

Cognitive (PSYC 317-002), Meets MW 1:30 – 2:45 Robinson B208, Instructor: Phillip Gilmore

SYLLABUS

PSYCHOLOGY 317-002: Cognitive Psychology

Instructor: Phillip Gilmore, MA

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Office hours: W 10:30 – 11:30a, or by appointment (e-mail to schedule)

Catalog Description: An in-depth overview of important topics in cognitive psychology, including memory, attention, pattern recognition, problem solving, reasoning and psycholinguistics.

Course Objectives/Goals: By the end of this course, you will be able to competently discuss core concepts in cognitive psychology including cognitive neuroscience, perception, attention, short-term memory and working memory, long-term memory, knowledge, visual imagery, language, problem solving and decision making. You will also be able to associate key terms with dominant theories related to these concepts, and you will be able to recognize some of these concepts in the real-world. You will have a general understanding of the methods used in cognitive psychology, and you will have experience proposing at least one innovative direction for cognitive research.

Reading Assignments: Reading materials should be brought to class, and readings should be completed by the start of class after assignments are made. While not all of the reading material will be discussed during class time, students are responsible for all assigned readings. A tentative reading schedule accompanies this syllabus. The chapters on the schedule refer to the following textbook:

Goldstein, B. E. (2008, 2011). Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience (3rd ed.).

Additional resources, such as the Coglab manual, are not required but can significantly enhance your learning experience.

Additional readings may be suggested throughout the semester (e.g., journal articles), but students will not have to purchase these resources. Further, the instructor will clearly specify any additional readings both in class and via e-mail.

Grading & Evaluation: The grading strategy is intended to reward students for reliably reading the required text, attending class and thinking creatively about how cognitive psychology is a tool for humans to better understand and control important aspects of life. To this end, the course grade is based on 10 quizzes, 3 exams and two papers. Although we will take 12 quizzes and 4 exams, the lowest 2 quiz grades and the lowest exam grade will be dropped from the final grade:

Quizzes (10): 50%; Papers (2): 20%; Exams (3): 30%

Grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, etc.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given in class; quizzes are used to assess content knowledge and to reward students for reliably reading the required text.

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Papers: Papers will be exploratory and will require students to think about future directions in cognitive research and how cognitive psychology can help solve real world problems. Paper topics and specifications will be assigned during lecture and posted on blackboard. Paper 1 is due 9/19 by end of class period; Paper 2 is due 11/19 by end of class period. Late papers will be failed.

Exams: Four non-cumulative exams will be given. Exams will include material from the textbook, other assigned readings and lectures. Exam 1 is on 9/24; Exam 2 is on 10/17; Exam 3 is on 11/14; the Exam 4 will be held during the Final exam period on 12/12 from 1:30p – 4:15p.

Make-up exams: If you miss an exam, an approved (e.g., medical) and documented (e.g., doctor’s note) excuse is needed to take a make-up exam. Generally, make-up quizzes will not be offered.

Extra credit: Extra credit may be obtained by participating in experiments sponsored by the Psychology Department. Each hour of experimental credit increases the final grade by 0.50%. Students may receive up to 5 additional percent (5%) in their final grade (10 hours max); final grades cannot exceed 100. However, participation in experiments is not a course requirement, and non-participation will not reduce the final grade. Conducting Psychology Department approved research can also be used toward this extra credit. Inquire with the instructor about the specific documentation needed.

TENTATIVE LISTINGS OF CLASS MEETINGS AND TOPICS

#	Date	Topic	Important Reminders
1	8/27	Who’s who?; Course structure and reminders	Prepare for CBA (if you want to); Read Ch. 1 & 2
2	8/29	Comprehensive baseline assessment (CBA)	Read Ch. 1 & 2
3	9/3	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	HAVE FUN!
4	9/5	Brief History of the Study of the Mind; physiological basis of cognition	Read Ch. 3
5	9/10	Quiz 1 (Ch. 1 & 2); Perception	Read Ch. 3
6	9/12	Perception; Quiz 2 (Ch. 3)	Read Ch. 4
7	9/17	Attention	
8	9/19	Quiz 3 (Ch. 4); Exam 1 Prep	Paper 1 due today
9	9/24	EXAM 1	Read Ch. 5
10	9/26	Exam 1 debrief; Short-term memory and working memory	Read Ch. 5 & 6
11	10/1	Quiz 4 (Ch. 5); Long-term memory: structure	Read Ch. 7
12	10/3	Long-term memory: structure, encoding and retrieval	Read Ch. 7
13	10/9 *Tu	Quiz 5 (Ch. 6 & 7)	Read Ch. 8
14	10/10	Everyday memory and memory errors	Read Ch. 8

15	10/15	Quiz 6 (Ch. 8); Exam 2 Prep	
16	10/17	EXAM 2	Read Ch. 9
17	10/22	Exam 2 debrief; Knowledge	Read Ch. 9 & 10
18	10/24	Knowledge; Quiz 7 (Ch. 9)	Read Ch. 10
19	10/29	Visual imagery	
20	10/31	Visual imagery debate; Quiz 8 (Ch. 10)	Read Ch. 11
21	11/5	Language	Read Ch. 11
22	11/7	Language; Quiz 9 (Ch. 11)	
23	11/12	Exam 3 prep	
24	11/14	EXAM 3	Read Ch. 12
25	11/19	Exam 3 debrief; Discuss paper 2	Paper 2 due today
26	11/21	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS	Exercise Moderation!
27	11/26	Problem solving	Read Ch. 13
28	11/28	Quiz 10 (Ch. 12); Reasoning & decision making	Read Ch. 13
29	12/3	Reasoning & decision making; Quiz 11 (Ch. 13)	
30	12/5	Quiz 12 (show-up); Exam 4 prep; Closing ceremonies; Teacher evaluations	Double-check your current grades
FINAL	12/12	FINAL EXAM (i.e., Exam 4); 1:30P – 4:15P	Enjoy your break! You earned it.

Important dates: Last day to add: September 4

Last day to drop (includes 67% tuition penalty): September 28

Note: This syllabus, including the class schedule, is subject to possible modification. Any changes in the course will be announced as soon as is possible during lecture and via e-mail.

OTHER POLICIES & RESOURCES

Technology: The primary modes of instruction are in-class lectures and activities. Lecture materials may be specifically requested from the instructor. Journal articles should be accessed through the student's GMU library subscription. Exams and quizzes will be given in paper and pencil format. Lecture materials include powerpoints and web-based resources which will be posted on Blackboard following lecture. Students will also need access to word processing software to type their papers and to view some documents posted on Blackboard.

Special needs: <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/drc/>

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with a disability or special needs. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

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University Honor policy: George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

The sanctions for being found guilty of an honor code violation can include but are not limited to receiving an F in this course or permanent dismissal from the university. Honor code violations are assessed by an Honor Code Committee. The instructor reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

For a plagiarism resource, please visit <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Counseling Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

Should a student require psychological support, you can refer them (or walk them over to) the Counseling Center, which provides individual and group sessions to students. They also support the Learning Services Program (703-993-2999) which offers academic skill-building workshops and a tutor referral service.

University Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Should you have a student with writing problems, the University Writing Center provides writing services to students (both undergraduate and graduate), at no charge.

Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.