



# Games People Play: Game Theory in Life, Business, and Beyond (The Great Courses)

*Scott P. Stevens*

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Ever since modern game theory—the scientific study of interactive, rational decision making—achieved prominence in the mid-20th century, it has proven instrumental in helping us understand how and why we make decisions. Game theory plays a crucial role in our lives and provides startling insights into all endeavors in which humans cooperate or compete, including biology, computer science, politics, agriculture, and, most importantly, economics. For example, game theory has become an invaluable tool for economists, underpinning the theories of five Nobel Prize winners in economics; helps corporate decision makers through the alternatives of complex negotiations where thousands of jobs and billions of dollars may be at stake; plays a crucial role in international diplomacy and military strategy, influencing the fates of nations even when that influence may well be invisible to the uninitiated; and provides insights into the origins of human behaviors, not only for psychologists seeking to understand why we act as we do, but also for evolutionary biologists asking how those patterns of actions—as human strategies—were handed down. You can even see game theory at work in the interactions you engage in every day, such as an obvious "game," like buying a car, or a less obvious one, like trying to decide where to go on a Saturday night or how you ought to dress. A basic working knowledge of this profoundly important tool can help us cut through an often confusing clutter of information—allowing us to make better decisions in our own lives or better understand the decisions facing other players in games. In *Games People Play: Game Theory in Life, Business, and Beyond*, award-winning Professor Scott P. Stevens of James Madison University has designed a course meant for anyone looking to gain that knowledge. In 24 insightful lectures, he presents you with the fundamentals of game theory in a manner that is both engaging and easy to understand.

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