Course Information:

Special Topics: How We Decide, 830:458:01
Class: Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:50 AM, Fine Arts 217 (Note: This is a change from what is in the schedule).

Professor Information:

Dr. Sarah R. Allred, srallred@scarletmail.rutgers.edu ATG 309
Office Hours: 11am-12pm, T/Th

Course Overview:

How and why do we make the decisions that we do? How are decisions guided both by intuition and reasoning? How do we decide what is right and what is wrong? What counts as evidence? How does the context in which we receive information affect how we use that information?

Learning Objectives:

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department and the broad goals of general education at the university. Course activities are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the two general systems that characterize human thoughts and decisions.
2. Identify examples of both systems in everyday decision-making.
3. Explain the principles of moral reasoning and trace their evolutionary roots.
4. Generate creative ways of influencing intuitive decision making.
5. Analyze the effect of digital media on decision-making.
6. Apply decision strategies to your own decision-making process.
7. Communicate your knowledge about decision-making clearly and effectively.

Course Logistics Overview:

Everything you need for this course will be listed on the Sakai site. Each topic has one Lessons page, and this page gives an overview of what will happen in class and links to all assignments and readings.

This class is a digitally-enhanced class, with many in-class activities and assignments completed digitally. **For this course, you will need a smartphone, tablet or laptop computer capable of connecting to the internet.** If you do not have a device, you may check out an iPad Mini from the library for the semester (more details to follow). It will be due during the final exam, and you will be responsible for lost or destroyed devices.

On the first day of class, you will be divided into teams. Most classwork will involve the opportunity to work with your team. See grading for more information

Course Materials:

1. **Readings.** You need to buy Thinking, Fast and Slow, by Daniel Kahneman. It is available inexpensively at Amazon or other retailers ($10, at last check). All other readings will be available free of charge on Sakai or through the library electronic reserves. For specific readings, follow the instructions on Sakai.

2. **Smartphone, tablet (such as an iPad) or laptop computer.** In almost every class, assignments will be turned in electronically, so you must have an internet-capable device in class. It is strongly recommended that you use your own device if you have one, but if you do not, you may check out an iPad from the library (see instructor for more information).

3. **Software.** The following applications or programs are required for this class: Google Drive, Google Docs, access to Socrative (free app on Apple products, or via internet for other platforms), and software to create and display presentations (such as Explain Everything, PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides or Educreations).

4. **Class information**. Information about assignments and due dates will always be posted on that week's Lessons page in Sakai. In some cases, slides will also be posted after class. Please note that class discussion and problem-solving will take up most class time, so often there will be few slides. Coming to class is strongly advised.

5. **Instagram account.** Some of our class assignments will involve Instagram. This means that you need to have a *public* account on one of these platforms. You may use an existing account, or if (like me) you prefer not to use private social media for school, you can create an account for the sole purposes of this course. It is not necessary that you associate your name with your Instagram or Twitter handle, although you will need to share your handle with me so I can verify your work.

If something prevents you from maintaining an account, talk to me directly within the first week of course, so we can make alternative arrangements.

Grading Overview:

Grading is based on the premise that frequent, low-stakes assessment aids learning much better than infrequent, high-stakes assessment. I expect you to come to class having read the material, and I expect you to be prepared to apply that material in class. In return for this up-front effort on your part, the plurality of your grade will come from daily assignments, completed in class, on which you should have ample opportunity to achieve full credit. Overall, grades will be divided into 4 parts:

(1) **Reading assignments due before class, 10%.** You must complete the reading assignments *before* coming to class. The reading assignments are designed to promote thoughtful reading so that you will be prepared to have stimulating and knowledgable debate in class.

(2) **In-class work (I or TI assignments), 40%.** Nearly every class period will have some assignment due electronically on Sakai by the end of the class. Some of these will be completed as a team (TI). For team activities, one person in the team will submit the assignment, and all team members will receive credit. Full credit will be given for engaged participation.

(3) **Critical thinking assignments/presentations (C or TC assignments), 35%**. During the semester, you will have several assignments in which you must demonstrate your ability to critically analyze decision strategies. These assignments will take several forms, including writing, digital compilation, and class presentations. These differ from I assignments in that grades are assessed in a more formal way. Feedback will be offered and you will have opportunities for revision. Rubrics will be available for each assignment. Although some of these assignments will involve team work, most of your grade will come from your own work.

(4) **Final Exam, 15%.** The final exam will take place in the classroom during the registrar's regularly scheduled