



### Description

The Psychology of Thinking will be introduced by many examples and class exercises. The development of thinking and problem solving skills, as well as different kinds of thinking and reasoning styles, will be discussed in depth. Typical failures in everyday thinking and reasoning will be described. Inter-individual differences in performance will also be explored.

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Straub 156 Office Hours: Thursday 10-12 & by appt.

### Goals

**My goals for this class are: 1) to give you theoretical and empirical knowledge of the principles of thinking and problem solving; and 2) to teach you how to apply those principles to real life problems. You will learn to evaluate your own and other peoples' reasoning processes critically.**

**Textbook:** Ian Robertson's *Types of Thinking*, Routledge/Tyler & Francis

Course material will be posted on blackboard, so if you missed a class you may use the lecture notes on blackboard. Please note that quiz questions may be referring to material just presented in class!

**Schedule:**

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**Week 1:** The first week will provide an overview of the term's most important topics. Critical concepts will be introduced. (Chapter 1), and general principles of human thinking.

**How to present a poster**

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 We will discuss two examples of structured thinking: problem solving and deduction. The notion of mental representation will be thoroughly investigated. (Chapters 2 + 4)

**Week 2.****Creativity**

In the following lecture, breaking free of certain mental representations will be the key topic. We will address the questions, "What is creativity?" and "How can our creative potential be increased?" (Chapter 3).

**Week3.**

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 We will look at failures of thinking to which most people are highly susceptible. Examples of real life events that demonstrate those failures of thinking will be discussed. (Chapter 5)

**Week 4.**

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 Inter-individual differences in thinking skills and styles. "Why do some people perform better than others?" The first topic will be to what extent differences in intelligence account for variability in performance. (Chapter 6)

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 The classic question of how language influences thinking will be discussed by looking at empirical evidence from animal language and cultural differences. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis will be critically evaluated.

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**SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OVER THE COURSE OF THE QUARTER!**

**Exams:** There will be 2 exams in this class. Each exam will take about 40 minutes and will start at the beginning of the lecture. After conclusion of the exam the lecture will be resumed. If you miss a midterm exam due to illness (proof required!) you are given the opportunity to make it up at the end of the term.

**Poster assignment:** You will present one poster to the class during a poster session either in week 2 or 4.

**Project assignment:** You will be assigned a group and with that group creat a working “game” to illustrate thinking and reasoning principles developed in class.

**Grading:**

midterms: 25% (12.5% each)  
class points: 25%  
poster: 25%  
project: 25% (Group grade)

**Posting of Grades:** Scores for papers and exams will be posted on blackboard throughout the course. Please do not wait until after final grades are submitted to dispute a grade; keep track of your scores as they are posted, and alert the instructor **in writing** (e-mail is fine) if you think that there has been a mistake in grading.

**In-class exams:** Exams will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exams will be closed book. More information on the exams will also be given in class as their scheduled day approaches. Exams 1-4 are not cumulative; however, general principles and definitions discussed during the first few weeks will be relevant throughout the course. Thus, understanding key concepts introduced early on will be required to do well on all exams.

**Missing Exams:** Exams may be made up if you have appropriate documentation indicating that you were unable to attend class (e.g., a doctor’s note). However, in order to make up any exam, you must contact me by e-mail or phone **within one day** (except in extreme circumstances) of the missed exam. If you do not contact me within one day of the missed exam, you will not be able to make up that exam.

