

# Psychology 3750-80 Cognitive Psychology Winter, 2013-2014

## Course Syllabus

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### Prerequisites

You must have successfully completed PSY 110 (General Psychology). In addition, the PSY 202-203 (statistics and experimental) sequence is strongly recommended.

### Text

Goldstein, Bruce (2011), Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience, 3rd Edition, Cengage.

### Course Description

This course is about human cognition, or just plain thinking. Thinking takes many forms, such as understanding what you are reading, remembering names, forgetting where you are going when driving down the road, recognizing your best friend at your 50-year high school reunion, solving a math problem, concentrating on reading your assignment when your roommate is talking on the phone, or trying to write a poem. The human mind is remarkably interesting and endlessly complex. This course is designed to expose you to how a particular group of scientists, cognitive psychologists, deal with this content.

Traditionally, the field of cognitive psychology covers three major areas. After an obligatory introductory chapter, and an early chapter describing the nervous system and the brain (Ch. 2), we first deal with the problem of getting information into the cognitive system (Chs. 3 and 4). Issues include sensation, perception, recognition, and attention. Once you get the information into the system, you need to remember it. How stuff is stored, understood, remembered, and turned into knowledge is the focus of Chapters 5 – 10. A third major area of cognitive psychology concerns complex thought processes, which traditionally has been organized into the topics of language, decision making, problem solving, and reasoning (Chs. 11-13).

The field of cognitive psychology occupies the core of modern experimental psychology. As such, this course is basic to your education in the science of psychology. Knowledge in this scientific field is gained by observing and measuring the behavior of people as they participate in well-controlled experiments. Your textbook describes many of these studies in enough detail to allow you to understand the logic behind the creation of this knowledge. This level of exposure is an essential part of your education. In addition, I

am assigning a series of demonstrations of cognitive studies (to be accessed online), so that you can have first-hand experience with some of these concepts.

### **Use of BlackBoard and Online Access**

My expectation for this online course is that students have access to a reliable computer with a reliable internet connection. This expectation can be met with the use of most desktop and laptop computers. The requirements of this course include taking a *timed, closed-book* online exams and participating in online demonstrations. These activities require adequate computer memory and totally reliable connections. *It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they have adequate access.* I cannot recommend that you entirely depend upon a mobile device equipped with a BlackBoard app to take this course because I do not know whether these required activities will work.

As an online course, essential documents, such as the course syllabus, schedule of classes, reading and writing assignments, etc., will be available to students on the course BlackBoard website (bb.wpunj.edu). You are responsible for accessing BlackBoard for these documents and to receive any announcements. In an online course, I typically make frequent announcements for general feedback, any changes in the schedule or syllabus, reminders, etc. All assignments are to be submitted on BlackBoard.

### **The ~~Weekly~~ Daily Routine**

This course runs for approximately three weeks, from 12/26/13 through 1/14/14. That's 20 calendar days, or 13 weekday days when you subtract out weekends and New Year's Day. Obviously, that's not a lot of time to learn the material contained in this difficult and important psychology course. Given that we need to cover the 13 chapters of your text, you can do the math in order to determine the "chapter-a-day" pace of this course.

Every day you will need to check the **Schedule of Classes** document to see what your reading and/or demonstration assignment is. Read the chapter (or section of the chapter), do the demo (or demos), and consider the "Think About It" questions that accompany the reading. Then make your DB contributions, and submit your chapter essay answer, the details of which are described below. In addition, there will be two exams, a Mid-term and a Final.

### **Course Requirements and Grades**

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the course content primarily by writing thoughtful answers to topical questions, based either on textbook readings or assigned demonstrations. In addition, there will be exams with multiple choice questions. Extra-credit assignments will not be utilized in this course; your course grade will be entirely based on the components described below.

- **Written Responses to "Think About It" Questions (36%):** At the end of each chapter there is a section called "Think About It". I have selected some of those questions as possible essay questions (See list below). Answer one question from each chapter. Your mark will be based how well you address the question being asked, and the quality of your writing. Sentences copied or paraphrased from the text (or other sources) are not acceptable. The point of these questions is for you

to demonstrate to me that you understand the concepts being discussed, and you can do that by composing thoughtful answers using your own words. Each of 13 chapter essays counts 3 percentage points toward your final grade. I will drop your lowest mark ( $12 \times 3 = 36$ ).

- **Discussion Board (20%):** This grading component involves two parts: (1) I would like you to participate in all assigned demonstration activities. For a grade, select any five and make a Discussion Board contribution about your experience. Your post should describe your results, your subjective experience in doing the demo, and how you think the demo relates to what is being discussed in the text? Each demo DB post counts 3 percentage points toward your final grade for a total of 15%. (2) The remaining 5% is based upon your general use of the DB as our online classroom. Here you are encouraged to ask questions and to provide answers to students' questions. In addition, I will also be posting questions as well as occasional answers. As a guideline you should make about a dozen such posts.
- **Multiple-Choice Exams (44%)** Two multiple-choice exams, a Mid-term (covering the first 7 chapters) and a Final (covering the last 6 chapters), are equally weighted. The tests are closed-book, and administered online with strict time limits.

The above assessment components will receive number grades and will be weighted according to the percentages indicated. In general, the number grades map into letter grades according to the following simple scheme:

90-100	A range (A-, A)
80-89	B range (B-, B, B+)
70-79	C range (C-, C, C+)
60-69	D range (D, D+)
0-59	F

### **Starting Early**

WPU makes it possible for students to get an early start for the Winter term courses by making the syllabi available at registration. I encourage students to start reading and learning early. The links to the demos are provided, along with the list of Think About It questions for the first seven chapters in the Schedule of Classes section of this syllabus. Contact me by e-mail if you have any questions about the assignments.

### **Course Policies**

- **Academic Honesty Policy**  
Any act of academic dishonesty is a very serious matter. In this class, all writing assignments are strictly individual. Therefore, although it is appropriate to discuss ideas, results of demos, etc. with other students, all writing assignments must be done individually. Any incidents of plagiarism (taking material from a source without acknowledging the source) and cheating on exams will result in receiving a grade of zero on that exam or assignment. Please be aware that the online multiple-choice exams are closed-book. A second incident will cause automatic failure in the course. In addition, all such incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration.

- **Attendance**

Attendance in an online course is reflected by your active participation. Attendance, *per se*, has no direct bearing on your grade.

- **Late Submissions**

In this ultra-short course, submitting written assignments late is to be avoided.

Nonetheless there is no penalty for late submissions for the Think About It and the DB assignments. However, the multiple-choice exams **MUST** be taken when scheduled.

A minimum 10% penalty will be imposed if you take an exam after it is scheduled. No make-up exams will be offered.

### Schedule of Classes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>“Think About It”</b>	<b>Demonstration</b>
12/26	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology	1	3, 4	
12/27	Brain and Cognition	2	1, 2, 3	
12/28-29	Perception	3	1, 2, 3	<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (visual search)
12/30	Attention	4	1, 6, 7	<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (selective attention) <a href="http://www.theinvisiblegorilla.com">www.theinvisiblegorilla.com</a> (view the first 5 videos)
12/31 – 1/1	Introduction to Memory; Short-term Memory	5	1, 2	<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (working memory capacity)
1/2	Structure of Long-term Memory	6	2, 3, 4	<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (implicit memory)
1/3 – 1/5	Long-term Memory: Encoding and Retrieval	7	1, 2	
1/6	<b>Mid-term Exam (Chapters 1 -7)</b>			
1/7	Everyday Memory	8		<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (memory for lists)
1/8	Knowledge: Concepts and Categories	9		
1/9	Visual Imagery	10		
1/10	Language	11		
1/11-1/12	Problem Solving	12		<a href="http://www.gocognitive.net">www.gocognitive.net</a> (monsters and globes)
1/13	Reasoning and Decision Making	13		Text demos on pp. 369, 371, 372, 373, and 380
1/14	<b>Final Exam (Chapters 8 - 13)</b>			