Cognition

Class code
PSYCH-UA 9029 – 002

Instructor Details
Suraj Samtani
ss9224@nyu.edu
Consultations by appointment.
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Cognition
Tuesday, 9:00am – 12:00pm
September 1 – December 8
Room 304
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
PSYCH-UA 1 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 Monday 14 December 10am-12pm.

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. The minimum requirements for the course have not been met.

Your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your total percent score is at least:</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>86</th>
<th>82</th>
<th>72</th>
<th>68</th>
<th>64</th>
<th>54</th>
<th>40</th>
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<tr>
<td>then you will receive a grade no lower than:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
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Submission of Work

Should work be submitted as a hard copy, or electronically?
Unless otherwise specified, all written work must be submitted as a hard copy. The majority of written assignments must also be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. All in-class presentations must be completed during class time.

Who may submit a student’s work?
Each student’s assigned work must be handed in personally by that student. The student may not nominate another person to act on his/her behalf.

When and where should the work be submitted?
The hard copy of any written work must be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of class on the date the work is due. If the assignment due date falls outside of class time, work must be submitted to the Staff Member on duty in Room 2.04 during prescribed Office Hours (11:30am-12:30pm and 2:30-3:30pm Mon-Thu), or by appointment with the Academic Programs Coordinator. Each submitted item of work received in Room 2.04 will be date and time stamped in the presence of the student. Work submitted in Room 2.04 will not be considered “received” unless formally stamped.

What is the Process for Late Submission of Work?
After the due date, work may only be submitted under the following conditions:

- Late work, even if an extension has been granted, must be submitted in person by appointment with the Academic Programs Coordinator. Each submitted item of work must be date and time stamped in order to be considered “received”.

- 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 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work.

- Because failure to submit or fulfil any required course component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to submit every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero. Early departure from the program therefore places the student at risk of failing the course.

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
Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive
Policy 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 affect students’ semester grades. 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.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalized by a two
percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more
times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in
a course may result in 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.

Religious Observance Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to
miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include
the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their
professor and the Assistant Director, Academic Programs in writing via email one week in
advance before being absent for this purpose.

Provisions to students with Disabilities Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are
encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as
soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely
fashion. For more information, see *Study Away and Disability*.

### Required Texts


### Supplemental Texts


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

**Tuesday September 1**

**Required Reading:**
- Goldstein, E.B. (2015) Chapter 1

### Session 2  Memory: Cognitive Neuroscience and Short-term Memory

**Tuesday September 8**

**Required Reading:**

### Session 3  Memory: Long-term Memory 1

**Tuesday September 15**

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

### Session 4  Memory: Long-term Memory 2

**Tuesday September 22**

**Required Reading:**
• Goldstein, E.B. (2015) Chapter 6 and 7

Session 5  Memory: Memory in use, visual memory and imagery
Tuesday September 29

Required Reading:
• Goldstein, E.B. (2015) Chapter 8 and 10

FALL BREAK: October 5-9

Session 6  Attention
Tuesday October 13

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

Session 7  Knowledge: Concepts and Categories
Tuesday October 20

Required Reading:

Session 8  Mid-term Exam
Tuesday October 27

Mid-term Examination (30%)

Session 9  Reasoning
Tuesday November 3
### Session 10  Judgement and Decision Making  
**Tuesday November 10**

**Required Reading:**

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

### Session 11  Problem Solving  
**Tuesday November 17**

**Required Reading:**

### Session 12  Perception and Language  
**Tuesday November 24**

**Guest Lecturer:** Nathan Mifsud

**Required Reading:**

### Session 13  Learning  
**Tuesday December 1**

**Required Reading:**

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

**Session 14  Revision**

**Tuesday December 8**

**Final Examination (30%): Monday December 12, 10:00-12:00pm**

**Your Instructor**

Suraj Samtani is a Clinical Psychologist (Registrar) and a PhD Candidate at the University of New South Wales. His primary research interests are rumination and worry, and developing better assessments and treatments for these cognitive processes across disorders.

He has taught various subjects at UNSW including neuropsychological assessment and psychopathology, social and developmental psychology, and introduction to psychology. He has worked as a clinician with acute psychosis, traumatic brain injury and personality disorder populations, conducting neuropsychological assessments and delivering treatment. His clinical experience also includes working with children and adolescents with learning difficulties, anxiety, depression, and autism spectrum disorder.