

## ***Thinking, fast and slow* by Daniel Kahneman**

This is a book about how people make judgements and decisions. I enjoy teaching this topic in my 2nd year Psychology lectures on Cognition. Kahneman, working together with Amos Tversky, pioneered psychology research into how people think and make decisions in the face of uncertainty.

Sometimes Kahneman and Tversky's research has been taken to show the limitations in human reasoning, because they revealed many characteristic biases and errors in people's judgements and decisions. But their research can also be read as an attempt to figure out how and why people are so smart, rather than so bad at decision making: They identified many ways that people could find effective shortcut ("heuristic") answers to difficult problems, even when given very limited information and time to think. The natural human ability to make "common sense" answers is still well beyond the reach of current artificial intelligence systems.

The "fast and slow" part of the title refers to a key theme of Kahneman's work, that there are two different systems for human reasoning -- one fast and automatic, and the other slow and deliberative.

See what you think it may tell us about whether people are surprisingly good or surprisingly bad in their judgements and decisions, and whether there really is such a neat division between fast and slow thinking.

For further reading:

- Books by Gerd Gigerenzer who has worked on similar topics and had clashing views with Kahneman and Tversky over the years.
- *The Art of Choosing* by Sheena Iyengar.
- *A Life in Error* by James Reason.

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