

# Topics in Behavioral and Experimental Economics

Winter 2025/26  
University of Bonn

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## Hours:

Class: Wednesday, 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm

Location: Juridicum, HS N

## Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to experimental methods and their applications in economics. We will focus on (i) the use of experiments in establishing causal effects, testing models, and illuminating mechanisms and (ii) the measurement of preference parameters and behavioral traits. We will illustrate these methods predominantly through papers in behavioral economics. Topics include bounded rationality in belief formation and choice, motivated reasoning, memory, cognitive uncertainty. We will cover methodological topics including the relationship between experiments and theory, internet experiments, and surveys. Students will become acquainted with the process of designing, organizing, and running an experiment, and class discussions will place emphasis on the development of early-stage research ideas.

The course is designed for PhD students in Economics. Knowledge of Microeconomics and Econometrics on the level of the 1<sup>st</sup> BGSE PhD-sequence is expected.

## Course requirements and grading:

Grades will be determined based on (i) a research proposal (60%) and (ii) student presentations (40%). Students are strongly encouraged to actively participate in class throughout the course. There will be no exam.

## Topics:

- General Course Introduction and Some Basics About Experiments
- Bounded Rationality – Attention and Focusing
  - Discuss some of the leading theories
  - Experimental tests of these theories
- Bounded Rationality - Belief Formation

- Some classical anomalies
- “Neglect” in Belief Formation
- Contingent Reasoning
- Over-and underreaction
- Bounded Rationality – Cognitive Uncertainty
- Bounded Rationality – Complexity
- Memory and Belief Formation
- Motivated Cognition
  - Moral wiggle room
  - Self-Confidence: supply and demand

## **Research Proposal and Presentations**

Students are required to write a research proposal on a topic related to the themes of the class. Proposals will be presented in (probably) two class sessions in mid/late January.

Presentations:

- 10 min presentation + 5 min discussion
- Focus on motivation, research question and experimental design

Research Proposal: The proposal is due *March 15, 2026* and should be < 10 pages long. The ideal proposal will formulate a clear research question, explain why it is important, describe in detail the experimental design, and propose a plan for statistical analysis.