

Course Syllabus, Psychology 221, Cognitive Psychology, Fall 2005 (subject to change)

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Required Texts: Cognitive Psychology – E. Bruce Goldstein
Concept Maps and CogLab Online Manual – bundled FREE with text
CogLab E-pin number – bundled FREE with text (MUST PURCHASE NEW)

Textbook Companion Website: <http://tinyurl.com/e3bkq>. This is a nice web site that includes many study aids (e.g., flashcards, sample quizzes, crossword puzzles) which can help you gauge how well you understand the material. I highly encourage you to take advantage of this free site.

Course Overview & Objectives

This course provides an in-depth exploration of human cognition, focusing on both classic and current issues. The study of cognition relies heavily on experimental research designed to test models and theories of cognitive processes, and we will explore both behavioral and neuropsychological approaches to data and theory. Topics will include attention, perception, multiple memory systems, encoding and retrieval processes, the role of knowledge, language, and reasoning.

Given the wide variety of topics in this field, my major objective for this course is to help you develop expertise in the field of cognitive psychology. Additionally, you will gain experience in cognitive research methodology, both by participating in a number of classic research studies as well as by designing and conducting a group research study of your own. A final course objective is to enhance your ability to think critically and scientifically about everyday cognitive problems (e.g., “How can I study more effectively so that I understand the material better and perform better on tests?”) so that you can try to generate effective solutions for yourself.

Prerequisite

A passing grade (i.e., a D or higher) in a college-level Introductory Psychology course is a University prerequisite for this course. My own STRONG recommendation is that you should have received at least a C+ in your introductory course. I give this advice because you will probably find this course challenging, due in large part to the theoretical and experimental nature of the research we will discuss. You will also be required to do quite a bit of reading, so please be prepared for some hard work and effort.

Evaluation

Your final grade in this course will be based on the total points you accumulate from four exams, eleven CogLab experiments, a group project and paper, comment cards, attendance, and participation.

A. Course Readings and Comment Cards (35 points possible)

In order to fully understand the course material, as well as to do well in this course, it is *crucial* that you stay current with the assigned readings. The class will include both lecture and discussion, so you need to come to class fully prepared each day to discuss the assigned material. Therefore, in order for me to ensure that you are staying current, all students will be asked to turn in index cards (i.e., “Comment Cards”) at the start of every class session (you will get these cards from me). On these cards, you will be asked to *react* to the assigned reading for that day. Basically, I would like you to show me on these cards that you are thinking about the reading and attempting to understand what the author is telling you. You might want to comment on something the author says, or relate it to something that you've encountered before. You may even ask questions about what you read if you don't understand something, *but a simple question by itself is not enough*. If you ask a question, elaborate upon why you're unclear. What specifically don't you understand? Where did the author lose you? Almost anything is fair game as long as you can show me that you're actively attempting to process the textbook information. What I do NOT want is a simple summary of what you read. Summaries don't require you to think about the information and I want you to show me that you are actively thinking about what you are reading. When you write your card, please include the following: (1) your name; (2) the date; (3) the page number from which your comment is drawn; and (4) your comment.

At the start of every class session, you will place your card into a file box that will be passed around. Each response will be graded on a credit/no credit basis, with each card being worth 1 point, up to a total possible of 35 points. Even if you haven't read the assigned reading please turn in a card with your name on it for attendance purposes. If you miss class but would still like to receive credit for the note card, simply turn in the missing note card during the next class period. I will not, however, accept cards more than one class period late. *If you are in class, your note card must be turned in on that day.*

B. Exams

There will be four exams in the course. The final exam will *not* be comprehensive, but will simply cover information from the last unit. The exams will consist of multiple choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions. The questions will be taken from class material, the CogLab experiments, and the textbook. You will be held responsible for all of the information covered in each chapter, not just the topics discussed in class, so be sure and read each chapter carefully.

C. CogLab Web Experiments – www.coglab.wadsworth.com (110 points; 11 experiments @ 10 points each)

Each student must have their own valid CogLab E-pin number purchased with the textbook bundle from the bookstore. Please note that old E-pin numbers used by other students won't work. The E-pins are only good for a single semester and associated with a specific student and course. Additionally, each of you must contribute your own unique data to each experiment (associated with your unique username and log-in ID). I am able to track individual student participation in each experiment, so please don't try and share an E-pin code.

You will be required to complete eleven of the CogLab experiments in this course. The assigned experiments and their due dates (completed by the start of class) are listed in the "Course Outline" section at the end of this syllabus. To participate in the CogLab experiments, you will need the E-pin bundled with the textbook, along with a UserID and password that you will receive from me. The CogLab manual explains in step-by-step fashion how to register and get started. Each study requires approximately 20-30 minutes and can be completed at any computer with web access. Each study must be completed by the date assigned in the syllabus, but you may certainly complete them in advance should you choose. The fact that these experiments are web-based means that you can participate in these studies at any hour, day or night. Therefore, **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

For each study, the software will keep track of who has completed the study and will tabulate data for each student. You need only to complete the web experiment; *there is nothing to hand in to me.* I will compile the data and use it as a basis for class discussion. Because I will discuss the findings in class, all experiments must be completed on time. It is to your advantage to complete every experimental assignment, not only because you earn points for each experiment, but also because the content of the studies will be covered on your exams. These are very simple assignments to complete, and if you simply participate in the web program you will receive full credit – so do them!

Although I do not anticipate this issue, failure to complete at least seven of the CogLab experiments by their due dates will result in the loss of one letter grade (e.g., a B+ to a C+). Failure to complete at least four on time will result in the loss of two letter grades. Failure to complete any of the experiments on time will result in an automatic F for the course.

D. Group Project & Paper

In a few weeks, specific guidelines will be distributed concerning this project. Briefly, students will work in small groups on a major research project and paper assignment. On Friday, December 2, all of the projects will be presented during a "Cognitive Psychology Research Fair." Faculty, students, and friends will all be invited to the fair and each team of students will present and discuss each of their research projects. In addition to the presentation itself, each student will individually submit a paper describing and discussing the project. The group will receive a common grade on the project presentation, and individual grades on the paper.

E. Attendance (35 points possible)

Attendance is essential to understand the concepts and processes explained in the reading material. All students will start off with 35 attendance points. A student will be allowed to miss three class periods, for any reason whatsoever, without penalty (this includes illnesses). Any absences over three will result in the loss of two points per absence.

F. Participation (75 points possible)

I fully expect every member of this class to be an active participant in class discussions. Therefore, to encourage and reward

class participation, active participation is mandatory and expected. Your contributions, either by asking or answering questions or sharing examples, will not only make the course more enjoyable, but will also help you actually *understand* the material better. Your participation score will be based on my assessment of the quality and quantity of your contributions.

Final Grade

Your final grade in the course will be based on the percentage of the points you have accumulated out of the total number of possible points. Grades will be determined using the grading scale listed below. For example, if a student accumulated 863 points out of 1000 possible points, they would have an 86.3%, or a B+. There is no grading on a curve.

92 - 100% of total possible points = A	76 - 78.5% of total possible points = C+
89 - 91.5% of total possible points = A-	70 - 75.5% of total possible points = C
86 - 88.5% of total possible points = B+	60 - 69.5% of total possible points = D
82 - 85.5% of total possible points = B	0 - 59.5% of total possible points = F
79 - 81.5% of total possible points = B-	

Course Policies

Cell phones: As I'm sure you are aware, when a cell phone rings in class it is highly distracting (and disrespectful) to everyone. Cell phones distract other students from learning, disrupt lectures, and create an environment in which events outside the classroom appear to be more important than those occurring inside the classroom--precisely the kind of environment none of us wants or needs for our classes. Therefore, unless there are special extenuating circumstances that you have discussed with me in advance (i.e., a parent who has a sick child at home), all cell phones must be turned off (not just silenced) and stored out of view.

Make-up Exams: The opportunity to make up a missed exam is a privilege, not a right, and will only be considered in cases of extreme unforeseen events. In the case of a serious problem, it is your responsibility to contact me by telephone BEFORE the exam is given. I will generally be in my office from 7:00-7:45 a.m. and 10:00-10:45 a.m. on the day of exams, so you need to contact me during these times. If for some reason I do not answer the phone, please leave a message on my voice mail with a number where I can reach you. I WILL NOT ACCEPT EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS; you must phone. No make-ups will be allowed without first contacting me.

Late Papers: As a general policy, I do not accept late papers. The course paper is due *at the start of class* on Monday, Dec. 5. If you are ill on this date, you are still responsible for turning in the assignment by the start of class. You may either have a friend turn in the paper, email it to me, or fax it to me at 771-8404.

Academic Integrity: I fully expect all of my students to exhibit mature, honest, responsible, and ethical behavior. A University is a community of scholars, and I expect my students to act in ways that uphold the integrity of this community. In the event, however, that some form of academic dishonesty is encountered, it will be dealt with following Penn State's policy 49-20 (<http://www.senate.psu.edu/policies/47-00.html#49-20>). Inappropriate actions include (but are not limited to) the following: cheating, helping another student to cheat, plagiarism, and copying from another student's work. If charged with academic dishonesty, you will receive written or oral notice of the charge by me. You and I will then meet to discuss the charge. If you choose to contest the charge, you have the option of contacting Dr. Joseph McCormick, Director of Academic Affairs and requesting a hearing with the University College Committee on Academic Integrity at the campus. Sanctions for breaches of academic dishonesty will typically range from failing an assignment with a score of zero to failing the course, although more harsh sanctions exist for especially severe cases.

Plagiarism. Although I will discuss the problem of plagiarism later in the semester, I want to address it now given that I have frequently encountered it in the past. The biggest problem I have found is that students are often unclear what constitutes plagiarism. Obviously, copying someone else's writing word-for-word without the use of quotation marks and a reference citation is plagiarism. This is true even if you only copy a few words, a short phrase, or a sentence because the basic ideas and sentence structure are the original author's. Plagiarism also involves paraphrasing someone else's work if you don't provide a proper reference citation, and sometimes paraphrasing comes awfully close to word-for-word copying, especially if you've only changed a couple of words. On the other hand, filling up a paper with many quotations is also unacceptable because the paper doesn't really represent your own thoughts and ideas. Therefore, the best advice I can give you revolves around two suggestions. First, **use quotations very sparingly**, and only when the exact wording of a passage is critical to your main point. Second, **put others' ideas into your own words**, but always remember to include a reference citation of where you got the ideas (e.g., Bower & Brown, 2004). **IF YOU ARE EVER IN DOUBT ABOUT PLAGIARISM, ALWAYS ASK FIRST.** I will be more than willing to assist you.

For more specific information regarding plagiarism (including examples of what is and is not plagiarism), I urge you to visit the web site <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. You are responsible for knowing this information before turning in any assignment.

Students With Disabilities. Penn State is committed to providing access to a quality education for all students, including those with documented disabilities. If a student has a disability and wishes an accommodation for a course, it is the student's responsibility to obtain a University letter confirming the disability and suggesting appropriate accommodation. This letter can be requested from the York campus Disability Contact Liaison, Dr. Cora Dzubak located at the Learning Center. Students are encouraged to request accommodation early in the semester so that, once identified, reasonable accommodation can be implemented in a timely manner.

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change)
(Important dates are in bold print)

Date	Reading assignment (please read <i>before</i> class)	Topic	What's Due?
W, Aug. 31	_Syllabus	Course introduction	
F, Sept. 2	Preface, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-12)	A brief history of cognitive psychology	
M, Sept. 5	NO CLASS	Labor Day Vacation!	
W, Sept. 7	Chapter 1 (pp. 13-22)	How cognitive psychologists study the mind	
F, Sept. 9	Chapter 2 (pp. 23-39)	A review of neural processing	
M, Sept. 12	Chapter 2 (pp. 402-54)	Physiological techniques	CogLab: Visual Search
W, Sept. 14	Chapter 3 (pp. 55–73)	Theories of pattern recognition	
F, Sept. 16	Chapter 3 (pp. 74-82)	The Gestalt approach	
M, Sept. 19	Chapter 3 (pp. 82-97)	“Intelligence” and perceiving the world	
W, Sept. 21	Chapter 4 (pp. 99-112)	Models of selective attention	
F, Sept. 23	No reading assignment	Group Project guidelines distributed	
M, Sept. 26	Chapter 4 (pp. 113-120)	Divided attention	CogLab: Spatial Cueing
W, Sept. 28	Exam 1	Exam 1	Exam 1
F, Sept. 30	Chapter 4 (pp. 120-134)	Visual attention	CogLab: Partial Report
M, Oct. 3	Chapter 5 (pp. 135-146)	Modal model of memory; sensory memory	
W, Oct. 5	Chapter 5 (pp. 146-156)	STM vs. LTM	
F, Oct. 7	Chapter 5 (pp. 156-161))	Properties of STM; problems with the model	CogLab: Phonological Similarity
M, Oct. 10	Chapter 5 (pp. 162-177)	Working memory	
W, Oct. 12	Chapter 6 (pp. 179-192)	Declarative LTM	CogLab: Levels of Processing
F, Oct. 14	NO CLASS	Fall Break!	

M, Oct. 17	Chapter 6 (pp. 193-208)	Encoding; storing information in the brain	CogLab: Encoding Specificity
W, Oct. 19	Chapter 6 (pp. 209-221)	Retrieval; encoding specificity	
F, Oct. 21	Exam 2	Exam 2	Exam 2
M, Oct. 24	Chapter 7 (pp. 223-234)	Memory for personal experiences	CogLab: False Memory
W, Oct. 26	Chapter 7 (pp. 234-245)	How memory is “constructed”	
F, Oct. 28	Chapter 7 (pp. 245-264)	Memory is not a video recorder	CogLab: Prototypes
M, Oct. 31	Chapter 8 (pp. 265-276)	Categories, prototypes, and exemplars	
W, Nov. 2	Chapter 8 (pp. 276-286)	Lexical ambiguity & context	
F, Nov. 4	Chapter 8 (pp. 286-294)	Semantic networks	
M, Nov. 7	Chapter 8 (pp. 294-307)	Connectionism	
W, Nov. 9	Chapter 9 (pp. 309-316)	Visual imagery	CogLab 1: Mental Rotation CogLab2: Mental Scanning
F, Nov. 11	No reading assignment	Exam 3	Exam 3
M, Nov. 14	Chapter 9 (pp. 316-325)	Visual imagery	
W, Nov. 16	Chapter 9 (pp. 326-344)	Imagery and the brain	CogLab: Word Superiority
F, Nov. 18	Chapter 10 (pp. 345-355)	Basics of language comprehension	
M, Nov. 21	Chapter 10 (pp. 355-369)	Word and sentence level effects	
T, Nov. 22	Chapter 10 (pp. 369-374)	Text comprehension and making inferences	
	(Following a Friday class schedule)		
W, Nov. 23	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving Vacation!!	
F, Nov. 25	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving Vacation!	
M, Nov. 28	Chapter 10 (pp. 374-386)	Situation models, conversation, and effects of culture	
W, Nov. 30	Chapter 12 (pp. 427-443)	Deductive reasoning: syllogisms	
F, Dec. 2	Cognitive Psychology Research Fair	Project Presentations 11:00 - 12:45	
M, Dec. 5	Chapter 12 (pp. 443--454)	Deductive reasoning: thinking conditionally	Project Papers Due
W, Dec. 7	Chapter 12 (pp. 454-465)	Inductive reasoning	
F, Dec. 9	Chapter 12 (pp. 465-478)	Inductive reasoning	
Dec. 12-15		FINAL EXAMS	