

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 317 DL1: Cognitive Psychology

Instructor: Dr. E. Phillips (Dr. P)

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Office Hours: By Appointment. I am Happy to accommodate a virtual face to face meeting as needed. Please email for appointment

Online learning tool: Blackboard

Course Overview and Objectives: This course is a deep dive into the study of cognition, including contemporary concepts and theories. Cognitive Psychology is concerned with the scientific study of the *mind*. Topics to be covered include perception, attention, imagery, memory, language, problem solving, and decision-making. For each topic, the evidence will be considered in the context of longstanding discoveries and theory. Although the focus will be primarily on understanding cognition as it relates to behavior and brain mechanisms, computational approaches will also be considered. The focus of the lectures and activities will primarily be on theories and concepts, and course assignments will be driven by differing conceptualizations of the theory and research applications.

Reading Assignments:

It is essential that you complete the required readings. YOU WILL BE READING THE ENTIRE BOOK IN 15 WEEKS. Ensuring that you have time to complete the readings will help to ensure that you do well in this course. A suggested reading and assignment completion schedule can be found in the “To-do” lists provided with each module on BB.

Required Text: E. Bruce Goldstein *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience (5th edition)*, Wadsworth/Cengage publishing

If the publisher offers you any online materials coupled with this text, they are not required for this course. Purchase at your own discretion. You only need the text for this course. Any form of the text (e.g., used, new, physical, digital, rented, etc.) is fine.

What you need to know about this course:

This course is completely online and asynchronous, so each student will have to take considerable responsibility for pacing their progress and learning the material. To succeed in this course, you will need to exert effort to keep yourself on a schedule that will allow you to complete material in a timely manner. Many assignments and exams will be available at the outset, so students who want to work ahead can do so. Assignments and exams have due dates. Due dates are not chosen to vex students. They allow the instructor the ability to plan how and when to grade and provide feedback to students while balancing the rest of their responsibilities. Please see the grading schedule for the policy on due dates and late assignments. Please plan accordingly. Keeping a detailed planner/calendar and stick to it. A

suggested reading and assignment completion schedule can be found in the “To-do” lists provided with each module on BB.

Technology:

It is absolutely necessary for you to familiarize yourself with the content associated with this course located on Blackboard. Familiarizing yourself with the materials will require reading all of the handouts and instructions provided on Blackboard. The instructor and ITS at George Mason are available for assistance, but if you have difficulty with any of the resources, please be sure to read the associated instructions and handouts prior to requesting assistance. It's important that you address any technological issues you may be having with Blackboard early.

The instructor will be available by email throughout the entire semester. You may email with questions, comments, concerns, etc. I do not have an office phone at GMU. Throughout the semester, all emails will be answered within 2 business (M-F) days. If the instructor has not responded within this time frame it is likely due to the fact that the answer to the question is contained in this syllabus. During the first week, the instructor will be online and checking email even more frequently and will endeavor to answer all questions within several hours.

Official Communications via GMU Email:

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Grading, Evaluation, and Grading Schedule:

Final grades will be calculated out of 1,000 total points in the course. To allow for flexibility in point accumulation in the course, maximum points available for assignments will be awarded on a sliding scale based on the day in which they are turned in. Turning in assignments early will yield bonus, extra credit points, turning in assignments on time can earn full points, and turning in assignments late will yield partial credit. Students can choose their own adventure in regard to earning points in this course.

All assignments turned in on-time and by the full credit due date listed below in this syllabus can be awarded full credit. Assignments completed by the bonus due date can be given up to a 5%-point bonus in return for completing the assignment early. Assignments turned in up to 24 hours after the full credit due date can earn a maximum of 75% of the points for that assignment. All other late work can earn a maximum of 50% of the points possible for that assignment. Assignments not completed by 11:59 pm on April 29th, 2024, will be awarded zero points. All types of due dates will be provided to students in the in “To-do lists” provided with each module in our BB course and will be clearly marked on assignments in BB.

Assignments, Exams, and Grade (based on 3 components)

1. **Syllabus and Course Logistics Quiz: 20 points.** Your first assignment is designed to familiarize you with the online course. Your task is to answer a series of questions about the syllabus and logistics of the course. This is due within the TWO WEEKS of the course and is designed to ensure that all students have fully read over the material necessary to succeed in the course. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO USE ALL COURSE MATERIALS WHILE COMPLETING THIS QUIZ. The purpose is not to test your memorization of the information, but rather to ensure that you have read and understand the logistics of the course and know where to find information about the course when needed as well as the operating rules and procedures of the course.

If you made it this far in the syllabus enter the word SPRINKLES into the bonus question on the syllabus quiz to earn an additional 10 points.

2. **Chapter Assignments: 480 points.** Each chapter assignment is worth 40 points. After every chapter, there are two types of assignments to be completed and submitted in Blackboard, a chapter quiz or a short reaction paper. Credit is assigned based on quality and timely completion of assignments. The quizzes are OPEN NOTE and untimed. However, be sure to check the quality of your work as your initial performance is your only opportunity to submit. Reaction papers are brief 250-500-word writings on a topic related to the chapter material. (NOTE: there will never be both a post-chapter quiz and a short reaction paper due at the same time. It will always be either/or).
3. **Module Exams: 500 points.** Each module exam is worth 100 points. There will be one exam per module of the course – 6 exams total. **ONLY 5 MODULE EXAMS ARE ENTERED INTO FINAL GRADE CALCULATIONS. YOUR LOWEST MODULE EXAM GRADE WILL BE DROPPED.** Also, exam questions will be randomly selected *for each student*, so no student will take the same exam. Questions are taken from a pool of over 1,000 questions and matched for difficulty and content.

Students will have only one attempt to complete all assignments.

Grading schedule:

Student assignments will be graded on the following schedule which will change the total possible points to be earned based on when the assignment is turned in: Plus 5% of total possible points for work turned in early, 100% of possible points for assignments submitted on the due date, 75% of possible points for assignments submitted one day (up to 24 hours) late, and 50% of total possible points for late work after one day late. The full credit due date ends at 11:59pm. The Due Date and time refer to the submission time, not the start time in BB. If you start an exam at 11:50pm and submit the exam at 12:15am, then that exam is marked as late and will be credited according to the schedule described above.

Grading scale:

The final grade will be calculated by summing the above points and dividing by 1,000, with 100% (1,000 points) as the highest possible total grade. Letter grades will be assigned using the plus-minus format using the scale below.

Total Course Points	Grade
970-1,000	A+
930-969	A
900-929	A-
870-899	B+
830-869	B
800-829	B-
770-799	C+
730-769	C
700-729	C-
660-699	D
<660	F

FINAL EXAM:

The final exam is TBD and will be announced by the middle of the semester according to the rules set forth by the University's final examination guidelines. In the past, the final exam has been optional for students and been used to improve student grades in the course.

Make-up exams:

Due to the unique grading structure for late assignments in the course, there will be no make-up assignments or exams.

A note about how Black Board Reflects your grades:

On average I have 3-4 students a semester who confuse how grades are calculated, stop completing assignments, and as a result are surprised by their grades at the end of the semester. Usually, it is a student who thinks they have an A+ and actually has a B-. Don't be careless and let this happen to you. It's not good strategy for your overall GPA at Mason.

The grade book in Black Board is hot garbage and should be launched directly into the Sun. Due to the nature of our grading policy (see dropped exams, late assignments) the cumulative total in Black Board may not be an accurate reflection of your points in the course. In order to allow for you to have the ability to turn in late assignments, this problem is the required trade off. The alternative is no late assignments allowed. The benefit of this policy seemed to outweigh this problem. Perhaps when GMU transitions to a new learning management system, this will be a less vexing problem. To keep an accurate running total of your grade in the course do the following:

1. Add all the scores from the syllabus quiz, and all chapter assignments
2. Add your *five highest module exam scores* to this number
3. Divide the grand total by 1,000.
4. Compare this percentage to the grading scale above.

You can also use this handy calculator located here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tDM9j3KrbAP2kM36nh4E71vxksWmrSRTyLtPVxnHFAI/edit?usp=sharing>

Other Course and Campus Policies

Technology Usage and technology requirements:

All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages will not be rejected for being over quota. You may forward GMU emails to other accounts, but emails to the instructor should come only from your GMU account; due to federal rights and privacy laws, instructors are not allowed to accept emails from non-GMU accounts. For this course, all assignments must be completed online within Blackboard (see below). To do best in this course, it is a good idea to have access to a designated computer (not mobile) with good internet connection and the ability to download, open, and upload MS Word and Adobe PDF files.

The Following language regarding technology for the course has been provided by the University:

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.

Online Course Resources:

The course will be run through Blackboard. ***It is important to access Blackboard through the MyMason Portal – please follow these instructions, as they may differ from your normal method of accessing Blackboard:***

1. Go to <http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>
2. Login using your Mason ID and password (the same one you use for your GMU email account)
3. Click on the “Courses” tab (toward the top left of the menu)
4. Click on the link for Psyc 317-DL1

The class website in Blackboard will contain access to videos, assignments, exams, and other course resources. Nearly all course activities will take place in Blackboard, so it is important to login and begin to explore the various components in the first days of the semester.

Special needs and disability services:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500.
email:ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with a special need. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please **contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474**. In order for me to appropriately accommodate your need, you will need to register with this office. The office will then contact me to let me know how I can work with the office and you to ensure your success in this course. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Thank you.

University Honor policy:

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated.

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. The Honor Code is available at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is

taken very seriously, and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task and abide by the policies of the course. If you rely on someone else's work in any part of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Some kinds of participation in online study sites violate the Mason Honor code: these include accessing exam or quiz questions for this class; accessing exam, quiz, or assignment answers for this class; uploading of any of the instructor's materials or exams; and uploading any of your own answers or finished work. Always consult your syllabus and your professor before using these sites.

I will deal with academic dishonesty in accordance with George Mason University's Student Code of Conduct. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the policies set forth by GMU. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. If you have questions about what may or may not be a violation of academic honesty, I recommend you visit the following:
<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>

The office of academic integrity also offers a training course on the subject if you would like more information. A good general rule is that if you think the behavior is questionable, it's probably better to assume that it's not a good idea. Check with me if you need clarification and protect your integrity.

Dr. Phillips will plan to use GPTZero and other methods to determine if reaction papers were generated using ChatGPT and other AI software.

Diversity and Inclusion:

In this course we will seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own. If you wish for me to address you in a preferred manner, please let me know.

Sexual Harassment, (Online) Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence:

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We

encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students.

As a faculty member and designated "Responsible Employee," I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking and/or online misconduct to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Important Dates:

Spring session start/end: January 16th – April 29th

Last Day to Add: January 23rd

Last Day to Drop with No Tuition Penalty: January 30th

Unrestricted withdraw: February 7th – February 20th

Selective withdraw: February 21st – March 25th

Spring Break: March 4th—March 10th

Last day to turn in assignments: April 29th

Final exam: TBD

Projected Course Schedule Spring 2024

Please see the Module To-Do lists for bonus credit due dates and suggested schedule of activities for the course.

Module	Week	Dates	Topic	Full Credit Due Dates All Assignments due by 11:59 pm on date listed below
1	Week 1	Jan 16-Jan 19	Course overview	
1	Week 2	Jan 22-Jan 26	Introduction (Chap 1)	Jan 26-Syllabus Quiz Due
1	Week 3	Jan 29-Feb 02	Cognitive Neuroscience (Chap 2)	Feb 02 -Chap 1-2 Quiz Due
1	Week 4	Feb 05-Feb 09	Perception (Chap 3) Module 1 Exam	Feb 09-Chap 3 Paper Due Feb 12-Module 1 Exam Due
2	Week 5	Feb 12-Feb 16	Attention (Chap 4)	Feb 16-Chap 4 Quiz Due
2	Week 6	Feb 19-Feb 23	Memory part 1 (Chap 5) Module 2 Exam	Feb 23-Chap 5 Paper Due Feb 26-Module 2 Exam Due
3	Week 7	Feb 26-March 01	Long-term memory part 1 (Chap 6)	March 01-Chap 6 Quiz Due
	Week 8	March 04-March 08	Spring Recess	
3	Week 9	March 11-March 15	Long-term memory part 2 (Chap 7) Module 3 Exam	March 15-Chap 7 Paper Due March 18-Module 3 Exam Due
4	Week 10	March 18-March 22	Everyday Memory (Chap 8)	March 22-Chap 8 Quiz Due
4	Week 11	March 25-March 29	Knowledge (Chap 9) Module 4 Exam	March 29-Chap 9 Paper Due April 01-Module 4 Exam Due
5	Week 12	April 01-April 05	Visual Imagery (Chap 10)	April 05-Chap 10 Paper Due
5	Week 13	April 08-April 12	Language (Chap 11) Module 5 Exam	April 12-Chap 11 Quiz Due April 15-Module 5 Exam Due
6	Week 14	April 15-April 19	Problem Solving (Chap 12)	April 19-Chap 12 Paper Due
6	Week 15	April 22-April 26	Decision Making (Chapter 13) Module 6 Exam	April 26-Chap 13 Quiz Due April 29-Module 6 Exam Due
Last day to turn in assignments for this course: April 29th				
	Final Exam Period	May 01-May 08	TBD	Due Date TBD

Note: Dr. Phillips reserves the right to modify the policies outlined in this syllabus and in the schedule given above at the discretion of the needs of the course. If changes are needed, she will revise the Syllabus, announce the changes to the course, and distribute a revised document to the students enrolled in this course.