

PSY 620 – Human Learning and Cognition Spring 2013

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Required Text: Robinson-Riegler, B, & Robinson-Riegler, G. (2012). Cognitive Psychology: Applying the Science of the Mind. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205-03364-5

ECollege: Course materials, including supplementary readings, will be posted on eCollege.

Course Description: Cognition is about how we process information and think. Some of the basic content areas emphasized are how we perceive objects, attend to information, remember material, solve problems, and make decisions. What you will find after learning about these topics is that cognition is in everything! The goal of the class is for you to see how these topics relate to everyday life and critically evaluate the current cognitive theories and hypotheses.

Course Philosophy: There are three elements that I believe are important for a graduate course. First, the course must be educational. The textbook was selected to provide you with a foundation of the major areas of study in cognitive psychology. Second, the course should be enjoyable. I have fun teaching this material, and I hope that you will find the material fascinating too! After all, what is cooler than learning about how we think and process information? ☺ Third, the course should be beneficial to you. You will be required to present on a specialized topic in cognitive psychology (See below). The topic will be selected by you (and approved by me). It is my hope that this presentation will result in a project that can be conducted as part of your thesis or dissertation research if you are in one of the programs that requires such projects. If you are not writing a thesis or dissertation as part of your graduate program, it is my hope that this project will inspire you to conduct research or think about applications in your career area. When coming up with a topic I encourage you to find elements of this course that relate to your research interests. This is your opportunity to investigate a question that fascinates you!

Course Objectives:

1. Understanding the basic principles of cognitive psychology, including how research is conducted and how it applies to real-world settings
2. Development of communication skills and reasoning skills to discuss and critique psychological research
3. Development of a research project that is feasible, empirical, and can potentially be conducted in the future

Course Format: The class will meet once per week. We will discuss the assigned chapter reading and assigned article. This is a graduate course, and, as such, participation is expected.

Course Assignments:

1) Exams – You will be administered two exams. The week prior to each exam you will be given a set of 12-15 potential essay questions. Each student is to work INDEPENDENTLY when preparing for the exam. Answers should include sufficient empirical evidence (not anecdotal). Five questions will be selected for the exam, and you will be asked to answer 4 out of the 5 essay questions. The questions will be based on material covered in lecture, assigned readings, videos, and demonstrations. The exams will be closed notes and closed books/closed articles. You will have to retrieve from your memory your responses to the practice exam. Violations will result in a ZERO on the exam. **The exams are worth 40% of your total grade (30% - Exam 1; 30% Exam 2).**

2) Presentation – During the last weeks of class you will give a presentation on a topic that you have selected (and one that has been approved by the instructor). The presentation will include pertinent background information followed by a proposed research study. The presentation is essentially a research proposal that you will be giving in front of an audience. Note that this assignment requires you to do outside research to verify that your proposed study is original and provide background information about the justification of the study. Students are expected to ask questions about the presentation and give feedback. **The presentation is worth 20%.**

3) Participation – Participation is an integral part of a seminar. Being an active participant will involve both participation in class and preparation before class. By 8 p.m. prior to each class students must post a discussion question on the eCollege discussion forum about the assigned article. These discussion questions should NOT be definitional questions. Instead, they should promote discussion. In addition to posting a question on the discussion forum, participation in class is also expected. In-class participation entails discussing the assigned readings – both the text and article, and being ready to answer questions posted on the discussion forum for the week. Arriving late, reading the newspaper, or any other class disruptions (i.e., ringing cell phone, discourteous, texting, face-booking) will result in deductions. **Participation is worth 10%.**

4) Discussion Leader – Students will lead the discussion of an assigned article. The discussion leader will organize the questions submitted by students from the eCollege discussion forum of the week (Note that the leader does not have to cover all of the submitted questions, but instead should select the questions he or she deems appropriate). The leader may also prepare other questions for discussion and/or develop group activities to review the article. **This assignment is worth 10%.**

Grade Scoring: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = Below 60

Course Policies

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

Plagiarism: Texas A & M University-Commerce views plagiarism as a serious offense. Plagiarism occurs when individuals take ideas and/or words from another source and claim these ideas as their own without giving credit to the original author(s). This can include copying words from an Internet website, reading an article and taking the authors ideas

without giving them credit, or writing work that is remarkably similar to other written work (e.g., Changing words to synonyms is still plagiarism). If any written work contains ideas that are not your own, you need to give credit to the author(s) by including citations. Instructors are obligated to report instances of plagiarism to university officials. Please refer to the American Psychology Association (APA) manual for instructions on citing materials. When in doubt, ask me. Ignorance will not be tolerated as an excuse for plagiarism. The first offense of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and include a Student Intervention. Additional accounts of plagiarism will result in an automatic zero in the course.

Scholarly Expectations: All works submitted for credit must be original works created by the scholar uniquely for the class. It is considered inappropriate and unethical, particularly at the graduate level, to make duplicate submissions of a single work for credit in multiple classes, unless specifically requested by the instructor. Work submitted at the graduate level is expected to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and be of significantly higher quality than work produced at the undergraduate level.

Late Work: There are no make-up assignments for the discussion leader assignment or presentation. Make-up exams will not be permitted unless under severe circumstances (e.g., hospitalization), and instructor must be notified prior to the exam, and documentation must be provided.

Etiquette/Netiquette: Offensive language in class and aggressive correspondence online will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be respectful of others' opinions when communicating. Rule of thumb: Just be nice and courteous.

Class Conduct: Please remember to turn off your cell phone or set it to silent (not vibrate). If you are expecting an urgent call (e.g., family member is having surgery, partner serving overseas is expected to call, etc.), please let me know before the class starts about the issue and we can make arrangements. Text messaging and instant messaging are prohibited. If you bring a laptop to class, please limit it to class-relevant use (e.g., typing notes, viewing assigned articles).

Students with Disabilities: 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, Room 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148, StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Textbook Chapter	Articles	Assignment Due
Week 1	1/17	Syllabus & Introductions,	None	None	
Week 2	1/24	History of Cognitive Psychology	Ch. 1	None	

Week 3	1/31	Perception	Ch. 2	Balcetis & Dunning (2010)	
Week 4	2/7	Attention	Ch. 3	Strayer et al. (2007)	
Week 5	2/14	Immediate Memory	Ch. 4	Beilock & Carr (2005)	
Week 6	2/21	Object Recognition & Categorization	Ch. 5	Richler et al. (2011)	
Week 7	2/28	Exam 1			In-class exam over Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and assigned articles
Week 8	3/7	Long-Term Memory Processes	Ch. 6	McDaniel et al. (2009)	
Week 9	3/14	Spring Break! ☺	None	None	
Week 10	3/21	Autobiographical Memory	Ch. 7	Storm & Jobe (2012)	
Week 11	3/28	Memory Malleability	Ch. 8	Chan et al. (2009)	
Week 12	4/4	Decision Making	Ch. 11	Kornell et al. (2011)	
Week 13	4/11	Problem Solving	Ch. 12	Grant & Spivey (2003)	
Week 14	4/18	Exam 2			In-class exam over Chapters 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, and assigned articles
Week 15	4/25	Language	Ch. 9 & 10	None	
Week 16	5/2	Presentations	None	None	All presentations due to Dropbox by 4:30 pm
Week 16	5/9	Presentations, continued	None	None	