

Psychology 2320

Cognition and Perception: Thinking and Seeing

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Section A Fall 2008
(Tues. Thurs. 1:40-2:55, PE275)

Objective

The objective of the course is to familiarize you with the two related areas of perceptual and cognitive psychology. Although the main emphasis will be on theoretical aspects of these areas, there will be some discussion of practical aspects of perception and cognition and the relation of perceptual and cognitive psychology to other areas of psychology, including evolutionary and social psychology. Topics to be covered include: visual perception, mental imagery, categorization, short and long term memory, false memories, unaware uses of memory, social perception, and social reasoning.

Textbook

The textbook for the course is a book of readings available at the bookstore. It consists of a series of articles, many of them “classics” of the discipline, taken from both the professional literature and magazines such as *Scientific American*.

Structure of the course

The course will proceed in roughly the order of the readings in the textbook. The reading for a given lecture will define the core material of the lecture and the “launching point” for discussion of subsequent and related material. Emphasis will be on, first, developing a clear understanding of the readings, and, second, on integrating this understanding with both related material and the broader themes of the course. In no case should the perspective of the authors of the readings necessarily be taken as the “correct” answer on some issue. As with most areas of human endeavour, many of the readings are important or “classics” not because they were or are “right”, but because they identified an important area or phenomenon or because they were so thoroughly wrong that they promoted a flurry of research into what the correct approach should be.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on a midterm exam (worth 50%) and a final exam (worth 50%). Each exam will be computer administered via [WebCT](#). It will be up to you to go to the appropriate computer lab some time within the allotted period to take the tests. The tests will not be administered during class periods. The tests will contain multiple guess questions and may contain short answer questions. The approximate dates during which you will be allowed to write the tests are as follows. These times may change due to the availability of the computer lab for the tests.

Midterm Test: October 17 - 22 (no class October 21)

Final Test: December 8 - 16

No excuses for missed tests will be accepted other than documented, prolonged illness. Make-up tests will not normally be provided.

Your final letter grade will be calculated as follows (of course, if you're precisely on the border you will receive the higher grade):

%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade
90 - 100	A+	77 - 80	B+	67 - 70	C+	55 - 60	D+
85 - 90	A	73 - 77	B	63 - 67	C	50 - 55	D
80 - 85	A-	70 - 73	B-	60 - 63	C-	0 - 50	F

Experimental Research Participation

This course is also designed to provide students with an opportunity to participate in the active research projects of faculty members. Calls for volunteers to assist in these projects will be made during the semester, in class or via e-mail. Each project usually requires one hour or less of your time, though this may vary. In recognition of the value of your time, and in recognition that you are learning something about the discipline of psychology beyond what you would in the normal classroom environment, an extra credit of 1 to 2% for each study in which you participate will be added to your total grade to a maximum of 5%. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum extra credit. These extra credits are added only after all grade cutoffs have been established such that students who choose not to participate are not disadvantaged.

Please check with the research assistant who is running the study to ensure that you have not already taken part in that study or one that is very similar to it.

Contacting me

The most effective way of reaching me outside of class is by email at allens@uleth.ca. There is also a [class, email discussion list](#) that you may use to raise questions and discussion with me and your fellow students; I encourage you to use it.

Welcome to the course. I hope you will have a fruitful and enjoyable semester -S.A.