PSYC 317-001
COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
FALL 2016

Time: **10:30am-11:45am Mon Wed**
Classroom: **Robinson Hall B224**
Instructor: **James Thompson**
Office: 2056 David King Hall
Email: **jthompsz@gmu.edu**
Office Hours: 10:30am-11:30am Thurs or by appointment

Course Objectives
Cognitive psychology is the scientific study of how we perceive, attend, remember, imagine, speak, reason and problem solve about the world around us. This course will introduce some of the major issues, theories, and experimental findings in cognitive psychology. By the end of this course you should be able to:

• Understand well established theories cognitive domains such as perception, attention, memory, language, problem-solving, reasoning and decision-making.

• Discuss current empirical research relevant to theories of cognition.

• Appreciate the logic of research design and the interpretation of findings as they relate to relevant theories of cognition.

• Understand how the traditional methods of cognitive psychology (e.g., reaction time, error analysis) can be used as tools to understand mental events.

• Understand how the established theories of cognitive psychology relate to the brain

• Discuss how research and theory in cognitive psychology have been applied to ”real world” problems.

Textbook (required)
Goldstein, E. B. (2015). Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience. 4th Edition. Stamford CT: Cengage.

Examinations and Grading
Exams: A number of studies have shown that regular testing helps you learn and remember material better. This course will include four (4) non-cumulative exams based on readings and lectures. Your three best exam scores out of the four exams will count towards 60% of your grade. The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The exams will test your knowledge and understanding of the material covered in both the lectures and the text. To receive a high grade in this course you will need to demonstrate understanding of the key concepts from both the lectures and the text. Mere memorization of the “facts” presented in the course will not be sufficient to receive a high grade in the course. There will be material presented during the classes that will not be found in the powerpoint presentations, so it is important to make sure you attend class. If you are having any difficulties with the material, be sure to get in touch with me.

Make-up exams will not be given unless there is a documented emergency and will consist of exam questions.

Article Review and Literature Search: The goal of this exercise is to get you to a) find out how to search for psychology articles using PubMed or PsychINFO; b) read and understand research articles; and c) relate them to things that happen in the real world. This paper will contribute 30% to your final grade.

1. You will choose one **primary research** article from one of the following journals: *Cognition, Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, Psychological Science.* If you are unsure what constitutes a primary research paper, please ask me. Once you have chosen a paper, please send it to me for approval.

2. Write a three page (double spaced, 12 font) summary of the article in which you a) identify the research question, (b) identify the independent and dependent variables, (c) summarize the results, and (d) summarize the researcher(s)' conclusions.

3. Then write two pages (double spaced, 12 font) relating the research question and findings from this article to a "real world" example from an event that happened to you, someone you know, or someone from a book or TV show.

4. Lastly, take the keywords from the article and perform a search for similar articles using either PubMed (www.pubmed.com) or PsychINFO (http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/psy). Generate a list of **five** *relevant* articles, print this out including your search terms, and include this with your article review. If you have any difficulties using PubMed or PsychINFO, finding the keywords (quick tip – they are usually on the first page so look there first) or determining what other articles are relevant in your search (yes, this will be part of your grade) come and see me *before* the paper is due. Five percent (5%) will be docked for each day late.

Class Participation: The final 10% of your grade will come from participation in class discussions. Note - **this does not just mean attendance** – you actually need to make a constructive contribution to class discussion. **Cell phones may not be used during class.**

Important Dates: Last day to add: Sep 6th. Last day to drop Sep 30th. Labor Day Sep 5th. Thanksgiving Nov 23rd - Nov 27th.

Grades
A (100-90); B (89-80); C (79-70); D (69-60); F (below 59). Please note that the actual grading standard will be based on class performance on each exam and the article critique.

Extra Credit
Extra credit may be obtained by participating in experiments sponsored by the Psychology Department. Each hour of extra credit will raise your final grade by 0.5%.

Students may receive up to 3 additional percent (3%) in their final grade (6 hours max). However, participation in experiments is not a course requirement, and non-participation will not reduce the final grade. **THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT FOR ONLINE SURVEYS.**

Honor Code
George Mason University has a code of Honor that each of you accepts by enrolling as a student. You should read and become familiar with this code at http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm. The expectation is that all of the work you do for this class will be the work of one individual. The instructor of this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. However, you are fully encouraged to discuss the readings and topics raised in this class with your fellow students.

Attendance
Class attendance is essential, as the lectures will frequently present information not found in the textbooks, and the material for the exams will be drawn from both lectures and readings. The lecture slides will be made available after each lecture via the web. However, please note that having access to the lecture slides is NOT a substitute for attending class AND taking notes. Relying only on the lecture slides will not be sufficient for you to score well on the exams.

Technology
Powerpoint will be used to present class materials.

Special Help
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me during the first week of class and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Access to Computers
Students must have access to their GMU Email account. Students should feel free to communicate with me via email. Updates and notifications will be sent to the class email list using your GMU email address. If you need to use university facilities, you can find out about location and hours of university facilities at http://www.labs.gmu.edu/ or ask at the information desk at the Johnson Center. I will ONLY use your GMU Email address to contact you. Please use and check this address frequently. You may forward your GMU email to another address if you like, but please ensure that you are receiving the email to your GMU Email address.

Cancellation Policy
In case class needs to be canceled due to an unexpected event, students will be informed via email as soon as possible. Make-up sessions will be arranged for canceled classes.

Course Outline
Any schedule changes or changes in assignments will be announced in class in advance. After an absence, students are responsible for contacting the instructor to obtain accurate information.

DATE	READING	DESCRIPTION
29-Aug	Syllabus	Course Organization
31-Aug	Chapter 1	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology
05-Sep	Chapter 2	Cognitive Neuroscience
07-Sep	Chapter 2	Cognitive Neuroscience
12-Sep	Chapter 3	Perception
14-Sep	Chapter 3	Perception
19-Sep	Chapter 4	Attention
21-Sep	Chapter 4	Attention
26-Sep		**EXAM 1**
28-Sep	Chapter 5	Short Term, & Working Memory
03-Oct	Chapter 5	Short Term, & Working Memory
05-Oct	Chapter 6	Long Term Memory: Structure
11-Oct	Chapter 7	Long-Term-Memory: Encoding, Retrieval, Consolidation
12-Oct	Chapter 8	Everyday Memory & Memory Errors
17-Oct		Memory Review **– Paper Approval Due**
19-Oct		**EXAM 2**
24-Oct	Chapter 9	Knowledge
26-Oct	Chapter 9	Knowledge
31-Nov	Chapter 10	Visual Imagery
02-Nov	Chapter 11	Language
07-Nov	Chapter 11	Language
09-Nov	Chapter 12	Knowledge, Imagery, Language Review
14-Nov		**EXAM 3**
16-Nov	Chapter 12	Problem Solving
21-Nov	Chapter 12	Problem Solving
23-Nov		**Thanksgiving**
30-Nov	Chapter 13	Judgment, Decisions, & Reasoning **- FINAL PAPER DUE -**
05-Dec	Chapter 13	Judgment, Decisions, & Reasoning
07-Dec		**EXAM 4**

Dates & readings are subject to change – any changes will be communicated in class.