of Knowledge: Knowledge can be helpful and *unhelpful*  
● Probabilistic and Statistical Thinking  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class #5</th>
<th>February 8, 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
<td>● Miserly Information Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2:</td>
<td>● Review for Midterm (Adam)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments:**
• Hand in Nudge Assignment Worksheet #3

**Reading:**

<table>
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<th>Class #6</th>
<th>February 15, 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
<td>● Misdide Bias Introduction Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2:</td>
<td>● Introduction to OpenMind Program</td>
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**Assignments:**
• Study for Midterm next week

**Reading:**

**Assignments:**
• Ensure access to OpenMind Program (see instructions to students on eClass)  
• OpenMind Lessons 1 & 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #7</th>
<th>March 1, 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
<td>● Myside Bias Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 2:</td>
<td>● OpenMind Program: Review and Peer-to-Peer Conversation Overview</td>
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**Readings:**
• Chapter 4

**Assignments:**
• Peer-to-Peer Conversation 1  
• OpenMind Lessons 3 & 4

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #8</th>
<th>March 8, 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1:</td>
<td>● The Development of Reasoning, Judgment and Decision-Making</td>
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<td>Part 2:</td>
<td>● Dual Process Models and Critiques</td>
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**Readings:**
• Chapter 5

**Assignments:**
| Class #9  | Part 1: Experimental Demonstration of the Iowa Gambling Task  | ● Peer-to-Peer Conversation 2  
Class #9March 15, 2023  | ● OpenMind Lessons 5 & 6 |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|          | Part 2: Special Populations: The Iowa Gambling Task AND Maltreatment Populations | Readings:  
|          | Readings:  
|          | Assignments:  
* Peer-to-Peer Conversation 3  
* OpenMind Lessons 7 & 8 |
| Class #10 | ● Clinical and Medical Decision-Making | Readings:  
| March 22, 2023 | Assignments:  
* Peer-to-Peer Conversation 4 |        |
| Class #11 | ● Training Effects | Readings:  
| March 29, 2023 | Assignments:  
* Peer-to-Peer Conversation 4 |        |
| Class #12 | Part 1: Metareasoning and Metarationality  
Part 2: Review and Final Exam Preparation (Adam) | Readings:  
* Chapter 6  
| April 5, 2023 | Assignments:  
* Structured Research Project Due – Submit on eClass |        |