

ECO331: WINTER 2019
BEHAVIOURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL ECONOMICS

1 THE BIG PICTURE

Section L0101. Tuesdays, SS 1083: 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM.

Section L5101. Tuesdays, SS 1083: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

Contacting me.

Office: Max Gluskin House (150 St. George Street), Room 330
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM and by appointment

Texts and Materials.

- **Required:** MobLab: <https://www.moblab.com> The cost is \$12 for the semester. Registration instructions found in the Syllabus section of Quercus.
- **Required:** Packback: <https://www.packback.co> The cost is \$25 for the semester. Registration instructions found in the Syllabus section of Quercus.
- **Required:** Articles, book chapters and handouts as posted on Quercus.

Teaching Assistants.

- Julian Dyer (julian.dyer@mail.utoronto.ca)
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Website. Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca>

Assessments.

	Date	Length	Weight
In-class assignments	All Year	N/A	9%
Packback curiosity assignments	All Year	N/A	10%
Term Test	Tues, February 12, 2019	2 hours	25%
Term Paper	See below	N/A	25%
Final Examination	TBA	2 hours	31%

2 THE DETAILS

This is kind of a weird course.

Behavioural economics might best be described as a movement: an effort to incorporate the insights of other social science disciplines (psychology in particular) to appropriately modify and augment the economist's traditional assumptions about human behaviour and preferences. It is

motivated by the fact that while models based on traditional assumptions often do rather well in predicting actual outcomes, non-trivial anomalies have been identified which might be reconciled by more “realistic” assumptions about human preferences and behaviour. *That is, by making more realistic assumptions about human behaviour, can we improve the predictions made by economic models?* Experimental economics is defined by method, namely the use of controlled, human-subject experiments. This course concentrates on the intersection of behavioural and experimental economics. Namely, we (mostly) look at controlled experiments which seek to uncover and quantify systematic ways in which people deviate from traditional assumptions.

Even limiting our attention to the intersection of behavioural and experimental economics, the list of possible topics to include in this class is absurdly long. My topic-selection mechanism might best be described as arbitrary and capricious, with perhaps some method to my madness.

2.1 Goals of the Course

I have three overarching goals for this course.

1. **Behavioural Economics** Understand a set of insights from behavioural economics with an eye towards recognizing how these insights improve the economist’s ability to explain and predict real-world behaviour.
2. **Experimental Economics** Understand the methods of modern experimental economics with an eye to assessing the results of human-subject experiments.
3. **You as Economist** Continue your intellectual transition from “consumers of” to “participants in” economic inquiry. In particular, you will gain practice in both posing testable hypotheses that follow-up on published human-subject experiments and identifying how to test these hypotheses.

2.2 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. It is critically important both to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility and to protect you, the students within this community, and the value of your degree. According to Section B of the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Polices/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>), which all students are expected to know and respect, it is an offence for students:

- To obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- To provide unauthorized assistance to another student. This includes showing another student completed work (e.g., an answer in a test).
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University. This, includes, but is not limited to, the *Verification of Student Illness or Injury* form.
- To use **or possess** an unauthorized aid in any test or exam (e.g., cellphone, graphing or programmable calculator).
- To continue writing when the time is up in any test or exam.
 - **N.B.** Anyone writing when the invigilator announces the end of the test or exam period automatically loses 5% of the total marks available on the test or exam.

There are other offences covered under the Code, but these are by far the most common. Please respect these rules and the values which they protect.

A note on plagiarism: Academic inquiry is a conversation. Someone makes (publishes) an argument. Others interpret and critique, with the goal of moving forward the frontier of what we “know”. **A fundamental goal of this course is to continue your intellectual transition from consumers of to participants in economic inquiry.** This means, for example, that the writing assignment is structured to elicit *your* intellectual contribution. When you plagiarize (i.e., implicitly claim ownership of the intellectual contribution of another by not attributing the idea its originator) you are not a participant in in economic inquiry.

The bottom line is that I want your intellectual contribution, and want to know how it fits into the extant conversation. This requires both your original ideas and interpretations and appropriately crediting the ideas upon which you are building.

2.3 Quercus

This course will make heavy use of the Quercus. You are responsible for checking it regularly. Content includes:

- Announcements;
- Copies of the lecture slides;
- Links to required articles, book chapters and handouts.

2.4 Communication

I will make important announcements in lectures or through Quercus. I expect you to check Quercus regularly. **I encourage you to customize you Canvas notification preferences to receive immediate or at least daily notifications of messages and announcements through either email or text.**¹

If you need to contact me (Prof. Gazzale) electronically. you **must** do so through your Quercus inbox. Direct electronic communication is **not** an appropriate forum for discussing course materials or asking questions about course content. As such, it should be restricted to private matters, or to notify me of a course problem (e.g., broken link, typo, TA issues, etc.).

- **Your message must include your student number.**
- For messages asking for a reply, if I can answer briefly without explaining course content or revealing something of general interest, then I endeavour to reply within 2 business days. If I do not respond within 3 business days, please re-send the message or contact me in class or office hours.
- Please note that I will ignore any request for information easily available in this syllabus or on Quercus.

2.5 Lectures

First and foremost, you are expected to come to class having done the required readings.

During lecture, I may project “PowerPoint” slides. I encourage you to print them and bring them to lecture. You will notice that while a set of slides represents a good overview of a topic and contains many of the important definitions, many of the details are missing. During the lecture, we

¹<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/doc-10624>

shall fill in the missing details, resulting in “marked-up” slides. **I will not make available the marked-up slides.**

2.6 Evaluations: In-class

In all 10 lecture meetings after the first class, there will be in-class assignments. These assignments will include:

Writing Prompts Writing prompts will be randomly assigned during class (i.e., may be beginning, middle or end). Responses will be marked very coarsely. The default marking scheme:

- 1 mark** Response shows neither minimal understanding of the material nor student engagement with the material.
- 3 marks** Response shows a general understanding of the material and student engagement with the material.
- 4 marks** Response shows a sophisticated understanding of the material.

Experiment Participation In this course, you will participate in a series of classic experiments. You will generally participate using MobLab. In most cases, you earn full marks for just for participating.

Each week, I take all of the marks you earn and scale them so that the student earning full marks earns 1 mark. The marks you earn for in-class assignments is the sum of your nine highest scoring weeks, up to a maximum of 9 marks.

What if I miss a lecture because I am hospitalized? If you planned ahead for this possibility, this is no problem because this is the first one you missed. If you previously missed one and find yourself hospitalized for one later in the semester, I am going to guess that you will regret having missed that first one . . .

Bottom Line: Assume you are going to get sick later in the semester.

2.7 Packback

The Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online curiosity community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask **big** questions about how the research we will encounter relates to life and the real world. Registration instructions are on Quercus.

Writing amazing questions and answers on Packback will:

- help you develop writing skills necessary for any career path;
- reinforce the skill of justifying thoughts and claims with credible evidence;
- enhance critical thinking;²
- deepen your understanding of the course content by gaining diverse insights and perspectives from your peers;
- provide a springboard for your term paper topic.

²A skill employers claim to value.

In order to receive your points for a week, you must post 1 Question and 2 Answers (responses to your peers' questions) per week by Monday, 11:59PM. Your question must be related to the reading due on the subsequent Tuesday. For example, the first Packback week ends Monday, January 14, and questions must be related to the readings assigned for January 15. The final Packback week ends on Friday, April 5. The question for this mini-week need not relate to subsequent readings, as there are none.

Before you start posting, be sure to read the Community Guidelines found in the tutorial on Packback. If your post does not follow the Packback Community Guidelines, there is a chance it will be removed and you won't receive points for that post.³

In a given week, you earn at least 65 of the 100 available marks for the week just by posting one question and two responses. The remaining marks (no more than 35 out of 100 available marks) will be determined by your Curiosity Score.⁴ Midway through the semester, I will assess how well this Curiosity Score assesses "curiosity", and may announce a lower weight on this score.

Based on your weekly Packback score, you earn up to 1 course mark per Packback week. There are 11 Packback weeks. The marks you earn for Packback is the sum of your ten highest weeks.

If you have ANY questions or concerns regarding Packback throughout the semester, please contact the customer support team at holla@packback.co.

2.8 Evaluations: Term Paper

While full details of the Term Paper will be provided later in the course, I provide a general outline here. The writing assignment will be a short essay of approximately 1,000 words (about four pages double spaced) applying tools and results from this course to an assigned question. The assignment details will be available by the end of January. The assignment will be staged with two submissions and an intervening peer assessment.

- The First Submission is due Friday March 15, 2019, 11:00 AM.
- Students will then be assigned three classmates' papers to read and provide constructive feedback and suggestions (using a form/rubric that we provide).
- The deadline for providing this "peer assessment" is Friday, March 22, 2019, 11:00 AM.
- Students will then have until Friday, March 30, 2019 at 11:00 AM to submit the "Final Submission" that incorporates any useful suggestions or insights from the peer review process. Included in this submission will be a short reflection on the peer reviews received, as well as an explanation of any other revisions made between the first and second submissions.
- The weights for final grade for the Term Paper will be:
 - 25%** The First Submission;
 - 20%** The Peer Assessments provided for other papers;
 - 45%** The Final Submission; and
 - 10%** The Reflection Piece, a "self assessment" of the explanation of the revisions to the first draft.

³It takes 24 hours for the Packback team to moderate a post and send a coaching email. If by any reason your post is moderated because it does NOT meet the Community Guidelines, you will need to edit and re-publish your post to receive credit for the week. This is why it is important that you complete your Packback questions and responses far before the deadline in case your post is moderated.

⁴<https://blog.packback.co/2017/01/20/introducing-the-packback-curiosity-scoring-system/>

- **N.B.**⁵ *Other* students' assessments of the *your* First Submission do not count towards *your* Term Paper grade.

We will be using the software PeerScholar for the implementation of this assignment. The entire exercise is conducted on line.

2.8.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a potentially serious problem in writing assignments. There will be more details concerning the definition of plagiarism, advice on how to avoid it, and the associated penalties when we discuss the assignment in more detail. The term paper must be submitted for review through Turnitin (<http://turnitin.com/>). Instructions will be provided along with the details to the assignment. It is important to underscore that Prof. Gazzale takes plagiarism very seriously (see note above), and the Department of Economics prosecutes all cases of vigorously. This includes "unintentional" plagiarism. Ignorance of the rules of plagiarism is specifically excluded as a defence. University disclaimer concerning Turnitin.com:

"Normally, students will required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site."

2.8.2 Extensions

Nope. No extensions will be granted due to illness, computer problems, or any other excuse, as ample time has been provided to complete the project.

2.8.3 Late Penalties

Late penalties, incorporating the fact that late first submissions and peer assessments impose negative externalities on classmates, are as follows:

First Submission 15 percentage points per 24 hours.

Peer Assessments 15 percentage points per 24 hours.⁶

Final Submission 10 percentage points per 24 hours.

Consider a First Submission or Peer Assessment that earns 75 marks. You will receive 60 marks if it is one second late and 45 marks if it is 24 hours and one second late. The Final Submission that earns 75 marks receives 65 marks if it is one second late and 55 marks if 24 hours and one second late.

2.9 Evaluations: Term Test and Final Exam

If a concept, skill, result or topic is addressed in lectures or the required readings, it is testable.

N.B. My choosing to devote scarce lecture time to a topic or concept is a good indication I find it important. Things I find important have a nasty habit of appearing on tests and exams. While this set of facts **in no way** rules out the inclusion of material not covered in lectures, it may be helpful in prioritizing your preparation.

⁵Short for the Latin *nota bene*, meaning "note well".

⁶Lateness determined by the time stamp on the **last** peer assessment submitted.

2.9.1 Evaluations: Makeup Test

If you **must** miss the term test, you will be permitted to take the makeup test if you comply with **all** of the following steps.

1. You send me a Quercus messages prior to 2:00 PM on the day of the midterm.
2. The subject line of this message is “Makeup test request: Student Number XXX”, where XXX is your student number.
3. In the body of this message you attest that you **cannot and will not** participate in *any* on-campus student activity on the day of the term test.

If all of the above are satisfied, you will be permitted to take the makeup term test on Friday morning, March 1, 2019. **The makeup term test will be a one-on-one oral test with Prof. Gazzale lasting approximately one-half of an hour.** If you take neither term test, you will be advised to drop the course.

N.B. Students who miss the final exam must petition the Faculty of Arts and Science for permission to write a deferred examination in the summer.

2.10 Evaluations: Marking and Appeals

If after receiving your graded term paper or test, you believe that there is a major error in grading, the following procedure will apply:

- Your request must be in writing, with a detailed explanation. The explanation must go beyond “I think I deserve a higher grade.” With direct reference to i) your paper and the grading rubric, or ii) your term test and the suggested solutions, you must explain why your score should be higher.
- Appeals must be submitted by email to me no later than one week after the grades are released. The specific deadline will be announced on Quercus when the assignments are graded.
- The *entire* paper or test will be regraded, which may result in either an increase or decrease of your grade.

2.11 Doing Well in ECO331

Attend lectures. Do the readings before lecture. Seriously.

3 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The reading list is tentative. Any modifications will be widely announced. Entries preceded by a † are suggested, but not required.

1. Introduction (Jan. 8)

- **Thaler, Richard H.**, “From Homo Economicus to Homo Sapiens,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Winter 2000, 14 (1), 133–141.

2. Experiment Design; Internal & External Validity (Jan. 15)

- **Gazzale, Robert, Sarah Jacobson, and Sera Linardi**, *Experiment Nuts and Bolts*, 2018.

- **Gneezy, Uri, Muriel Niederle, and Aldo Rustichini**, “Performance in Competitive Environments: Gender Differences,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 2003, *118* (3), 1049–1074.
- †**Friedman, Daniel and Shyam Sunder**, *Experimental Methods: A Primer for Economists*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 1–84.

3. A Failure to Optimize I: A Smörgåsbord (Jan. 22)

- **Kahneman, Daniel**, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011, chapters 1–3, pp. 19–49.
- **Iyengar, Sheena S. and Mark R. Lepper**, “When Choice is Demotivating: Can One Desire Too Much of a Good Thing,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2000, *79* (6), 995–1006.
- **Danziger, Shai, Jonathan Levav, and Liora Avnaim-Pesso**, “Extraneous factors in judicial decisions,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2011, *108* (17), 6889–6892.
- **Mani, Anandi, Sendhil Mullainathan, Eldar Shafir and Jiaying Zhao**, “Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function,” *Science*, August 30, 2013, *341* (6149), 976–980.

4. A Failure to Optimize II: People and Probabilities (Jan. 29)

- **Barberis, Nicholas, Andrei Schleifer, and Robert Vishny**, “A Model of Investor Sentiment,” *Journal of Financial Economics*, 1998, *49* (3), 307–343.
- **Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman**, “Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases,” *Science*, 1974, *185* (4157), 1124–1131.

5. Prospect Theory and the Endowment Effect (Feb. 5)

- **Kahneman, Daniel, Jack L. Knetsch, and Richard H. Thaler**, “Anomalies: The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Winter 1991, *5* (1), 193–206.
- _____, _____, and _____, “Experimental Tests of the Endowment Effect and the Coase Theorem,” *Journal of Political Economy*, December 1990, *98* (6), 1325–1348.
- †**Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky**, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,” *Econometrica*, March 1979, *47* (2), 263–292.

6. Midterm Test (Feb. 12)

7. More Framing (Feb. 26)

- **Thaler, Richard H.**, “Mental Accounting Matters,” *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 1999, *12* (3), 183–206.
- **Fehr, Ernst and Lorenz Goette**, “Do Workers Work More if Wages Are High? Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment,” *The American Economic Review*, 2007, *97* (1), 298–317.
- **Benartzi, Shlomo and Richard H. Thaler**, “Myopic Loss Aversion and the Equity Premium Puzzle,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 1995, *110* (1), 73–92.

8. Do we even know what we want? (Mar. 5)

- **Kahneman, Daniel, Peter P. Wakker, and Rakesh Sarin**, “Back to Bentham? Explorations of Experienced Utility,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 1997, *112* (2), 375–405.
- **Ariely, Dan, George Loewenstein, and Drazen Prelec**, ““Coherent Arbitrariness”: Stable Demand Curves Without Stable Preferences,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2003, *118* (1), 73–105.
- **Gilbert, Daniel T., Elizabeth C. Pinel, Timothy D. Wilson, Stephen J. Blumberg, and Thalia P. Wheatley**, “Immune neglect: A source of durability bias in affective forecasting,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1998, *75* (3), 617–638.

9. Present Bias & Bounded self control (Mar. 12)

- **Ashraf, Nava, Dean Karlan, and Wesley Yin**, “Tying Odysseus to the Mast: Evidence from a Commitment Savings Product in the Philippines,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2006, *121* (2), 635–672.
- **DellaVigna, Stefano and Ulrike Malmendier**, “Paying Not to Go to the Gym,” *American Economic Review*, June 2006, *96* (3), 694–719.

10. Other-regarding preferences (Mar. 19)

- **Hoffman, Elizabeth, Kevin A. McCabe, and Vernon L. Smith**, “Social Distance and Other-Regarding Behavior in Dictator Games,” *The American Economic Review*, June 1996, *86* (3), 653–660.
- **Fehr, Ernst and Simon Gächter**, “Cooperation and Punishment in Public Goods Experiments,” *The American Economic Review*, September 2000, *90* (4), 980–994.

11. Topics in other-regarding preferences (Mar. 26)

- **Gneezy, Uri and Aldo Rustichini**, “A Fine Is a Price,” *Journal of Legal Studies*, January 2000, *29* (1), 1–17.
- **Gneezy, Uri and Aldo Rustichini**, “Pay Enough or Don’t Pay at All,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 2000, *115* (3), 791–810.
- **Akerlof, George A. and Rachel E. Kranton**, “Identity and the Economics of Organizations,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Winter 2005, *19* (1), 9–32.
- **Gneezy, Uri and John A. List**, “Putting Behavioral Economics to Work: Testing for Gift Exchange in Labor Markets Using Field Experiments,” *Econometrica*, 2006, *74* (5), 1365–1384.

12. Interpreting Experiments; Paternalism (Apr. 2)

- **List, John A.**, “Does Market Experience Eliminate Market Anomalies?,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2003, *118* (1), 41–71.
- **List, John A.**, “On the Interpretation of Giving in Dictator Games,” *The Journal of Political Economy*, June 2007, *115* (3), 482–493.
- **Sunstein, Cass R. and Richard H. Thaler**, “Libertarian Paternalism Is Not An Oxymoron,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, 2003, *70*(4), 1159–1202.
- **Whitman, Glen**, “The Rise of the New Paternalism,” *Cato Unbound*, April 2010, available at <http://www.cato-unbound.org/2010/04/05/glen-whitman/rise-new-paternalism>.

- **Loewenstein, George and Ubel, Peter**, “Economics Behaving Badly,” *The New York Times*, July 14, 2010.