

PSYCHOLOGY 309a
COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Section 001 Winter 2019-20, Term 1, Tu-Th 2:00-3:20

INSTRUCTOR

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BUYER BEWARE: ATTENDANCE AND LAPTOPS

Towards promoting a learning-positive agenda, this course has two important policies in place. First, learning begins with coming to class on a regular basis. To encourage this, *each of the three exams (see below) will include 3 1-point questions based on happenings and/or discussions exclusive to lecture* and that thus directly reward attendance. So beware: this is not a good course for the attendance-challenged. Second, research has shown that the use of laptops in lecture settings (1) distract the user and those around him/her from the lecture, and (2) students who take notes by hand show greater retention of material from lecture, relative to students who take notes on laptops. *As such, laptops, tablets, phones, and other forms of attention-distracting technology are not to be used in class.* For insight into the science on this, please see the WHY NO LAPTOPS IN CLASS? module on the course Canvas site.

ASSIGNED READINGS

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, we will be reading one assigned research article per lecture, beginning with Lecture 2. All of the assigned readings can be found in pdf format on the course Canvas site, under the ASSIGNED READINGS module. There you will find three files, one containing the readings for each of the three parts of the course (see the course lecture schedule at the end of this syllabus). For each of the assigned papers, I also include a brief summary or introduction to each paper in the reading files, along with a few key terms that would be helpful to Google prior to reading the paper. For the file containing the readings for Part 1 of the course, I also include some important introductory comments on the papers themselves, what you should focus on in general when reading them, and a set of strategies for reading each paper that will hopefully help maximize what you learn while minimizing anguish and stress. As I note in these notes, I STRONGLY encourage you to read each paper prior to the class for which it is assigned. I don't assign a lot of pages of reading; rather, I expect you to spend quality time with what is assigned.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course is broken down into three parts, with each part defining a primary learning objective, as described here. Specifically, at the end of the course, the successful student should be able to:

1. Understand how the brain provides a guiding frame to help explain the structure and organization of our cognitive processes, and explain using various examples what cognitive processes actually encompass.
2. Describe various factors influencing how we think about and evaluate information in the world around us, and describe several basic cognitive biases that impact our real-world behavior.
3. Understand how we perceive thoughts and emotions in others, explain the neural systems supporting these abilities, and describe basic biases in how we think about others and how others bias our own thoughts and behaviors.

LECTURE SLIDES

In the LECTURE SLIDES module on the course Canvas site, I will post the slides for each lecture. Although I will always try to post each lecture's slides the evening (or morning) before each class, I can only guarantee that slides will be posted shortly after each lecture. Please note, however, that this is a privilege that can be revoked at any time; so please, don't be demanding about posting times.

RECORDING LECTURES

It is okay to audio record the lectures. Feel free to place your phone or other recording device on a table at the front of the podium prior to lecture if you'd like to exercise that option.

DISCUSSION SESSIONS

As indicated in the course schedule below, the course is divided into three parts, each concluding with a non-cumulative exam/midterm. In the last lecture slot prior to each of these exams, rather than having a regular lecture, class will consist of a question and answer period on course material for the upcoming exam. Please be aware that issues and new points raised in these sessions are testable material for the exams, and thus attendance on these days is no less vital to optimal course performance than on regular lecture days.

EXAMS

There are **three** non-cumulative exams for the course. Dates for the exams can be found on the lecture schedule below; Exams 1 and 2 are worth 56 points each, and Exam 3 is worth 68 points. The first two exams will take place during the regularly-scheduled lecture time. The third exam will

take place during the final exam period at the end of the term, with the time, date, and location TBA.

The following points should also be noted regarding exams:

1. Each exam will consist of a mix of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions.
2. For each exam, you are required to bring a photo ID and #2 pencil
3. Exams will begin 5 minutes after the start of the class period.
4. No extra time will be given to those who are late for an exam.
5. **Make-up exams will only be considered for students facing exceptional emergency circumstances that are communicated to the instructor prior to the time of the exam.** The format of any make-up exam granted will be at my discretion.
6. Cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Any student found cheating will get a "0" for that exam. Please see the UBC Calendar for information regarding academic offences and penalties.
7. UBC accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance or completing scheduled examinations. Please let me know **by email no later than Thursday, September 19** if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.
8. Exam marks will be posted on the course website as soon as scoring is complete, but exams will not be handed back. However, students have the right to view their marked examinations, providing they apply to do so within one month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

TERM MARKS

Marks for the term will be based on a total of 180 points (2 x 56 points + 1 x 68 points), as distributed across 3 exams. However, if the grade distribution for the final course marks fails to meet the Psychology Department's norms, scaling will be applied to final course marks. For details on scaling course marks, please see below.

DEPARTMENT SCALING POLICY

In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions for final course marks. According to departmental norms, the mean course mark in a 300-level class is 70 for a good class, 68 for an average class, and 66 for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 13. Final course marks may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor or department in order to comply with these norms. For official UBC policy on grade scaling, please see: <http://students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0>

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

Before Class: I am not in a position to answer questions prior to class unless they directly concern an issue involving the upcoming lecture, such as whether you want to let me know that you're leaving early or might have a medical reason that could warrant being given permission to use a computer during that lecture. All other questions should be handled via one of the options that follow.

After Class: On most days I am available for brief questions immediately following the lecture.

Office Visits: Because many students' schedules inevitably conflict with a set weekly office hour, all office meetings for this course will be by appointment only. Scheduling must be done in advance via email.

Email: To avoid having your emails automatically deleted as spam, the subject header must read "Psych 309." The answers to questions regarding lecture/reading content may often be useful for the entire class to hear. As a consequence, questions may be answered in class at the beginning of lecture rather than via email. Please also note that while I try to be responsive to student emails, there are limits that must be put in place when dealing with large classes. Unfortunately, in a large lecture course I can not respond to students who generate excessive/frequent emails or who generate long lists of questions, as in the name of fairness it would be impossible for me to provide this level of service to all students. **Finally, in order to promote good problem solving skills, I will deduct 1 point from a student's final course mark for each email question that can be answered by consulting this syllabus, the Department of Psychology web page, and/or the UBC web page.** Examples of such questions would be *When is the next exam?*, *Where/when is the final?* and *What are the assigned readings for the next exam?*

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

If you run into trouble and need information on effective studying, preparing for exams, how to take notes, or manage your academic time, free workshops and advice are available from the Student Resources Center, which can be reached through the School and College Liaison Office at 822-4319.

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here: (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

LECTURE SCHEDULE

NOTE: All assigned readings are available in pdf format on the course Canvas page.

Part 1: Neurocognitive Processing

Date	Lecture	Topic	Assigned Reading
9/5	1	Course Introduction	Course Syllabus
9/10	2	Visual processing	Goodale (1991)
9/12	3	Motor processing	Kim (2017)
9/17	4	Emotional processing	van Honk (2002)
9/19	5	Language processing	Rose (2017)
9/24	6	Processing interactions	Stephens (2009)
9/26	7	CLASS DISCUSSION	--
10/1	Exam 1:	On Lectures 1-7	

Part 2: Cognitive Biases

Date	Lecture	Topic	Assigned Reading
10/3	8	Priming	Tal (2017)
10/8	9	Processing fluency	Alter (2013)
10/10	10	Unconscious thinking	Bos (2008)
10/15	11	Metacognition	Ackerman (2017)
10/17	12	Loss aversion	Schindler (2017)
10/22	13	The Ikea effect	Norton (2012)
10/24	14	CLASS DISCUSSION	--
10/29	Exam 2:	On Lectures 8-14	

Part 3: Social Cognition

Date	Lecture	Topic	Assigned Reading
10/31	15	Emotion recognition	Adams (2003)
11/5	16	Mimicry	McIntosh (2006)
11/7	17	Mentalizing	Larsen (2016)
11/12	18	Social neural systems	Vogeley (2017)
11/14	19	Social evaluation	Boothby (2018)
11/19	20	Social exchange	Rim (2019)
11/21	21	Shared experiences	Boothby (2014)
11/26	22	Social status	Oveis (2016)
11/28	23	CLASS DISCUSSION	--
TBA	Exam 3:	On Lectures 15-23	