

**PSCH 731 & 831**  
**GRADUATE HUMAN COGNITION**  
**Course Syllabus**

**Instructor** : Ivan K. Ash, Ph.D.  
**Office** : Mills Godwin 132 E  
**Office Hours** : 4:30-5:30 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays  
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**Class** : 3:00-4:15 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Required Text:** Hunt, R. R. & Ellis, H. E. (2004). *Fundamentals of Cognitive Psychology* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 0-07-285895-8

**Required Readings:** Please refer to the attached reading list. All articles will be posted in pdf format on the course's blackboard page <http://blackboard.odu.edu/>.

**Recommended:** American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Washington, DC

**Course Goals:**

Cognitive Psychology is the scientific study of the mental processes involved in perception, learning, memory, language, comprehension, reasoning, problem solving, judgment formation, and decision making. This course is designed to provide students with an extensive foundation in Cognitive Psychology. Emphasis will be placed on aspects important (and perhaps unique) to Human Cognition. Modern information processing theories, computer based modeling approaches, and insights from cognitive neuroscience will guide discussions of topics such as attention, working memory, knowledge representation, language processing and reasoning. This course is designed for Graduate Students in the Psychology Departments M.S. or Ph.D. Programs. Course work will primarily focus on comprehending, integrating, and critiquing psychological theories and research from primary source journal articles.

**Readings:**

The bulk of the course work in this course will come involve readings on different topics of Cognitive Psychology. This course is designed to be an advanced survey of the traditional topics investigated by researchers in this field. There are two sources of reading. The first is the text book by Hunt and Ellis (H&E) will be used to introduce topics and give an overview of the history of research in an area. The second type of readings will be sets of primary source research articles for each topic that were selected to illustrate the major theoretical perspectives in the field and introduce you to modern research on these topics.

The course schedule lists which class each reading assignment is connected to. You are expected to have all readings completed and be ready for discussion before each class. Please stay on top of your reading list. When you have extra time, you should use it to get a jump-start on the next set of readings. Also, be sure to take good notes while you read so that you do not have to re-read the same article multiple times.

**Lecture:**

My philosophy for instructing graduate courses centers on the goal training you to be professional psychological researchers. For professional researchers, mastery of a new literature or content area is a self directed and self motivated pursuit. In other words, when a professional psychologist decides that he or she wants to open a new line of research, the person needs to head to the library and start reading up on that topic. For a professional understanding of topics, you need to delve into the primary source journal articles to learn about the concepts and theories in the field from the most advanced and current research psychologists. Therefore, I will not be spending the majority of class time lecturing in this course. I will serve more as a guide who will introduce you to the different topics, help you clarify and comprehend the difficult concepts, point you to the issues that are important, work to keep the discussion of the issues and theories on a productive track, and help direct your future exploration into these topics. However, just because time in class will not be spent listening to lectures, does not mean that class attendance is not important. In fact, your attendance is crucial to your success in this class. Class time will be used to discuss the readings, clarify issues, debate perspectives, and integrate the different readings. Therefore, your attendance in class will be critical for both own understanding of the topics and for the overall success of this course format.

**Reaction Papers & Proposed Essay Questions:**

For each set of primary source readings you will complete a reaction paper. The reaction papers should be short essays (about 1 page single spaced) in which you report some sort of reaction, impression, idea, question, issue, or disagreement that you had after completing the readings. You will also be asked to write at least two essay style questions inspired by the chapter or articles for each section and submit them with your reaction paper. Reaction papers and proposed test questions are to be posted on the Discussion Board on this courses Blackboard site by noon the day before the class where we are scheduled to discuss the readings.

There are several goals for the reactions papers. First is to make sure that you are keeping up with your readings (i.e. to reward those who are prepared for class). The second goal is to use the issues brought up in the reaction papers to help stimulate class discussion. All students will be expected to go over their fellow students' reaction papers before the class discussion. This will help all of us come to class ready for a lively discussion. Finally, discussion papers are designed to give you experience writing concisely about research articles and communicating ideas to others. In an introduction section of an APA style article you need to be able to summarize a finding and make your point about it in a few short sentences. We all can use as much practice as we can get at this difficult technical writing skill. Finally, your proposed essay questions will be used to compile the mid-term and final exams. Successful completion of reaction papers and proposed essay questions will be included in your final grade.

**Discussion Leaders:**

I will serve as discussion leader on days that new topics are introduced. On the days that we discuss the articles from the readings list, students in the class will serve as discussion leader. Depending on the number of articles in the reading list one or two students will be assigned to serve as discussion leaders each week. Discussion leaders will be expected to be prepared to present short summaries or introductions for each article, to guide the class in discussing the different articles, lead the class in clarification and debates of issues, to keep discussions on track so all material is covered, and to have issues and question prepared to help prompt discussion. Every student in the class will be required to participate as discussion leader or co-leader for at least one topic this semester. Your performance as discussion leader will count toward your final grade.

**Mid-term and Final Exams:**

The mid-tem and final exams will present essay style questions selected from your proposed questions, the chapter review questions, and questions I design based on the readings and discussions. These tests will be open book/open note and completed in class. These exams will serve as the courses primary assessment of your mastery of the course material and be counted toward your final grade.

**Final Paper:**

The primary project in this class will be an independent research paper. These papers should demonstrate your mastery of the topics, concepts, and literature presented in this course. That being said, the research paper could take many different forms. It could be a compare and contrast of different cognitive theories or paradigms, it can be a review of the current literature on a topic covered in class, it could be a critique of research on a topic or particular paradigm, a research proposal, or (perhaps most useful and interesting) it could be an integrative paper where you attempt to apply some of the concepts and theories presented in this course to your own topic of interest. Papers are to be in APA style and the body of the paper should be no more than 10 pages (clear and concise writing is the name of the game). The papers from our class reading list can serve as a starting point for your papers, however further independent research into a topic will be expected for an acceptable paper. Papers will be graded based on adherence to the guidelines and deadlines, and on its expressed mastery of the topics, concepts, and theories covered in this course.

The deadlines for different stages of the paper project occur throughout the semester and are listed in the schedule. These will be discussed further in class. Please pay attention to the deadlines and do not leave your paper until the last minute.

We will be using a peer-review system in this class for developing our papers. You each will be assigned to 3-4 person reading groups where you exchange papers for review. This part of the project is designed to mimic the peer-review process used for most professional journals and will help you gain experience writing reviews and responding to editors comments. Each stage of the paper project will count toward your final grade.

**HONOR PLEDGE:**

The Honor Code of ODU shall be abided by. The Honor Pledge is as follows:

“I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community it is my responsibility to turn in all suspected violators of the honor code. I will report to a hearing if summoned.”

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Without exception, any student who breaks the University’s code of academic integrity will receive an automatic “F” for the course and will be the subject of formal charges. University’s policies for academic dishonesty: <http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/osja/academicdishonesty.shtml>

**SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS:**

In compliance with PL94-142 and more recent federal legislation affirming the rights of disabled individuals, provisions will be made for students with special needs on an individual basis. It is the student's responsibility to request assistance as soon as possible from Disability Services before any accommodations can be furnished. Reasonable accommodations are arranged in the spirit of equalizing opportunity and are based on the student's individual documentation. Documentation of a disability must meet the established guidelines which are available from the Office Disability Services. Contact Info: 1525 Webb Center, Phone: 757-683-4655, Webpage: <http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/disabilityservices/about.shtml>

**Grading:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Grading Scale</b>		
Discussion Leader:	10%	100-93% = A	92-90% = A-	
Reaction Papers & Questions:	15%	89-88% = B+	87-83% = B	82-80% = B-
Mid-term Exam:	15%	79-78% = C+	77-73% = C	72-70% = C-
Final Exam:	15%	Below 70% = F		
Topic Proposal:	5%			
Final Topic & Reading List:	5%			
Review Draft:	5%			
Peer-reviews:	10%			
Final Paper:	20%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>			

**Course Schedule:**

	<b>Date</b>		<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assigned Readings</b>	<b>Final Paper</b>
Week 1	Tuesday	26-Aug	Introduction		
	Thursday	28-Aug	Cognitive Psychology	H&E Chapter 1 Behaviorism Readings	
Week 2	Tuesday	2-Sep	Behaviorism/Cognitive Revolution Discussion	Cognitive Rev Readings	
	Thursday	4-Sep	Perception	H&E Chapter 2	
Week 3	Tuesday	9-Sep	Perception Discussion	Perception Readings	
	Thursday	11-Sep	Attention	H&E Chapter 3	
Week 4	Tuesday	16-Sep	Attention Discussion	Attention Readings	
	Thursday	18-Sep	Working Memory	H&E Chapter 4	
Week 5	Tuesday	23-Sep	Working Memory Discussion	WM readings	
	Thursday	25-Sep	Long-term Memory	H&E Chapter 5	Topic Proposal & Reading List
Week 6	Tuesday	30-Sep	Long-term Memory Discussion	LTM Readings	
	Thursday	2=Oct	Skill Acquisition Discussion	Skill Acquisition Readings	
Week 7	Tuesday	7-Oct	Implicit Memory/ Learning	H&E Chapter 6	Final Topic & Reading List
	Thursday	9-Oct	Implicit Memory /Learning Discussion	Implicit Readings	

	Date		Topic	Assigned Readings	Final Paper
Week 8	Tuesday	14-Oct	<b>Fall Break No Class</b>		
	Thursday	16-Oct	<b>Mid-term EXAM</b>		
Week 9	Tuesday	21-Oct	Forgetting/ False Memory	H&E Chapter 7	
	Thursday	23-Oct	Forgetting/ False Memory Discussion	Forgetting Readings	
Week 10	Tuesday	28-Oct	Conceptual Knowledge	H&E Chapter 9	
	Thursday	30-Oct	Conceptual Knowledge Knowledge Discussion	Concept Readings	
Week 11	Tuesday	4-Nov	Language	H&E Chapter 10	Paper for Peer Reviews
	Thursday	6-Nov	Language	H&E Chapter 11	
Week 12	Tuesday	11-Nov	Language Comprehension Discussion	Comprehension Readings	
	Thursday	13-Nov	<b>NO CLASS</b> Work On Peer Reviews		
Week 13	Tuesday	20-Nov	Problem Solving	H&E Chapter 12	Peer Reviews
	Thursday	22-Nov	<b>No Class</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b>		
Week 14	Tuesday	27-Nov	Problem Solving Discussion	Problem Solving Readings	
	Thursday	29-Nov	Reasoning Discussion	Reasoning Readings	
Week 15	Tuesday	2-Dec	Judgment/Decision Discussion	Judgment/Decision Readings	
	Thursday	4-Dec	<b>Final Exam</b>		Final Paper