UC Berkeley Logic Group
Philosophy Preliminary Syllabus 2013
Decision Theory: Paradoxes and Alternatives (Prof Lara Buchak)

Many normative alternatives to classical decision theory have arisen in recent (and not-so-recent) years in response to particular paradoxes and problems. These alternatives must be evaluated according to standards of rationality, which raises the question of what decision-theoretic rationality amounts to. This syllabus studies four problems and the corresponding alternatives: (1) non-sharp credences; (2) risk-aversion; and (3) acts that are evidence for outcomes but not causally efficacious. It contains readings on a brief introduction to classical decision theory, the paradoxes and alternatives, and whether these alternatives stand up to the canons of rationality.

I. Classical Decision Theory: History of decision theory; uses of decision theory; the norm of decision theory; the status of paradoxes and counterexamples.

Michael Resnik, (1987), *Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory.* University of Minnesota Press., 81-119.

James Dreier (1996). "Rational Preference: Decision Theory as a Theory of Practical Rationality." In *Theory and Decision* 40: 249-276,.   dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF00134210

Amartya Sen (1973). "Behavior and the Concept of Preference." *Economica*, New Series, 40(159): 241-259.

Optional Background: Lara Buchak (2013), "Decision Theory." *Oxford Handbook of Probability and Philosophy*, eds. Christopher Hitchcock and Alan Hajek. Oxford University Press.

II. Paradoxes and Alternatives: Non-sharp credences, risk-aversion, Newcomb's problem.

Roger White (2009), "Evidential Symmetry and Mushy Credence." In Oxford Studies in Epistemology, eds. Tamar Szabo Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 161-88.

Peter Gärdenfors and Nils-Erik Sahlin (1982), "Unreliable Probabilities, Risk Taking, and Decision Making." In *Synthese* 53: 361-386.

Lara Buchak (2013), "Risk and Tradeoffs." *Erkenntnis (FEW 2012 special issue)*.

Allan Gibbard and William Harper (1978), "Counterfactuals and Two Kinds of Expected Utility." In William Harper, Robert Stalnaker, and Glenn Pearce, eds., *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance, and Time*, pp. 153–190, Dordrecht: Reidel (1982).

Andy Egan (2007), "Some Counterexamples to Causal Decision Theory." Philosophical Review 116(1): 93-114.

III. Rationality and Consequentialism

Michael D. Resnik (1987), *Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory.* University of Minnesota Press., pp. 68-79.

David Christensen (1996), "Dutch Book Arguments Depragmatized: Epistemic consistency for partial believers." *Journal of Philosophy* 93: 450-79.

David Lewis (1981), "Why Ain'cha Rich?" *Nous* 15(3): 377-80.

John Broome (1991), *Weighing Goods: Equality, Uncertainty, and Time.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Ch. 5.

Frank Arntzenius, Adam Elga, and John Hawthorne (2004), "Bayesianism, Infinite Decisions, and Binding." *Mind* 2004.

Christopher J.G. Meacham (2010), "Binding and Its Consequences." *Philosophical Studies.*

Adam Elga (2010), "Subjective Probabilities Should be Sharp." *Philosophers' Imprint* 10(5).