

PSYB57: Introduction to Cognitive Psychology

0.5 credits

University of Toronto, Scarborough

Winter Term, 2025

LEC01 (in-person)



Instructor: Prof. Michael Souza (he/him) (note: my surname is pronounced “SUES-uh”)

Email: michael.souza@utoronto.ca (**please note: I do not read or respond to Quercus messages**)

Office Hours: *This information can be found under Quercus Announcements*

Head TA: Gahyun Kim

Email: gh.kim@mail.utoronto.ca (**please note: I do not read or respond to Quercus messages**)

Office Hours: *This information can be found under Quercus Announcements*

I. Your instructor and Head TA



Dr. Souza is an Associate Professor (Teaching Stream) of Psychology and Neuroscience at UTSC. He received his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2010. His teaching interests include cognitive neuroimaging, higher-order cognitive functions, and cognitive impairments and neurorehabilitation.

II. Course description, pre-requisites and learning goals

Cognitive psychology is a subfield of psychology concerned with the scientific study of mental processes, and how those mental processes give rise to thoughts and actions. With respect to content, the goal of this course is to provide you with a thorough survey of the field of cognition, including coverage in topics such as relevant history and methods, perception and object recognition, attention, memory, visual imagery, language, problem-solving, intelligence and consciousness. With respect to process, this course will introduce you how to conceptualize and concretize questions in cognition, how to deconstruct and answer short-answer questions, and how to approach a primary research article in cognition. Taken together, this course is engineered to provide you with the knowledge and fundamental skills necessary to advance your understanding of cognition.

Prerequisites: [PSYA01](#) and [PSYA02](#)

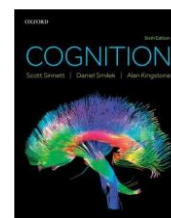
After successful completion of this course, you will have demonstrated an ability to:

1. **Understand** and **describe** why the integration of cognitive psychology and neuroscience helps to promote a more rigorous understanding of human cognitive processes than either field alone might;
2. **Understand** and **describe** the core elements of a range of cognitive science tools and research designs – including strengths/weaknesses – and to **apply** this knowledge to pertinent, novel research questions;
3. **Understand** and **describe** the core tenets of major theories in various domains in cognition (e.g., attention), and to consider how we might **create** experiments to test and **evaluate** these ideas;
4. **Understand** how and why primary research articles are organized the way they are, and to **develop** and **apply** strategies to effectively consume the information contained within them;
5. **Conceptualize** the content units of this course (e.g., attention) as both *integrative* and *hierarchical*;
6. **Identify** and **articulate** the value and contribution of this course to your broader program of study (i.e., Psychology and/or Mental Health Studies, as appropriate).

III. Course textbook

Sinnett, S., Smilek, D. & Kingstone, A. (2016). Cognition (6th edition). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (ISBN-13: 978-0199019700)

You should NOT use older editions of this book, as this edition has not been compared to previous editions. As such, you may miss out on necessary material for the exams.



IV. Course webpage

Please visit Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca/>) and sign in with your UTORid credentials to access our course webpage. This webpage will house all course-related materials, including announcements, discussion boards, lecture and related learning materials, assessments, and marks. You should expect to visit this webpage a few times per week to ensure you are up to date on any new happenings in the course throughout the term.

V. Assessment structure

Your mark in this course will consist of three (3) major assessments:

Midterm Examination I 27% of course grade	Covers lecture and textbook materials from the first four lectures.
Midterm Examination II 33% of course grade	Covers lecture and textbook materials from the next four lectures.
Final Examination 40% of course grade	Cover ALL lecture materials, textbook readings from weeks 12-13 only, and one assigned journal article (TBA).

Exam structure

All examinations will consist of both multiple-choice (MC) questions and 2-4 multi-part short-answer (SA) questions. These questions are designed to probe your knowledge of not only course content, but your ability to think and reason with what you have learned across a variety of scenarios.

Each MC question will have five (5) options and these questions may come in various formats, including (but not limited to) questions with diagrams and “all of the above” or “none of the above” options. MC questions will be drawn from both lecture and the textbook.

SA questions will consist of multi-part questions that are broken down to help you structure and scaffold your thinking. Each question will require a several sentence response, and may also require the creation or analysis of a visual (e.g., diagram). SA questions will be drawn from lecture only. SA questions will be weighted based on relative difficulty (i.e., the challenge/complexity of thought), as opposed to how many things you need to say (i.e., we will not employ a system of five points requiring five “things” to say).

On the whole, there will be more of a focus from lecture (approximately 2/3 to 3/4 of the points on the exam) than the textbook readings (approximately 1/4 to 1/3 of the points on the exam). For superior performance, you will need to develop a clear understanding of both the lectures and the readings. **Take note that rote memorization of lectures and the textbook will not ensure you a high mark**; rather, I expect you to not only learn what things are, but also why they are relevant, and how/why they are used, etc.

Practice questions will be made available for you for each lecture. These sample questions are an invaluable resource for many reasons, including (1) acclimating you to my testing style/expectations, and (2) giving you an opportunity to apply what you’ve learned in a test-like structure. Please note that while the answers to these questions will not be posted online, we strongly encourage you to connect with Prof. Souza and/or your Head TA to discuss the answers after you’ve tried to work them out to receive positive and/or constructive feedback.

VI. Course policies

Classroom conduct and participation

I work to create an interactive dynamic during my lectures that engages you to think and reflect. I challenge you to use this time to actively engage with the content we are covering, as active learning and immersion in the material will facilitate your ability to think critically about these concepts. I challenge you to structure your time in such a way that you can reasonably space out your learning, as effective skill development requires time, practice, and reflection.

Lecture slides

Lecture materials will be posted on a weekly basis to control the flow of learning and engagement in the course. Lecture slides will be posted in PDF format in two version only (2 slide and 6 slides per page).

You must know that these lecture slides are not a suitable substitute for watching lectures and engaging the materials. Lecture slides alone are not themselves exhaustive, as we will regularly cover important material that extends beyond them during lecture. Know that you are responsible for this material.

Instructional materials are only for the purpose of learning in this course and must not be distributed or used for any other reason whatsoever.

Reading the textbook

The material covered in the textbook is meant to reinforce and complement what we discuss in lecture. At times, we may overlap more with the textbook than at other times. In the spirit of promoting fair and transparent expectations, we will primarily target your practical and conceptual understanding of the bold face terms and figures (and their legends). To be clear, verbatim memorization of course content will not be sufficient here, as the goal of assessments is to tap understanding and/or application, not regurgitation. Finally, it is absolutely reasonable to assume that this is particularly important for terms and figures that were not covered in lecture.

E-mail policy

In most cases, e-mails will be answered within 48 hours of receipt (not including weekends). The email subject should include our course name and nature of the inquiry (i.e., "PSYB57: Question about the Dual Route theory"). The start of your email should include your full name and student ID number so that we know who you are. Emails that you send should contain no more than one question and you should try to explain your current understanding of the concept in the email (which will be affirmed or corrected).

If you are not used to writing emails in an academic context, I encourage you to review this online resource so that you adopt proper email etiquette now and in the future: <<https://tinyurl.com/kysxwtx>>

Office hours

You should consider visiting Prof. Souza's office hours if you would like to (1) discuss course content (e.g., weekly practice questions), (2) review an issue with course performance or progress, (3) contest a question on an assessment (note: this is a starting place for the process and must occur within two weeks of releasing the marks), or (4) discuss the field of psychology/neuroscience and how to get more involved.

Syllabus changes

There may be minor changes to the syllabus during the term. You will be notified of these changes ASAP and no changes will be instituted that dramatically affect your ability to properly prepare for an examination (e.g., reading an extra chapter the week before the Midterm).

Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedure outlined below.

Procedure:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) ("MTW Form").
2. Email **BOTH** your MTW Form and Supporting Documentation to gh.kim@mail.utoronto.ca **AND** [cc michael.souza@utoronto.ca](mailto:michael.souza@utoronto.ca) according to the instructions specified below.

Supporting Documentation Requirements and Deadlines:

Reason for Missed Work	Documentation required for a first absence in the term	Documentation required for subsequent absences in the term	Deadline for submitting MTW form and supporting documentation
Illness or Injury	ACORN Absence Declaration	UofT Verification of Illness Form	<u>WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS</u> of the missed work
Bereavement	ACORN Absence Declaration	A death certificate or funeral announcement	<u>WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS</u> of the missed work
University-sponsored athletic or artistic obligation at the varsity/provincial/national level	ACORN Absence Declaration	A note from a university staff member (advisor, coach, residence staff, etc.) who can substantiate the obligation, sent directly to the course email	<u>10 BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE</u> of the missed deadline
Disability-related reasons for students registered with AccessAbility Services	For missed TERM TESTS , - Contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed. For missed ASSIGNMENTS , - If your desired accommodation is within the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" and you need 3 days), send your Accommodation Letter to the course email and specify how many days extension you are requesting. - If your desired accommodation is outside the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" but you need more time than that), contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed.		<u>PREFERABLY IN ADVANCE OF THE MISSED WORK, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE</u>
Academic Conflict	Screenshot from Quercus demonstrating the conflict.		<u>10 BUSINESS DAYS IN</u>

(e.g. two midterms at the same time)		ADVANCE of the missed work
Religious Conflict	None required	

Notes:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: social activities, recreational travel, technological issues, avoidance of assessments or deadlines, work commitments
- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.
- For ACORN absence declarations, the date you declare the absence is required to fall within the seven-day declaration period (i.e.) the absence cannot be submitted proactively or retroactively.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office [petition process](#).
- If you are unable to submit your request within the specified number of business days, you must still email your instructor within that window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the deadlines are made only under exceptional circumstances.
- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered academic conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered academic conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.
- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

Next Steps:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor's response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you're able, and email it to your instructor.

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation**. Examples: If you were granted an extension for a paper but are still unable to meet the new deadline, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* MTW form and supply documentation according to the "subsequent absences" column in the chart above. *Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

Academic Integrity

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

The University of Toronto is a richly diverse community and as such is committed to providing an environment free of any form of harassment, misconduct, or discrimination. In this course, I seek to foster a civil, respectful, and open-minded climate in which we can all work together to develop a better understanding of key questions and debates through meaningful dialogue. As such, I expect all involved with this course to refrain from actions or behaviours that intimidate, humiliate, or demean persons or groups or that undermine their security or self-esteem based on traits related to race, religion, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance or record of offences.

University Land Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

PSYB57: Lecture and reading schedule

May be subject to minor revisions with advance notice from the instructor

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Agenda for the day</u>	<u>Relevant details</u>
1	8-Jan	Course intro; foundations of cognitive psychology <i>Skills: Strategies for success in this course (and beyond)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 1
2	15-Jan	Cognitive methods and experimental design <i>Skills: Practicing with visual frameworks</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 2
3	22-Jan	Perception and object recognition <i>Skills: Navigating exam questions</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 3 (56-81) Chapter 8 (253-60)
4	29-Jan	Attention	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 4 (87-112)
5	5-Feb	Midterm Examination 1 (IN-CLASS)	Covers Weeks 1-4 and their associated readings
6	12-Feb	Memory systems <i>Skills: Reading journal articles (overview, Abstract)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 5 (125-152)
7	19-Feb	READING WEEK (NO CLASS)	-
8	26-Feb	Memory traces and schemas <i>Skills: Reading journal articles (Introduction)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 6
9	5-Mar	Language <i>Skills: Reading journal articles (Methods)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 9 (264-294)
10	12-Mar	Problem-solving <i>Skills: Reading journal articles (Results)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 10
11	19-Mar	Midterm Examination 2 (IN-CLASS)	Covers Weeks 6-10 and their associated readings
12	26-Mar	Intelligence <i>Skills: Reading journal articles (Discussion)</i>	<u>Textbook</u> : Chapter 12
13	2-Apr	Decision-Making; "Psychology of Gambling" Course review and conclusion	-
-	TBD	FINAL EXAMINATION	(see below)

There are three examinations in this class, and the intended timing for each is indicated above. Midterm and Final exam dates/times are set by the Registrar's office and may occur later (but not earlier) than this timing.

Midterm Examination 1 will cover ALL lecture, skills, and assigned textbook material from weeks 1-4.

Midterm Examination 2 will cover ALL lecture, skills, and assigned textbook material from weeks 6-10.

The Final will cover ALL lectures and skills, the textbook from weeks 12-13; and one article (TBD)

Both Midterm 1-2 are scheduled during normal class time and will occur in the same room as our class is typically held.
The Final will be scheduled later in the term and will be shared as soon as it becomes available.