Cognition

Class code

PSYCH-UA 9029 – 001

Instructor Details

Dr Suraj Samtani
ss9224@nyu.edu
Consultations by appointment (Monday 12-12.30pm)
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details

Fall 2017

Cognition

Monday, 9:00 – 12:00pm
4 September to 11 December
Room 302
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.

**Assessment Components**

**Class Participation (10%)** – ongoing throughout semester. Students will be given a grade for participation based upon attention during class, responsiveness and thoughts about comments made by other students, and a demonstration that they have read the material.

**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 (15%)**. 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 9:00am, Week 15.

**Proposal for video assignment (5%)** A one-page outline of the psychological principle chosen for the video demonstration. The proposal is to be submitted by 9:00am, Week 11.

**Mid-semester exam (30%)** – consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. Delivered during Week 9.

**Final exam (30%)** – consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. Delivered on Monday 18 December 9:30 – 11:30am.

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

*For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.*

*Extra Credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.*

**Assessment Expectations**

**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 unfinished or unsubmitted.

Grade Conversions

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 to 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>86 to &lt; 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>82 to &lt; 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>72 to &lt; 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>68 to &lt;72</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>64 to &lt;68</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>54 to &lt;64</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>50 to &lt;54</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>45 to &lt;50</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40 to &lt;45</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to &lt;40</td>
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</tbody>
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Submission of Work

Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully been uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

An assessment component completed after the deadline 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. Work completed beyond five weekdays after the due 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 assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.
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.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

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 affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning 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 penalised 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.

Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs staff.

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.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, “...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU Sydney we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

• fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and

• promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

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 Academic Programs Coordinator 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

It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.


Supplemental Texts


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

Monday 4 September

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

Week 2     Memory: Cognitive Neuroscience and Short-term Memory

Monday 11 September

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 3     Memory: Long-term Memory 1

Monday 18 September

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

Recommended Reading:

Week 4     Memory: Long-term Memory 2
Monday 25 September

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 5   Memory: Memory in use, visual memory and imagery

Friday 6 October (Make up class for Monday public holiday)

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 6   Attention

Monday 9 October

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

Recommended Reading:

FALL BREAK: 16-20 October (Week 7)

Week 8   Knowledge: Concepts and Categories

Monday 23 October

Guest Speaker: Dr Erika Penney (to be confirmed; Cognitive distortions in anxiety and depression)

Required Reading:
Recommended Reading:

**Week 9  Mid-term Exam**

*Mid-term Examination (30%)*

**Week 10  Reasoning, Judgement and Decision Making**

Monday 6 November

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

**Week 11  Problem Solving**

Monday 13 November

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

*Assignment due: Video Proposal (5%)*

**Week 12  Perception and Language**

Monday 20 November

**Guest Lecturer:** Nathan Mifsud *(to be confirmed: Visual perception and hallucinations)*

Required Reading:
Recommended Reading:

**Week 13  Learning**

Monday 27 November

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 14  Clinical applications: Dementias and Alzheimer’s Disease**

Monday 4 December

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 15  Revision**

Monday 11 December

*Video Demonstrations Due: (15%)*

**Week 16 (Exam Week) Final Examination (30%): Monday 18 December, 9:30 – 11:30am**

Your Instructor
Dr Suraj Samtani (PhD, University of New South Wales) is a Clinical Psychologist. He has completed a Masters and PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). 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.