Behavioral Economics and Persuasion

Faculty Member: Zoe Chance

This opportunity is for students interested in both behavioral economics and applied psychology. If you’re a bit familiar with behavioral economics, you know it tries to explain how what people actually do differs from what they “should” do in predictable ways. And the foundation of behavioral economics is dual process theory—the idea that in addition to the rational decision making process we’re aware of (“System 2”), much of our behavior and many of our decisions are driven by an intuitive, unconscious process (“System 1”).

This research investigates how to influence decisions and behavior via System 1, with the long-term goal of helping influencers effect positive social change. This short HBR piece describing my previous research with Google will give you an idea of some of the types of System 1 nudges that can influence people’s behavior: https://hbr.org/2016/03/how-google-uses-behavioral-economics-to-make-its-employees-healthier. Summer work will combine literature reviews of academic and mainstream press articles/books with data collection via surveys and/or experiments. And you’re welcome to join our weekly(ish) lunch discussions of behavioral research with the marketing doctoral students and faculty.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

1) In your cover letter, please share a few of your favorite books you’ve read relevant to this research topic, and why they’re your favorites.
2) It’s not necessary for you to be familiar with Qualtrics or SPSS, but if you are, please let me know.

HSSRO Application Link: HSSRO Application Link

Award: Charles Taylor ’18
Katherine Xiu ’18
Jakub Madej ’20

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