

## PSY 675: Special Topics: Adaptive Memory (Residency, June 2014)

Instructor: Curt A. Carlson, Ph.D., Binnion 208, curt.carlson@tamuc.edu

Class meets: M-Th 1p-5p, Binnion 214

Office hours: By appointment

Text: *What is Adaptive about Adaptive Memory?* (2014) Editors: Schwartz, Howe, Toglia, & Otgaar. You are encouraged to purchase this book, but I will provide copies of chapters.

There is no escaping the fact that all biological systems are a result of evolutionary processes, and the human brain/mind is no exception. Evolutionary psychology is based on the application of theories from evolutionary biology to the science of psychology, and this sub-discipline of psychology has grown substantially over the last 20 years. One result of this rapid expansion is increasing extensions of an evolutionary/adaptive mindset to core concepts of psychology, including memory. This course highlights this particular extension: adaptive memory. We will cover the following topics: (a) Natural selection of memory, (b) Survival information and processing, and (c) Adaptive memory in distinctive populations.

There will not be formal lecturing in this course, but rather you should come to class having read the required material so that we can have an organized discussion. The foundation of this course is class discussion of the readings. Your grade will come from: 1) your participation in class discussion every day, demonstrating that you have processed the required readings for that day, and 2) your presentation of a literature review during the last week of the course.

Grading. Your grade will be based on the following: 1) Leading discussions (20 points), 2) participation in discussions (20), 3) presentation (40), and 4) attendance (20).

Topic Discussion. Each student will lead class discussion of at least one chapter during the term. You must fully digest the reading, write a summary and/or outline of it (though you do not need to turn this in), and create several questions to ask of the class during discussion. The reading will be provided to you at least one day before the class in which you will discuss it. Additionally, you are expected to participate in discussion of readings every day. Early in the term, we will determine who will lead discussion for which topics/chapters.

Presentation. By the end of the first week, you must have a topic approved by me. It can be any topic that falls within the realm of topics covered in this course (based on the below schedule). You will gather and read 5-10 peer-reviewed research articles on the subject in order to get an idea of what has been done in the area. These articles are likely referenced in the book chapters we will be reading, so they won't be difficult to identify and find. You will then construct a presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) that describes your findings, which you will give to the class during the last week. It should last 15-20 minutes. The point of the presentation is to provide the class with actual research findings that formed the basis for some of the chapters we read. This will provide everyone with more depth into the subject matter than what we will garner just from the chapters.

Attendance. You must attend every class (10 total) and stay for its entirety. Not every class will last the entire 4 hours, but you must stay as long as we are covering material. If you are not

present during any class time, you risk losing up to 10% of your final grade. If you must miss a class, you must notify me in advance.

Though we will try to abide by the following schedule, it is possible that it may change.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>
Monday 6/2	Introductions, Syllabus, Assignment of Readings
Tuesday 6/3	Chapter 1: What is Adaptive Memory?; Chapter 2: Evolution & Memory
Wednesday 6/4	Chapter 3: Remembering Cheaters; Chapter 4: Encoding Processes
Thursday 6/5	Ch. 5: Survival Processing, Ancestral Relevance, & Elaboration; Ch. 6: Domain-Specificity of Survival Processing Advantages
Monday 6/9	Ch. 7: Survival Processing & Attention; Ch. 8: Cognitive & Social Factors
Tuesday 6/10	Ch. 9: Paired-Associate Learning; Ch. 10: Proximate Cognitive Mechanisms
Wednesday 6/11	Ch. 11: Memory Errors; Ch. 13: Person Recognition
Thursday 6/12	Ch. 15: Development of Adaptive Memory; Ch. 16: Controversies & Future Directions
Monday 6/16	Presentations
Tuesday 6/17	Presentations (if necessary)

**“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).”**

**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](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)