

Psychology 433: Learning and Memory – Spring, 2006
Monday & Wednesday, 12:00-1:20
142 Straub

Instructor

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Textbook

Essentials of Human Memory. Alan Baddeley. (1999). Psychology Press.

There will also be additional reading assignments that will be used to supplement the material in the textbook. These will be available as pdfs on the Blackboard website (in the 'Assignments' section). You will be responsible for these readings as well as the textbook chapters.

General Course Description

My goal in this course is to help you build an appreciation for the central role that memory plays in our lives. You could not have a conversation, play basketball, hum a song, recognize your mother, or even have a sense of your own identity if it were not for the seamless, unobtrusive influence of memory. Indeed, the function of memory is never as conspicuous and astonishing as when it fails us.

Because memory is such a basic and pervasive process, it has been a central theme of psychology since its inception as a science over 100 years ago. In this course we will survey the most influential theories and findings in this important and extensive area of research. Basic research and theory will be discussed as well as a variety of interesting special issues, like amnesia, repressed memory, and the accuracy of eyewitness memory.

Course Format

The material for this class will be presented through assigned readings, class lectures, discussions, and in-class demonstrations. Lectures will be designed to supplement the text, not simply repeat it. As such, there will be material in lecture that is not covered in the book and material from the book not covered in lecture. You will be responsible for all the materials presented in lectures and in the text. Therefore, I am more than willing to speak with you during office hours about difficult material from the text that I have not covered in class. You are expected to have done the reading before class in order to get the most out of the lectures.

Course Evaluation

Grades will be based on three midterms (your two highest scores will each count for 25% of your final grade, while your lowest score will only count for 15%), a project and accompanying paper (25%), and quizzes (10%).

Exams

Tests will be a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. Make-up exams will only be considered if the student has a note from a doctor.

Project and paper

During the quarter you will be asked to document your memory failures and then later to analyze the types of forgetting that you experience. The purposes of this project are to (a) tune you into the memory lapses that you experience daily; (b) emphasize the costs associated with those lapses, (c) get you to relate the concepts and theories presented in this class to your life, and (d) get you to think about how such ideas might be applied to improving your lives. The end product of this project will be a 6-9 page paper in which you report the results of the project. This assignment will be discussed in greater detail during the 5th week of class (May 1).

Quizzes

Throughout the course there will be quizzes on the assigned reading and lecture material. Some of these quizzes will be announced ahead of time in class, but some will be pop quizzes. Anything covered in class or the reading up to that day (including that day's assigned reading) will be fair game on the quizzes. There will be no opportunity to make up these assignments, so if you miss class frequently your grade will suffer.

Extra credit

You may receive extra credit for this class by participating in the Psychology Department's Human Subjects Pool. For every hour (up to four) that you participate, you will receive a half of a percentage point adjustment to your final grade (i.e., you can raise your final grade 2% if you participate in 4 hours of experiments).

Course Outline:

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading Assignment
M, 4/3	Intro, Overview of memory	
W, 4/5	Sensory memory	Ch. 1
M, 4/10	Short-term memory (Guest lecture)	Ch. 2
W, 4/12	Working memory (Guest lecture)	Ch. 3
M, 4/17	Neural basis of working memory	Website
W, 4/19	Midterm #1	
M, 4/24	Variables that influence long-term memory	Ch. 4
W, 4/26	Skilled Memory	Ch. 5, Website
M, 5/1	Description of the forgetting project	
W, 5/3	Retrieval	Ch. 9 (pp. 169–182, 186-198)
M, 5/8	Forgetting, part 1	Ch. 6, Ch. 9 (pp. 182-186)
W, 5/10	Forgetting, part 2	Website
M, 5/15	Midterm #2	
W, 5/17	Memory illusions and errors	Ch. 10 (pp. 199-209), Website
M, 5/22	Repression / Recovered Memories	Ch. 7, Website
W, 5/24	Amnesia	Ch. 11
M, 5/29	<i>No Class (Memorial Day)</i>	
W, 5/31	Discussion of the forgetting project	
M, 6/5	Memory in childhood	Ch. 12
W, 6/7	Memory and aging	Ch. 13
	--Paper due by 4 pm on Fri, 6/9--	
M, 6/12	Midterm #3 (10:15-12:15)	