**Cognition: Basic Processes**

**UN2210**

**3 points**

**Nora M. Isacoff, PhD**

**Graduate TA: Chey Wakeland-Hart**

**Undergraduate TAs: Maryam Isayeva & Maya Velasco**

**Monday & Wednesday 1:10 – 2:25**

**Havemeyer 209**

**Office Hours**

Nora M. Isacoff ni2237 Uris 204-C Mon & Tues 2:45 – 3:45

Chey Wakeland-Hart cdw2147 Schermerhorn 311 Mon 3 - 4

Maryam Isayeva mi2523 Uris 203 Weds 10 - 11

Maya Velasco mbv2117 Uris 203 Tues 11:30 – 12:30

**Bulletin Description**

An introduction to basic concepts in cognitive psychology. Topics include theories and phenomena in areas such as attention, memory, concepts and categories, language, reasoning, decision making, and consciousness.

**Prerequisitites**

PSYC UN1001 The Science of Psychology, or an equivalent introductory course in psychology.

**Note:** This class overlaps substantially with PSYC 2821 – Cognition in Context. Therefore, students cannot receive major credit for both classes.

**Aims of this class**

The topic of this class is the human mind. In addition to exploring some of the most current theories about how we perceive, remember, speak, and reason (among other abilities), we’ll learn about how psychologists investigate these elusive processes. Students will develop an understanding of how psychologists translate a grand theoretical question like “how does our memory work?” into empirical questions that can actually be tested and measured. As we proceed through our survey of the mind, we will look carefully at the data supporting our claims and also consider alternative explanations for results in the literature. These will be invaluable tools in other psychology classes, classes in other disciplines, and throughout life. A final aim is for you to develop a fascination with the peculiarities of the human mind. As I’ll explain the first class, by “pulling back the curtain,” I believe we can get a little closer to the magic.

**Optional Textbook:** Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind, by Daniel Reisberg, 8th Edition. ISBN: 0393921778; ISBN13: 9780393921779. Alternative versions of the text, or other similar textbooks, are okay, but please make sure the chapter themes align with those in the syllabus. Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

**Communication policies:**

**Have a question about things like deadlines or class policies?**

Step 1. Check the syllabus. The answer is probably in there. (Then check the syllabus again, and the slides, your notes, anywhere the information was that you think you might have seen somewhere.)

Step 2. Ask the classmate whose info you got in the first class

Step 3. Ask a TA.

**Have a question about class concepts?**

Step 1. If it’s quick, ask during class

Step 2. Come to my office hours and/or TA office hours

**Want to go over your in-class questions/quiz/paper?**

Come to my office hours and/or TA office hours

**Have a personal circumstance you need to discuss?**

Email me and/or a TA, or come to my/their office hours

**Grading**

60% The highest 3 of your 4 quizzes (each 20%)

25% Paper

15% In-class problems

**Quizzes**

- All quizzes are 40 multiple-choice questions

- All quizzes are open notes (on paper), but you cannot use any devices

- Quizzes 1, 2, and 3 are non-cumulative

- Quiz 4 is cumulative

- If you miss a quiz (because you are sick, have a family emergency, or for any other reason) it will be dropped, and the other 3 will count. Please email me if you need to miss a quiz so I know you are okay.

- If you are happy with your grades on Quizzes 1-4, you are welcome not to take Quiz 4

**Paper**

For this essay, you will choose any peer-reviewed, empirical journal article relating to cognition that you find on your own. You should *not* choose an article describing an experiment that we have analyzed together in class and should *not* choose an article posted on Canvas. The goal of the essay is to analyze the relationship between the theoretical and empirical questions in this article, which is a skill we’ll practice throughout the semester. The essay should be approximately 1000 words. More details will be available in the *Essay Guidelines* and *Sample Essays* that will be posted on Canvas.

**In-class problems**

At some point during each class, I will put up a problem (or a few problems) to practice the concepts we are discussing that day. I will give you time to work in small groups (2-4 people per group) to discuss the problem(s) and write up a short answer to it.

Rationale: In-class problems will help you 1. Practice for the quizzes 2. Practice for the paper 3. Get to know your classmates and learn about the information in a deeper way through discussion 4. Produce information each class, rather than only listening, which is much more impactful for learning/memory. (We might as well use cognition principles in a class about cognition.0

What to do: Each group should list the names of all group members at the top of the page and submit their answers once. You absolutely **may not** include the name of anyone who was not present in class that day working with your group, as this would count as a violation of academic integrity.

In-class problems are graded for completion, not for accuracy. We will go over each problem in class, and it is your responsibility to check whether your answer was correct and to understand why, if your answer was incorrect. To get full credit for in-class problems, you must turn in 15 in-class problems (out of 24 possible days). I recommend submitting all 24 of them if you can, for the practice, but 15 is the maximum you can get credit for. You may not turn in the problem(s) for the day if you are not in class. Therefore, I recommend making sure you submit 15 early in the semester, to make sure you get full credit. 1 point will be deducted for each in-class problem under 15 (e.g., if you submit 14, your classwork grade will be 14/15).

I strongly recommend you try to answer the in-class problems as you would under quiz conditions (i.e., you use your notes but not the internet). This will give you the best chance of seeing how well you are understanding the material.

**Review/Special Topic/Catch-up Days**

There are 3 days on the syllabus listed as review/special topic/catch-up days. Depending on timing and the interests of the class, we may be able to use this time to explore additional topics related to cognition or to dig more deeply into some of the topics we are covering. If there is a topic you are particularly interested in, please let me know.

**Extra Credit Policy**

Please note that because all of the assignments are open-notes/open-book and you have the opportunity to work with other students on in-class problems, there are no extra credit opportunities.

**Late Policy**

The paper will lose 10% for every day late (e.g., if you got a 95% and handed it in a day late, your grade will be an 85%).

**Academic integrity.**

Any use of AI (e.g., ChatGPT) in any assignment you are submitting must be disclosed, with a detailed description including the prompt(s) you entered, the output, and how you used the information. Use of AI without a disclosure can result in failure of the class in addition to penalties at the University level.

Violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, using AI when not permitted or without disclosure, putting other students’ names on your in-class problems, and any other violations of academic integrity, will be reported to the university and can potentially result in failing this class as well as other sanctions determined by the university.

**Students with disabilities**. If you are a student with special needs and require accommodation, you must also contact Disability Services before the first class to register for specific accommodations (https://health.columbia.edu/disability-services).

**Technology policy.** Our devices are distracting (to ourselves and others). They just are! If you have websites/games/messenger/email/social media/etc. open, of course you are going to look at it. I strongly recommend trying out leaving your device closed and taking notes in a notebook. Try it for a class or two and see how it feels. If you choose to use a device, I recommend closing all tabs other than the slides/your notes. Whatever you choose, please do what you can to minimize distraction to others/maximize your contribution to a positive learning environment.

**Attendance.** Attendance will not be taken, other than submission of class problems and quizzes. You do not need to notify me if you will be absent. If you are sick, you should stay home. If you are able to come to class, you should come. There is no Zoom option. Recordings of each class, as well as the slides for the day, will be posted for your review, but generally, students who come to class learn much more, have a much more positive experience, and perform much better on assignments.

**SCHEDULE**

Chapter numbers refer to the Reisberg textbook. Other readings will be available on Canvas. All readings are optional, if you want to dig further into a topic or gain clarity. All mandatory information will come from the lectures.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1/22 | Introductions |  | Problem 1 |
| 1/27 | The Rise of Cognitive Psychology  | Ch 1 | Problem 2 |
| 1/29 | Research Methods in Cognition  | Firestone  | Problem 3 |
| 2/3 | Perception  | Ch 3 | Problem 4 |
| 2/5 | Physical Reasoning  | Wang et al | Problem 5 |
| 2/10 | Attention  | Ch. 5 | Problem 6 |
| 2/12 | Executive Functioning  | Calarco  | Problem 7 |
| 2/17 | Review/Special Topic/Catch-up day | TBD | Problem 8 |
| **2/19** **Quiz 1** |  |
| 2/24 | Memory 1 | Ch. 6 – 8 | Problem 9 |
| 2/26 | Memory 2 | Ch. 6 – 8 | Problem 10 |
| 3/3 | Theory of Mind  | Barrett et al | Problem 11 |
| 3/5 | Symbolic Development & Pretend Play  | Sheehan & Uttal | Problem 12 |
| 3/10 | Concepts & Categories | Ch. 9 | Problem 13 |
| 3/12 | Reading  | Hanford (in class) | Problem 14 |
| **3/13 11:59p Paper Due** |  |
| **3/17, 3/19 Spring Break** |  |
| 3/24 | Review/Special Topic/Catch-up day | TBD | Problem 15 |
| **3/26 Quiz 2** |  |
| 3/31 | Language Part 1  | Ch. 10 | Problem 16 |
| 4/2 | Language Part 2  | Wolff & Holmes | Problem 17 |
| 4/7 | Reasoning & Decision Making  | Ch. 12, Dorin et al | Problem 18 |
| 4/9 | Moral Cognition  | Haidt, Awad et al | Problem 19 |
| 4/14 | Neurodiversity  | Krcek | Problem 20 |
| 4/16 | Consciousness  | Ch. 15 | Problem 21 |
| 4/21 | Review/Special Topic/Catch-up day | TBD | Problem 22 |
| **4/23** **Quiz 3** |  |
| 4/28 | TAs Present | TBD | Problem 23 |
| 4/30 | TAs Present  | TBD | Problem 24 |
| **5/5 Quiz 4 (Optional)** |  |