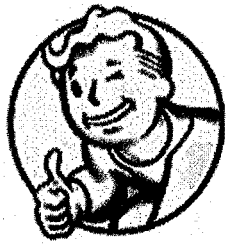

Cognitive Psychology (PSYCH 325)

Spring 2016 – MWF 1:30pm-2:20pm – Bailey 103

Instructor: Dr. Jason Ozubko
Email: ozubko@geneseo.edu
Office: Bailey 133
Office Hours: Tues 10am-Noon, Wed 3-4pm

Textbooks:

- Cognitive Psychology: Theory, Process, and Methodology; McBride & Cutting

Course Overview

The human organism possesses a complex system of mental abilities--including perceiving, remembering, language, problem solving, reasoning, and decision making, through which it acquires, organizes, and utilizes knowledge of the environment. Cognitive psychology is the study of this sophisticated processing system.

Course Objectives

- To give you an understanding of what scientists have learned about human cognition
- To show you the methodologies and techniques that are used to study cognition
- To expose you to the scientific process and teach you how to develop and test your own ideas about cognition
- To train you to effectively communicate and express your ideas in a scientifically appropriate way
- To train you to think critically, objectively, and scientifically

Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 250, PSYC 251, and human or general biology with lab (BIOL 103/104, BIOL 117/116, or BIOL 119/116).

Evaluation

Exam 1	25%	History, Cog Neuro, Perception, Attention
Exam 2	25%	Memory I, Memory II, Memory Errors, Imagery
Final Exam	30%	Language, Knowledge, Problem Solving, Decision Making
Assignment	20%	

Exams

There will be three exams in this course, divided equally across the semester. Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The first two exams will be written during class time. The final exam will be written in the final exam period at the end of the semester. Make-up exams will be granted only in exceptional circumstances with written documentation. Make-up exams may differ in content and style from the regular exam.

Accommodations: SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities. Accommodations will be made for medical conditions related to pregnancy or parenting. Students should contact Dean Buggie-Hunt in the Office of Disability Services (tbuggieh@geneseo.edu or 585-245-5112) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

Assignments

A major goal of scientific writing is to be concise and brief, yet informative. A strict page limit is being enforced for the writing assignment. Pay careful attention to this limit because you will only be graded on material that falls within the page limit (e.g., so the 5th page of an assignment with a 4-page limit will be ignored; reducing your font size to fit more text into your assignment will also lead to material at the end of your assignment being ignored). To help you keep your writing brief yet informative we will discuss good writing practices and examples of well written sections will be provided to guide you.

If you have questions or need help with your assignment please come to office hours with specific questions. I will not look at or read over any written assignments to give you "general feedback" or look for errors. As well, questions that require lengthy responses will only be answered in person. You should be working on your assignment in advance so that if you have questions you can come to office hours to get answers.

Grading Policy

This is a college-level course, with high standards for grading. All of your grades will be earned based on the quality of your work. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the standards and requirements for each assignment and exam, as discussed in this syllabus and in class. Grading errors (e.g., errors in addition or a significant oversight) are the only time in which a grade will be changed. Individual opportunities for extra credit are not offered in this class, meaning that there are no extra credit activities that are not already listed in the Evaluation section of this syllabus (above). Should you find yourself with grades that do not meet your expectations I encourage you to visit me in person, early in the semester, so we can talk about your grades. Though grades will not be changed, I am happy to help you understand why a specific grade was given, and help advise you on how to improve your study habits to try to perform better in the class.

Groups

On the first day of class you will be assigned to a peer group. You are being assigned to a group to encourage cooperation and collaboration. Your group is intended to be your support network in this course. If you are having trouble understanding materials in the textbook, you missed something in class, or you need feedback on a draft of your paper, you should be turning first to your group. Though the group system offers a clear benefit to the group members who need help, there is also much personal educational value in teaching what you know to others, and so this process will be beneficial to all group members. That said, though the group exists for mutual support, the group is not meant to carry you. Ultimately everyone is responsible for their own performance and participation in this class. Additionally, though everyone will have a group to turn to for basic questions and help, all students are welcomed and encouraged to also attend office hours to obtain extra help from the professor, if needed.

Peer Review Grade

For all three written assignments you are required to read and review the assignments of each of the individuals in your group. You should take this as an opportunity to critically evaluate their work and offer feedback and help. When you evaluate another student's assignment, consider how their paper would be graded and offer them feedback. For example, is it a clear and well written paper? Does it meet the requirements for that assignment? Are there changes that could be made that would significantly improve the paper?

For each assignment you must submit a report on the quality of your group mates' work. Specifically, you must submit a ranking to indicate whose written report was best, whose was second best, whose was third best, etc. This ranking will NOT affect the grades of your group mates, however, it will affect your grade. Your ability to critically evaluate the work of others is what is being evaluated for your peer review grade. Note: you do not rank yourself.

I urge groups to work together on this and try to help individuals who are having writing difficulties to improve their work. It is perfectly acceptable to rank all group members as equal if you truly believe the quality of their papers are all about the same. But keep in mind your peer review grade will reflect the degree to which you were able to accurately rank your group's performance. If you indicate that everyone in your group ranks equally but my ranking of your group shows that some group members produced significantly worse assignments compared to others, your own peer review grade will suffer. Giving your group mates honest and realistic feedback is therefore an essential part of this peer review section of this course.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1:	**Introduction and History** Chapter 1
Week 2:	**Cognitive Neuroscience** Chapter 2
Week 3:	**Cog Neuro/Perception** Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Week 4:	**Perception/Attention** Chapter 3 Chapter 4
Week 5:	**Attention** Chapter 4 *EXAM #1 – Friday 2/19*
Week 6:	**Memory I** Chapter 5
Week 7:	**Memory II** Chapter 6
Week 8:	**Memory Errors** Chapter 7
Week 9:	BREAK
Week 10:	**Memory Errors** Chapter 7
Week 11:	**Imagery** Chapter 8 *EXAM #2 – Friday 4/1*
Week 12:	**Language** Chapter 9 *Assignment Due –Monday 4/4*
Week 13:	**Knowledge** Chapter 10
Week 14:	**Problem Solving** Chapter 11
Week 15:	**Decision Making** Chapter 12
Week 16:	**REVIEW!** *Revision Due (Optional) – Mon 5/2*

FINAL EXAM – May 6th, Noon-2:30pm

Assignment (4 page MAX)

Describe a cognitive psychological phenomenon using three relevant cognitive psychology articles. Your goal is not to simply summarize the three articles but instead to tell me about a phenomenon and use the articles and their findings to illustrate, demonstrate, or support your explanation. After describing your phenomenon and citing three current studies of that phenomenon, you must propose an interesting next step. What would be the next experiment that should be done? What experiment would further our knowledge in this area, test the current explanation of the phenomenon, or otherwise advance our understanding? Describe what possible outcomes could emerge from this next step and how they would inform or advance our understanding of the phenomenon that is the focus of your paper.

Grading Key:

Did you introduce your topic in a clear yet interesting way?
Did you summarize the articles in a way that sets up a coherent overall story or theme?
Did you summarize the articles in enough detail?
Does your "next step" idea logically flow from your introduction?
Did you propose an interesting next step?
Did you describe the potential results clearly and is it clear what the results would mean?
Did you provide a thoughtful discussion about the implications of your potential results?

Did you use APA formatting?
Did you write clearly? Was your writing style coherent?
Peer review grade