

## **PSYD50: Current Topics in Memory and Cognition Summer 2006**

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday 10-12

Classroom: BV-363

Virtual Meeting Place: The Intranet PSYD50 Discussion Board (<http://intranet.utoronto.ca>)

### **Contact Information**

Instructor: Prof. George Scott Cree

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**Goals of the course:** This course is designed to help you develop your critical thinking and communication skills. It will also serve as an introduction to current topics of debate and research interest in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. The goal is to use in-depth discussion of specific topics to illustrate the kinds of theories, research strategies, data, and mistakes, that researchers use/make when conducting their research ,and trying to develop a better understanding of cognition.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

Weekly Tests (best 10 of 11)	20%
Presentation and Discussion Leader	10%
Class Participation	5%
Discussion Board Participation	5%
Thought Papers (best 10 of 11)	30%
Final Exam	30%

Weekly tests are included to ensure everyone reads all of the assigned material, which is crucial if we are to have informed, intelligent discussions. Presentations are included to make sure you get practice verbally defending a thesis on a controversial topic. Class discussion is included to promote sharing of ideas, discussion of challenging topics, and to illustrate the diversity of opinions present on any given topic. Thought papers will help you develop your critical thinking and writing skills.

The final exam will include questions about the material assigned for intranet discussions (similar in format to the weekly tests), and a short article on a controversial topic, related to course content, that you will be required to read and critique.

### **Note:**

1. There will be an in class quiz at the beginning of every class, starting with the second class. If you arrive late, you will not be given extra time. If you miss it, you forfeit the marks (except in the case of illness).
2. Thought papers are to be handed in at the same time as tests. They will not be accepted late (it is unfair to the other people in the class that you should benefit from seeing the presentations, hearing the class discussion, and having extra time).

3. If you miss a class due to illness, be sure to get appropriate medical documentation. In the case of tests, your mark will be computed out of the remaining number of tests (e.g., if you miss 1 test, then your best 9 of 10 will make up the test component of your grade). If you miss a thought paper, then you are expected to hand it in within 1 week from the date you return to school.
4. Note that only the best 10 of 11 marks count for both tests and thought papers. If you choose not to attend a class because of a wedding, funeral, academic trip, migraine, etc., then be forewarned that it will count as your missed (lowest mark) assignment. Rarely, in truly exceptional circumstances, I may grant extensions for missed assignments.

**General Class Structure (2 hours):**

10:10 -	Class begins.
10:10 - 10:15 -	General Questions.
10:15 - 10:25 -	Test
10:25 - 10:30 -	Return and discuss previous weeks tests, thought papers, and discussions.
10:30 - 10:45 -	First student presentation (5 minutes for questions).
10:45 - 11:00 -	Open Discussion (led by presenter).
11:00 - 11:10 -	Break.
11:10 - 11:25 -	Second student presentation (5 minutes for questions).
11:25 - 11:40 -	Open Discussion (led by presenter).
11:40 - 12:00 -	Summary and Introduction to next topic.

**Topics:**

- Week 1: Introduction.
- Week 2: What are the big questions in mind/brain science?
- Week 3: The Past Tense debate.
- Week 4: The Eliminative Connectionism debate.
- Week 5: Semantic memory: reaction time studies, dead-ends, and new paths.
- Week 6: Theories of category-specific semantic deficits and the structure of semantic memory.
- Week 7: Can neuroimaging inform cognitive theories?
- Week 8: What have we learned about the structure of semantic memory from neuroimaging?
- Week 9: Single unit recording, neural representation, and Grandmother cells.
- Week 10: The Modularity debate: face module or expertise?
- Week 11: The False Memory debate.
- Week 12: Can we forget unwanted memories through active suppression?

**Potential Discussion Board Topics:**

- Intranet 1. Will computers ever be able to think? Attain Consciousness?
- Intranet 2. Will we find a neural correlate of consciousness?
- Intranet 3. Can we observe a person's thoughts with current day neuroimaging techniques?
- Intranet 4. Neuroethics: Memory pills and neural-prosthetics.
- Intranet 5. Do we have free will?

**Policies on missed exams.**

If you miss the final exam you will have to petition to be allowed to write a deferred final exam during the next exam period (up to four months away).

Please be aware that I can not, by U of T policy, accept assignments after the last day of classes.

**Policies on academic integrity**

Please review the UTSC Code on Academic Behaviour:

[http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/courses/calendar/University\\_of\\_Toronto\\_Policies.html#Code\\_of Behaviour on Academic Matters](http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/courses/calendar/University_of_Toronto_Policies.html#Code_of_Behaviour_on_Academic_Matters)

**AccessAbility**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. The UTSC AccessAbility Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

*The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*