

Psychology 315: Cognition Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Johnson
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When: M/W 1:10-2:20pm
Where: 335 PPHAC
Office hours: M & W 2:30-4pm
T 3:30-5pm
or by appt.

Overall Course Goal: This course will explore mental processes. We will read about and discuss research examining a variety of areas in cognition, esp. memory. This course will give you a deeper understanding of your mind (be afraid!) and the way it interprets the information it receives from the world. Feel free to turn back now...

Specific Course Objectives: By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Discuss important theories and findings from major subdivisions of cognitive psychology—e.g., perception, attention, memory, language—including knowing some of the important researchers in these areas.
2. Understand the major themes of cognitive psychology as put forth by Matlin and be able to discuss how research from different areas within this field applies to those themes.
3. Discuss how research in areas of cognitive psychology is relevant to everyday life and understanding of oneself and others.
4. Take a topic in an area of psychology, esp. cognitive, and use electronic databases such as PsycInfo and PubMed to find articles pertinent to a particular question in that area.
5. Use the principles of scientific method to design and conduct an experiment on a particular topic within cognitive psychology.
6. Evaluate articles in terms of how well they serve a particular purpose and in terms of how well the findings really support the research claim. Communicate to others the gist of a piece of research and provide reasoning for why that research is or is not strong, esp. in the context of scientific debate.
7. Present your scientific work to others in a professional manner/setting.

Attendance: Attending class will benefit you for multiple reasons: learning how to learn and think critically, discussions of specific learning- and memory-related tips, participation in a variety of activities designed to promote active learning and integration of information, gaining a better idea of my expectations for assignments or exams, and promoting my recognition of you as one of my students. That said, I hold a rather liberal attendance policy for this class. You will be given up to 3 absences (excused or unexcused), and starting with the fourth absence, your **final grade will be reduced by 20 points (3%) for each additional absence.** Apart from this policy, there are some days on which attendance may be required in conjunction with an assignment; these dates will be listed in the schedule or on the handout for that assignment.

Lateness: A legitimate reason for being late can happen to anyone now and then, but repeated lateness is disrespectful to me and to your classmates. Come see me if you have a reason for repeated lateness or absence.

Textbook: *Cognition*, 7th ed., by Margaret Matlin.

Additional readings will be journal articles, provided via Blackboard or researched and obtained by you in conjunction with the experiment project.

Course Evaluation:

Exams: There will be three exams during the course of the semester (third exam during finals). Exam format will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer/identification, and short essay. Exams can include questions on anything in the assigned text chapters, handouts, or readings even if not discussed in lecture. Study guides will be posted on Blackboard as each exam approaches. The study guides will include important terms to know for the exam as well as sample exam questions.

Missed exams: If you have a legitimate, documentable excuse for missing an exam, contact me as soon as possible and we will plan to have you take a make-up. If you know in advance that you will be absent during an exam (e.g., because of travel for a sports team or an interview) then you need to let me know as soon as possible before the exam. You may not take a make-up exam if you skipped the exam without legitimate reason for absence.

Debate days: There will be two debate days that will involve reading assigned articles and coming into class prepared to discuss them with your peers. Your grades for these debate days will depend on both written components and your participation in class on those days, so attendance is crucial. The dates are listed on the class schedule. More information on the components and grading of these assignments will be given in a separate handout.

Experiment project: Working in small groups, you will be assigned a topic for which you will research a basic effect and create an experiment that will replicate that effect based on the designs from other studies. Data will be collected using your peers in class as participants. This project has multiple components, including a poster presented by the group as a whole and a paper that is written individually by each member of the group. More information on the components and grading of these assignments will be given in a separate handout.

Late policy: Late assignments (both debate assignments and other assignments) will be accepted for up to four days after the due date and, unless otherwise noted, will result in **a reduction in points equivalent to one letter grade (10%) for every calendar day late** beginning at 5pm on the day the assignment is due. After the four-day period, a paper will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be applied. No exceptions will be made for minor technical difficulties (printer or email mishaps), but other circumstances may allow for exceptions as determined by me on a case-by-case basis. **I accept assignments by email only if you have arranged with me to do so for a particular assignment.**

Extra credit: There will be two main opportunities to earn extra credit, by participating in experiments or by submitting your project for presentation at Scholars Day or the LVAIC Undergrad Psych Conference. Info about these opportunities will be made available partway through the semester.

Overall grades- breakdown:

Exams (3 @ 100 pts each)	300
Debate days (2 @ 100 pts each)	200
Experiment project:	
Experiment design/carry-out	30
Poster/presentation	30
<u>APA-style paper</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	660 points

Note that it is within my purview as instructor to use qualitative judgments in determining grades for assignments, papers, participation, or other aspects of the course (e.g., exam essays).

I expect you to come and see me if you have any questions or concerns about class in general or about your performance in this class. I am always willing to meet, so don't let things snowball; if you are having trouble, come and see me as soon as possible! I encourage you to come and see me at any point if you feel you could be doing better than you are.

Plagiarism and cheating: Any work that you turn in for this class must be entirely your own work. Any sources used must be properly documented, and I will ask you not to use any direct quotes in assignments or papers. For more information on plagiarism and cheating, refer to the Student Handbook and the following website regarding academic responsibility at Moravian College: <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic2.htm>. As this site clearly explains, the consequences for cheating or plagiarism can range from failing the assignment to receiving an F for the final course grade to expulsion, depending on the severity of the case and prior history of offenses. Although I am not generally opposed to your discussing assignments with fellow students from the class, all of the work you submit to me must be entirely your own, and in some cases I may ask you not to collaborate with fellow students. .

For the group experiment project, in which collaboration is an important component, I will ask you to provide an indication of the extent to which each member of the group participated. You will have the opportunity to indicate how work was divided between the group members and whether any group member shouldered an unfairly large or small portion of the work. I will spend class time discussing ways to avoid plagiarizing, but apart from this it is your responsibility to come see me if you have any questions about your use of sources or when/in what way it is okay to collaborate with other students in the class.

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides for some accommodations to be made for students with certain disabilities. If you have such a disability and are willing to disclose it, you may take advantage of such accommodations. In order to do so, you are required to meet with Mr. Joseph Kempfer in the Office of Learning Services. Accommodations cannot be provided until I have received authorization from Mr. Kempfer. You should also consider taking advantage of the Learning Services Office if you are having difficulty academically in this (or any other) class. The office is located at 1307 Main St. (phone: 610-861-1510).

Class Schedule (The schedule is tentative. Any changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.):

Week:	Class topic/activities:	Text Chs/Assignments:
1		
Jan 18 M	Introduction and course overview	
Jan 20 W	Cont'd	Ch. 1
2		
Jan 25 M	Visual and Auditory Perception	Ch. 2; <i>Select experiment project topics/groups</i>
Jan 27 W	Cont'd	
3		
Feb 1 M	Debate day: Face module	<i>Assigned readings</i>
Feb 3 W	<i>Experiment planning day</i>	
4		
Feb 8 M	Attention	Ch. 3
Feb 10 W	Cont'd	<i>Experiment designs due</i>
5		
Feb 15 M	Mental Imagery	Ch. 7
Feb 17 W	Exam 1	
6		
Feb 22 M	Memory: General concepts & Working Memory	Ch. 4
Feb 24 W	Cont'd	
7		
Mar 1 M	Long-term Memory	Ch. 5
Mar 3 W	<i>Data collection day</i>	
8		
Mar 8-12	NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK	
9		
Mar 15 M	LTM cont'd	
Mar 17 W	<i>Data collection day</i>	
10		
Mar 22 M	Amnesia	
Mar 24 W	Debate day: Memory suppression	<i>Assigned readings</i>
11		
Mar 29 M	General Knowledge	Ch. 8
Mar 31 W	Cont'd	
12		
Apr 5 M	No Class – Easter Recess	
Apr 7 W	Decision Making	Ch. 12 (pp. 405-438)

Week:	Class topic/activities:	Text Chs/Assignments:
13		
Apr 12 M	Exam 2	
Apr 14 W	Language	Chs. 9-10
<i>Sat, April 17 – LVAIC Undergraduate Psychology Conference</i>		
14		
Apr 19 M	Cont'd	<i>Experiment paper due</i>
Apr 21 W	Language development	Ch. 13 (pp. 467-479)
15		
Apr 26 M	Cont'd	
Apr 28 W	<i>Experiment Project Posters</i>	
Finals wk	Exam 3 Fri. May 7 th at 8:30am	

Exam 1 – Chs. 1-3, 7

Exam 2 – Chs. 4-5, 8, 12

Exam 3 – Chs. 9-10, 13 (note: cumulative essays)

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

Letter	Grade range	Letter	Grade range
A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59