

Psychology 376 – Fall 2011  
Topics in Experimental/Cognitive Psychology: Memory Suppression

**Instructor:** Dr. Sarah Johnson

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**Website:** <http://blackboard.moravian.edu/>

**Pwd:** Forget

**When:** MW 1:10-2:20pm

**Where:** 301 PPHAC

**Office hours:** M/W 11:30am-1pm,  
R 2:30-4pm, or by appt

**Course Objectives:** This seminar will focus on memory and the processes of forgetting. We will examine the way (or ways) that memory works and when/how it can go awry, focusing on a growing debate about the plausibility of memory suppression. In the context of this debate, we will learn about potential mechanisms behind suppression, theories of why suppression might occur, research on the creation of false memory, and will discuss the legal and societal implications of this debate.

**Readings:** Readings in the form of book chapters and articles will be provided in one of three ways: in class, via the blackboard website, or available on reserve in the Psych dept office.

**Specific Course Objectives:**

1. Discuss important theories and findings about memory—including knowing some of the important researchers and types of methodology in this area.
2. Discuss how research in memory and related areas of cognitive psychology is relevant to everyday life, personally and societally.
3. Improve your skills at researching a specific topic within psychology using electronic databases such as PsycInfo and PubMed.
4. INTEGRATE/SYNTHESIZE research—Take several pieces of research and tie them together into a larger-picture understanding of cognitive functioning and/or societal issues. Improve your ability to think critically about two (or more) sides of an issue and see how the different sides of an argument do or don't connect.
5. Communicate to others the gist of a piece of research and how it fits into the larger picture of memory in cognition and/or memory suppression from a psychological or legal perspective. Be responsible for leading research-oriented discussions.

**Course Evaluation:**

**Attendance:** Each student can have up to 3 allowed absences. Except where arranged with me (on a case-by-case basis), for each absence beyond the 3 allowed ones, your class participation grade will be reduced by 25 points. 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 legitimate reason for repeated lateness or absence.

**Class participation/Reading responses:** You will be given a grade each week (see scale below) based on your participation in class discussions and on questions, comments, or reactions you have prepared in response to the readings. You should type up these comments to hand to me at the end of each class. Some of these responses will be reflections written during class in response to prompts given by the professor (or by other students)

Class participation will be graded each week based on the scale below:

- A:** Contributes to class discussion by asking questions or making comments, in particular providing insightful and thought-provoking ideas that go beyond simple methodological questions or anecdotal reflections. Can include either bringing up points or responding to other's points, but without overly dominating the discussion. Insightful written questions/comments are tied to the reading. Ideas go beyond what is read to show an incorporation of your own ideas or a synthesis of information across sources.
- B:** Consistently attentive and engaged but only occasionally contributing spontaneously to class discussions. Questions/comments that consistently reflect an accurate understanding of the material (e.g., reiterating an authors' point in your own words) but don't go beyond the reading to add something of your own or integrate ideas across sources.
- C:** No spontaneous contribution to class discussion or contribution with evidence of poor preparation. Lateness beyond 15 min = automatic start grade of C. Written questions/comments are made but reflect poor preparation (e.g., a question that is superficial, reflects poor understanding of the reading, or shows a lack of willingness to put minimal effort into finding the answer yourself).
- D:** Shows up but doesn't participate except when directly asked a question. Disengaged from class. No written questions/comments apart from what is directly prompted in class.
- F:** Highly disruptive (e.g., table-dancing) or inconsiderate (e.g., snoring loudly during the entire class, initiating fist-fights) behavior in class discussions. No written comments/questions.

**Exam:** There will be one exam during the semester, given on week 5, covering the information in the assigned readings, class presentations, and class discussions corresponding with the topic of type of memories. This exam reflects basic level information about memory, providing a foundation on which we can build as we further explore the topic of memory suppression. Exam format will be short and long essay.

**Synthesis paper:** A paper (~5 pages) pulling together the research we discuss early in the semester in relation to the mechanisms involved in forgetting. The focus is not summarizing but discussing how the different pieces of research fit together.

**Presentations:** You will be responsible for two presentations during the semester, a brief presentation and a major presentation. The brief presentation will involve leading the class in developing an understanding of a particular type of memory. For the major presentation, you will lead the class in a discussion of two articles, i.e., providing main themes and some important questions of your own devising, helping the class to analyze these themes in order to develop a stronger understanding of that topic, providing ties across topics, possibly organizing in-class activities or free write, to help illustrate the concepts, etc.

**Movie review:** You will select and watch a movie (must be fictional) that relates to memory suppression and write a 1-2 page review of the movie based in our understanding of memory and forgetting from class readings and discussions.

**Annotated bibliography:** You will find 6 articles related to the topic from your long presentation and write a bibliography of those articles. The paper will include a brief summary of each article (no more than 1 page each) and a brief synthesis (no more 2 pages) of how the articles work together to contribute to our understanding of the topic of eyewitness memory and/or memory suppression within the larger picture of memory. This bibliography should include your 2 assigned articles from your class presentation but the additional 4 articles must be found by you (i.e., not from other assigned articles). This paper is expected to be a precursor to your final debate paper.

**Debate paper:** You will write a paper (~12 pages) that builds on the research you have compiled for the annotated bibliography and includes additional sources (10+ articles; this can include further articles assigned to the class). The review paper should go substantially further than the annotated bibliography in terms of laying out a synthesis of an area of research related to a certain sub-topic or viewpoint regarding eyewitness memory and memory suppression. Further information will be given regarding theoretical focus, as well as the expectations for and grading of the various papers as the semester progresses.

**Late Policy:** Late papers will be accepted for up to four days after the due date and, unless otherwise noted, will result in a reduction of ***1 letter grade for every calendar day late*** beginning ***sharply*** at **5pm** on the day the assignment is due. After the four-day period, the paper will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be applied. Exceptions to this policy will only be made under extenuating circumstances (determined by me on a case-by-case basis). I only accept work turned in by email if you have arranged with me to do so for that particular assignment.

**Overall grades- Breakdown:**

Exam	100
Class participation/weekly questions	150
Synthesis paper	100
Presentations (75 pts; 100 pts)	175
Annotated bibliography	100
Debate paper	150
Movie review	25
<u>Debate participation</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	900 pts

**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 papers or presentations.*** 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. All of the work you submit to me must be entirely your own.

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.

**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** (This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to make announced changes.):

<b>Week:</b>	<b>Class topic/activities:</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments:</b>
<b>1</b>		
Aug 29 M	Introduction and course overview	
Aug 31 W	What is memory? Methods of studying memory	Fulcher on-line chapter; Henderson Chs. 1-2
<b>2</b>		
Sept 5 M	<b>Labor day – No class</b>	
Sept 7 W	TOM presentations: Short-term & Working memory (2 students)	
<b>3</b>		
Sept 12 M	Executive function discussion	Logie (2011); Smith (1999)
Sept 14 W	TOM presentations: Episodic, Semantic (2 students)	Tulving (2002)
<b>4</b>		
Sept 19 M	TOM presentations: Priming, Procedural, Conditioning (3 students)	
Sept 21 W	STM vs. LTM; 5 system view	Squire (2004)
<b>5</b>		
Sept 26 M	<i>Summary day</i>	
Sept 28 W	<b>EXAM</b>	
<b>6</b>		
Oct 3 M	Forgetting	Schacter (1999); Schmolck (2000)
Oct 5 W	Inhibition and Memory suppression	Levy (2002)
<b>7</b>		
Oct 10 M	<b>Fall break – No class</b>	
Oct 12 W	[S1]	Anderson (2004); Depue (2006)
<b>8</b>		
Oct 17 M	Thought avoidance [S2]	Wegner (1987); Hertel (2005)
Oct 19 W	<i>Summary day</i>	<b>Annotated Bib draft due</b> (2 sources) <i>Optional reading:</i> Levy (2008)

<b>Week:</b>	<b>Class topic/activities:</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>
<b>9</b>		
Oct 24 M	The recovered-memory debate	Freyd (1994); Laney (2005); <i>Synthesis paper</i>
Oct 26 W	[S3]	Clancy (2000); Geraerts (2009)
<b>10</b>		
Oct 31 M	Dissociation [S4]	Chu (1999); DePrince (2004)
Nov 2 W	False memory [S5]	Roediger (1995); Clancy (2002)
<b>11</b>		
Nov 7-11	<b>Dr. J out of town this week</b>	<i>Movie assignment (due by Fri Nov 11)</i>
<b>12</b>		
Nov 14 M	[S6]	Leichtman (1995); Nourkova (2004); <b>Final annotated bib due</b> (6 sources)
Nov 16 W	Studying eyewitness memory [S7]	Bradfield (2002); Wright (2009)
<b>13</b>		
Nov 21 M	[S8]	Zarkadi (2009); Bernstein (2009)
Nov 23 W	<b>Thanksgiving break – No class</b>	
<b>14</b>		
Nov 28 M	Recovered-memory debate: A dialog [S9]	Williams (1994a); Loftus (1994); Williams (1994b)
Nov 30 W	<b>DEBATE DAY</b>	
<b>15</b>		
Dec 5 M	Debate post-game notes and Movie discussion day	
Dec 7 W	Finish movie discussion	<b>Final debate paper due</b> (10+ articles)

### **Article Reading List:**

#### ***Introduction to Memory***

Logie, R. H. (2011). The functional organization and capacity limits of working memory. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 240-245.

Smith, E. E., & Jonides, J. (1999). Storage and executive processes in the frontal lobes. *Science*, 283, 1657-1661.

Tulving, E. (2002). Episodic memory: From mind to brain. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 1-25.

Squire, L. R. (2004). Memory systems of the brain: A brief history and current perspective. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 82, 171-177.

### ***Forgetting, Inhibition, and Thought Avoidance:***

- Schacter, D. L. (1999). The seven sins of memory: Insights from psychology and cognitive neuroscience. *American Psychologist*, *54*, 182-203.
- Schmolck, H., Buffalo, E. A., & Squire, L. R. (2000). Memory distortions develop over time: Recollections of the O. J. Simpson trial verdict after 15 and 32 months. *Psychological Science*, *11*, 39-45.
- Levy, B. J., & Anderson, M. C. (2002). Inhibitory processes and the control of memory retrieval. *TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences*, *6*, 299-305.
- Anderson, M. C., Ochsner, K. N., Kuhl, B., Cooper, J., Robertson, E., Gabrieli, S. W., Glover, G. H., & Gabrieli, J. D. E. (2004). Neural systems underlying the suppression of unwanted memories. *Science*, *303*, 232-235.
- Depue, B. E., Banich, M. T., & Curran, T. (2006). Suppression of emotional and nonemotional content in memory. *Psychological Science*, *17*, 441-447.
- Wegner, D. M., Schneider, D. J., Carter, S. R. III, & White, T. L. (1987). Paradoxical effects of thought suppression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *53*, 5-13.
- Hertel, P. T., & Calcaterra, G. (2005). Intentional forgetting benefits from thought substitution. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, *12*, 484-489.
- Optional reading:* Levy, B. J., & Anderson, M. C. (2008). Individual differences in the suppression of unwanted memories: The executive deficits hypothesis. *Acta Psychologica*, *127*, 623-635.

### ***The Recovered-Memory Debate & Dissociation***

- Freyd, J. J. (1994). Betrayal trauma: Traumatic amnesia as an adaptive response to child abuse. *Ethics & Behavior*, *4*, 307-329.
- Laney, C., & Loftus, E. F. (2005). Traumatic memories are not necessarily accurate memories. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, *50*, 823-828.
- Clancy, S. A., Schacter, D. L., McNally, R. J., & Pitman, R. K. (2000). False recognition in women reporting recovered memories of sexual abuse. *Psychological Science*, *11*, 26-31.
- Geraerts, E., Lindsay, D. S., Merckelbach, H., Jelicic, M., Raymaekers, L., Arnold, M. M., & Schooler, J. W. (2009). Cognitive mechanisms underlying recovered-memory experiences of childhood sexual abuse. *Psychological Science*, *20*, 92-98.
- Chu, J. A., Frey, L. M., Ganzel, B. L., & Matthews, J. A. (1999). Memories of childhood abuse: Dissociation, amnesia, and corroboration. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *156*, 749-755.
- DePrince, A. P., & Freyd, J. J. (2004). Forgetting trauma stimuli. *Psychological Science*, *15*, 488-492.

### ***False Memory***

- Roediger, H. L. III, & McDermott, K. B. (1995). Creating false memories: Remembering words not presented in lists. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 21(4), 803-814.
- Clancy, S. A., McNally, R. J., Schacter, D. L., Lenzenweger, M. F., & Pitman, R. K. (2002). Memory distortion in people reporting abduction by aliens. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 111, 455-461.
- Leichtman, M. D., & Ceci, S. J. (1995). The effects of stereotypes and suggestions on preschoolers' reports. *Developmental Psychology*, 31, 568-578.
- Nourkova, V., Bernstein, D. M., & Loftus, E. F., (2004). Altering traumatic memory. *Cognition and Emotion*, 18, 575-585.

### ***Eyewitness Memory***

- Bradfield, A. L., Wells, G. L., & Olson, E. A. (2002). The damaging effect of confirming feedback on the relation between eyewitness certainty and identification accuracy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 112-120.
- Wright, D. B., Memon, A., Skagerberg, E. L., & Gabbert, F. (2009). When eyewitnesses talk. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, 174-178.
- Zarkadi, T., Wade, K. A., & Steward, N. (2009). Creating fair lineups for suspects with distinctive features. *Psychological Science*, 20, 1448-1453.
- Bernstein, D. M., & Loftus, E. F. (2009). How to tell if a particular memory is true or false. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4, 370-374.

### ***The Recovered-Memory Debate: A Dialog***

- Williams, L. M. (1994a). Recall of childhood trauma: A prospective study of women's memories of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 1167-1176.
- Loftus, E. F., Garry, M., & Feldman, J. (1994). Forgetting sexual trauma: What does it mean when 38% forget? *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 1177-1181.
- Williams, L. M. (1994b). What does it mean to forget child sexual abuse? A reply to Loftus, Garry, and Feldman (1994). *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 1182-1186.