

**PNB 2XA3 – Human Perception and Cognition
Fall, 2017**

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: Dr. David I. Shore, Dr. Ellen MacLellan, Ruth Kim, David Prete, Parker Banks, Melissa Ptok, Julie Bannon, Hannah Kearney

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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	7%
In-class assessment (iclicker & cue card)	TBD	5%
Article Summary	5	5%
Learning Portfolio	1	5%
Tutorial Exams	10	78%
Final Exam	1	

Overall Schedule of Assignments

Week of	Topic	Chapters to read	Article summary
09.04	Introduction	1&2	
09.11	Perception	3	
09.18	Object Recognition	4	
09.25	Attention	5	
10.02	Memory 1	6&7	Article 1
10.9	Fall Break		
10.16	Memory 2	8	
10.23	Concepts	9	Article 2
10.30	Guest Lectures	-	
11.06	Guest Lectures	10	
11.13	Language & other knowledge	11	Article 3
11.20	Judgement	12	
11.27	Problem Solving	13	
12.04	Consciousness	14	
Exam Period			Article 4 & 5

Specifications of Assessments

Quizzes take place online and will be available from Tuesday evening for 24 hours. These quizzes will focus exclusively on the textbook readings.

In-class assessments will be completed either on iClickers or on 3"x 5" cue cards. You are required to bring both your iclicker and a WHITE 3"x 5" cue card to every class. Failure to bring either of these will result in a zero for that assessment. Missed quizzes and assignments will be assigned a zero. Allowance will be given for some missed work.

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 (4"x6" 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. Article summaries are due in the Friday Class in the week indicated above. All five article summaries will be submitted at the end of the term via a learning portfolio.

Learning Portfolio will be submitted at the end of the term. It will include all article summaries, tutorial exams, and any in-class assignments. Additionally, you may add any content from the course you find exceptionally interesting.

Tutorial Exams focus on lecture material, but textbook material will also be relevant. There will be an exam every week during the tutorial. You will bring a single 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper with one side filled with your notes from the previous week's lecture. On the other side, you will write

your answers to the questions presented in tutorial. Completed exams will be included in your final learning portfolio for this course.

Final Exam will build on the weekly exams—you will be able to bring with you all of the exams taken and any notes that you wish. The questions will focus on big issues within the course and require you to synthesize material from different sections. There will also be a detailed section focused on individual experiments presented during the course. Detail will be provided later in the 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 issue 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. Tutorial Exams will not be made up. Your grade will be redistributed to other elements of the course. 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. The first 50 students to send an email to the course email with the subject line “made it to the end” to receive a bonus point.