

## Psychology 2H03E – Human Learning & Cognition – Winter 2009

**Instructor:** Dr. Scott Watter

**Office:** Psychology 408, ext. 23031

### Contact:

- To contact the instructor, please EMAIL: [2h3@cogsci.mcmaster.ca](mailto:2h3@cogsci.mcmaster.ca) - this is *by far* the quickest and most reliable way to contact me! (Again, note the address: [2h3@COGSCI.mcmaster.ca](mailto:2h3@COGSCI.mcmaster.ca))
- Please send email from your McMaster account!!! – hotmail, yahoo, etc. is often filtered as spam!!!

**TAs:** If your student number ENDS in the last two digits, your TA is...

# 01-33 Eugenie Roudaia [roudaie@mcmaster.ca](mailto:roudaie@mcmaster.ca)

# 34-66 Dave Thomson [thomsodr@mcmaster.ca](mailto:thomsodr@mcmaster.ca)

# 67-00 Adam Spadaro [spadaraj@mcmaster.ca](mailto:spadaraj@mcmaster.ca)

**Lectures:** Wednesday, 7pm-10pm, JHE 376

### WebCT:

In this course we will be using WebCT. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

The course website is available to registered students by logging into WebCT: <http://webct.mcmaster.ca>

You will need to learn how to use WebCT to access the course content, announcements, and discussions.

Detailed instructions for logging in and using WebCT can be found on the website above.

Powerpoint slides from the lectures will be available on WebCT as PDF files, **AFTER** the lectures.

### Office Hours:

Most questions you have re the class can be asked and answered via the discussion sections on WebCT. There are currently no official scheduled office hours for this class. You will typically be able to talk with Dr Watter before or after class, for most issues. Official office hours may be arranged later in the semester, depending on demand (see WebCT for details). Please email your TA if you need to meet for help with the course.

### Course objectives and content:

In this course you will be introduced to the major themes in the field of Cognitive Psychology, including topics in perception, attention, memory, concepts, language, imagery, problem solving and reasoning.

**Required Text:** Reisberg, D. (2006). *Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. is ok)  
Chapters to be covered: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

### Assessment:

**84%** of your grade will be based on exams

**5%** from participation in web-based discussion group assignments

**11%** from participation in two experiments and a written assignment based on one of these experiments

### Course Material & Exams:

For exams, you are responsible for the material covered in lectures **AND** the assigned chapters from the textbook. **Please note** that you may be examined on material presented in lectures that is **not** in the textbook, and also material from the textbook **not** covered in lectures.

There will be four multiple choice exams: three midterm exams, plus a final cumulative exam. Midterms 1, 2 and 3 will be done in class (approx. 1 hour); the cumulative final will be done in one longer session during the final examinations period (2 hours). The three midterm exams are each worth 21%, and will each cover approximately 1/4 of the course. The cumulative final exam will have two separate sections – one covering only material from the final 1/4 of the course (worth 21%), and a second section covering the entire course (worth 21%). **Out of these five examination components, the lowest will be dropped, and will not count towards your final grade.** Midterm exams 1, 2 & 3 are held in our regular classroom, at the start of the evening lecture session (7pm). There will be a lecture after these midterm exams, starting at 8pm.

### **Class discussion assignments:**

The set of class discussion assignments are all together worth 5% of the grade. Every week a discussion question will be posted to the class WebCT discussion board. For each week of the course, you will be required to post an original response to the question, or a reply to another student's comment or question. There will be 11 questions (one per week) posted over the duration of the course, each worth 1/2 % of your final grade, up to a maximum of 5 % (i.e., you need to respond to 10 out of 11 questions throughout the semester to earn this 5%). Responses should be a minimum of 150 words, and reflect at least a few minutes of moderate thought regarding the topic. Questions will be posted early in the week; responses to weekly questions are due by the start of class (7pm) on Wednesday – **late responses will not receive credit.** Further details will be posted on WebCT.

### **Experimental assignment:**

The experimental assignment is worth 11% of the grade. You will take part in, or if you prefer, simply observe two experiments from the psychology subject pool. This paper can be submitted at any time during the semester, up until Thursday, March 26. You also have an opportunity to revise and resubmit your paper once to improve your mark, if you hand it in by Friday, March 6. Further details on both assignments will be given out later, in class and on the course website. Full instructions are given below in this syllabus...

### **Changes in course requirements:**

Details of the course requirements may be subject to change. If requirements are altered, a revised course outline will be posted on the webpage and announced in class.

### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Missed Assessment:**

All excuses for missed exams, assignments, etc. must be submitted through the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty. It is then also **your** responsibility to speak with your professor as soon as possible.

**Final Grades:** All assessment components will be assigned numerical grades, and the total converted to a letter grade according to McMaster's standard grading scheme:

A+ 90-100%      A 85-89%      A- 80-84%      B+ 77-79%      B 73-76%      B- 70-72%  
 C+ 67-69%      C 63-66%      C- 60-62%      D+ 57-59%      D 53-56%      D- 50-52%      F 0-49%

**Assessment Dates:**

|                         |  |                                       |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, Jan. 28, 7pm | <b>MIDTERM 1 (Part 1)</b>                        | Ch. 1, 3, 4                           |
| Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7pm | <b>MIDTERM 2 (Part 2)</b>                        | Ch. 5, 6, 7                           |
| Friday, March 6, 5pm    | Final date for experiment assignment feedback    |                                       |
| Wednesday, Mar. 17, 7pm | <b>MIDTERM 3 (Part 3)</b>                        | Ch. 9, 10, 11                         |
| Thursday, Mar. 26, 5pm  | Final date for experiment assignment submissions |                                       |
| Exam period (date TBA)  | <b>FINAL EXAM (Part 4 + Cumulative)</b>          | Ch. 12, 13, 14, plus earlier chapters |

**Class Schedule:**

| Date        | Topic   |                                   |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Jan 7       | Introduction; Perception 1  | <b>PART 1</b><br>(Ch. 1, 3, 4)    |
| Jan 14      | Perception 2  |                                   |
| Jan 21      | Attention   |                                   |
| Jan 28      | <b>MIDTERM 1 (Part 1)</b> (1 hour); <i>then</i> 8pm class: Memory 1                   | <b>PART 2</b><br>(Ch. 5, 6, 7)    |
| Feb 4       | Memory 2  |                                   |
| Feb 11      | Memory 3  |                                   |
| Feb 18*     | <i>(MID-TERM RECESS – NO CLASS)</i>   |                                   |
| Feb 25      | <b>MIDTERM 2 (Part 2)</b> (1 hour); <i>then</i> 8pm class: Visual Cognition & Imagery | <b>PART 3</b><br>(Ch. 9, 10, 11)  |
| Mar 4       | Categories & Concepts   |                                   |
| Mar 11      | Language  |                                   |
| Mar 18      | <b>MIDTERM 3 (Part 3)</b> (1 hour); <i>then</i> 8pm class: Judgment, Decision Making  | <b>PART 4</b><br>(Ch. 12, 13, 14) |
| Mar 25      | Reasoning   |                                   |
| Apr 1       | Problem Solving, Expertise, Creativity (LAST CLASS)                                   |                                   |
| Final Exams | <b>FINAL EXAM (Part 4 + cumulative section)</b> (2 hours)                             |                                   |

## Experiment Assignment – Instructions

- 1) Complete **TWO** experiments through the Departmental Participant Pool (**2%**) - you will need to use Experimatrix (link on the Psychology department's home page) to choose and sign up for experiments. Be sure that an experiment says it is open to 2H03 students before you sign up!
- 2) Find an article in a the popular media that you can relate somehow to **ONE** of the experiments that you did. (e.g. an article that talks about Attention Deficit Disorder, and you could relate that to an experiment you did on attention and dual task processing).  
For this assignment, the popular media is defined as a **DAILY NEWSPAPER** that has a **print edition**. (It is fine to access your article via an online edition if the paper has one – e.g. websites of Washington Post, NY Times, Globe & Mail, etc). You should **NOT** be looking at scientific journals, popular science magazines (e.g. Scientific American), news magazines (e.g. Macleans, Newsweek), online/TV/radio news sources (e.g. CNN website), etc. to find your article.
- 3) Write a paper **NO LONGER** than 3 pages, double spaced (**9%**)  
This should describe the experiment you took part in (the general motivation, the hypotheses, the independent and dependent variables), and also relate the experiment to the article that you found—how the issues might relate to each other. Often, the article will not be **DIRECTLY** related to the experiment, so you will have to put some effort into thinking about how these issues might be related, and how the kinds of issues addressed in the experiment might bear on the issues brought up in the article. Marks will also be given for the actual writing, not just the content.
- 4) If you submit your assignment by **Friday, March 6, 5pm**, the TAs will mark it, and give it back to you in class with written feedback by **Wednesday, March 18**. You then have the option to revise and resubmit the assignment on the basis of this feedback if you would like to improve your mark. You can also make an appointment with your TA at this stage to get more feedback. Assignments submitted after this **will not** get detailed feedback from the TA, and **will not** be allowed to resubmit.

The **FINAL** date for all submissions or resubmissions is **Thursday, March 26, 5pm**.

### **Marking scheme:**

- 2% Participate in experiments
- 9% Paper
  - 3% Description of experiment, including the general point of the experiment, the hypothesis being tested, and the independent and dependent variables
  - 4% A brief description of the media article, with most of the focus on a discussion of how issues of psychology related to your experiment relate to issues in the real world.
  - 2% Overall quality of writing, including clarity, structure and correct usage

### **Submitting your assignment:**

Your assignment should be placed in the 2H03E drop box in the psychology building lobby (near the vending machines). The submission should contain:

- 1) A cover page with **your name and student number**, and **your TA's name**
- 2) A copy of the debriefing sheet from the experiment
- 3) A copy of the newspaper article you based your paper on
- 4) Your paper

**NOTE: Late submissions will be penalized by 2 marks (out of a total 9) for each day or part thereof overdue, judged at 5pm every day.**