
**Psychology 3500
Cognition
Spring 2009**

Professor: Dr. Aaron Ashley
Lecture Time: T: 5:30 – 8:20
Lecture Location: SS 347
Office: SS 360
Office Hours: MWF: 11:00 – 12:00 TR: 10:00 – 11:00 T: 4:30 – 5:30
Email: AaronAshley@weber.edu

Please note: If you contact me via email, use only your Weber State email account, because I will not open email from or respond to Non-Weber State email accounts.

Phone: (801) 626-8743

Texts: Kellogg, R. T. (2007). *Fundamentals of Cognitive Psychology*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Spellman, B. A., & Willingham, D. T. (Eds.) (2005). *Current Directions in Cognitive Psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Course Description: Cognitive psychology is the study of mental activity. It is the investigation of the so-called “black-box” between external stimulation and observable response. Some of the topics of inquiry in cognitive psychology include perception, attention, memory, language, learning, and problem-solving. Cognitive psychologists are not only interested in understanding how mental processes occur and interact, but also in how we can use this understanding to enhance our lives. This course provides an overview of the field of cognitive psychology.

Course Objectives and Expected Outcomes: There are several general principles or themes that emerge across areas of inquiry in Cognitive Psychology/Cognitive Science. Some of the most fundamental are:

- Understanding the mind, like any other area of scientific inquiry, requires formulating and systematically testing well-developed and falsifiable theories.
- The human mind has evolved to solve many difficult problems in the face of imperfect data. The way the mind solves the problems it solves can be understood as processes that operate on structures (or mental representations).
- Understanding how the mind works means understanding its constituent representations and processes.

The primary goal of this course is to give you the tools to identify, understand, and appreciate how these general themes are realized across areas of inquiry in Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Science. More generally, you should be able to recognize how these principles broadly guide and facilitate understanding how the mind works.

At the conclusion of the course you should be able to speak clearly and productively to the following questions:

- What is the nature of intelligence?
- How does the mind generally work such that it can solve the problems it solves?
- How is information represented in the mind?
- What processes operate on mental representations to produce intelligent behavior?
- How does the form of mental representations affect how the mind solves various problems?
- Why does the mind function so well across so many domains and situations?
- How and why is human cognition simultaneously structured and flexible?

Lectures: Lectures will cover material both from and outside the readings (i.e., some material covered in lectures is not in the readings). The majority of the exam material will come from the lectures, so please come to class and take notes. Also, come to office hours to get any clarification you may need on any lecture material or material from the readings.

Grades: Your final course grade will come from your performance on four exams (100 pts each), four article reviews (50 pts each), two class presentations (50 pts each), five quizzes (20 pts each), ten sets chapter questions (10 pts each), and class participation (100 pts). There are 1300 total points possible for the course. The following letter grade equivalents shall apply:

A... 93-100	A-...90-92	B+... 88-89
B...83-87	B-...80-82	C+... 78-79
C...77-73	C-...70-72	D+...68-69
D...63-67	D-..60-62	E.....00-59

Exams (100 pts each): The course material is broken into four sections with each section covering two to three text-book chapters and three to five articles. Each section will have a corresponding exam. The format of the exams will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay, with each exam containing approximately twenty-five to thirty-five multiple choice questions, three to five short answer questions, and two to four essay questions. The dates of each exam are listed below. These dates will not change. Therefore, you know at this moment the dates and times for each of your exams in this class. Prepare your schedule accordingly for each exam, because make-up exams will be given only in extreme circumstances.

Testing Center Hours: All exams will be taken in the Social Science Testing Center, located in the basement of the Social Science Building (SS 036). In order to take an exam, you must show up at the center on the correct day(s), during testing center hours, and with a picture ID. You will not be allowed to take the exam without a picture ID, or if you come after the hours specified. You will also need a #2 pencil, and 10¢ to purchase a scantron form.

Make-up Exams: As you will have a free class period in which to complete each exam **make-up exams will be subject to a penalty of 10 points per day (including weekends and holidays). There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy!**

Article reviews (100 pts each): During the course of the semester we will cover several research articles related to the material we are covering in the text. Some of these articles will

be theoretical in nature and others will have a more applied stance. For two of the four sections you will write a review paper for one of the articles. Each of these papers should be approximately 2-3 pages in length and should follow APA format. These papers are to be turned in the day of the exam through WSU Online. That is, papers for the first section are due Tuesday February 10, papers for the second section are due Tuesday March 17, papers for the third section are due Tuesday April 7, and papers for the fourth section are due April 21.

Class Presentations (50 pts each): Each week three groups of 2-3 students will present on the weeks readings. Each presentation should be about 15 minutes and accomplish two things: A) provide an overview of the reading and B) stimulate class discussion.

Quizzes (20 pts each): There will be five short quizzes occurring during the course of the semester. Quizzes will come directly from the required readings and will be given at random times during the class period. As quizzes are given during class, there will be no make-up quizzes given. Quizzes will come from the assigned readings.

Chapter Questions (10 pts each): For each section you are to develop a set of 5 essay questions from the class readings. These questions are due at the beginning of class on the day we begin discussion of the material. For example, the questions for Chapter 1 are due Tuesday January 13.

Class Participation (100 pts): As a student in this class, it is your responsibility to be an active participant. By active participant, I mean that it is your responsibility to be in class (on-time), prepared (i.e., you have read the assigned materials), ready to participate in class discussion (and to do so), and you behave in a manner representative of an academic environment (see Course Policies and Expectations below). At the end of the course, you will earn a grade for class participation as follows:

(100 pts) Excellent class participation/attendance throughout the course. Participation generally reflected careful reading of the course material. Questions were generally thought-provoking and relevant to the material.

(75 pts) Good participation/attendance throughout the course. Participation questions generally indicated that the material (chapters and articles) had been read and given some thought.

(50 pts) Good participation some days, weak participation other days. Questions not very thoughtful or thought-provoking.

(25 pts) Very little participation. Questions asked did not necessarily reflect a careful reading of the course material.

(0 pts) Poor attendance and participation

Course Policies and Expectations:

Attendance: Attendance is not required for this class; it is, however, highly encouraged that you attend all classes. As a portion of your grade comes directly from class participation, and you have to be present to participate, it is in your best interest to attend every class. As a student, you are responsible for all lecture materials and announcements made in class whether you are present or not. Because this course covers a broad overview of concepts and theories in psychology, attendance is very important and may determine final grades in borderline cases. Additionally, you are expected to be present, attentive, and participate during the entire class period. I do not expect you to arrive late, nor do I expect you to leave early. Both of these are disruptive to the class, and will not be tolerated. I understand an occasional instance, but repeated cases will result in a reduction of participation points.

If you must miss class, **do not** contact me with questions about what was covered in class. At this point, you are to obtain the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of four of your class mates. These are the people that you should contact in case of a class absence. Only after contacting these individuals, obtaining class notes, and preparing the assigned materials are you to contact me. I'm happy to help you learn the material, but only after you have taken the time to prepare and review what you have missed.

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

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Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

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Classroom Courtesy:

Cell phones/beepers/laptops: Leave **all** electronic devices turned off during class. I do not want to see any cell phones, laptops, or electronic devices of any type out during the class period. You can text message and email your friends during the other twenty-two hours and forty-five minutes of the day, but not during this class. This behavior is not only rude, but is also extremely disruptive. A first warning is forgetfulness. A second warning (and subsequent warnings) will result in five points off your final total points for each occurrence.

Discriminatory Harassment: Weber State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination based upon race, color, ethnic background, national origin, religion, creed, age, lack of American citizenship, disability, status of veteran of the Vietnam era, sexual orientation or preference or gender, including sexual/gender harassment. Such an environment is a necessary part of a healthy learning and working atmosphere because such discrimination undermines the sense of

human dignity and sense of belonging of all people in the environment. Thus, students in this class should practice professional deportment, and avoid treating others in a manner that is demeaning or derisive in any respect.

While diverse viewpoints and opinions are welcome in this class, in expressing them, we will practice mutual deference so important in the world of work. Thus, while I encourage you to share your opinions, when appropriate, you will be expected to do so in a manner that is respectful towards others, even when you disagree with them.

If you have questions regarding the university's policy against discrimination and harassment you may contact the university's AA/EO office (626-6239) or visit its website:

<http://departments.weber.edu/aaeco/> .

Academic dishonesty policy: Weber State University imposes specific disciplinary actions in response to incidents of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.). These actions may include admonition, failing grade, failure of course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal. The specified policies can be found in the WSU Student Code at <http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm> . Cheating will not be tolerated in this or any class at WSU. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment will result in a grade of E. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism please contact me.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary. Weber State University policies regarding Services for Students with Disabilities are available on the <http://weber.edu/ssd> website.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Tuesday Jan. 6	Overview	Syllabus
Tuesday Jan. 13	Intro to Cognitive Psychology	Articles given in class.
Tuesday Jan. 20	Intro to Cognitive Psychology	
Tuesday Jan. 27	Perception	CD: 1-2, 11-18, 162-168
Tuesday Feb. 3	Attention	CD: 3-10
Tuesday Feb. 10	EXAM 1	
Tuesday Feb. 17	Memory Systems	
Tuesday Feb. 24	Remembering Events	
Tuesday Mar. 3	Memory Distortions	CD: 27-50
Tuesday Mar. 10	NO CLASS FALL BREAK	
Tuesday Mar. 17	EXAM 2	
Tuesday Mar. 24	Knowledge Representation	
Tuesday Mar. 31	Language	CD: 131-152
Tuesday April 7	EXAM 3	
Tuesday April 14	Problem Solving	CD: 51-58, 91-98
Tuesday April 21	Reasoning & Decision Making	CD: 99-114
Tuesday April 28	FINAL EXAM	

*Please remember, this schedule is tentative and subject to change at the Instructors discretion.