

ECON 4060 Choice Theory and Economic Ethics: Good, Bad and Happiness

Fall 2023

Instructor: Yangwei Song (yangwei.song@colorado.edu)

Lecture: TTH 12:30-01:45 pm

Room: ECON 117

Office Hours: T 9:30 to 11 am (ECON 14A)

Requisites: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory, Calculus, Statistics

Final: Sunday, Dec. 17, 4:30–7 p.m.

Course Description:

How do individuals make choices? In economics, it is standard to assume that individuals are perfectly rational, self interested utility maximizers with unlimited cognitive abilities. What does this mean and is it true? In many cases, this standard model provides a good approximation to the types of behavior that economists are interested in. However, psychologists, experimental and behavioral economists have documented ways in which the standard model fails to explain people's choices. The goal of this course is to understand how individuals make choices and their implications.

Course Content:

1. Introduction
2. Preference and Choice
3. Consumer Choice
4. Choice under Risk and Uncertainty
5. Reference Dependent Preferences
6. Intertemporal Choice
7. Temptation and Self Control

Readings:

- N. Wilkinson. An introduction to behavioral economics. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

- A. Rubinstein. Lecture Notes in Microeconomic Theory
- H. Varian. Intermediate Microeconomics A Modern Approach. W. W. Norton & Company.
- S. Landsburg. Price Theory and Applications. Cengage Learning.
- Microeconomic Theory by Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green.

Grading Policy:

Exams 60% + Research Project 40%

There will be three midterms and each midterm takes 20% of the final grade.

In terms of the research project, students are expected to write a 10-15 page research paper on one of the topics covered in the course. The paper could be the outline of a new model, the description of a new an experiment, or an application of the models that we study in class in order to explain some real life phenomena. This can be a group project, which consists of at most three students. You can definitely work on it alone. At the end of the semester, each group will do a presentation of 8-10 mins. Everyone in the same group will receive the same grade.

SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the [further guidance of the Public Health Office](#). For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

[Disability Services](#) determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance.

If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, send me an email. Also see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.