

Psy3720: Learning

Prof. Javid Sadr

Spring 2011, University of Lethbridge

Lectures: Tue 6:00-8:50pm, Rm. C610

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Course Goals and Requirements

Our goal in this course is for students to actively learn and master concepts, issues, and research findings in Learning (and, to some extent, Psychology, science, and critical thinking in general), and we pursue this primarily through the course readings and lectures. This course extends and critically relies on material acquired at an introductory level in Psy1000 and related 2000-level courses. A number of examinations and quizzes/activities will chart students' progress and their mastery of the course readings and lecture material.

Pre-requisite Courses

There are three mandatory pre-requisite courses that must be successfully completed before taking Psy3720, providing crucial background necessary for succeeding in this course. These pre-requisites will not be waived. These courses are Psy1000 (Basic Concepts of Psych.) and any two 2000-level Psych. courses; Neuro2600 (Brain and Behavior) is very strongly recommended. The registrar's office has been asked to produce a report of all enrolled students and to de-register any who lack these pre-requisites prior to the add/drop deadline.

Course Readings

Textbook: "Learning and Behavior," by J. E. Mazur, 6th edition (2006); ISBN: 0-13-193163-6.

VERY important: students are required to read and study/prepare assigned chapters and readings **before** attending lectures related to that material (e.g., read and study Chpt. 1 before attending lecture on Jan. 18).

Course Exams, Evaluations, and Grading

Students' final grades will reflect their performance on a number of exams and in-class quizzes and activities as well as their lecture attendance, punctuality, conduct, and ongoing preparation. More details about these components are provided below, and they will also be discussed in greater detail in lectures as we proceed (e.g., specific information for each exam). These items contribute to the final grade as follows:

29%	exam 1
33%	exam 2
38%	exam 3 [final exam period]

Final letter grade assignment across grade boundaries (e.g., B+ vs A- at ~80%) is based on end-of-term evaluation of students' quizzes, in-class activities, assignments, attendance, punctuality, preparation, and conduct. The standard UofL guidelines will be used to convert total percentage scores into final letter grades:

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

"Is this going to be on the exam?"

"Yes."

The short quizzes and three exams will cover assigned readings as well as material from the lectures. There will be substantial overlap of lecture material and assigned readings; however, exams and quizzes will include assigned reading material that is not specifically discussed in lecture, as well as lecture material (including in-class activities, videos, hand-outs, etc.) that might not appear in the textbook. As such, it's important to take very good notes in lecture, to study along with the readings. Then, as to whether exams are "cumulative":

- The first exam covers all lecture and assigned readings up to the time of the first exam.
- The second exam covers all the material that comes after the first exam and before the second exam.

However, many of these topics, concepts, and terms build on material from the first third of the course. So, although the second exam is not explicitly "cumulative," understanding the material in the first third of the course is very important for doing well in the second exam and, just as importantly, throughout the course.

- The third exam will be more comprehensive than the first two. The main focus of this exam (and the majority of its questions) will be on the material that follows after the second exam; in addition, however, there will be questions on the first two thirds of the course. As such, the third exam will be "cumulative," although the selection of questions will be strongly aimed at material from the last third of the course.

"Make-Up" Exams, Quizzes, etc.

There will be no "make-up" exams, quizzes, or other graded work. There is no system to exclude low scores or missed work, exams, or quizzes from the total final grade, and there are no sources of "extra credit." No special arrangements can be made for alternate exams or exam times, and students must not make any travel plans or other commitments beyond the official dates for Reading Week or other official UofL holidays.

The primary procedure for a lecture absence is for students to immediately obtain the missed lecture notes from one or more classmates, along with the details of all the readings/assignments due for the next lecture. [Serious emergency medical situations, which must always be specifically supported by documentation obtained the same day, signed and dated by a medical Doctor, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.]

Exams -- at the Testing Centre

All exams will be written outside of class at the UofL Testing Centre (Rm. B770) using Blackboard/WebCT. Please familiarize yourself with the Testing Centre and its policies, procedures, location, etc., far in advance of each exam, starting at: http://fusion.uleth.ca/crdc/testcenter/testcenter_student_info.htm For the first two exams, we will shorten one lecture within a set range of days allowed to write each exam (but students may write exams whenever the Testing Centre is open on those days, not necessarily at regular lecture time). The timing of the third exam, during final exam period, will be based on the registrar's scheduling; students must not make travel plans or other commitments that begin prior to the official end of the final exam period.

Attendance, Daily Preparation, Punctuality, Note-Taking, etc.

Students are expected to attend all lectures. Attendance, punctuality, proper note-taking, and appropriate, well-prepared participation in class are important components of each student's evaluation and crucial for digesting, relating to, and mastering the course material. Classes will provide a forum for demonstrations, activities, elaboration, ancillary material, and evaluations, as well as a context for students to further clarify, explore, and apply the material read, studied, and prepared outside of class. It is in the students' best interest to attend lectures regularly also because lectures will include examinable material not present in the readings, and because there will be a number of in-class quizzes and other activities throughout the semester.

Students are expected to arrive on time for each class (ideally, a few minutes early) to be ready to start on schedule without disturbing other students or the Professor. Also, many in-class quizzes and activities will occur at the beginning of class (and not repeated or extended later into the lecture), so punctuality is crucial.

As emphasized above, students are required to prepare for lectures by reading and studying relevant textbook and other material before each lecture. (It is not acceptable for a student to bring the textbook to class to read, review, or consult during lecture.) At lecture, students are advised and expected to actively take notes on the material presented; well-prepared students will find this much easier, e.g., avoiding unnecessary duplication of textbook material or figures, focusing instead on new material presented in lecture, etc. Outlines or duplicates of lecture material (i.e., notes, diagrams, etc.) will not be created or distributed.

BestBuy in the Classroom

During lectures, all cell-phones, smartphones, PDAs and text-messaging devices (e.g., Blackberry, iPhone, etc.), gaming devices (electronic or otherwise), and all other portable entertainment or communication devices (e.g., radios, music/video players, etc.) must be turned off and put away. The same is required during exams.

Students are not permitted to use a computer in class without the Professor's prior permission [very rare]. Students are very strongly encouraged to take lecture notes with pen and paper, and spare paper is required

for completing and submitting quizzes and activities. Very rarely, by prior arrangement, special exceptions to this guideline might be considered on an explicit and individual basis (e.g., certain students requiring assistive technology, or rare individuals who formally demonstrate [and continue to demonstrate] to the Professor exclusive note-taking activity, as well as astonishing maturity and conscientiousness, with their computer use; wireless/internet use is prohibited and must be disabled by anyone pre-approved for electronic note-taking).

Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Code of Conduct

All students are required to learn and follow university policies on academic honesty and student conduct; these are outlined in the University Calendar for Undergraduate Programs, particularly in Part 4.

These policies include specific notes on cheating, plagiarism, proper citation, shared/combined work, repeat submissions, etc. They relate not only to exams, quizzes, and assignments but to one's daily life at the UofL.

It is a mistake to consider some transgressions to be minor or inconsequential, e.g., looking at a neighbor's answers for "inspiration" during a quiz or questionnaire. If, for example, suspiciously similar answers are seen on two or more quizzes or exams, all students involved will typically suffer serious sanctions; note that it is usually impossible to establish who copied from whom and/or, just as importantly, lack of consent, so it is as important to protect your work as it is to not exploit the work of others. It most certainly has occurred that students have earned marks of zero for tainted work and academic dishonesty (e.g., duplicate answers on quizzes or exams) and thus received failing course grades and additional sanctions and disciplinary action.

Students with Documented Disabilities should consult the Disabilities Resource Centre as soon as possible re: guidelines for arranging accommodations: <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/disabilities/index.html>

Announcements, Course Material, and Communication Online or via Email

Outside of lectures, some online/emailed announcements and materials may be necessary in this course. From the very beginning of the semester, it is the students' responsibility to regularly and frequently check their university email account and the Blackboard/WebCT system at <https://courseware.uleth.ca/webct> for the latest course announcements, hand-outs, readings, assignments, and other communication.

Email sent to the Professor will be read during business hours typically within approx. two business days and responded to either via email or, often, in person at the classroom. All course-related emails should be titled "psy3720 - " followed by a clear, descriptive subject heading, otherwise it may be classified as junk mail.

Some Important Dates and Deadlines

week 1	Fri	Jan 14	Add/Drop deadline
week 6	Tue	Feb 15	Short Lecture, coinciding with Exam 1
week 7		Feb 21-26	Reading Week (no classes)
week 10	Tue	Mar 15	Short Lecture, coinciding with Exam 2
week 11	Mon	Mar 21	Withdrawal deadline
week 15-16		Apr 19-30	UofL Final Exam Period (Exam 3 to be scheduled)

Additional Comments: It is often helpful to become acquainted with one or two other classmates in order to, e.g., fill in gaps left by a missed lecture or messy notes (recall that it is not the Professor's responsibility to repeat missed lecture material for absent students); at the same time, be extremely mindful of your privacy and security before sharing any personal/contact information. Over time, however, most students find that studying in groups is usually not productive; for most people, active reading, note-taking, and serious study is best pursued alone. That said, sometimes it is helpful to supplement one's studying with group quizzing/discussion/review sessions, which may benefit from multiple viewpoints and questioning styles/interests.

Over the course of the first few lectures, we may also discuss some other strategies for approaching the study of the readings and textbook material in particular, as well as the course content in general.

As we proceed, some syllabus items will be described in greater detail (e.g., exams), potentially updated (e.g., exam schedule), or even corrected (e.g., stray typing errors). For full, updated details on course events, requirements, etc., this syllabus cannot substitute for regular lecture attendance and attention to email/Blackboard-WebCT updates.