

## PSY 620 – Human Learning and Cognition

Fall 2015

**Instructor:** Dr. Lacy Krueger

**Email Address:** [Lacy.Krueger@tamuc.edu](mailto:Lacy.Krueger@tamuc.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11:00-12:15 (Binnion 220), Thursday 11:00-12:15 and 3:30-4:15 (Binnion 220), Wednesday 10:00-11:15 (Virtually), and by appointment

**Phone Number:** 903-886-5637

**Fax:** (903) 886-5510

**Required Text:** Robinson-Riegler, B, & Robinson-Riegler, G. (2012). Cognitive Psychology: Applying the Science of the Mind. 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. These exams consist of short essay and multiple choice 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. **The exams are worth 50% of your total grade (25% - Exam 1; 25% 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) Quizzes** – Quizzes will be administered to provide an assessment of your knowledge of the assigned chapter reading for the week and promote learning via testing (i.e., testing effect). These quizzes will be taken without aid – closed notes, closed book, and no Internet aid. You will have to retrieve from your memory your responses. For each quiz that you earn 70% or better you will receive 1 point. If you earn a score less than 70% you will receive zero points for that quiz. Quizzes must be completed the week of the topic. See eCollege for dates. **Quizzes are worth 10% of your course grade (1% each) is worth 10%.**

**4) Discussion Leaders** – Students in groups of 2-3 will lead a 20-minute discussion on an article related to the topic of the week. It is expected that the discussion leaders will provide an overview of the article followed by leading a discussion of the article. A formal presentation should be prepared using PowerPoint or Prezi. **This assignment is worth 10%.**

**5) Applications** – Each week you are expected to bring with you to class a typed application response on the assigned reading. This application response will consist of you a) explaining a concept, and b) describing how it fits with your profession. After all, each of you is required to take this course as part of your graduate studies, and this is because of the course’s professional relevance. The applications should be formally written (i.e., grammatically correct, no typographical errors) and be between 250-500 words. It should be double-spaced, 12 inch margins, and in Times New Roman font. You should also be prepared to share these applications in class discussions. **This assignment is worth 10%.**

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

### Course Policies

**University Codes of Conduct:** A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained. “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 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.

**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, quizzes, applications, or presentation. Make-up exams will not be permitted unless under severe circumstances (e.g., hospitalization), 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](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)**

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Textbook Readings &amp; Articles*</b>	<b>Article Discussion Leader(s)</b>	<b>Quiz</b>
Week 1	9/3	Syllabus, Introductions, History of Cognitive Psychology	Ch. 1	--	Introduction and Ch. 1
Week 2	9/10	Long-Term Memory Processes	Ch. 6 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 6
Week 3	9/17	Perception	Ch. 2 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 2
Week 4	9/24	Attention	Ch. 3 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 3
Week 5	10/1	Immediate Memory	Ch. 4 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 4
Week 6	10/8	Exam 1 (In-class exam over Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and assigned articles)	--	--	--
Week 7	10/15	Memory Malleability	Ch. 8 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 8
Week 8	10/22	Object Recognition & Categorization	Ch. 5 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 5
Week 9	10/29	Decision Making	Ch. 11 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 11
Week 10	11/5	Problem Solving	Ch. 12 and Articles	TBA	Ch. 12
Week 11	11/12	Exam 2 (In-class exam over Chapters 5, 8, 11, 12, and assigned articles)	--	--	--
Week 12	11/19	Independent Research (Optional Student Appointments)	--	--	--
Week 13	11/26	Thanksgiving	--	--	--
Week 14	12/3	Final Presentations * All presentations due to Dropbox by 4:30 pm	None	TBA	--
Week 15	12/10	Final Presentations, continued	None	TBA	--

\* Articles are located in the DocSharing folder in eCollege.