

**PNB 2XA3 – Human Perception and Cognition
Fall, 2016**

Course Objectives and Content: The core theme throughout the term will be the “illusion of the expert”, which refers to the observation that, as experts in perception and cognition, we are all unaware of the myriad mental processes lurking under the surface of our external behaviour; just as we can only see the tip of the iceberg, so too we can only observe the external behaviour of an individual. The primary goal of psychology is to make apparent the mental processes underlying overt behaviour and action. We will start by considering how information gets into our mind—the sensory system. Specifically, we will talk about going beyond the information given. This will lead to a discussion of perception and the various ways information enters our conscious awareness. One important attribute of our cognitive system is the highly selective nature of processing, which leads to the limited capacity nature of our minds. Once information is processed and available to consciousness, we need to consider how that knowledge is represented and stored. Here we will focus on how memory is a by-product of perceptual processing and how acquisition and retrieval are interactive and dependent processes. I will further argue that memory is a reconstruction. Finally, at the end of the course, we will apply all of this information to understand how we make judgments about everyday things using both heuristics (i.e., rules of thumb), and some rules. Importantly, I will argue that we often ignore a great idea of information (e.g., base rates) in making critical life-course decisions.

Instructors: David I. Shore, Brendan Stanley, Lisa Lorentz, Ruth Kim, Maryam Pandi,
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<https://goo.gl/forms/CuzXFcY9WT6aBY112>

Readings:

Reisberg, D. Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind. W.W. Norton & company. 6th edition.
Various Readings posted to Avenue2Learn and extracted from the McMaster Library System.

Class Times:

Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 11:30-12:20 in MDCL 1105
Tutorial: Monday 14:30-15:20 in BSB/104, BSB/105, BSB 119, BSB 136
Office Hours: by appointment

Evaluation Breakdown:

Type of Assessment	Number	Value
Online Quizzes	Best 7	10%
Midterm Exams	3	55%
Final Exam	1	25%
In-Class Assessments	TBA	5%
Article Summary	5	5%

Overall Schedule of Assignments

Week of	Topic	Chapters to read	Article summary	Exams
09.05	Introduction			
09.12	Perception	1&2		
09.19	Object Recognition	3&4		
09.26	Attention	5	Article 1	Exam 1
10.03	Memory 1	6&7		
10.10	Fall Break			
10.17	Memory 2	8		
10.24	Concepts	9	Article 2	Exam 2
10.31	Language	10&11		
11.07	Guest Lectures			
11.14	TBA		Article 3	Exam 3
11.21	Judgement	12		
11.28	Problem Solving	13		
12.05	Consciousness	14		
Exam Period				

Specifications of Assignments

Exams focus on lecture material, but textbook material will also be relevant. There will be three (3) exams during the term, held during the tutorials noted above.

Quizzes take place online before the Tuesday class each week. These quizzes will focus exclusively on the textbook readings.

Final Exam will have two parts. Part A will cover the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of the lecture material. Part B will be cumulative of the entire term and will equally cover textbook and lecture material.

In-class assessments will be completed either on iClickers or on 3"x5" cue cards. You are required to bring both your iclicker and a WHITE 3"x5" cue card to every class and tutorial. Failure to bring either will result in a zero for that assessment. Missed quizzes and assignments will be assigned a zero.

Article Summary assignments. You are required to read 5 empirical articles of your choosing. The articles must be related to the content in the course—ideally choose an article cited in one of your readings or discussed in class. For each article you will produce a cue-card (3"x5" index card), which contains on one side the APA reference for the article you have chosen, and on the other side five sentences, one sentence each for the: question, hypothesis, method, result and implication from the study. The first three cue cards are due in the Monday tutorial prior to each of the exams. Assignment 4 and 5 are due at the end of term.

Grading Policy: The instructors reserve the right to adjust final marks up or down, on an individual basis, in the light of special circumstances and/or the individual's total performance in the course. Final grades may also be adjusted up or down on a class-wide basis depending on overall performance. Details of the course requirements are subject to change. If requirements are altered, a revised course outline will be posted on Avenue and the details will be announced in class. The instructor is not able to reschedule the final exam. If there is a problem with the final exam schedule, students must contact the registrar's office.

Academic Integrity: Attention is drawn to Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty as found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office. Any student who infringes one of these resolutions will be treated according to the published policy.

Missed Work Policy: If you are absent from the university for a temporary medical issue (i.e., the flu), lasting fewer than 5 days, you may report your absence using the McMaster Student Absence Form. Absences for a longer duration or for other reasons must be reported to your Faculty/Program office, with documentation. When using the MSAF, report your absence to pnb2XX3@psychology.mcmaster.ca. You must speak to the instructor in person before or after class within 5 business days. In-class quizzes will not be made up. Midterms will not be made up, but your grade will be estimated based on the content-relevant questions from the cumulative portion of the final exam. For all other assignments, please discuss accommodations with your instructor.

Communication 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 this 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. reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; 2. ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; 3. teach the professional use of e-mail. Please note that instructors and TAs cannot return long distance telephone calls. The fastest avenue for feedback concerning course-related problems is the course e-mail address [<pnb2xx3@psychology.mcmaster.ca>](mailto:pnb2xx3@psychology.mcmaster.ca). This will be monitored daily and a response will be sent within two business days.

Logistics: McMaster University reserves the right to change or cancel course dates, assignments and their grading weights, and deadlines at the discretion of the instructor and in case of an emergency, labour disruption, civil unrest/disobedience, etc. Send an email to the course email with the subject line "made it to the end" to receive a bonus point.