PSY 541 GRADUATE SEMINAR IN COGNITION
Spring 2018
4 Credits
Room TBD
Meeting times: 4 hours per week on the Corvallis campus

Instructor
Jason S. McCarley
School of Psychological Science
Office: Reed Lodge 211
Office hours: TBA

Course description
Cognitive psychology studies the processes by which we notice, encode, remember, and use information. This course is a graduate-level survey that covers the history, methods, important findings, and major theories of the field, with an emphasis on reading and critically analyzing articles from the primary research literature. Topics of interest will include perception and object recognition, attention, working memory, long-term memory, concepts and categorization, and judgment and decision making.

Learning outcomes
Our goal is that at the end of the course, you will be able to:
• describe important empirical characteristics of human cognition;
• summarize and evaluate major theories and principles that have been used to explain the characteristics of human cognition;
• summarize papers from the primary research literature on cognitive psychology, and critique them methodologically and substantively.

Prerequisites
None

Learning resources
We will have one required textbook, Eysenck & Keane (2015). Additional readings will be drawn from the primary research literature. A tentative list of articles that we will read and discuss is presented in the calendar below.


Course structure and content
We will spend the first 9 weeks of the term covering topics and readings selected by the instructor. The tenth week of the term will be devoted to presentations from students, on topics of their choice.

Most weeks, we will cover a chapter or portion of a chapter from Eysenck & Keane (2015), along with one or more journal articles. Class sessions will be organized around discussion of these readings. Students should come to class prepared to summarize and critique each reading.
To aid preparation and facilitate class discussion, students will provide A) a bullet-point summary of each Eysenck & Keane chapter, and B) a 1/2 – 1 page reaction paper to each journal article. The summary and reaction papers should be emailed to the instructor by 5 pm, the day before the class meeting at which the chapter and/or articles are to be discussed.

The purpose of your reaction papers will be to help you read and critically analyze the articles under discussion.

Reaction papers typically include a brief summary of the article, including prior research, hypotheses, research method, main results, and conclusions. The next step is your critical reaction. You might critique the study, identify unresolved issues, suggest future research, or reflect on the study’s implications. [You may also] connect the material you are learning in class with the article’s theories, methodology, and findings. Remember, reaction papers require more than a simple summary of what you have read. (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/psychology/).

These links provide further useful guidance on writing good reaction papers.  
http://public.wsu.edu/~moonlee/WritingReactionPaper.html  
http://behavioralsciencewriting.blogspot.com/2012/10/what-is-reaction-paper-how-do-i-write.html

A tentative calendar for the semester appears below.

**Evaluation of student performance**
Your grade for the semester will be based on the average of three equally-weighted components:
1) class participation, including chapter summaries and reaction papers;
2) class presentation;
3) a final paper.

**Class participation.** Class participation will be assessed each week on a pass/fail basis. You will receive a passing score for the week if you submit the expected chapter summary and reaction papers, and engage in class discussion.

**Class presentation.** The last week of the semester will be dedicated to student presentations. These are meant as an opportunity for you to choose a sub-topic that interests you, explore the literature on it, and relate it to the class. I will allow 30 minutes for each presentation, including 20-25 minutes for the presentation itself and 5 – 10 minutes of questions. Presentations may cover topics from cognitive psychology or any closely related field (e.g., social cognition, cognitive neuroscience, philosophy of mind). The presentation should be structured as an introduction/overview of the topic for people unfamiliar with it. Presentations will be graded on content, organization, and delivery.

**Paper.** You will also write a short paper on the topic of your class presentation. This paper should be 2000-2500 words in length, and take the form of a popular media article aimed at a general audience (e.g., an article from *Scientific American*). Papers will be graded on content, organization, and mechanics. Paper will be due by 5:00 PM the Friday of week 10.
Attendance policy
As class participation is a major component of your grade for the semester, consistent attendance will be imperative. The requirement to participate in class discussion for a given session will be waived only in cases where, A) I am notified in advance that you will be absent for a university-approved reason, or B) you provide documentation (e.g., a note from a doctor) that an emergency prevented you from attending class. In the event that you are not able to attend a given class session, you will still be expected to submit the chapter summary and/or reaction papers, and your class participation score for that session will be based solely on those items.

Academic Integrity
Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic conduct. The University defines academic dishonesty as, “an intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work.” This is interpreted to cover five categories of behavior: cheating, fabricating information, assisting someone else to carry out academic misconduct, altering or interfering with evaluations or materials, and plagiarizing (http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/academic-misconduct-reporting-forms).

What all of that means in this course, roughly, is that we will expect students to perform their own work on various assessments, not to disrupt class or assessments, and to give appropriate credit when presenting other people’s words or thoughts. Violations will lead to an academic misconduct report. At a minimum, a student found to have violated standards of academic honesty will lose all credit for the assessment on which the violation occurred.

For more detailed information on the University's expectations, policies, and procedures pertaining to academic conduct, please see:
- http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0
- http://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/subject-guide/1771-Academic-Integrity-for-Students

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities
Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at http://ds.oregonstate.edu. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.
Calendar
Here is a tentative calendar/list of readings we will cover. Note that this is subject to change. Changes to the assigned readings will be announced at least one week before the due date.

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<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC AND READINGS</th>
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| 1    | Syllabus + History and philosophical foundations of cognitive psychology  
Eysenck & Keane (2015), Chapter 1, “Approaches to human cognition.”  
*Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 141–144.  
http://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613(03)00029-9  
| 2    | Vision and two visual systems  
Visual object recognition  
| 3    | Perceptual attention  
| 4    | Attention and cognitive control  
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| 5    | **Working memory**  
Eysenck & Keane (2015), Chapter 6, “Learning, memory, and forgetting”, pp. 209-228  
| 6    | **Long-term memory**  
Eysenck & Keane (2015), Chapter 6, “Learning, memory, and forgetting,” pp. 229-259  
| 7    | **Everyday memory**  
Eysenck & Keane (2015), Chapter 8, “Everyday memory.”  
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| 8    | **Categorization**  
| 9    | **Problem solving**  
Eysenck & Keane (2015), Chapter 9, 503-526.  
| 9    | **Expertise**  
| 9    | **Judgment and decision making**  
| 10   | **Student presentations** |