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## Course Information

### SI 502: Choice and Learning Winter 2006

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#### Office hours and contact information

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Office hours are subject to change. In case of a location or time change, an announcement will be posted to CTools, and students will be notified by email.

#### Reading materials

There are **two required textbooks**, available from the several campus bookstores:

- *John Anderson*, Cognitive Psychology and its Implications, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Worth)
- *Robert Frank*, Microeconomics and Behavior, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (McGraw-Hill)

The books are available on reserve in Shapiro Library.

**Other required readings** are available on ctools, in the Resources/Reading folder.

## **Final grade determination**

Midterm:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Weekly Assignments:	60%

See the grading procedures section below for details.

## **Class Email Authorization and Discussions on CTools**

As the CTools site is set up, only the instructors and the GSIs can use the class email to send an announcement to the class. Students can communicate through Discussion under the discussions tab on the CTools site. Everyone can create a new discussion topic. The messages can be viewed and responded to by other users of the site. However, messages posted by students will not be sent out to the class, and everyone who is interested in the topic should go to CTools > Discussions to read the messages.

## **Requirements**

### **Class Email**

We will send out emails containing information about CTools postings, changes in office hours, homework assignments, etc. You are responsible for reading class email sent out by the instructors.

### **Lecture preparation and participation**

You are expected to have read the required material before class. Class is large so we cannot have a lot of free-wheeling discussion, but we welcome comments and questions. Please raise your hand; if we feel things are getting off track or we are running out of time we'll ask you to talk with us during break, after class or in office hours.

Please turn off cell phone and pager sounds before class. If you want to use a laptop computer for anything other than note-taking, please sit in one of the last two rows.

### **Discussion preparation**

You should get started on the week's assignment before discussion section, at least enough to see if you have any questions. You should also be prepared with questions about the most recent lecture. This may be more difficult to do for students attending the section right after the lecture. These students should at least be prepared with questions about the assigned readings.

### **Experiments**

Each individual's performance in the experiments run during discussion sections will be recorded. The top 10% of students over all experiments will get a half grade added to their course grade at the end of the semester. Thus, it's in your interest to try to earn as many points as you can in the experiments. If you cannot attend your experimental section, send an email to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu).

If there are seats available in other sections participating in the same experiment, you can attend one of those. Some of the sections you might want to attend may be earlier than yours, so we recommend contacting the GSIs early.

### **Homework**

Homework is due before class. See the detailed discussion of homework policies below.

## **Midterm**

The midterm covers Lectures 1-7. It is closed-book, closed-notes, but you will be allowed to have a 2-sided cheat sheet and a non-graphical calculator. The midterm will be one-hour long, held during regular lecture hours on March 10/14, 2006, in the regular classroom. You are responsible for attending the exam. No make-ups will be held except for students with a medical excuse from a doctor.

## **Final Exam**

The final exam covers Lectures 8-14. It is closed-book, closed-notes, but you will be allowed to have a 2-sided cheat sheet and a non-graphical calculator. We will pass out sample examples from previous years. The exam will be held 10:30 am -11:30 pm on 25 April, 2006. The room will be announced. You are responsible for attending the exam. No make-ups will be held except for students with a medical excuse from a doctor. No students in Section 005 have a conflict with this exam time. Some students in Section 001 may have an official final exam conflict: you must notify us no later than 7 April 2006 if you do have a conflict so that we can make alternative arrangements. Only conflicts on the official UM exam schedule will be recognized.

## **GSI availability**

Erik and Anya will attend the Friday lecture and Rick will attend the Tuesday lecture. Each GSI will hold office hours in the Basement of the Shapiro Library (room B138) for two hours each week. Students are invited to come to any of the GSI's office hours that are convenient, not only the GSI that leads their discussion section. You can also call the SI GSIs' office (647-8032) during the office hours. Students coming to the office hours have priority, and your phone call will be answered if there are no or few students present in the office. The phone-call option may be useful for students who have quick questions or cannot come to office hours due to an illness. Please note that if you call the office number outside the 502 GSIs' office hours, a GSI of another SI class may answer your call, because many SI GSIs share one office.

Students are also welcome to send email questions or comments to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu), which will reach all three of the GSIs. If the question is specific to one of the GSIs, please indicate so in the body of the message. We would prefer that you use this email address instead of our personal email addresses.

## **Homework Policies and Homework Submission**

There will be a homework assignment due every week. We will post assignments on CTools at least a week before the due date. An automatic email notification about the posting will be sent out. You can start working on the assignments as soon as they are posted. It is your responsibility to check the postings on the web site. We will return graded assignments in your mailboxes no later than two weeks after the original due date. An answer key for the assignment will be posted to CTools on the Thursday following the assignment due date. An automatic email notification about the posting will be sent out.

## **Format**

All assignments are worth 10 points. Some assignments contain optional bonus problems in addition to the main question(s). Points for optional bonus problems will be counted if you lose points on the main questions of the corresponding assignment. Points for bonus problems will not be transferred to other assignments and will not be counted if you get full points on the main questions. You can earn at most 10 points on any assignment.

Example. Suppose assignments 1, 2, 3, and 4 are each worth 10 points, and the first three assignments contain a bonus problem. Suppose also that student A's performance is as shown in columns 2 and 3. Then the final grades are as shown in column 4.

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Main Questions (10 points)</i>	<i>Bonus Problem (max points are indicated in parentheses)</i>	<i>Final Assignment Grade</i>
1	10	2 (2)	10
2	8	1 (2)	9
3	9	2 (3)	10
4	9	no bonus problem in this assign.	9

### **Guidelines**

**Show your work.** If you write down all the steps, you are less likely to make a mistake, and the grader sees whether your reasoning is correct. You will receive full points if your answer is correct and you show how you obtained it. Correct answers without a solution or justification will receive  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the points assigned to the question. Incorrect answers without a solution or justification will receive 0 points. If you show your work, but your final answer is incorrect, you can receive partial credit.

Some of homework questions are open-ended by design, which means there is no correct answer or there may be many. To answer such questions, state your assumptions, if necessary, make your claim and support it using the material you have learned in class. Show that you have read and understood the material. Answer the question asked. You will not receive points for answering a different question, even if your argument is correct. The best are concise answers written using the terminology and concepts covered in class.

### **Submission**

**Please write your name, discussion section number (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, or 8), and your mailbox number on the first page of your homework.** Assignments are due at the beginning of your assigned lecture period, unless otherwise specified. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy. You can turn in your assignment to a GSI or put it in one of the GSIs' West Hall mailboxes before lecture time. It does not matter to which GSI you hand in your homework. If you cannot come to class (if you are out of town or are not feeling well, etc.) when the assignment is due, you can email it in PDF format to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu) before class. Otherwise, please turn in a hard copy.

### **Homework late policy**

Assignments can be turned in up to 48 hours past the assignment due date, but one point will be taken off for late submission after accounting for bonus points. For example, if you receive 9 points for the main assignment and 2 bonus points and submit your assignment late, then your grade will be  $10-1=9$ .

Assignments turned in more than 48 hours after the due date will receive 0 points. This is necessary since we do not want to delay posting the answer key for the class. Students with special circumstances (e.g., a death in the family or a medical emergency) that prohibit them from turning in assignments on time should contact their GSI. Such cases will be reviewed on an individual basis. For students with a legitimate excuse, the typical procedure is as follows:

- Try to turn in your homework within 48 hours past the assignment due date. It will be graded for full credit.
- If you are not able to turn in your homework within 48 hours past the assignment due date, turn it in whenever you can. We will give you feedback on the submitted assignment and make sure you understand the material. You will receive 0 points, but we will drop this assignment from your final grade (i.e., your final grade will be a weighted average of the rest of the assignments and the final exam). See the grading procedures section below for information on final grades calculation.

- If you do not turn in your assignment at all, you will receive 0 points, and this score will be counted in your final grade.

In general, it is much better to ask for permission to turn in a late assignment before the due date than to ask forgiveness after the fact.

### **Late submission**

**WH building hours are Mon-Fri 7am-10pm, Sat-Sun closed.** You can put your homework in one of the GSI mailboxes in WH during the building hours or slide it under the door of the GSI office (B138 Sapiro/UGLi), when WH is closed. In either case **please notify us the time of submission by sending an email to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu)**. We would prefer hard copies, but when WH is closed, you can also email your late homework in PDF format to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu). Please submit **only one copy** of your assignment (hard or electronic).

### **Grade reconsiderations**

If you believe the grade you received is inappropriate, you will need to email a completed "Grade Reconsideration Form" (available in CTools resources) to [502.GSI@umich.edu](mailto:502.GSI@umich.edu) within two weeks after the assignment was returned. You will receive an email response from one of the GSIs within two weeks of submitting the form. Please note that submitting a grade reconsideration form does not assure that your grade will change, but your arguments will be reviewed and if they have significant merit a grade change is possible.

### **Getting help with assignments**

You are welcome to ask questions related to assignments and readings during discussion sections and office hours. We cannot do your homework with you, but we can clarify homework questions, help you to understand concepts with which you have difficulties, show how a particular type of problems can be solved and go through practice non-homework problems from the textbooks.

### **Study groups**

We recommend that you form study groups (3-6 502 students), and discuss readings and work through homework assignments together. However, this does not mean that you have group assignments. All assignments are individual, which means that you have to write your own answer. Direct copying of answers from other students or sources is not allowed. Ideally, you should try to do all you can by yourself, then get together with your study group, discuss the homework and understand (but not copy) what other students did, and then write up your answer yourself. If you have difficulty finding a study group, we recommend posting a message under the Discussions tab on CTools. This helped students in previous years.

### **Policy on original work**

All written submissions must be your own, original work. You may incorporate selected excerpts from publications by other authors, but they must be clearly marked as quotations and must be attributed. You may obtain copy editing assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own or be explicitly attributed to another. See the *Rackham Graduate Student Handbook* for the definition of plagiarism, and associated consequences.

## Grading procedures

Assignments and exam questions will be graded by all three GSIs for the course throughout the semester. Typically, two of the GSIs will grade one assignment. Your graded assignment or exam question will indicate which GSI did the grading.

The assignments, the midterm and the final exam are graded on an absolute scale. If you answer every question correctly, you receive full points. However, final grades are based upon a curve rather than an absolute score. This means that 8 points out of 10 for a particular homework can be very good if few students received more. It is not so good if most students received 9 or 10. The average score, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile scores for each assignment will be released via CTools so that you have an idea of how well you have performed.

To determine final grades we do the following for every student:

1. Compute total homework grade = sum of 13 assignment grades. If you had to turn in an assignment much later for a legitimate reason, then that homework is assigned the average class score for that particular assignment before the total homework grade is calculated. This is equivalent to ignoring that assignment in the final curved grade.
2. Compute the class mean and standard deviation of total homework grades.
3. Compute homework z-scores = [(your total homework grade – mean)/ standard deviation].
4. Compute total exam grade = sum of midterm and final exam grades.
5. Compute the class mean and standard deviation of total exam grades
6. Compute total exam z-scores = [(your total exam grade – mean)/ standard deviation]
7. Compute final scores = 0.6 \* homework z-score + 0.4 \* total exam z-score
8. Assign letters to percentiles of the final scores
9. Add half a grade to the letter grade of the students who are in the top 10% for the 4 experiments. This is the grade you'll see on the Wolverine Access website.

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