Syllabus

Cognitive Processes
50:830:362
Fall 2007

Class location: FA 110
Time: M W 1:20 - 2:40 p.m

Professor: Dr. Adelson
Office hours. Monday & Wednesday:
Mon. 2:40 - 4:10 p.m, Armitage 311. Wed. 2:40 - 3:10 FA 110
Best way to reach me:
email: adelson@rutgers.edu

- Cut off for arranging extra credit assignments: Nov. 1.
- This syllabus may change.
  - If so, new versions will be sent to you by email.
  - You are responsible for being current.

- Texts:
  - Required: *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications. 6th edition.* John R. Anderson
  - Recommended: *Attention Revolution.* (Wallace) & *Pay Attention* (Boorstein)

- Nature of the course
This course will cover the classic topics of experimental cognitive psychology focusing on process and representation in memory. Toward that end it will be a rigorous exploration of experimental work of the last few decades. Class time will be spent reviewing in detail the operationalization of hypotheses and the attendant experimental procedures and results.
The work will require reasoning through the relationship between quantitative experimental results and structures posited to underlie cognition. In keeping with current research on cognition, a computational metaphor will be assumed when looking at underlying cognitive structures. It is expected that this course will provide a good background for students who intend to go on for graduate study.

- **Exams**

  - **Three in-class exams.** (Each is worth 1/3 of your grade.)
    - The dates are Oct 3, Nov 7 & Dec 12.
    - Honesty policy: please see:
      http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/info/Academic-Integrity-Policy.html
    - There are no **make up exams**. But see “excused absences” just below.
      Exceptions cannot be made because this would mean some students might have a harder grading criterion than others.
    - **Excused absences on exams:**
      * No student can have more than one excused exam absence per semester, for any reason, so use them sparingly.
        - Any test missed, for any reason excused or otherwise, after the first excused one gets a zero.
      * Documented illness or documented family emergency are the only bases for the first excused absence. Vacations, no matter how badly needed; weddings or family events are some examples of excluded reasons.
        - If you fall into the category of excluded reasons, although I am personally supportive, I cannot change the policy, so you might want to make other arrangements. The decision is up to you, but these are the consequences, please plan ahead.
      * If you are excused:
        1. I will **average the grades on the exams you have taken**.
        2. I will ask you to write a 6 page paper. It will be on the material you would have been tested on and will take the same amount of time as it would have taken you to study.
        3. It is your responsibility to arrange this with me at the time you request the absence.

- **Extra credit assignments:** By prior arrangement only
• Students can do outside reading of journal articles cited in the text and write a 2 page paper or make an in-class presentation.
  
  – I must agree to the article and paper/presentation beforehand.

• Each extra credit assignment is worth 2 extra points on your most recent exam. Maximum: 2 per student.

• Must be arranged by Nov 1.
  
  – This is a firm deadline. If you are worried about your grade, be sure to plan ahead.

• Grading scheme:
  
  Your final grade will be computed by averaging your grades on the three in-class exams. 
  
  Your final grade will be computed on the following scale.

  100 - 90 = A (4.0)  
  85 - 89 = B+ (3.5)  
  80 - 84 = B (3.0)  
  75 - 79 = C+ (2.5)  
  70 - 74 = C (2.0)  
  69 - 60 = D (1.0)  
  < 60 = F (0.0)

• Class behavior regulations:
  
  These are quite similar to what you may have seen in Dr. Garcia’s & Dr. Rantuccio’s classes.

  There are certain expectations that I have concerning students who take my courses. My experience is that classes function best when students abide by these expectations. They are:

1. You are expected to come to class on time.
  
  • Students may not walk into class late. This can be very distracting.
  
  • Also, if you come to class, you are expected to stay for the entire class period unless you seek permission beforehand.
2. If you attend class, you are expected to pay attention to the lecture and discussion. In large classes students feel anonymous and there is a tendency to interact with friends. Again, this can be very distracting.

3. If you must use the facilities during class you must not walk in front of the speaker or allow the door to slam on entering and exiting.

4. You may not use electronic devices without permission and then only to record class notes.

5. You may not engage in any behavior that detracts from the class learning experience.

- **Violations?**
  - Everyone can slip, so everyone gets one warning for the above rules.
  - I hope that you all act in accord with the above.
    - If you do not wish to, you may take a different class.
    - If there is a problem with keeping to these regulations I will create a student committee and/or establish published penalties as is needed for class to go happily and smoothly.
Classroom Meeting Schedule

- Sep 5: Course Business & Introduction

- Week of Sep 10: The Science of Cognition – Chapter 1

- Week of Sep 17: Abstraction of Information into Memory – Chapter 5

- Week of Sep 24: Human Memory: Encoding and Storage – Chapter 6


- Week of Oct 8:
  - Videos on cognition and contemplative practice. – Student led discussions.

- Week of Oct 15: Human Memory: Retention and Retrieval – Chapter 7

- Week of Oct 22: Problem-Solving – Chapter 8

- Week of Oct 29: Expertise – Chapter 9


- Week of Nov 12: Language – Chapter 11


- Week of Nov 26: Language – Chapter 12

- Week of Dec 3: Individual Differences in Cognition – Chapter 13