



Psychology 591.4 - Advanced Topics in Cognitive Psychology

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Course Description and Goals

This course provides a detailed examination of current research topics in cognitive psychology. Topics covered in the course include some of the following: attention, memory, language, reasoning, and embodied cognition. The course goals are for students to acquire knowledge about the different areas of research in cognitive psychology, to develop critical thinking skills when evaluating scientific literature, to develop skills in disseminating this knowledge, and to use this knowledge and these skills to generate a novel means of investigating a specific aspect of cognitive psychology.

Prerequisites

Psyc 312 (Experimental Design & Quantitative Methods) and Psyc 365 (Cognitive Psychology), or consent of the Department of Psychology.

Required Text

There are no required textbooks for this course. The course material consists of selected articles that will be available on the course's blackboard website.

Evaluation

Each student's final grade will be based on:

1. Article Presentation/Facilitation of Class discussion 20% (assigned on first class)
2. Participation of in-class discussions 10%
3. Discussion Questions 10%
4. Thought paper/Review of a research article 10% (Due: Monday July 15 at start of class)
5. Research Proposal
 - a. Annotated Bibliography 10% (Due: Wed July 24 at start of class)
 - b. Summary 5% (Due: Wed July 31 at start of class)
 - c. Final paper class presentation 5% (Last day of classes: Wed Aug 14)
 - d. Final Paper 30% (Due: Friday Aug 16 by 4:30 pm)

Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day.

Because this is a small seminar class, students are expected to be prepared for each class by having completed the readings and being prepared to participate in class discussion. Effective participation involves, but is not limited to 1) attending class consistently and arriving on time, 2) reading and thinking carefully about the weekly readings prior to class 3) asking questions during the presentations, and 4) being prepared to offer your perspective and opinions during class discussions.

A. Article Presentation/Facilitation of class discussion (20% of final grade). During the first class of the semester, students will be asked to select a presentation date and topic according to the course schedule. Students will present singly or in groups depending on class size, and presentation dates will be assigned at random if the number of dates and topics chosen voluntarily do not cover the entire course schedule. A maximum of 60 minutes will be allotted for each presenter, during which they must cover both the presentation and facilitation components of this assessment. More information about time allotment will be discussed once final course enrolment is known.

The presentation should be in PowerPoint (or similar) format, and should examine one or more journal article(s) related to the topic of the class (from the articles available on the course website). As a guideline, each presentation should include: 1) a brief overview of the subject of the article, 2) the main question that the article aims to address, the relevance of this question in the context of the topic of the week, and the authors' hypotheses, 3) a detailed description of the methods and procedure used, 4) the results of the study, 5) the authors' interpretation of the results, 6) the authors' general conclusion, 7) the presenter's observations about the study (including merits and/or limits of the research question, methods, or interpretation), and 8) the presenter's suggestions for future studies given the article's findings. Presenters should be prepared to answer student's questions during the course of their presentation.

Once the article has been presented, the presenter will facilitate a class discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the article as well as of the article's relevance in the context of the topic of the week, or in the broader context of the cognitive psychology literature. Presenters are encouraged to read supplementary research as needed and/or to prepare material (such as handouts or prepared questions) in order to engage the class and stimulate relevant discussion.

Evaluation of the presentation is based on clarity, accuracy and completeness. Evaluation of the facilitation of the class discussion is based on the facilitator's success in engaging colleagues' participation in a thoughtful discussion, time management, and in keeping the discussion focused and on topic.

B. Participation in in-class discussion (10% of final grade). Students are expected to come to class and actively engage in the in-class discussion of the weekly readings. To this end, students should keep up with the weekly readings and read each article with an eye for discussion points about such topics as the article's methodological strengths and weaknesses, the practical significance of its findings, its relevance in the context of previously reviewed literature, and directions for future research. Students will be evaluated on their attendance, as well as their ability to contribute quality discussion points to the class discussion on a regular basis.

C. Discussion Questions (10% of final grade). Each class, students are expected to submit two thoughtful discussion questions from that day's readings. Questions are to be submitted to the instructor and to the presenting student at the beginning of each class, and students may use these discussion questions to aid in their contribution to class discussion on that day. Students will be evaluated on their ability to generate novel and relevant questions about a variety of aspects of the selected articles over the course of the term. Put another way, students' questions should provide evidence of independent critical thought about the source material.

D. Article Summary/Thought Paper (10% of final grade). After selecting their topics for their article presentations, students will prepare an article summary on one of the required readings for that topic (not the same article that is going to be presented). This paper will consist of a summary and critical evaluation of the research, including: a brief summary of the research question, methodology, results, and implications of the source article. The critical evaluation can focus on a variety of aspects of the

source article (e.g., were there confounds in the design? Could the results be interpreted in another way? Do the findings suggest further research opportunities?), but above all, should demonstrate the student's ability for independent critical thought. Put another way, the paper should not simply consist of an article summary and one or two superficial comments about the methodology (e.g., they should have tested more people, what if they sampled from a different cultural group? I really liked their stimuli). Thought papers should be no more than 4 pages in length (double spaced, APA formatted).

E. Research Proposal: Each student will write a research proposal focusing on any of the topics covered during the course (preferred) or a topic that is relevant to cognitive psychology (approved by the instructor). It is recommended that the topic chosen for the proposal is the same as that chosen (or assigned) for the presentation/discussion. Students are required to formulate one or two feasible experiments that would make an original contribution to the literature/topic that the proposal focuses on. This component of the course consists of **four** parts: Proposal Summary, Annotated Bibliography, Proposal Presentation, and the Final Research Proposal Paper itself.

E.1. Annotated Bibliography (10% of final grade). In preparation for writing the final research proposal, students will submit an annotated bibliography, reviewing research articles that are relevant to their proposed research. The bibliography will include an APA formatted reference, followed by a brief description of the cited research, including a description of the authors' hypotheses, methods, results, implications, it's relevance to the students' proposed research. Annotations should be half a page to 1 page in length (single spaced). The annotated bibliography will consist of 4 or more annotations.

E.2. Proposal Summary (5% of final grade). Students will first submit a brief summary of their research proposal. This summary should be formatted using the APA 6th edition guidelines, no longer than 2 double-spaced pages (not including the title and reference pages), and should include a concise outline of the relevant literature, highlighting the specific need for further inquiry. In addition, students will provide a brief outline of their proposed study, including a description of how this study addresses the existing gap(s) in the literature. This assignment provides a formal point of first contact between the student and the instructor for the research proposal project, and should be viewed as a means of ensuring that the student's final proposal is feasible. As such, evaluation is based on completion, clarity, relevance, and feasibility.

E.3. Proposal Presentation (5% of final grade). On the last day of class, students will prepare a short (10 minute max) presentation of their proposed research to share their idea with the class. Students are welcome to use Powerpoint, or any other means of supplemental materials to present their proposal.

E.4. Final Proposal (30% of final grade). The content of the paper must be formatted using the APA 6th edition guidelines, and organized into the following sub-headings: (1) Title, (2) Abstract (150 words maximum), (3) Literature review, (4) Proposal, (5) Methods, (6) Expected results, (7) Implications and conclusions, (8) References (minimum 6). The body of the paper must not exceed 10 pages (not including the title page, abstract and reference list). All text should be double spaced and formatted in Times New Roman font, size 12. Evaluation is based on clarity, accuracy, completeness, and originality of the proposal. Students who do not comply with the guidelines described above will have 10% deducted from the final proposal's grade. Proposals will be submitted by email no later than 4:30 pm Friday August 16. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Schedule of Topics, Presentations & Important Dates	Presenters
W July 3	Introductions/Organization Class	Whalen
R July 4	<i>Last day to change registration (drop, add, or swap courses)</i>	
F July 5	Methods & mechanisms in cognition Elements of a research presentation	Whalen
M July 8	Cognitive Neuroscience - Overview	Whalen
W July 10	Student Presentations Begin	
W July 10	Perception	
F July 12	<i>Fee payment deadline</i>	
F July 12	Attention: Distracted Driving	
M July 15	Attention: Mind Wandering	
M July 15	Thought Paper Due (at start of class)	
W July 17	Memory Monitoring	
F July 19	Memory Encoding & Retrieval	
M July 22	Memory Errors & Misinformation: Eyewitness Testimony	
W July 24	Impaired functioning in the above realms	
W July 24	Annotated Bibliography Due (at start of class)	
F July 26	Language: Symbol perception	
M July 29	Language: Garden path effects	
W July 31	Language: Multilingual effects	
W July 31	Proposal Summary Due (at start of class)	
F August 2	Knowledge: Expertise	
M August 5	<i>University Closed – Alberta Heritage Day</i>	
W August 7	Embodied Cognition	
F August 9	Thinking & Reasoning: Heuristics and Biases	
M August 12	Impaired functioning in the above realms	
W August 14	Final paper discussions/presentations	
W August 14	<i>Summer Term Lectures End. Last day to withdraw from full session Summer Term courses.</i>	
F August 16	FINAL PAPERS DUE! (via email, by 4:30 pm)	

Note: Schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion.

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence From A Test/Exam

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

Travel During Exams

Consistent with University regulations, students are expected to be available to write scheduled exams at any time during the official December, April, or Spring/Summer examination periods. Requests to write a make-up exam because of conflicting travel plans (e.g., flight bookings) will NOT be considered except under exceptional circumstances. Students are advised to wait until the final examination schedule is posted before making any travel arrangements.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act

The FOIP legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve tests and assignments from a public place. Therefore, tests and assignments may be returned to students during class/lab, or during office hours, or via the Department Office (Admin 275), or will be made available only for viewing during exam review sessions scheduled by the Department. Tests and assignments will be shredded after one year. Instructors should take care to not link students' names with their grades, UCIDs, or other FOIP-sensitive information.

Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. A maximum of two (2) credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation. The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>

The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is August 14th, 2013.

Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Student Organizations

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS).

They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

Student Union VP Academic: Phone: 403-220-3911 suypaca@ucalgary.ca

Student Union Faculty Rep.: Phone: 403-220-3913 socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and still receive a tuition fee refund and the last day for registration/change of registration is **Thursday July 4, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from this course with permission is **Wednesday, August 14, 2013**.