

## **Psychology 2H03 – Human Learning and Cognition Fall 2009**

**Instructor: Dr. Karin Humphreys**

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**Lectures:** Tuesday, Wednesday Friday: 12:30-1:20; HSC 1A1

**Elm:** The course website is available to registered students by logging into ELM (what used to be WebCT): <https://elm.mcmaster.ca> You will need to learn how to use ELM to access the course content, announcements, and discussions. Detailed instructions for logging in and using ELM can be found on the website above. It is your responsibility to keep up to date with class announcements made on ELM. Powerpoint slides from the lectures will be available on ELM as PDF files, **AFTER** the lectures. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course in ELM, 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.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30, or by appointment. Extra office hours before exams will be announced on ELM as needed.

**TAs:** There are four TAs for this course, Alex Gough, Jennifer Heisz, Johanna Lake, and Melena Vinski. There are no formal tutorials, but the TAs are available to answer questions posted to ELM, via email, or in person by appointment. The quickest way to get your questions answered is via ELM, where any of the TAs, the professor, or your fellow students can help you.

If you need to contact your TA directly, if your student number ends in the digits:

00-24: your TA is Alex Gough: [goughaw@mcmaster.ca](mailto:goughaw@mcmaster.ca)

25-49: your TA is Jennifer Heisz: [heiszjj@mcmaster.ca](mailto:heiszjj@mcmaster.ca)

50-74: your TA is Johanna Lake: [lakejk@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lakejk@mcmaster.ca)

75-99: your TA is Melena Vinski: [vinskimt@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vinskimt@mcmaster.ca)

**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. Chapters to be covered: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

### **Assessment:**

**80%** of your grade will be based on exams

**6%** from participation in web-based discussion group assignments

**14%** from participation in two experiments (2%) and from a written assignment based on one of these experiments (10%)

**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 five multiple choice exams: four midterm exams, plus a final cumulative exam. Midterms 1 (Oct 6), 2 (Oct 27) and 3 (Nov 17) will be done in class (approx. 40 mins); midterm 4 and the cumulative final will be done together in one longer session during the final examinations period (2 hours). The four midterm exams are each worth 20%, and will each cover approximately 1/4 of the course. The cumulative final exam will cover the entire course, and is also worth 20%. **Out of these five examination components (four midterms plus cumulative final), the lowest will be dropped, and will not count towards your final grade.** Midterm exams are held in our regular classroom.

**Class discussion assignment:**

The set of class discussion assignments are all together worth 6% of the grade. Every week a discussion question will be posted to the class ELM 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 12 questions (one per week) posted over the duration of the course, each worth 1/2 % of your final grade. 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 (12:30pm) on Tuesdays – late responses will not receive credit. Further details will be posted on ELM.

**Experimental assignment:**

The experimental assignment is worth 14% of the grade. Full details are on p 5 of the syllabus. You will take part in, or if you prefer, simply observe two hours' worth of experiments from the psychology subject pool. Your participation is worth 2% of your grade (1% for each experiment). You will then need to find an article from the **popular print media** (i.e. newspapers) that relates to the issues addressed by ONE of the experiments you took part in, and write a paper (no more than three pages long) that discusses the article and the experiment, and the relationship between them, worth 12%.

This paper can be submitted at any time during the semester, up until Friday, November 27. You also have an opportunity to revise and resubmit your paper once to improve your mark, if you hand it in by Friday, November 6.

**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.

**Written Work, and Late or Missed Assessment:** All excuses for missed exams, assignments, etc. must be submitted through the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty/programme. It is then also your responsibility to contact your professor as soon as possible. **If you cannot take (or missed) a midterm, please email or phone the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, preferably BEFORE the test.** Please do this even if you do not have medical or other documentation available yet.

No webposts will be accepted after they are due, and no assignments will be accepted after the final date, unless by prior arrangement with the instructor.

**Special Needs:** If you have special needs please contact the instructor so accommodations can be made.

### Class Schedule:

Schedule of topics within each part is approximate, and the instructor reserves the right to change these. Students will be notified of any such changes in class, and on the website.

Date	Topic	Chapter	Assessment due	
11 Sept Fr	Introduction	1		PART 1
15 Sept Tu	Perception	3		
16 Sept We	Perception	3		
18 Sept Fr	Perception	3		
22 Sept Tu	Attention	4	Post 1	
23 Sept We	Attention	4		
25 Sept Fr	Attention	4		
29 Sept Tu	Attention	4	Post 2	
30 Sept We	Attention	4		
2 Oct Fr	Attention	4		
6 Oct Tu	<b>Midterm 1</b>	<b>1, 3, 4</b>	Midterm 1, Post 3	
7 Oct We	Memory 1	5		PART 2
9 Oct Fr	Memory 1	5		
13 Oct Tu	Memory 1	-	Post 4	
14 Oct We	Memory 2	5		
16 Oct Fr	Memory 2	6		
20 Oct Tu	Memory 3	6	Post 5	

21 Oct We	Memory 3	7		
23 Oct Fr	Memory 3	7		
27 Oct Tu	<b>Midterm 2</b>	<b>5, 6, 7</b>	Midterm 2; Post 6	
28 Oct We	Categories & Concepts	9		<b>PART 3</b>
30 Oct Fr	Categories & Concepts	9		
3 Nov Tu	Categories & Concepts	9	Post 7	
4 Nov We	Language	10		
6 Nov Fr	Language	10	Assignment due for feedback	
10 Nov Tu	Language	10	Post 8	
11 Nov We	Visual Cognition & Imagery	11		
13 Nov Fr	Visual Cognition & Imagery	11		
17 Nov Tu	<b>Midterm 3</b>	<b>9, 10, 11</b>	Midterm 3; Post 9	
18 Nov We	Judgment	12		
20 Nov Fr	Judgment	12		
24 Nov Tu	Judgment	12	Post 10	
25 Nov We	Reasoning	13		
27 Nov Fr	Reasoning	13	Assignment final due date	
1 Dec Tu	Reasoning	13	Post 11	
2 Dec We	Problem Solving	14		
4 Dec Fr	Problem Solving	14	Post 12	
FINALS	Midterm 4 + Cumulative Final	12, 13, 14 + all	<b>Final exam</b>	

**Experiment Assignment – Instructions**

1) Complete **TWO** experiment hours through the Departmental Participant Pool (**2%**) To be scheduled for an experiment, please go to <https://experimetrix2.com/mac> for registration details. You may participate in any combination of half hour, hour, or 90 minute experiments to make up the two hours. Make sure you obtain a debriefing form from your experiment, and that you are fully debriefed by your experimenter (i.e. make sure you **UNDERSTAND** the experiment you just did) Your experimental credit will be recorded automatically.

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 (**12%**) 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, November 6 IN CLASS**, the TAs will mark it, and give it back to you in class with written feedback by Friday, November 13. 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. You may also submit your assignment prior to November 6. These will be marked in no more than one week. The **FINAL** date for all submissions or resubmissions is **Friday, November 27, IN CLASS**. No papers will be accepted after this date.

**5) Marking scheme for written paper (12%):**

- 4% Description of experiment, including the general point of the experiment, the hypothesis being tested, and the independent and dependent variables
- 6% 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

**6) Submitting your assignment:**

Your assignment should be handed in at the start of class on the due date, and should include:

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