

Scuola Superiore di Catania

Corso Interdisciplinare

a.a. 2019-2020

“Economia comportamentale e psicologia economica: concetti di base e applicazione nel mondo degli affari e della governance”

“Behavioral economics and economic Psychology: Basic concepts and application in business and governance”

Behavioral economics and economic psychology:

Basic concepts and application in business and governance

Insights from behavioral sciences in general and psychology in particular are considered increasingly more important in economic and legal research. Insights are also requested for understanding human behaviour and for strategy development in organizational and governance practice. While work and organizational psychology is delivering for long valuable insights for managerial affairs, economic psychology and behavioural economics have gained momentum in the scientific community especially with the bestowal of the Nobel Prize for Economics (officially known as The Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel) for 2002 on the behavioural economist Vernon Smith and the psychologist Daniel Kahneman (and his long-term research partner Amos Tversky was also recognized in the announcement), and Richard Thaler in 2017. Under the term “nudging”, the British government, and many other governments around the world reflect about soft regulation of citizens’ behaviour as compared to regulation by law.

The lecture deals with topics from economic psychology, organizational psychology and behavioural economics. The basic reading will be “Economic Psychology: An Introduction” by E. Kirchler and E. Hoelzl (2018; Cambridge University Press). Topics range from basics of decision making under uncertainty to consumption markets, labor markets, financial markets to counter-productivity on the national level to economic wealth and happiness.

The lecture is organized by presentations by the lecturer, short videos (by e.g., David Halpern, Daniel Kahneman, Stephen Reicher, Richard Thaler), lectures prepared by the participants and small-scale investigations by the participants (survey studies, survey experiments). Topics are:

- Overview: applied psychology: work, organization, consumption and economics
- Organizational topics:
 - Leadership (theories; gender, toxic leadership)
 - Motivation and satisfaction in organizations
- Decision making under uncertainty
 - Rationality and utility maximization
 - Decisions under uncertainty
 - Decision anomalies (information processing, emotions, heuristics)
 - Prospect theory (endowment effect, sunk costs effect)
 - Descriptive theories
- Nudging
- Lay theories
- Consumer goods markets
 - Financial decisions in the private household
 - Marketing

- Labor markets
 - Experimental markets in the laboratory
 - Wages
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Unemployment
- Financial markets
- Counter-productivity and tax behavior
- Wealth and happiness

Small-scale empirical studies shall be designed on topics such as e.g., overconfidence, purchase decisions, tax behaviour, gender and leadership; conducted and collected data will be analyzed and discussed.