**SYLLABUS**

**PSYCHOLOGY 317-001: Cognitive Psychology**

**Spring 2022**

**Instructor Name:** Gerald Matthews **Email:** gmatthe@gmu.edu

**Class Time:** M W 10:30-11:45 **Office Hours:** Wed 1:00-2:00 or by appt., DK 2068

**Class Location:** Horizon Hall 3010

**Course Overview:** 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, brain mechanisms and computational approaches will be also be considered.

**Objectives:** By the end of this course you will be able to:

* Explain the core concepts of cognitive psychology that define human cognitive capabilities and limitations
* Identify important foundational theories and theorists, and their place in psychological science
* Determine optimal research methods for investigating human cognitive capabilities and limitations
* Apply cognitive psychology concepts and methods to address real-world issues
* Write a scientific paper on cognition based on integrating concepts, methodological issues, and research findings

**Required Text:** Goldstein, E. B.(2015). *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience (4th edition),* Wadsworth/Cengage publishing.

**Technology:**

* **Official Communications via GMU E-mail:** 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.

Your emails to me should come only from your GMU account. They should clearly indicate that you are a student in 317-001 and they should be professional in content and tone.

* **Class Cancellation Policy:** This class will entail frequent use of email, Blackboard, PowerPoint, etc. Please check Blackboard and your email regularly. If class is cancelled, I will notify you by email/Blackboard and how we will make the time up.

**Accommodations:**

* Disability Statement: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Services (DRS) at 703-993-2474.

**Honor Code:**

* 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.

**Staying Healthy:**

* Familiarize yourself with requirements and recommendations for Safe to Return to Campus (<https://www.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus>) to avoid Covid-19 infection. Be alert and responsive to any changes in Mason policies that may occur during the semester. It is strongly recommended that you wear a high-quality mask at all times during class.

**Grading Scale:** All graded assignments and final grades will be evaluated on the following scale Reference: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=6177#undergrad>

**Undergraduate Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Percentage** | **Quality Points** | **Undergraduate Courses** |
| A+ | 97-100 | 4.00 | Passing |
| A | 93-96 | 4.00 | Passing |
| A- | 90-92 | 3.67 | Passing |
| B+ | 87-89 | 3.33 | Passing |
| B | 83-86 | 3.00 | Passing |
| B- | 80-82 | 2.67 | Passing |
| C+ | 77-79 | 2.33 | Passing |
| C | 73-76 | 2.00 | Passing |
| C- | 70-72 | 1.67 | Passing |
| D | 65-69 | 1.00 | Passing |
| F | 64 and under | 0.00 | Failing |

\* Although a B- is a satisfactory grade for a course, students must maintain a 3.00 average in their degree program and present a 3.00 GPA on the courses listed on the graduation application.

**Assignments:** There are three major assignments, **totaling 100 points.**

* **Three exams (36 points total, 12 each)** There will be three exams in this class throughout the semester, each covering one section of the course. Exams will be in short essay format and a rubric will be provided. There will be a review session in the class preceding the exam.
* **One research paper (40 points).** I will provide a choice of paper topics no later than March 2. You will write a ten-page scientific essay citing empirical evidence and sources. Further details on paper requirements will be provided.
* **In-class assignments (24 points total, 3 each)*.*** There will be eight in-class activities during the semester. Activities may, for example, require a written summary of your reactions to an issue discussed in class, or your ideas for applying research findings to real-world issues. You must be present in class to complete the activity; you will receive full credit for completing it.

**Attendance:**

* Students who miss classes, exams, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance or for participation in a university activity will be provided a reasonable alternative opportunity, consistent with class attendance policies stated in the syllabus, to make up the missed work. It is the obligation of students to provide me, within the first two weeks of the semester, with the dates of major religious holidays on which they will be absent, and the dates for which they are requesting an excused absence for participation in any university-sponsored activity scheduled prior to the start of the semester, and as soon as possible otherwise. Students requesting an excused absence for participation in a university-sponsored activity must provide me a letter from a university official stating the dates and times that participation in the activity would result in the student missing class.

**Schedule of Classes:**

* Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes (see https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring\_2022-1/).
  + **1/31 last day to add classes**
  + **2/7 last day to drop classes**
  + **2/15-3/1 Student Self Withdrawal Period**
  + **3/2-4/11 Selective Withdrawal Period**
  + **3/14-3/20 Spring Break**
* After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**Class Topics:**

(Subject to modification)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Class Topic** | **Textbook Chapter** |
| 1/24 | Syllabus and Overview |  |
| 1/26 | Introduction to Cognitive Psychology | Chapter 1 |
| 2/7 | Cognitive Neuroscience | Chapter 2 |
| 2/9 | Perception | Chapter 3 |
| 2/14 | Attention I | Chapter 4 |
| 2/16 | Attention II | Chapter 4 |
| 2/21 | Course Review and Q&A |  |
| 2/28 | **Exam I** |  |
| 3/2 | Short-Term and Working Memory | Chapter 5 |
| 3/7 | Long-Term Memory: Structure | Chapter 6 |
| 3/9 | Long-Term Memory: Encoding and  Retrieval | Chapter 7 |
| 3/14 | No Class: Spring Recess |  |
| 3/16 | No Class: Spring Recess |  |
| 3/21 | Everyday Memory | Chapter 8 |
| 3/23 | Memory Errors | Chapter 8 |
| 4/4 | Course Review and Q&A |  |
| 4/6 | **Exam II** |  |
| 4/11 | Knowledge | Chapter 9 |
| 4/13 | Visual Imagery | Chapter 10 |
| 4/18 | Language | Chapter 11 |
| 4/20 | Problem Solving | Chapter 12 |
| 4/25 | Reasoning | Chapter 13 |
| 4/27 | Decision-Making | Chapter 13 |
| 5/2 | Course Review and Q&A |  |
| 5/4 | **Exam III** |  |
| 5/13 | **Research Paper Due, 11:59 pm** |  |