

## Psychology 315: Cognition Spring 2011

**Instructor:** Dr. Sarah Johnson  
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**Website:** <http://blackboard.moravian.edu/> (Pwd: mind)

**When:** T/R 1:10-2:20pm  
**Where:** PPHAC 112  
**Office hours:** Tues 2:30-4pm  
Wed 3:30-5pm  
Fri 10-11am 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, esp. in terms of how we learn in an educational setting.
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. Write up your experimental research following the conventions in the field of Psychology.
6. Communicate to others the gist of a piece of research and provide explanation regarding what that research means in relation to everyday concerns.
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 25 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*, 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Experiment project:** Working in small groups, you will be assigned a topic for which you will research a basic learning/memory 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 an APA-style paper written individually by each member of the group and a group web-page design project. More info on the components and grading of these assignments will be given in a separate handout. Some aspects of the project will be group grades (denoted as G in the grade break-down), but a larger proportion will be individually graded (denoted as I in the grade break-down).

**Late policy:** Late assignments/papers 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 work by email only if you have arranged with me to do so for that particular assignment.***

**Extra credit:** There will be two main opportunities to earn extra credit: 1) by participating in experiments; 2) by submitting your project for presentation at Scholars Day or the LVAIC Undergrad Psych Conference (the latter opportunity is contingent upon discussion with me regarding the quality of your group's project). Info about these opportunities will be made available partway through the semester.

**Overall grades- breakdown:**

Exams (3 @ 100 pts each)	300
Perception article summary	50
Experiment project:	
Article summary (I)	100
Experiment design/carry-out (G)	50
APA-style paper (I)	150
Project presentation (G)	50
Webpage project:	
Research summary (I)	100
Webpage design (G)	100
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Total	900 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. Don't let things snowball if you are having trouble, come and see me as soon as possible!

**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; changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard):

<b>Week:</b>	<b>Class topic/activities:</b>	<b>Text Chs/Assignments:</b>
<b>1</b>	Jan 18 T Introduction and course overview	
	Jan 20 R Cont'd	Ch. 1
<b>2</b>	Jan 25 T Visual and Auditory Perception	Ch. 2
	Jan 27 R Cont'd	
<b>3</b>	Feb 1 T Attention	Ch. 3; <i>Article summary</i>
	Feb 3 R <b>No Class – INS</b>	
<b>4</b>	Feb 8 T Cont'd	
	Feb 10 R <b>Exam 1</b>	
<b>5</b>	Feb 15 T Memory: General concepts & Working Memory	Ch. 4
	Feb 17 R <i>Experiment planning day</i>	<i>Assigned reading &amp; article summary</i>
<b>6</b>	Feb 22 T WM Cont'd	
	Feb 24 R Long-term Memory	Ch. 5; <i>Experiment designs due</i>
<b>7</b>	Mar 1 T Amnesia	
	Mar 3R LTM cont'd	
<b>8</b>	Mar 7-11 <b>NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>9</b>	Mar 15 T <i>Data collection day 1</i>	
	Mar 17 R <i>Data collection day 2</i>	
<b>10</b>	Mar 22 T LTM cont'd	
	Mar 24 R General Knowledge	Ch. 8
<b>11</b>	Mar 29 T Cont'd	
	Mar 31 R <b>Exam 2</b>	
<b>12</b>	Apr 5 T Language	Ch. 9
	Apr 7 R Cont'd	<i>Experiment paper due</i>

<b>Week:</b>	<b>Class topic/activities:</b>	<b>Text Chs/Assignments:</b>
<b>13</b>		
Apr 12 T	Language cont'd	Ch. 10
Apr 14 R	<i>Poster presentations</i>	
<b>Sat, April 16 LVAIC Psychology Undergraduate Conference at Lafayette</b>		
<b>14</b>		
Apr 19 T	Language development	Ch. 13 (esp. pp. 467-479)
	<i>Moravian College Scholars Day</i>	
Apr 21 R	<i>Group meetings</i>	<i>Research summary due</i>
<b>15</b>		
Apr 26 T	Language dev't cont'd	
Apr 28 R		<i>Webpage materials due</i>
<b>Finals wk</b>	<b>Exam 3</b> Tues. May 3 <sup>rd</sup> at 1:30pm	

Exam 1 – Chs. 1-3, Simons & Levin article

Exam 2 – Chs. 4-5, 8

Exam 3 – Chs. 9-10, 13

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Grade range</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Grade range</b>
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