PSY 350: Cognitive Psychology (Summer II 2012)
COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Curt A. Carlson, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Due to the online nature of this class, it is best to either post questions in the eCollege discussion boards or email me.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook: *Cognitive Psychology* (2012, 3rd edition) by Robinson-Riegler & Robinson-Riegler

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of cognitive psychology, which is a laboratory-based science investigating the mental processes that allow us to perceive the world around us, attend to certain parts of it, store information for later retrieval, interact with other human beings through the use of language, and make decisions prior to performing actions. Of course, these processes are not perfect, but rather are quite error-prone. Cognitive psychology has uncovered some of the reasons behind these errors, and has even suggested many solutions and/or short-cuts that can help us avoid some of them.

Although most of what we know about cognitive psychology has arisen from controlled laboratory experiments, it impacts your everyday life in many ways. For example, many airplane crashes are due to cognitive errors on the part of the pilot or air traffic controller. Car accidents are often due to distracted drivers talking or texting on their smart phones or interacting with their GPS systems. Kirk Bloodsworth was positively identified by five eyewitnesses and sentenced to death, but eventually exonerated by DNA evidence. As of August 19th, 2011, 273 individuals in the U.S. have been exonerated based on DNA evidence, and approximately 75% of these were due, at least in part, to mistaken eyewitness identification. We will learn about the cognitive errors that can drive these mistakes leading to miscarriages of justice. The phone number 1-888-CAR-TALK is easy to remember, but 1, 8, double 8, double 2, 78, 2, double 5, is not.

My goals in this course are to present the laboratory-based foundation on which cognitive psychology is built and to make that information relevant to you through examples. To help you develop an appreciation of the laboratory-based approach, you will read some journal articles that describe experiments. You will leave this class with a good grounding in cognitive psychology, its methods and theoretical outlook, and an ability to capitalize on this knowledge to improve the quality of your mental life (e.g., improved study habits, enhanced memory, the knowledge to make better decisions) as well as understand the cognitive principles that underlie these improvements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your developing knowledge of the above topics will be assessed in two ways: 1) quizzes and exams, and 2) reading summaries.

Quizzes

After completion of each topic, you will be quizzed over that material. There are two reasons for these quizzes. First, they should encourage you to keep on top of the reading, in order to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course. Second, research has shown that repeated testing enhances retention of material. We will make use of this finding in order to increase your performance on exams and to help you remember the topics we cover after the course has been completed.

Reading Summaries

For two selected topics, you will be required to submit to the eCollege dropbox a Reading Summary (as a Word document: .doc or .docx) of an empirical article I've posted in Doc Sharing in eCollege for everyone to read. This summary must include:
1) a brief summary of the literature/theory on which the study is based
2) a basic description of what the authors did in the experiment(s)
3) their most important results
4) their conclusions based on these results.

In other words, it is most important to emphasize the REASONS WHY they conducted this research, what their HYPOTHESES were, how they TESTED them, what they FOUND, and what they CONCLUDED. The summary must be 1-2 pages long (single-spaced). Prior to submitting to the dropbox, be sure your summary is a .doc or .docx file, and label as: "LastNameFirstNameA#" with # designating the assignment number (1-2).

Exams

There are 3 exams, including the final. The first exam is worth 18%, the second exam is worth 20%, and the final exam is worth 22% of your overall grade.

Grading

- You will earn credit for every quiz on which you score a 60% or better (i.e., they are treated as pass/fail). There will be 10 quizzes, which add up to be worth 20% of your overall grade (2% each).
- You earn up to 10% of your overall grade for each reading summary completed correctly and submitted on time. There are two readings for a total of 20% of your overall grade.
- There are 3 exams, including the final. The first exam is worth 18%, the second exam is worth 20%, and the final exam is worth 22% of your overall grade.

You need 90% or better for an 'A', 80% or better for a 'B', 70% or better for a 'C', and 60% or better for a 'D'. Below 60% results in an 'F'.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

This course will be presented entirely in **eCollege**, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course.
- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Microsoft Word (**all reading summaries you submit must end with .doc or .docx**)

eCollege is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means that this course will work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0). This course also will work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems. It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

1. Each topic will be accessible from the left column of the eCollege site for this course – within each you will see the lecture, quiz, any assignment that might be due, and an exam if for that topic.
2. You will download the two research articles from Doc Sharing. These are to be read carefully for your research summaries.
3. You will submit your research summaries using the eCollege dropbox tool/tab – see 'Dropbox' in the top toolbar of eCollege for this course.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

You can interact with me via email or the eCollege Virtual Office. Email is preferred, and I will try to get back to you within 24 hours. Please do not email me multiple times within this 24 hours for the same issue.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

· Chat Support: Click on 'Live Support' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

· Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

· Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

· Help: Click on the 'Help' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc…)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Academic Honesty Policy: Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.

Examination Policy: All quizzes and exams are to be taken closed-book. **You are not allowed to take any quiz or exam after its respective deadline, unless you notify me of extenuating circumstances and I give permission in advance.**

Late Work: **Reading summaries will not be accepted late unless I give you permission in advance.**

Dropping the Course: A student may drop this course by logging into their myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled 'Drop a class' from among the choices found under the myLEO section of the Web page.

Incompletes: The policy for this course is not to allow incompletes. If you cannot complete the course with a grade that you find satisfactory, it is your responsibility to drop it.

University Specific Procedures:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).*

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

This schedule is to be used as a guide. It is possible that it will change.

7/9 – 7/10	Topic 1: Read syllabus & Introduce yourselves using Discussion Board
7/11 – 7/12	Topic 2: Ch 1: What is Cognitive Psychology? Online lecture; **Quiz 1**
7/13 – 7/14	Topic 3: Ch 2: Cognitive Neuroscience; Online lecture: Research Mtds & Brain; **Quiz 2**
7/15 – 7/17	Topic 4: Ch 3: Perception online lecture; **Quiz 3**
7/18 – 7/19	Topic 5: Ch 4: Attention online lecture; **Quiz 4**; ***Summary 1***
7/19	**EXAM 1: Topics 2-5; Found in Topic 5**
7/20 – 7/21	Topic 6: Ch 5: Memory Models; Online lecture: Sensory & Primary Memory; **Quiz 5**
7/22 – 7/24	Topic 7: Ch 6: Memory Processes; Online lecture: Encoding; **Quiz 6**
7/25 – 7/26	Topic 8: Ch 7: Knowledge 1 Online lecture: Retrieval & Eyewitness ID; **Quiz 7**
7/27 – 7/28	Topic 9: Ch 8: Knowledge 2 Online lecture: Concepts & Storage; **Quiz 8**
7/28	**EXAM 2: Topics 6-9; Found in Topic 9**
7/29 – 7/31	Topic 10: Ch 9: Language 1; No quiz or online lecture; ***Summary 2***
8/1 – 8/2	Topic 11: Ch 10: Language 2; Online lecture: Language; **Quiz 9**
8/3 – 8/4	Topic 11 continued: Steven Pinker lecture
8/5 – 8/7	Topic 12: Ch 11: Problem Solving Online lecture: Problem Solving; **Quiz 10**
8/8 – 8/9	Topic 13: Ch 12: Decision Making Online lecture: Decision Making
8/9	**EXAM 3: Topics 10 – 13; Found in Topic 13**