

PSYCH 2H03 - Human Learning and Cognition

Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour
McMaster University

Fall Term: September – December 2013

Course Times: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 1:30-2:20 pm

Course Location: HSC 1A1 Course Website: Avenue To Learn (avenue.mcmaster.ca)

Instructor Dr. Sandra Thomson Office: PC 230 (ext 22853)
Email: thomsosj@mcmaster.ca Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30

Teaching Assistants: your TA is determined by the last two digits of your student number:

01-40 Joann Correa: correjc@mcmaster.ca

41-64 Blair Ellis: ellisbk@mcmaster.ca

65-00 Amy Beth Warriner: warrinab@mcmaster.ca

The Avenue Discussion tool is a great place to ask and answer questions. If you need help with the course that you cannot get in the Discussion board, please email your TA for help.

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

Required text: Reisberg, D. (2013). *Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind*. 5th Edition (Earlier editions are okay, but it is your responsibility to make sure you are not missing anything from the 5th edition). Chapters to be covered: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Assessment: Your final grade will be determined as follows

80% based on exams

8% from participation in weekly web-based discussions

12% from participation/observation in two experiments, plus a written assignment on one

Exams: You are responsible for 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 five multiple choice exams: four midterm exams, each covering about ¼ of the course, plus a final cumulative exam. Midterms 1-3 will be written in class, and midterm 4 will be written with the final exam. The midterms are worth 20% each, but the lowest will be dropped, and not counted toward your final grade. The cumulative portion of the final exam is worth 20% and cannot be dropped.

Class discussion assignment: Every week a discussion will be posted to the Avenue discussion board. You will be required to post an original response to the question, or reply to another student's comment or question. There will be 12 questions, each worth 1% of your grade, to a maximum of 8%

(ie, you need to respond to 8/12 questions to earn this 8%). Responses should be a minimum of 200 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 (1:30pm) the following Monday – late responses will not receive credit. Further details will be posted on Avenue.

Experiment Assignment: You will take part in or observe two hours' worth of experiments through the psychology participant pool (2%), and write a paper that relates to one of these experiments (10%). This paper can be submitted at any time during the semester, up until Thursday, November 21. You also have an opportunity to revise and resubmit your paper once to improve your mark, if you hand it in by Wednesday, October 30. Further details on the written assignment are given below, and on Avenue.

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%

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

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

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.

Website Policy

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. You are expected to check this website regularly for announcements, updates, empirical articles, discussion board postings, and other valuable information. It is *your responsibility* to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the website's discussion boards is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries (e.g., questions about course content and the running of this course, but *not* emails reporting illness or other private matters) is *preferred to email communications*. Questions asked on the discussion board allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer. Discussion board

questions also provide a learning experience for students who attempt to answer these questions themselves. Inappropriate posts will be deleted from the board.

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.

Email Policy

E-mail communications must originate from your designated McMaster e-mail account. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your mcmaster.ca account. You should monitor this account regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, etc.) will not be received. We have this policy for three reasons: 1. to reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; 2. to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; 3. to teach the professional use of e-mail. Emails to your professors are professional communications. They should include correct spelling and punctuation, an informative subject line, and should be polite and to the point.

Every effort will be made to ensure that emails and discussion board posts are responded to in a timely fashion. In the case of email this means within 24 hours, and for discussion board posts, after an appropriate amount of time for other students to attempt the question, as necessary.

Missed Test Policy

There will not be makeup tests provided for missed midterm exams, regardless of reason. Unexcused absences will receive a grade of “zero”, and that grade will be dropped when calculating the best 3 out of 4 midterm grades, assuming the student writes the other 3 tests. If a student misses a second midterm, owing to an illness or other legitimate reason, and provided official permission is routed through the University Admission or by filling in the McMaster Student Absence Form, the weight of the second missed test will be added to the final exam. In this case it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor within 48 hours of the missed work. In the absence of such an arrangement, the grade on the missed test will be a “zero”.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) may be used to report some, but not all absences. Please make yourself familiar with the terms of using the MSAF by going to the following websites:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/> and <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>.

Changes in Course Requirements

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Chapter	Assessment due	
Thurs Sept 5	Introduction	1		PART 1
Mon Sept 9	Perception	3		
Wed Sept 11	Perception	3		
Thurs Sept 12	Perception	3		
Mon Sept 16	Attention	4	Post 1	
Wed Sept 18	Attention	4		
Thurs Sept 19	Attention	4		
Mon Sept 23	Attention	4	Post 2	
Wed Sept 25	Attention	4		
Thurs Sept 26	Attention	4		
Mon Sept 30	Midterm 1	1, 3, 4	Midterm 1; Post 3	
Wed Oct 2	Memory 1	5		PART 2
Thurs Oct 3	Memory 1	5		
Mon Oct 7	Memory 2	6	Post 4	
Wed Oct 9	Memory 2	6		
Thurs Oct 10	Memory 3	7		
Mon Oct 14	NO CLASS			
Wed Oct 16	Memory 3	7	Post 5	
Thurs Oct 17	Memory 3	7		
Mon Oct 21	Midterm 2	5, 6, 7	Midterm 2; Post 6	
Wed Oct 23	Categories & Concepts	8		PART 3
Thurs Oct 24	Categories & Concepts	8		
Mon Oct 28	Categories & Concepts	8	Post 7	
Wed Oct 30	Language	9	Assignment due for feedback	
Thurs Oct 31	NO CLASS			
Mon Nov 4	Language	9	Post 8	
Wed Nov 6	Language	9		
Thurs Nov 7	Visual Cognition & Imagery	10		
Mon Nov 11	Visual Cognition & Imagery	10	Post 9	
Wed Nov 13	Midterm 3	8, 9, 10	Midterm 3	
Thurs Nov 14	Judgment	11		PART 4
Mon Nov 18	Judgment	11	Post 10	
Wed Nov 20	Judgment	11		
Thurs Nov 21	Reasoning	11	Final Assignment due date	
Mon Nov 25	Reasoning	11	Post 11	
Wed Nov 27	Reasoning	11		
Thurs Nov 28	Problem Solving	12		
Mon Dec 2	Problem Solving	12	Post 12	
Wed Dec 4	Review			
FINALS	Midterm 4 + Cumulative Final	11, 12 + all	Final exam	

Experiment Assignment – Instructions

- 1) Complete **TWO** experiment hours through the Departmental Participant Pool (**2%**). You will need to use Sona (mcmaster.sona-systems.com) to choose and sign up for experiments. Be sure the experiment indicates that it is open to 2H03 students before you sign up. Be sure you understand and save the debriefing form provided by the experimenter.
- 2) Find an article published in a scientific journal that you can relate to ONE of the experiments that you did. For this assignment, the article you choose must contain an empirical study (at least one experiment) and **NOT** be a review paper.
- 3) Write a paper **NO LONGER** than 3 pages, double spaced (**10%**). Your paper should describe the experiment you took part in (the general motivation, the hypotheses, the independent and dependent variables), and also compare the experiment to the article you read – were the hypotheses and methods similar or different? How? In addition, you should propose a reasonable follow up research question, and give a brief description of how that question could be addressed experimentally.
- 4) If you submit your assignment by **Wednesday, October 30, 5pm**, the TAs will mark it, and give it back to you in class with written feedback by **Monday, November 11**. 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, November 21, 5pm**.

Marking scheme:

- 2% Participate in experiments
- 10% Paper
 - 4% Description of experiment you participated in, including the general point of the experiment, the hypothesis being tested, and the independent and dependent variables
 - 6% A brief description of the media/research 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 (option 1) OR how the experiments relate and how you could follow up on them with another experiment.
 - 2% Overall quality of writing, including clarity, structure and correct usage

Late submissions will be penalized 2 marks (out of a total of 10) per day or part thereof overdue, judged at 5pm every day.

Submitting your assignment:

You will submit your assignment in electronic form to the Dropbox in Avenue. Grading and feedback will be provided electronically. 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 (you may ask for an electronic copy)
- 3) A copy of the newspaper/journal article you based your paper on
- 4) Your paper