



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2020

8,742: Verantwortung/Responsibility: Climate Change and the Psychology of Decision-Making

ECTS credits: 3

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (40%)

Decentral - Presentation (individual) (20%)

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (40%)

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,742.1.00 Verantwortung/Responsibility: Climate Change and the Psychology of Decision-Making](#) -- Englisch -- [Gamma Karoline](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

none

Learning objectives

In this course, students will learn to analyze the psychology of decision-making in order to reflect upon ways how to manage consumer decision-making and improve policies in the context of combating climate change. Students will gain insights into the field of decision science research and learn how to employ tools of choice architecture in practical context (e.g. policy design or consumer engagement) in order to combat climate change through fostering sustainable consumer decision-making.

After the course students should

- have a sound understanding of the consumer decision-making process in the context of climate change
- know relevant psychological theories on sustainable consumption behavior (e.g. dual-process theory)
- know a set of tools to improve environmental friendly consumption behavior
- be able to identify ways to shift consumer preferences towards more environmental alternatives in various domains.

Course content

It is common knowledge in psychology and consumer research today that there are two modes of decision making. Dual-process theories point out that real-life decisions are driven by a combination of analytical & slow versus intuitive & fast processes. While the exact way in which both modes interact is still subject to vivid scientific debate, it is widely accepted that the simplified assumptions of a fully rational, cold, information-processing homo oeconomicus portrayed in economic textbooks captures only a small part of reality. How does this observation relate to an area of crucial societal importance - global climate change, the transition to renewable energies and sustainable consumption behavior?

Course structure

In the first part of the course, the conceptual foundations for the course will be introduced: Climate Change and its challenges & psychological theories about decision making. A particular emphasis will be laid on dual-process models of decision-making. This will be followed by the assignment of research topics. These topics match the questions that will be addressed in the seminar's subsequent sessions. The last part of the introductory session will be devoted to brainstorming, during which students will present and get feedback on a preliminary analysis (i.e., not based on research) of the question they have been assigned.



In the following weeks, students will work in teams to prepare a presentation based on original research. Each team will outline the main idea of their presentation in a management summary (1-2 pages). Each student team will address their chosen research topics by using the required readings as well as a minimum of 10 additional references. Teams are encouraged to pick up on the phenomena described in the respective reading(s) and apply it to an empirical decision context of their choice in the area of climate change, combining conceptual and empirical elements and reflecting on methodological aspects. Other criteria for grading include originality, coherence of the argument, analytical precision, and quality of writing.

Each topic will be presented in a two-hour session during a blockseminar. In each session, the student team will present the findings of their research in 30-45 minutes, followed by a brief comment by another student team that will have reviewed the presentation and the management summary. A general discussion led by the presenting team will follow. Each student is expected to have done the required readings in order to contribute actively to the discussion. Personal attendance to all sessions is required.

After the seminar, each student is required to write a short reflection paper. This reflection paper will address how the research experience and seminar discussions altered the student's preliminary analysis.

Contextual Studies are considered part of Contact Learning; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is **the students' own responsibility** to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen.

Course literature

- Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication. ecoAmerica & Center for Research on Environmental Decisions. available online at: <http://www.connectingonclimate.org/>
- IEA World Energy Outlook 2019: Executive Summary. Paris: International Energy Agency.
- REN21: Renewables Global Status Report 2019, Executive Summary. Paris: REN21/UNEP.
- Weber, E. U. & Johnson, E. J. (2009). Mindful judgment and decision making. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60: 53-85.

Additional course information

Dr. oec. Karoline **Gamma** is a postdoctoral research fellow with a focus on energy decisions and sustainable consumer behavior. During her research visit at Columbia University she has gained experiences in the field of environmental psychology and decision making and is working with international experts to investigate how to improve energy consumption decisions. She received her PhD in management from the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/3)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (40%)

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Practical examination

No examination-aid rule is necessary for such examination types. The rules and regulations of the University of St. Gallen apply in a subsidiary fashion.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English



2. Examination sub part (2/3)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (individual) (20%)

Remark

Short Quizzes on each of the presentation days

Examination-aid rule

Practical examination

No examination-aid rule is necessary for such examination types. The rules and regulations of the University of St. Gallen apply in a subsidiary fashion.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

3. Examination sub part (3/3)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (40%)

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the applicable quotation standard, while informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2017), *Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien* (12th ed., Cornelsen Schweiz).
- For any work written at the HSG, the indication of the page numbers both according to the MLA and the APA standard is never optional.
- Where there are no page numbers in sources, precise references must be provided in a different way: titles of chapters or sections, section numbers, acts, scenes, verses, etc.
- For papers in law, the legal standard is recommended (by way of example, cf. FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R. et SCHINDLER B. (2018, *Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende* (6. Auflage), Zürich: Schulthess, or the recommendations of the Law School).

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

The **presentation** (including the management summary) represents 40% of the grade and each team member will receive the same grade for this component. The other **presentation** (20%, individual grade) consists of two small quizzes on the topics discussed on each of the presentation days (April 8 & 9). The **reflection paper** about the course content and learnings (40%, 12'000 characters including blanks) is based on individual performance.



Examination relevant literature

Readings will be announced in the kick-off meeting.

Please note

Please note that this fact sheet alone is binding and has priority over any other information such as StudyNet (Canvas), personal databases or faculty members' websites and information provided in their lectures, etc.

Any possible references and links within the fact sheet to information provided by third parties are merely supplementary and informative in nature and are outside the University of St.Gallen's scope of responsibility and guarantee.

Documents and materials that have been submitted no later than the end of term time (CW21) are relevant to central examinations.

Binding nature of the fact sheet:

- Information about courses and examination time (central/decentral) and examination type starting from the beginning of the bidding on 23 January 2020
- Information about examinations (examination aid regulations, examination content, examination-relevant literature) for decentral examinations after the 4th semester week on 16 March 2020
- Information about examinations (examination aid regulations, examination content, examination-relevant literature) for central examinations as from the starting date for examination registration on 6 April 2020

Please consult the fact sheet again after these deadlines have expired.