

Psychology 330: Introduction to Cognitive Psychology

Spring Session, 2007

Instructor: William J. Owen

Phone: 960-6657

E-mail: owenw@unbc.ca

Text: Robinson-Riegler, G.L., & Robinson-Riegler, B. (2004). *Cognitive Psychology: Applying the Science of the Mind*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Web Page: <http://web.unbc.ca/~owenw/> to obtain highlight notes and other information.

Textbook Web Page: http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_robinson_cogpsych_1

Office: T+L 3698

Office hours: Mon. 1-2:15 pm

E-office hour: Wed. 1-2 pm

General Course Introduction: Have you every wondered how or why we are aware? Or how we take in (i.e., encode) information, store, and, at a later date, reactivate that stored information? Maybe you have wondered about whether hypnosis improves people's access to lost memories, or whether children are truly "blanks slates". Or you may have noticed that your grandparents have started to use shorter, simpler words instead of long, complex words, and wondered if this deterioration of language can be slowed. This course is designed to introduce you to a selection of the many topics that cognitive psychologists study. As well, because cognitive psychology is a science, the course will focus on discussing experimental research, providing a foundation for other psychology courses such as *Perception, Learning, Development*, etc. I hope that you enjoy your *Introduction to Cognition* and go on to enjoy more specialized courses in the area of cognitive psychology.

Course Objectives: The objectives of this course are to introduce the student to important concepts, phenomena, experimental techniques, and theoretical issues in the field of cognitive psychology. **As cognitive psychology is the study of how people come to know about their world, this course will cover how people attend, encode, represent, and understand that world, as well as solve problems, make decisions, and communicate their thoughts.** The course will involve an assessment of current theoretical issues and experimental methodology, and whenever possible, links to real-life situations will be considered. ***Practical objectives*** of this course will be for me to help students improve their academic writing skills, enhance critical thinking skills, and to evaluate and critique published research in the area of cognition.

Student Skill Set Assumptions: It is assumed that you have: (1) basic knowledge of cognitive psychology (e.g., Psy 101) and (2) well developed writing skills, including knowledge of APA style. **If not, you may want to review your cognition chapter from your introductory psychology course and/or check out the Learning Skills Centre regarding your writing skills.**

Evaluation: Because not all students learn new material in the same manner, or are able to demonstrate the material they have learned in the same manner, your evaluation will be based upon several types of assessments. **Note that because writing is a critical skill in your everyday life, one of the two evaluation components are designed to facilitate critical thinking about issues in cognitive psychology through effective written communication.** All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. **Assignments handed in during the class period will be assigned a 5% penalty. Late assignments will not be accepted.**

1) Quizzes and Exams – 65%: We will have daily 10 minute quizzes* on the material for most of the chapters that we cover in this course. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice and other questions. The quizzes are worth **10%**, and will be based upon your lowest 7 quiz marks – no make-up quizzes will be given (yes it does say lowest 7 marks – motivation to do well on *ALL* quizzes). There will be one midterm worth **23%** and a final exam** worth **32%** of the final grade. Exams*** will consist of definitions, multiple choice, and short- and long-answer questions on material from the **text, journal articles, and class lectures**. The final exam will be comprehensive.

***Quiz OPTION:** Instead of writing a quiz, hand in a copy of your highlight notes.

****Final Exam OPTION:** Instead of writing a final exam, you can choose to write a 2500 word paper (not including title page, abstract page, and references) on the topic of how **gestures** can provide insight into the types of representations and processes involved in cognition. Your paper should clearly articulate how gestures provide cognitive scientists with an opportunity to study how the mind works. One key author in this area is Dr. Susan Goldin-Meadow. The paper is due BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM begins; however, you have to let me know by June 11th whether you plan to hand in a paper instead of writing the final exam.

***See highlight notes for bonus assignments that can be added to your midterm and final exam marks. Note: you can hand in a maximum of two bonus assignments per exam.

2) Paper - 35%: Your paper will be based on an experiment being conducted in my lab (See bonus marks). The paper will follow the format typical of an empirical paper (i.e., introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion, references). You will be given five reference papers to base your paper on; however, good papers will have at least 7 reference papers. You will also be given the methods and results in point format – you will need to put these notes into sentence and paragraph format. Excellent papers will analyze and synthesize the ideas in reference papers. A good paper will reflect a lot of thought and analysis on behalf of the student. You will do two versions of the paper: (1) a 5 page draft introduction and methods section, (2) final paper. All drafts and final position paper must be written in APA style. **Three copies** of your draft paper (not including title page, abstract page, and references) worth 10% will be due on **May. 23rd**. You will then have to review two of your classmates draft papers. The reviews are worth 5% and will be due on **May. 28th**. The final product of this process will be an 8-10 page position paper (not including title page, abstract page, and references) worth 20%. This paper is due on **June. 6th**. Late submissions of the drafts, reviews, or final position paper will not be accepted.

3) Bonus Marks – Max of 4%: Research is key to furthering our understanding of cognition, thus, it is important to have a sense of cognitive research. You will be asked to participate two cognitive research experiments (each lasting about 30 minutes). You can also sign up for, and participate in, another two experiments. Each experiment is worth 1% in bonus marks added to your final grade. Your participation is completely voluntary, and this opportunity is simply to provide you “real-life” experience in cognitive experiments, and psychology more generally.

Grading:

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments handed in during the class period will be assigned a 5% penalty. Late assignments will not be accepted after the class period has ended.

Key due dates:

- ✓ **Three copies of your 5 page draft are due May 23rd.**
- Midterm on CH 1-5 is on May 23rd.**
- 📁 **Two peer reviews of the draft papers are due on May 28th.**
- ✍ **One final copy of your paper is due June 6th.**
- * **Quiz dates.**

A note on plagiarism and cheating: Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may result in reduction of your assigned grade for the course, an assignment or examination. University students are expected to be informed as to what constitute plagiarism. **Ignorance of UNBC's and the APA's standards of ethical writing is not an acceptable excuse.** Refer to the University Calendar for definitions of plagiarism (<http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/GeneralInformation/regulations.html>), the Learning Skills Centre's guide to minimize the chance of plagiarism (<http://www.unbc.ca/lsc/writing/Plagiarism.pdf>), and/or to turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Based upon sound cognitive research, I consider a sentence to be plagiarized when there are *five identical words that can be traced back to another source*. I will be using turnitin.com to check for plagiarism, plus I am very familiar with the literature relevant to cognitive psychology.

Helpful suggestions to ensure your success in this (or any) class:

1. Read the chapter before coming to class. Write down questions about the readings that you would like clarified in class.
2. Look over the highlight notes before coming to class.
3. Take additional notes to supplement the highlight notes that are provided.
4. If you have questions, please ask.
5. Be aware of the due dates.
6. After a chapter has been covered, see if you can answer, or at least find the answers to, the key terms and questions provided on the highlight notes.
7. Because the material in cognitive psychology tends to be abstract in nature (e.g., thinking about thinking), it is a good idea to re-read your notes, chapter summaries, and text a couple of times prior to the exams.

Open Classroom: if you require accommodations for recognized physical or learning disabilities, please inform me as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

E-Communication: all e-mails will be answered within the regular working week hours of 9am – 4pm Monday-Friday in order to ensure that I provide the best response possible. Note that Wednesdays from 1-2 are dedicated to your e-mails. I will be on-line waiting to help address your questions.

Schedule for Lecture Topics, Summaries, Paper, and Exams

<i>Lectures:</i>	<i>Topic:</i>	<i>Readings:</i>	<i>Quiz:</i>
May 2 nd	Introduction to Cognition	Ch1	
May 7 th	Research Methods in Cognition *Ch 1 quiz at the beginning of class; Ch 2 quiz at the end of class	Ch. 2	CH1+2
May 9 th	Perceptual Processing	Ch. 3	CH3
May 14 th	Attentional Processing	Ch. 4	CH4
May 16 th	Memory – Encoding and Retrieval	Ch. 6	CH6
May 21	<i>Break – Victoria Day Long weekend – Plant your gardens =)</i>		
✓May 23 rd	Midterm 3 copies of your draft paper are due on May 23rd.	Ch. 1-4, 6	
✍May 28 th	Memory Distortions 2 peer reviews are due on May 28th.	Ch. 7	CH7
May 30 th	Autobiographical Memory	Ch. 8	CH8
June 4 th	Language - Spoken	Ch. 10	CH10
✍June 6 th	Music Cognition Final paper is due June 6th.	Readings Provided	Yes
June 11 th	Word Recognition	Readings Provided	Yes
Final Exam	TBA (June 13th – 18th)	Comprehensive Exam CH 1-8, 10, lecture material	

Each semester ends on the final day of the exam period NOT on the last day of classes. As such, the ONLY time that the final exam will be offered is on the date set by the registrar. Thus, students are advised to wait till the Registrar schedules the final exams before making any travel arrangements.