Cognition

Class code
PSYCH-UA 9029 – 001

Instructor Details
Oren Griffiths PhD
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+61-2-9385 1380 (office)
Consultations by appointment.
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Spring 2015
Cognition
Monday, 12:00 – 3:00pm
February 3 to May 11
Room 302
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
PSYCH-UA 9001 Introduction to Psychology

Class Description
This course is a survey of cognitive psychology, the scientific study of the human mind and human thinking. During the course of the semester we will discuss many different aspects of cognition: perception, attention, memory, language, concepts, reasoning, problem solving, expertise, creativity, and decision making. The emphasis in the course will be on how psychologists have used experiments to help construct theories of how the human mind works and how human thinking occurs. The class will involve lectures, student presentations, discussion, video material to accompany lectures, and occasional example class experiments. The course also has a practical component, for which students work in small groups and document or replicate an empirical study, which they write up in a research proposal and produce as a video.

Desired Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Demonstrate understanding of the basic cognitive functions, based on key research findings.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the main theories of cognition.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic methods of cognitive research, plus their
strengths and weaknesses.

- Demonstrate understanding of the scientific process underlying cognitive research, and show a basic ability to assess the scientific quality of research.
- Demonstrate ability to conduct and report a basic piece of empirical work.

Class presentation (10%) – a short (10 minute) class presentation on one of the readings. The readings are to be read after each class, and presentations of each reading will occur in the week after it is assigned.

Video demonstration (20%). A video will be prepared in small groups of 2-4 students documenting or demonstrating the operation of a fundamental principle of cognition in the “wild.” A range of suitable topics will be provided by the lecturer, but the student may select a topic of his/her own choice (and approved by the lecturer). It is to be submitted by Week 14.

Proposal for video assignment (10%) A one-page outline of the psychological principle chosen for the video demonstration. The proposal is to be submitted by Week 10.

Mid-semester exam (30%) – consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. Delivered during week 8.

Final exam (30%) – consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. Delivered on Wednesday 20 May 3:00-5:00pm

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class.

Grade A: Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning.

Grade B: Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.

Grade C: Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level.

Grade D: Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations.

Grade F: Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Work is weak, unfinished or unsubmitted.
Grade Conversions

A grading rubric will be provided and distributed in class.

Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted to your instructor during class time.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Academic Coordinator during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday). In the absence of the Academic Coordinator, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person. The NYUS staff will mark down the date and time of submission in the presence of the student. Students must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to Turn-It-In within 24 hours.

Work submitted after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late.

Written work submitted beyond five (5) weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Plagiarism Policy

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are severe and are dealt with by the Director, NYU Sydney, not your instructor. Your home school will be notified and you will be dealt with according to the standards of that school. The codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges are outlined in the respective school’s academic resources.

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. **To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalised with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week of classes missed.**

The class roster will be marked in the first five minutes of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure.
Classroom Expectations

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

Required Texts


Supplemental Texts


Session 1 Introduction: Modern Cognitive Psychology and the Scientific Method and Neuroscience

Monday 2 February

**Guest lecturer:** Suraj Samtani

**Required Reading:**
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 1

Session 2 Memory: Cognitive Neuroscience and Short-term Memory

Monday 9 Feb
Guest lecturer: Suraj Samtani

Required Reading:

Session 3  Memory: Long-term Memory 1  
Monday 16 Feb

Guest lecturer: Suraj Samtani

Required Reading:
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 6 and 7

Session 4  Memory: Long-term Memory 2  
Monday 23 Feb

Required Reading:
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 6 and 7

Session 5  Memory: Memory in use, visual memory and imagery  
Monday 2 March

Required Reading:
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 8 and 10

Session 6  Attention  
Monday 9 March

Required Reading:
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 4

**SPRING BREAK 16-20 March**

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<tr>
<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Knowledge: Concepts and Categories</th>
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<td>Monday 23 March</td>
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**Required Reading:**

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<th>Session 8</th>
<th>Mid-term Exam</th>
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<td>Monday 30 March</td>
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**Mid-term Examination (30%)**

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<tr>
<th>Session 9</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
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<td>Monday 6 April – NO CLASS (Easter Monday Public Holiday)</td>
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**Make up class Friday 10th April**

**Required Reading:**

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<tr>
<th>Session 10</th>
<th>Judgement and Decision Making</th>
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**Required Reading:**

**Assignment due: Video Proposal (10%)**

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<th>Session 11</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
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**Required Reading:**

**Session 12  Learning**

**Monday 27 April**

**Required Reading:**

**Session 13  Perception and Language**

**Monday 4 May**

**Guest Lecturer: Nathan Mifsud**

**Required Reading:**
- Goldstein, E.B. (2013) Chapter 3 and 11

**Session 14  Revision**

**Monday 11 May**

**Video Demonstrations Due: (20%)**

**Final Examination (30%): Wednesday May 20, 3:00-5:00pm**

**Your Instructor**

Dr Oren Griffiths completed his PhD in cognitive psychology at the University of New South Wales in 2008. His primary areas of research interest are the fundamental principles of human attention, reasoning and learning, and how disruptions in these processes underlie mental health disorders. Current research projects include how evaluative conditioning principles influence people’s interactions on Facebook, and the role of fundamental learning processes play in the formation of psychotic symptoms (such as delusions and hallucinations). After a post-doctoral fellowship at Goettingen University (Germany) he returned to UNSW to complete a series of post-doctoral fellowships in human learning and psychopathology. In addition, he is a practicing clinical psychology registrar.