

**PSYD50-07W: Current Topics in Memory and Cognition
Winter 2007**

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday 9-11
Classroom: AA-204

Contact Information

Instructor: Prof. George Cree

Office: S-559

Office Phone: (416) 287-7439

Email: gcree@utsc.utoronto.ca (preferred means of communication)

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	10%
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 consist of 2 short articles that will present opposite sides of a debate. You will have 3 hours to produce a thought paper, exactly like the ones you have been writing all term, in which you defend one side of the debate.

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):

9:10 -	Class begins.
9:10 - 9:15 -	General Questions. Hand in Thought Papers.
9:15 - 9:30 -	Test
9:30 - 9:40 -	Return and discuss previous tests and thought papers.
9:40 - 9:55 -	First student presentation (5 minutes for questions).
9:55 - 10:05 -	Break.
10:05 - 10:20 -	Second student presentation (5 minutes for questions).
10:20 - 10:50 -	Open Discussion (led by presenters).
10:50 - 11:00 -	Summary, and Introduction to next topic.

Topics:

Popular Media

- Week 1: Halle Berry Neurons: Single Unit Recording and Grandmother Cells.
- Week 2: Smart Drugs and other Cognitive Enhancements: What is the state of the art, and should it be allowed?
- Week 3: Lie Detection: Can/should modern neuroimaging techniques be used for detecting lies in court room settings?

Classic Debates:

- Week 4: Rules vs. Symbols: The Past Tense Debate
- Week 5: Face Modules vs. Expertise: The Modularity Debate
- Week 6: Theories of Category-Specific Semantic Deficits: How is knowledge stored in the mind/brain?

New Findings: You Spot the Controversy

- Week 7: Gary Marcus & The Algebraic Mind: Rules and Symbols vs. Connectionism.
- Week 8: Michael Anderson & Repression: What can we learn from laboratory analogues of repressed memory?
- Week 9: Elizabeth Loftus and Implanting False Memories

New Frontiers: What questions should we be asking?

- Week 10: Moral Cognition: mechanisms and representations.
- Week 11: Neuro-Economics: The neural and cognitive mechanisms of decision making.
- Week 12: Mind Reading: What are the limits of modern day neuroimaging techniques?

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

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. 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.