



PSY 350: Cognitive Psychology (Summer II 2014) COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Curt A. Carlson, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Due to the online nature of this class, it is best to either post questions in the eCollege discussion boards or email me.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook: *Cognitive Psychology* (2012, 3rd edition) by Robinson-Riegler & Robinson-Riegler

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of cognitive psychology, which is a laboratory-based science investigating the mental processes that allow us to perceive the world around us, attend to certain parts of it, store information for later retrieval, interact with other human beings through the use of language, and make decisions prior to performing actions. Of course, these processes are not perfect, but rather are quite error-prone. Cognitive psychology has uncovered some of the reasons behind these errors, and has even suggested many solutions and/or short-cuts that can help us avoid some of them.

Although most of what we know about cognitive psychology has arisen from controlled laboratory experiments, it impacts your everyday life in many ways. For example, many airplane crashes are due to cognitive errors on the part of the pilot or air traffic controller. Car accidents are often due to distracted drivers talking or texting on their smart phones or interacting with their GPS systems. Kirk Bloodsworth was positively identified by five eyewitnesses and sentenced to death, but eventually exonerated by DNA evidence. Over 300 individuals in the U.S. have been exonerated based on DNA evidence, and approximately 75% of these were due, at least in part, to mistaken eyewitness identification. We will learn about the cognitive errors that can drive these mistakes leading to miscarriages of justice.

My goals in this course are to present the laboratory-based foundation on which cognitive psychology is built and to make that information relevant to you through examples. To help you develop an appreciation of the laboratory-based approach, you will read some journal articles that describe experiments. You will leave this class with a good grounding in cognitive psychology, its methods and theoretical outlook, and an ability to capitalize on this knowledge to improve the quality of your mental life (e.g., improved study habits, enhanced memory, the knowledge to make better decisions) as well as understand the cognitive principles that underlie these improvements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your developing knowledge of the above topics will be assessed in two ways: 1) quizzes and exams, and 2) reading summaries.

Quizzes

After completion of each topic, you will be quizzed over that material. There are two reasons for these quizzes. First, they should encourage you to keep on top of the reading, in order to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course. Second, research has shown that repeated testing enhances retention of material. We will make use of this finding in order to increase your performance on exams and to help you remember the topics we cover after the course has been completed.

Reading Summaries

For two selected topics, you will be required to submit to the eCollege dropbox a Reading Summary (as a Word document: .doc or .docx) of an article I've posted in Doc Sharing in eCollege for everyone to read. The summary must be 1-2 pages long (single-spaced, max 12-point font, 1-inch margins). Prior to submitting to the dropbox, be sure your summary is a .doc or .docx file, and label as: "LastNameFirstNameA#" with # designating the assignment number (1-2).

Exams

There are 3 exams, including the final. The first exam is worth 18%, the second exam is worth 20%, and the final exam is worth 22% of your overall grade.

Grading

- You will earn credit for every quiz on which you score a 60% or better (i.e., they are treated as pass/fail). There will be 10 quizzes, which add up to be worth 20% of your overall grade (2% each).
- You earn up to 10% of your overall grade for each reading summary completed correctly and submitted on time. There are two readings for a total of 20% of your overall grade.
- There are 3 exams, including the final. The first exam is worth 18%, the second exam is worth 20%, and the final exam is worth 22% of your overall grade.

You need 90% or better for an 'A', 80% or better for a 'B', 70% or better for a 'C', and 60% or better for a 'D'. Below 60% results in an 'F'.

Extra Credit

Attached to this syllabus are instructions on logging into the Experiment Management System so you can participate in research studies conducted by faculty in the Psychology Department. You can earn up to 3% of extra credit by participating in studies (either online or in-person in Commerce; most are online). Each "credit" is equivalent to an hour of research participation, and each credit = 1% of extra credit. In other words, you can earn the full 3% of extra credit by participating in approximately 3 hours of research. Please note that there might not be enough studies available to reach the full 3%.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

This course will be presented entirely in **eCollege**, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu>, then click on eCollege at the top.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course.

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Microsoft Word (**all reading summaries you submit must end with .doc or .docx**)

eCollege is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means that this course will work best if you are using a Windows operating system (Vista or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (8.0 or newer). This course also will work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser on both Windows and Mac operating systems. It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

1. Each topic will be accessible from the left column of the eCollege site for this course – within each you will see the lecture, quiz, any assignment that might be due, and an exam if for that topic.
2. You will download the two research articles from Doc Sharing. These are to be read carefully for your research summaries.
3. You will submit your research summaries using the eCollege dropbox tool/tab – see ‘Dropbox’ in the top toolbar of eCollege for this course.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

You can interact with me via email or the eCollege Virtual Office. Email is preferred, and I will try to get back to you within 24 hours. Please do not email me multiple times within this 24 hours for the same issue.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Chat Support: Click on 'Live Support' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.
- Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.
- Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.
- Help: Click on the 'Help' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc...)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Academic Honesty Policy: Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.

Examination Policy: All quizzes and exams are to be taken closed-book. **You are not allowed to take any quiz or exam (or submit an assignment) after its respective deadline, unless you notify me of extenuating circumstances and I give permission in advance.**

Late Work: **Reading summaries will not be accepted late unless I give you permission in advance.**

Dropping the Course: A student may drop this course by logging into their myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled 'Drop a class' from among the choices found under the myLEO section of the Web page.

Incompletes: The policy for this course is not to allow incompletes. If you cannot complete the course with a grade that you find satisfactory, it is your responsibility to drop it.

University Specific Procedures:

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce**

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

This schedule is to be used as a guide. It is possible that it will change.

7/7	Topic 1: Read syllabus & Introduce yourselves using Discussion Board
7/8 – 7/9	Topic 2: Ch 1: What is Cognitive Psychology? Online lecture; Quiz 1
7/10 – 7/11	Topic 3: Cognitive Neuroscience; Online lecture: Research Mtds & Brain; Quiz 2
7/12 – 7/14	Topic 4: Ch 2: Perception online lecture; Quiz 3; Summary 1
7/15 – 7/16	Topic 5: Ch 3: Attention online lecture; Quiz 4
7/16	EXAM 1: Topics 2-5; Found in Topic 5
7/17 – 7/18	Topic 6: Ch 4: Memory Models; Online lecture: Sensory & Primary Memory; Quiz 5
7/19 – 7/21	Topic 7: Ch 6: Memory Processes; Online lecture: Encoding; Quiz 6; Summary 2
7/22 – 7/23	Topic 8: Ch 7-8: Knowledge 1 Online lecture: Retrieval & Eyewitness ID; Quiz 7
7/24 – 7/25	Topic 9: Ch 5: Knowledge 2 Online lecture: Concepts & Storage; Quiz 8
7/25	EXAM 2: Topics 6-9; Found in Topic 9
7/26 – 7/28	Topic 10: Ch 9: Language 1; No quiz or online lecture
7/29 – 7/30	Topic 11: Ch 10: Language 2; Online lecture: Language; Quiz 9
7/31 – 8/1	Topic 11 continued: Steven Pinker lecture
8/2 – 8/4	Topic 12: Ch 12: Problem Solving Online lecture: Problem Solving; Quiz 10
8/5 – 8/6	Topic 13: Ch 11: Decision Making Online lecture: Decision Making
8/7	EXAM 3: Topics 10 – 13; Found in Topic 13

Students' Guide to Research Participation for Extra Credit

- **What is Research Participation?**

Exposure to research is essential to your gaining a better understanding of the scientific study of psychology. It is how we add new knowledge in psychology. Being involved in research is a good way to experience first-hand and learn about the scientific enterprise. We believe there are two key ways to experience research activity at this level: 1) read about related scientific investigations; 2) experience research as a volunteer participant; or some combination of both.

- **What if I am not yet 18 years old?**

In order to participate in research you must be at least 18 years old. If you are not yet 18 years old, please see your instructor, and ask him/her about alternative ways of earning extra credit.

- **In what type of research studies will I participate?**

All studies you will participate in have been reviewed and approved by the Texas A&M University-Commerce Institutional Review Board (IRB) and by the Department of Psychology, Counseling, & Special Education. Studies vary widely. Many involve completing questionnaires or carrying out tasks on the computer.

- **What are my rights as a research participant?**

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from any study at any time. Your data will be kept confidential. If you have any further questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB head, Carmen Salazar (Carmen.Salazar@tamuc.edu). More information about your rights will be provided to you prior to each study.

- **How will my research participation credit be calculated?**

You will receive 1 credit for each hour of research participation. Studies lasting 15 minutes or less are worth 0.25 credit. For example, a 15 min. study = 0.25 research credits; 30 min. = 0.5 credits; 45 min. = 0.75 credits; 60min = 1 credit; 1½ hours = 1.5 credits... etc.

- **How many research credits may I complete?**

You are encouraged to participate in as much research as you wish, but your instructor will inform you of how many credits are offered for extra credit.

- **What if I do not wish to participate in research studies?**

Participation in research is voluntary. Your instructor is offering you the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in research (and helping psychology).

- **How do I find and sign up for research participation opportunities?**

Throughout the semester, researchers in the Psychology Department will post their research studies in the Experiment Management System (EMS) online. It is up to you to check the EMS regularly to find and sign up for research studies that fit into your schedule. Detailed instructions for how to use the EMS are listed in the following pages of this handout.

- **What if I cannot go to a study I signed up for?**

If for whatever reason you cannot attend a study that you have signed up for you need to cancel your appointment before the start of the study. There are 2 ways to cancel an appointment. First, if you cancel 24 hours before a study you can do this online through the Experiment Management System (EMS) website. Second, if it is the same day of the study you can call or email the experimenter – their contact information will be available in the EMS.

How do I use the Experiment Management System (EMS)?

(Create a new participant account unless you already have one and your login information works. If you do not remember your login information click on the “lost your password?” on the front page of the EMS website and follow the directions on the site, and if that does not work email curt.carlson@tamuc.edu. A list of courses will be presented, from which you must select the courses you are taking this semester for which you will receive credit for participation. If your course is not listed, see the instructor for that course.)

A. How to create a participant account on the EMS

1. Go to <http://tamuc-commerce.sona-systems.com/>
 - a. Click on New Participant “request an account here” link on the left of the screen.
 - b. This takes you to a screen on which you must enter your name, a unique User ID, your University ID number, and primary email address (reminders of studies you sign up for will be sent to that email address). You will also need to highlight the course(s) in which you are enrolled, and for which you will be earning credits. If more than one, highlight all that will be involving you in research participation. However, each study in which you participate will only provide you credit for ONE course. In other words, there is no “double-dipping” allowed. **BE CAREFUL TO SELECT THE CORRECT COURSE AND SECTION # – IF YOU CHOOSE THE WRONG ONE, YOUR INSTRUCTOR WILL NOT BE INFORMED OF YOUR CREDITS!** After you submit your information, you will be emailed your login information. (After you have received your login information, I recommend that you login into EMS and go to your “Profile” and change your password to something that you can remember.)

If you encounter any problems with creating your account (e.g., login information not sent to you), contact the EMS administrator, curt.carlson@tamuc.edu with your full name and a detailed description of the problem.

2. When you first log into the EMS at the beginning of the semester you will be asked to take a prescreen survey. This is a short survey that researchers will use to decide if you meet the specified requirements for some studies (e.g., as a researcher I may only allow participants who are female. If you do not complete the prescreen you will not be eligible to participate in this study). In other words, if you do not complete the prescreen you will have fewer studies that you are eligible to participate in. **IF YOU COMPLETE THE PRESCREEN IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER YOU WILL GET 0.5 CREDIT.** Take it even if you have done it before – it has probably changed, and you will still earn the 0.5 credit.
3. You are now ready to use the EMS to sign-up for research studies.

B. Sign-up for studies—login to the EMS with your User ID and password that was emailed to you after creating your account

1. Click **Study Sign-Up**. A list of all available studies for which you qualify will appear. You can sign-up by clicking on either the study name or **Timeslots Available**, and you will go to a new screen showing more information about the study, with a link to **View Time Slots for This Study**.
2. Click the **Sign-Up** button to schedule your time. You should then write down or print out the study information (name of study, place, time, name and contact information of experimenter, etc.) that appears in the final window. You will also receive an email reminder the day before the study time you have selected.

C. Canceling a Sign-Up (MUST be done if you know you will not show up)

1. If you need to cancel a timeslot you have signed up for, you can do this from the **My Schedule and Credits** page. Choose the **My Schedule and Credits** option from top toolbar.
2. You will see listed all of the studies for which you have signed up, as well as those you have completed (see the Tracking Your Progress section below for more information).
3. Studies for which you have signed up that you are allowed to cancel will have a **Cancel** button next to them. If you cannot attend the study session you signed up for, you need to cancel it, either within the EMS system or by contacting the researcher directly prior to the start of the study. Keep in mind that there is a time limit before the study is to occur, when it is too late to cancel online. This restriction is listed at the bottom of the page (it can be 24 hours before your timeslot, or much less, such as just 2-4 hours). If you cannot cancel online please email or call the experimenter to cancel. **IF YOU DO NOT CANCEL ONLINE, BY EMAIL, OR OVER THE PHONE BEFORE THE START OF THE STUDY YOU WILL BE COUNTED AS A “NO SHOW.”**
4. If you cancel the first part of a two-part study, the second part will also be cancelled. If you cancel the second part of a two-part study, the first part will *not* be cancelled, but you will need to ask the researcher to sign you up for the second part again, if you would like to participate in it at a later date. However, this is up to the researcher.

D. Tracking Your Progress

1. You may track your progress at any time by choosing the **My Schedule and Credits** option from the top toolbar.
3. When you view this page, you will see at the top a list of the number of credits you are required to earn, and how many you have earned so far. Below that, if you have signed up for any studies, those are listed as well. In the list of studies, you will see information about your credit status. If you have a no show for a study you will see that the status for that study is “failure to appear.”

Note: Your login session will expire after a certain period of inactivity, usually 20-60 minutes. This is done for security purposes. If this happens, you can always log in again. When you are finished using the system, it is better to explicitly log out, to prevent any problems that may arise if someone uses your computer before the session expires. This is especially important if you are using a public computer lab.

E. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Immediately after I login, as soon as I click on any menu option, I am taken back to the login page and I see a message that my authentication has expired. What does this mean?

Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, use a different web browser (for example, try Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you go to the site and enter the URL "cookie_help.asp" in place of "default.asp" in the address bar of the browser, when you are on the front page of the site.

2. I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?

The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done within a few days after your participation. If it has been some time and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher (his or her contact information should be listed when you click on the study name within the system).

3. How do I change the email address where email notifications from the system are sent?

You can change the email address where notifications are sent by going to **My Profile** and editing the email address you see there.

4. I forgot where and when a study is that I signed up for. What do I do?

If you forget when or where your study is, check your e-mail for the **EMS reminder**, or logon to EMS and check your appointments.

5. Should I keep some sort of record of my participation and credits earned?

The system will keep track of the credits you earn and your instructor will have access at the end of the semester to a report of credits earned by students enrolled in the class. It is a good idea, however, to occasionally print a personal copy of your credits earned and hold on to that printout as a back up to the system.

6. I showed up for a study on time, and no one was there! What do I do?

First refer to your information about that study session, to make sure you are in the right place at the right time. If you are, then wait at least 10 minutes for the researcher. If they are still not there at that point, you can leave and must send them an email within 24 hours, stating that you were present at the correct place and time for the study (refer to the study name). It is up to the researcher to try to reschedule with you.