

PSYC 341: MEMORY & COGNITION

Overview.

This course is an introduction to cognitive psychology, which is a field focused on the internal mental processes involved in representing concepts, remembering, reasoning, language processing, decision making, and problem solving. We will study, for example, how you remember a long to-do list (yet forget what you had for dinner last night), how you effortlessly tune into your name when it is uttered in a crowd at a large party (yet not pay attention to your mother asking you to take out the garbage), how doctors diagnose diseases (yet use only a subset of their wealth of knowledge), and how you rapidly and reliably understand and produce language during conversation (yet sometimes struggle to find the right words while giving a speech or presentation). We will approach these concepts by considering individual-differences and drawing on findings that employ various methods (behavior, computational models, neuroimaging, electrophysiology) within normal and clinical populations across the lifespan.

Purpose and Goals.

The purpose of this course is to give you a basic understanding of cognitive psychology. In so doing, we wish to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) Boost your understanding of and ability to employ cognitive psychology concepts across a range of disciplines
- 2) Translate cognitive psychology lab findings into real world applications
- 3) Gain a fuller appreciation for cognitive psychology. We would like you to begin to develop your own ideas about how the mind works! We don't intend to make all of you cognitive psychologists, but would like to make you aware of the importance of understanding how we think.

Resources.

Required Text. Smith, E.E., & Kosslyn, S.M. (2006). *Cognitive Psychology: Mind and Brain*. First Edition. Pearson Education

Canvas. Refer to Canvas (formerly, ELMS) for writing assignments, relevant articles and links, and lecture slides. We will post any announcements related to changes in the course schedule and exams, so be sure to check the site often. All writing assignments (both required and extra credit) should be uploaded to Canvas by the specified deadlines.

A Note About Notes. We will not provide our personal lecture notes, so please do not ask us for our notes. If you miss a class, instead ask a classmate for his/her notes or come to our office hours to review any material you may not understand after reviewing the slides and corresponding readings.

University Writing Center. If you find yourself struggling with the writing assignments, please consider visiting the Writing Center. The goal of the Center is to improve your writing quality and to help you understand writing assignments. For more information about the Writing Center, visit: <http://www.umdenglish.info/academics/writingcenter/undergraduate>. Note that this is **not** a proofreading or editing service. We strongly suggest that you pair up with someone in class and exchange proofreading services prior to submitting papers for grading.

APA Style. All writing assignments will require APA style for your in-text citations and reference sections. Guidelines can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01>

Lectures: MWF 10-10:50am
Location: BPS 1243

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* Erika will hold "office hours" on Monday afternoons from 12-4pm at the [Starbucks](#) located near south campus on Rt. 1.

Text

Outcome Measures.

3 Exams	300 points
2 Writing Assignments	100 points
Extra Credit Paper	+12 points

Exams (100 points each) – three in total; worth 300 points or 75% of your final grade

All exams will be administered in BPS 1243 on the date indicated on the course schedule unless otherwise specified. Exams will follow a hybrid format consisting of both multiple choice and free-response questions. We have designed the exams such that they can be completed within the allotted lecture time (roughly 45 minutes). They will begin promptly at the start of class. Students are expected to arrive on time for exams. Tardy students will not be given extra time to complete the exam, and any student arriving after the first exam has been turned in will not be allowed to take the exam (even if the first exam is turned in 1 minute after the start of class). This is to prevent tardy students from gaining an unfair advantage by potentially having access to information about the content of the exam prior to taking it.

Make-up Exams. We give make-up exams only for University sanctioned reasons. Please consult the University Student handbook. If you anticipate not being present for an exam, it is your responsibility to inform us prior to the scheduled exam. We will require a medical doctor’s health excuse or a note from a funeral home. If you do not inform us or if you do not present us with timely documentation, 0 points will be given to you for the missed exam. *Note: In the case that you are unable to get a written medical excuse, you may ask your provider for a copy of your medical notes for the specific visit(s) in question.*

Writing Assignments (50 points each) – two in total; worth 100 points or 25% of your grade

The two short writing assignments are geared toward giving you the opportunity to practice your writing and to translate the concepts you’ve learned in class to either real world examples or the development of novel research initiatives. Points will be earned based on:

1. Relevance: demonstrate comprehension of the chosen question
2. Accuracy and Clarity: define concepts, describe the variables you will manipulate and measure, and state hypotheses
3. Presentation: proper spelling, use of punctuation, grammar, and use of APA style formatting for references
4. Succinctness: respond in no more than 500 words, not inclusive of references (If you exceed 500 words, you will forfeit 5 points—equivalent to one letter grade for the assignment.)

Because you will have several weeks to prepare your responses, there are **no deadline extensions** for writing assignments. We will make no exceptions about this. For each day that your assignment is late, you will forfeit 5 points; thus, any assignment received 10 days after a deadline will result in 0 points.

Extra Credit Paper (12 points) – one opportunity to earn up to 12 additional points; potentially 3% of your final grade

Attend a cognitive seminar or colloquium on campus and write no more than 500 words discussing the research that was presented. To receive full credit, in your response, you must include the speaker’s name, the talk title, the date of the seminar/colloquium, the primary research question or goal, at least one proposed hypothesis, methods used to test the hypothesis, at least one result, and a statement of whether this evidence supports or is against the proposed hypothesis.

You will find a list of relevant seminars and colloquia for you to consider on Canvas.

Grades.

Final Grade Cut-Offs.

Grading will strictly adhere to the following cut-off points. We will **not** round final grades. If your grade is below a cut-off, you will receive the lower grade.

A+ = 100–97	B+ = < 90–87	C+ = < 80–77	D+ = < 70–67	F = < 60
A = < 97–93	B = < 87–83	C = < 77–73	D = < 67–63	
A- = < 93–90	B- = < 83–80	C- = < 73–70	D- = < 63–60	

Re-grades.

If you wish to dispute the grade you received on an assignment, send a formal request via email to *both* of us explaining the reasons why you think your assignment should be reconsidered. All requests must be received within two days of the return of an assignment. Note that a re-grade may result in a higher, lower, or the same grade originally issued. Formal disputes need not be submitted for grading or scoring errors, though please bring these to our attention if you discover such mistakes.

Students with Disabilities.

Students requiring specific academic accommodations should contact us with the appropriate documentation from DSS during the first week of the semester (www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS).

Academic Misconduct.

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and those privileged to be members of a university community have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty and a right to expect the same standards of others. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the university and therefore is unacceptable and rigorously proscribed. Violations will be met with the maximum possible response. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, contact us.

All students will be required to read and sign a document about plagiarism to acknowledge what plagiarism entails and to pledge to not commit the act. Plagiarism is a very serious offense and any students exhibiting such behavior will be directed to the Office of Student Conduct.

In-Class Conduct.

Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or me will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the University Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct

Use of Electronics. We will not allow the use of any and all electronic devices in class, including laptops, tablets, phones, MP3 players, gaming devices, etc. Although many enjoy the benefits of electronic note-taking, more often than not, such devices are a source of distraction for the person using them and for nearby students. As you will learn throughout the semester, attention is a limited resource that is not optimally functional when divided across multiple tasks. Moreover, there is tremendous benefit in re-copying (typing) notes—a concept known as *rehearsal*—that will benefit your ability to remember course material; thus, we strongly believe that you will get the most out of the course by a) not having such devices as potential sources of distraction and b) reconstructing concepts by revisiting in-class notes in more active ways. That being said, because we will not be taking attendance, if you feel that you would rather use your morning perusing the Internet, you are welcome to spend your morning in a location other than lecture. To reiterate, this policy is meant to promote learning. If you are seen using an electronic device, you will be asked to leave.

Study Tips.

- Preview the readings suggested for each lecture, thoroughly grasping the main points of each.
- Don't just copy down what's on the slide. Jot down any new information or points of clarification. We don't want you to miss information, so we'll make the slides available online.
- *Organize* your notes and even rewrite or type them after each class. This will force you to study the material over time. You'll learn in this course that cramming doesn't result in as effective long-term retention of material; in fact, rehearsal distributed over time is a better method.
- Focus on concepts, not details.
- If you don't get something, come to office hours or send one of us an email. Don't wait until the day before the exam to hit us with all of your questions. It's possible that you won't receive responses from us right away.
- Go over practice exam questions, answering each as thoroughly as possible. Compare your answers with classmates.
- Attend the classes just prior to the exam to ask questions during the review sessions.

Course Schedule.

Date(s)	Topic(s)	Reading	Assignment
Jan 23	Course Overview	Syllabus	Sign plagiarism pledge
Jan 25	History of Cognitive Psychology	Ch. 1	
Jan 28	Biological Bases of Cognition	Ch. 1	
Jan 30	Cognitive Research Methods	Ch. 1	
Feb 1, 4	Perception	Ch. 2	
Feb 6, 8, 11	Attention	Ch. 3	
Feb 13, 15, 18	Representation & Categorization	Ch. 4	
Feb 20	Catch-up & Review		
Feb 22	IN-CLASS EXAM 1		Exam 1
Feb 25, 27	Encoding & Retention	Ch. 5	
Mar 1, 4, 6	Memory Retrieval	Ch. 5	
Mar 8, 11	Forgetting & Amnesia	Ch. 5	
Mar 13, 15	Semantic & Episodic Memory	Ch. 5	Assignment 1 due by the end of the day on Mar 15 (midnight)
Mar 18-22	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>		
Mar 25, 27, 29	Working Memory	Ch. 6	
Apr 1, 3	Executive Processes	Ch. 7	
Apr 5	Catch-up & Review		
Apr 8	IN-CLASS EXAM 2		Exam 2
Apr 10, 12	Emotion & Cognition	Ch. 8	
Apr 15, 17, 19	Judgment & Decision Making	Ch. 9	
Apr 22, 24	Problem Solving & Reasoning	Ch. 10	
Apr 26, 29	Motor Cognition	Ch. 11	
May 1, 3, 6	Language Processing	Ch. 12	
May 8	Catch-up & Review		Extra credit paper and Assignment 2 due by the end of the day on May 8 (midnight)
May 17	FINAL EXAM		Exam 3 – 9-10am in BPS 1243

Note: We reserve the right to change the grading system in any way (add, delete, or change assignments and exams). Any such modifications will be announced both in class and on Canvas.