Course outline,
Psych 2HO3E: Introduction to Cognition
Summer (Term 2), June 23 – Aug 8, 2003

Course content and objectives
In this course we will cover the major topics in cognition. We will begin with very fundamental cognitive processes such as pattern recognition, attention and memory, and move to more abstract processes, such as categorization, reasoning, and metacognition. The course should help students better understand not only how the mind works and how specific mental processes such as memory operate, but should also help them gain some insight into how these processes affect our lives and our experience, including our experiences as students and learners.

This course will also focus on encouraging skills such as analysing research papers, critically evaluating empirical results and thinking through the implications of research claims.


Classes are held Tuesday and Thursday, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in room 165 of the Arthur Bourne Building (ABB).

Instructors are
Aimee Skye, skyeal@mcmaster.ca, ext. 24824, room 145, Psychology Building
Sam Hannah, hannahsd@mcmaster.ca, ext. 24824, room 141, Psychology Building

LearnLink is a software system that we will be using to post course-relevant information. LearnLink also allows students to post course-relevant questions, comments and concerns. The use of LearnLink will be discussed in the first class, and a handout will be provided. Learnlink can be accessed from most computer labs, the Internet, or from home by downloading the software.

Evaluation and grades
Grades will be based on the following weighting: final exam = 45%, midterm exam = 25%, in-class quizzes = 15% (5 quizzes @ 3% each), critique = 15%. There is also an optional lab participation component, as well; this is worth 3%, which can be used to replace the results of any 1 quiz. The critique and quizzes are included to develop skills other than those that can be encouraged in standard test formats, and to allow a variety of evaluative formats for those who have trouble with formal exams.
Exams
Exams will cover both lecture and text content. Although there will be some overlap between lecture and text, some material presented in each will be unique. Students are responsible for both. There will be two exams: a one-hour midterm on July 17th, and a three-hour final on Aug. 7th. Both exams will be conducted in class. Exams may include multiple choice, short answer, and brief essay questions, as well as other possible question formats. These exams may be conducted in rooms other than the regular classroom. Students will be advised of exam location in class, as well as via LearnLink.

Critique
In addition to the exams, there will be a 500 – 700 word (double spaced) critique of a research paper due July 24th. The instructors will provide students with a handout detailing requirements in the first class, and the information will also be posted on LearnLink. Students will select one research paper to critique from a list provided by the instructors. Students are expected to not only summarize a paper, but also to evaluate how well its claims are substantiated, how important the findings are, how the argument could be better and so forth. Instructors will NOT read drafts, but will meet with students if they are having specific problems, such as having difficulty writing the introduction.

Quizzes
There will be 5 in-class quizzes throughout the course. These will be conducted in the first 10 minutes of most Tuesday classes, except for the first two quizzes. They will focus mainly on the lecture material, but will also include some review of the text as well. They will be returned no later than the next week. Quizzes will be brief, and will contain a mixture of questions. These quizzes has several aims: to provide experience with a variety of exam questions, to provide a review and reinforcement of the previous week’s material, and to provide ongoing feedback to students prior to the exams. Each quiz is worth 3% of the final grade.

Lab participation
To reduce some of the pressure some people may feel because of the five quizzes, and also to encourage people to gain as much of a first-hand experience of psychology as possible, we have allowed a lab participation component. This is worth 3% of the final grade, which can be used to replace any one quiz.

If you fail to show up and do not contact the experimenter ahead of time, you will be marked as a ‘No Show’, you will not get the 3%, and you will not be permitted to participate again. If there were exceptional circumstances that prevented you from notifying the experimenter that you wouldn’t be able to make it, you may be permitted to participate again.

Academic dishonesty and missed work
Students should ensure they are familiar with the Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty. These are found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration, and are available in the Senate Office and online.
Students infringing these policies will be treated according to the published policy.

**Students wanting to submit excuses for missed exams or exemptions from course requirements must submit them through the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty or programme.** It is your responsibility to speak to one of the instructors regarding missed exams as soon possible. Exemptions for course requirements must be submitted within one week of the original due date of the missed work. If this period is missed, then students must file an appeal to have an exemption. No exemption will be accepted after a month.

Students should be aware that the instructors’ policy regarding missed work or exemptions from course requirements I to reweight the remaining components of evaluation. Make-up quizzes or exams will not be offered under any circumstances.
Important dates: Lectures, readings and assignments June 24th – first class

June 24th
Intro, history of cognition,
Ch.1

June 26th
Object recognition
Ch. 3

July 1st – no class
Canada Day

July 3rd
Object recognition, attention
Ch.3 & 4

1st quiz (first 10 minutes)

July 8th
Attention
Ch. 4

July 10th
Memory acquisition
Ch. 5

2nd quiz

July 15th
Acquisition and retrieval
Ch 6

July 17th – midterm: 1st hour
Associative theories and metacognition
Ch. 8 (235-238; 262-270)

July 22nd
Memory errors and SCAPE
Ch. 7 (195-214)

3rd quiz

July 24th
Concepts
Ch. 9
critique due

July 29th
Concepts and Language
Ch.9 & 10 (301-331)

4th quiz

July 31st
Language and Judgment
Ch. 10 (301-331), Ch. 12( 387-408)

Aug 5th – last class
Judgment and Reasoning
Ch.12(387-408), Ch. 13 (430-445; 417-428)

5th quiz

Aug. 7th – final exam, in class