

**COGNITION (PSY 435/535) Fall 2015 CRN15309/15327**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**University of Oregon**

**Instructor:** *Dr. Jagdeep Kaur-Bala*  
225 Straub Hall  
346-4953  
[jagdeep@uoregon.edu](mailto:jagdeep@uoregon.edu)

**Classroom:** *166 Lawrence Hall*  
**Time:** *2:00pm–3:20pm MW*

**Office Hours:** *10:30am - 12:30pm Wednesdays (& by appointment)*  
*During office hours, I'll also be available for Canvas chats, (unless I'm busy talking to one of your classmates in person!).*

**Teaching support:** *GTFs are also available to help students.*

**Jimena Santillan** - [jimenas@uoregon.edu](mailto:jimenas@uoregon.edu)

Office Hours: ***117 LISB (enter through 102), 11:00am –12:00pm Thur/Fri & by appointment.***

***This syllabus is rather long, read it all!! Familiarizing yourself with the course requirements will be one key to success in this class!***

**Course Description:** Our brain holds a lifetime of learning, memories, emotions, thoughts and desires. In this course, we will study the cognitive and neural processes that underlie human thoughts and behaviors. We will focus on issues in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, interdisciplinary fields of study attempting to answer complex questions about the functions of our minds (and brains) –gaining and retaining knowledge, reasoning, decision making and problem solving.

**Learning Objectives:** One goal of this course is for you to gain foundational knowledge of the major theories, research findings and methodological approaches in the field of human cognition. We will include readings and discussions of the methods used by scientists to examine questions related to thinking (logical, or otherwise!), reasoning, decision making and problem solving. In addition, we'll talk about metacognition and interventions that can influence cognition. A second important goal is for you to gain proficiency in reading, analyzing and critically evaluating scientific literature, by yourself, as well as collaboratively. Discussion, critique and writings based on empirical research in the field is an important part of this course. You will develop the ability to conduct library research, write a comprehensive research paper and compare and contrast empirical research. In addition, we will work to enhance your self-study skills through reading response and discussions assignments. Overall, the format of this course is designed to help you to hone your scientific and critical thinking skills.

**Required Text:** ***Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind*** by Daniel Reisberg. 5<sup>th</sup> edition; Norton Publishing Company. This is a comprehensive text for the course and can be purchased new or used through the bookstore. *Two copies of the text are also available on reserve at the Knight Library.*

**Course website:** [PSY 435/535 \(Fall 2015: 15309,15327\) Cognition Fall 2015](#) This site will provide supplemental information for the course (course outline, grades, copies of class notes, assignments, etc.). It is in your best interest to check for updates frequently and stay connected.

**Course Format:** The material in this course will be presented through a combination of assigned readings, class lectures, in-class discussion, and demonstrations. Please note that some class materials (videos, demos, etc.) will not be available outside of class due to copyright and intellectual property laws. Lecture material and readings will have overlap, but will not be replications of each other; some lecture material will not be covered in the readings and vice versa. Each of the non-lecture parts of the course (discussions, readings, papers, presentations) are designed to reinforce ideas and augment concepts presented in lectures. Questions are encouraged in all parts of the course and students are welcome to stop by my office for clarifications and/or discussions during my office hours or additional appointments, and equally welcome to see the GTF(s). It is my hope that by the end of this course you will have a new appreciation for how

humans think, make judgments and interact on a daily basis. You are expected to do the assigned reading before the class period in which it is due. This is a fast paced class and you should plan on scheduling regular intervals of time for studying/assignments outside of class.

## GRADING POLICY

Final grades are based on consistent performance through the term. As such, the final grade will include the weighted scores for the quizzes, the term papers, study group discussion responses and the exams. Graduate students (Psy535 class) will also undertake an additional, graded self-study assignment and prepare a presentation for class. In addition, some opportunities for extra-credit will be available to all.

**Letter grades will be determined as follows: A (90-104% of total possible points), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%), F (0-60%). Scores in the upper and lower third of each grade range will be awarded a 'plus' or a 'minus' respectively.** Typically, grades are not curved, However, the instructor reserves the right to relax (but not stiffen) this criterion for final grade assignments, depending on the actual distribution of scores.

- **Quizzes** – highest- scoring 4 (of 6 total) quizzes form 15% of final grade
- **Midterm Exams** –25%, 20% and 15% for highest to lowest scoring midterms, respectively.
- **Term Paper** – 15% of final grade
- **Class presentation** (*graduate students only*) – 10% of final grade
- **Study group discussion responses** - 10% of final grade (*0% for graduate students*)
- **Extra-credit (optional)** - up to 4 points added to final grade

## TESTS

### Quizzes: (15%)

Short quizzes will be given in the first 10 minutes of several scheduled classes (see course outline). Quizzes will contain 5 multiple choice questions that pertain to the most recently presented lecture materials and the readings from the text. The quizzes are designed to serve as quick reviews of recently covered materials as well as to help you keep up with the reading assignments. Of the 6 quizzes, the 2 lowest scores will be dropped, with the score of the remaining four yielding 15% of the final grade. ***No make-up quizzes will be offered; if you miss a quiz, that grade will be one of the two that will be dropped.***

### Exams: (15%, 20%, and 25%, for lowest to highest midterm scores)

Exams primarily test conceptual understanding. The exams will be part multiple choice, part fill-in-the-blank/match the information and part short answer/short essay. All exams are somewhat comprehensive i.e. each exam will contain questions drawn from the entire course. However, a greater focus on material covered after the previous exam is typical (refer to the study guide for each exam for a list of general concepts and detailed topics included in that test). All exams will be initially scored out of 20%. At the end of the term, your highest midterm score will be weighted to 25% and the lowest score weighted to 15% of the final grade.

***No make-up exams will be given without evidence of a valid excuse, and prior arrangement with the instructor – if you know in advance that you cannot take all exams on the appointed dates (see the course schedule below), do not take this course!*** If unforeseen circumstances during the term prevent you from taking an exam, notify the instructor immediately. Allowable excused absences are medical emergencies, athletic events such as away games for student athletes and executive orders/court orders. All such occasions must be accompanied by official documentation. Student athletes should notify me of their away schedule early in the term and make arrangements for taking missed tests on the road, when possible. Format of make-up exams may be different in type of questions and/or choices.

**Term Paper (15%):** A prerequisite to gaining scientific knowledge of any sort is the ability to read and critically evaluate the primary scientific literature. The goal of this assignment is to help you develop these essential skills.

Students will be required to write a 7 – 9 page (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 10-12 point font) term paper that describes compares and contrasts two journal articles that address a topic relevant to Cognition. I suggest

that you use the textbook and course outline as a first source for selecting a general topic, followed by library, PsychINFO, and Pubmed/Google scholar searches for the selection of the two related articles on the topic of your interest (for online assistance in your search, see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/psychology/>). The chosen articles must be **empirical** in nature, with data collected to investigate a specific question related to the topic of interest (*i.e., no reviews, commentaries, news reports or summary articles!*). The due dates for this assignment have been designed to help you get an early start on your assignment and enable you to distribute the work on the paper throughout the term.

You must turn in four different items pertaining to the paper (Specific due dates as per course outline):

- 1) A topic name, *citations of the 2 related empirical research articles* chosen and a brief description of the topic (one paragraph describing why the topic is appropriate and interesting, and how the 2 research articles that you have chosen will help you investigate the topic should be **submitted to the "Term Paper" section of Canvas**. Submissions via email will not be accepted. This will account for **10% of the term paper grade**.
- 2) The term paper topic and articles chosen will be finalized after feedback from the instructor/GTF. Electronic versions of the complete articles should be submitted on Canvas. *After the due date, you may not change your chosen topic and articles without the instructor/GTF's consent.*
- 3) **Peer review (optional)** - A draft of the paper that will be given to other students in the class to review. If you chose to do the peer review, you must bring a hardcopy draft of your paper to class on the date it is due. If you choose to do this, it will account for **20% of the term paper grade (10 for your editing ability of your peer's paper and 10% for the draft)**. *If you choose NOT to go through this process your final paper will be graded with this 20% included in the assessment.* Edited papers are due back in the following class.
- 4) **VeriCite check**– I strongly encourage you to upload your paper to VeriCite on Blackboard and check for originality of writing for yourself before submitting your paper for grading. Students who are asked to upload after submission are REQUIRED to upload their papers. In these cases, failure to do so in a timely fashion will adversely affect your grade. At that time, if your writing is found lacking in originality, you may be penalized (see academic honesty section below)!
- 5) The final version of the paper is due on **in class during week 9 of term (see course schedule)**. The paper as well as the peer edited draft (for those who took the option) should be submitted in hardcopy at the beginning of class. **The paper should include a title page, abstract and citations written in APA style** ([reference copies of the APA Publication Manual](#) are available in many of the University Libraries).

Each paper should include (*with equal emphasis on #2 through #6 below!*):

In writing your paper you should include:

- 1) A brief introduction to the general topic.
- 2) A summary of the articles in your own words, including the question under investigation, the hypothesis being tested, the methods used, the findings, and the conclusions drawn by the authors.
- 3) A comparison of the two articles, describing how the findings of one either support, conflict, or extend the findings of the other.
- 4) A discussion of the merits and deficits of the articles, including suggested ways that the deficits could have been avoided. *For example, questions such as these should be addressed: Is the question an interesting one, and is it framed properly? Is the hypothesis valid and defensible? Are the methods appropriate to address the question? Are the findings clear and interpreted appropriately? Are the authors' conclusions warranted, given the findings?*
- 5) An overall assessment of the significance and quality of the contribution of the articles to the field of cognition.
- 6) Future directions for the research should be discussed. Suggest a research study you would conduct if you were to take this research further. *(This should include a clear well defined hypothesis and discussion of expected findings, but need not detail methods or analysis)*

In order to improve the quality of papers, and to provide you with experience editing, papers will be **peer edited** (optional). On the day that your paper is "due for editing", you will turn your paper in hardcopy at the beginning of class. At the end of class, you will be given someone else's paper to edit. You will have 2-5 days to edit the other student's paper, and then you will bring the paper to the next class and return it to the student.

Your paper, meanwhile, will have been edited by someone else. You will then have a few more days to consider the corrections, incorporate those you think are good, revise the paper, and then turn in your "final version" of the paper AND the corrected original. Your grade on the paper will be based mainly on the final version, but your original will be considered too (10% points), in order to prevent sloppy first drafts. Your editing will also be evaluated (10% points), and you will receive points toward your final grade for it. Guidelines for editing will be available on Blackboard.

**Important note: ALWAYS keep a copy of your paper and reference articles either on disk, or a hard copy!** Your peer editors are no more reliable than you, perhaps less so, and they may misplace or forget your paper. If your peer editor does not return your edited paper to you, you will not be penalized (except that your paper will not have the benefit of having been edited – you may wish to ask a friend in the class to edit your paper for you), but you will still be responsible for turning in an original and final version of the paper when it is due. Also, please keep in mind that just as the quality of students in this course varies so does the quality of editing. Taking bad advice from a peer editor is no excuse for errors in a paper. Papers (drafts) are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. If you don't turn your paper in before the start of class, it will not be eligible for peer editing, and you will not be given a paper to edit (so you will lose your peer editing points). If you cannot be in class the day a paper is due for peer editing, you may turn in the paper early so that you will be eligible for the peer editing system, but it is your responsibility to arrange to pick up the paper you are to edit from me. If you cannot be in class the day peer edited papers are to be returned to their authors, you can also return the edited paper early.

Peer-edited draft (if option taken) should be attached to your final paper; both submitted in hardcopy before class on the due date. The term paper grade will be determined by 1) the timely submission of your topic and citation and the paragraph describing the term paper topic (10%), 2) the quality of the final paper (90%) [or paper(70%) and draft(10%) with the peer editing that you provide another student (10%)]; in total, the paper grade is worth 12.5% of the final grade in the course. Please note: At no point will email submissions be accepted for this assignment. Please be sure to submit the topic, citations, and articles on Blackboard and the draft and final paper for grading as hardcopies!

**Finally, plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with according to official University policy (see section on Academic Honesty below).**

**Study group Reading responses and discussion assignments (10% - PSY435 students only):** We will form 5-6 member study groups in order to have some contact time outside the class in which course work may be discussed and small assignments completed as a group. The study groups will be expected to meet once a week and 5 discussion reports will be due during the term (see outline for due dates). For each report, I will give you assignments and will be looking for timely responses (via Blackboard). Only one response is required from each group for each of the assignments. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the assignment.

**Note:** Sometimes, group members feel that not everyone in the group is working to their best and so it is not fair for everyone in the group to receive the same grade for an assignment. If such is the case for your group, you can choose (as a group) to award individual grades for the report. *If the group decides that it is not fair that every person receives the same grade for a particular report, I will let the group decide on grades for each member. For example, if the group grade on a particular assignment is 85 and there are 5 members in the group, the group will have a total of 425 points (85 times 5) to spread among its members. The group can then negotiate with all members and spread out the total points to all members in any way the group sees fits, as long as all members agree to the point spread. The only requirement is that the group negotiates who gets what grade and that all members of the group give the instructors a written agreement to the point spread. It will be the responsibility of the group to notify me of the point spread if they wish to use this alternative.*

**Class Presentations: (10% - graduate students only)** Psy535 students will be required to create a 10-15 min presentation related to the course materials on a topic of their choosing. Presentations should be designed to

share in depth study on an area related to Cognition that is not directly covered in the lectures. Topics for presentations are due **beginning of the first class of week 3**. Students are expected to set up an appointment for a one-on-one meeting with the instructor at least once before this date and once before the date of their presentation. This ensures that the effort you put into this assignment is focused and fruitful!

If two or more students have the same idea for a presentation, the one that informs me first (by email) will have exclusive rights to the idea. You are encouraged to confer with me about the choice of topics, the research involved and the preparation of the presentation. Accompanying write-up and copies of slides, overheads, etc. are **due on the day of your presentation**. *The instructor reserves the right to keep copies of the presentations for use in future courses.* Of necessity, the class presentations will be spread out through the latter part of the term; some presentations will have to take place earlier in the term than others. Dates of individual presentations will be decided by the instructor. As such, while assessing/grading the presentations, I will be sure to keep in mind the amount of time (into the term) each student got for preparation of this assignment.

**Study Group Reading responses and discussion assignments: (10%, PSY435 only)** We will form 5-6 member study groups in order to have some contact time outside the class in which course work may be discussed and small assignments completed as a group. The study groups will be expected to meet once a week and 5 discussion reports will be due during the term (see outline for due dates). For each report, I will give you assignments and will be looking for timely responses (via Blackboard). Only one response is required from each group for each of the assignments. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the assignment.

**Note:** Sometimes, group members feel that not everyone in the group is working to their best and so it is not fair for everyone in the group to receive the same grade for an assignment. If such is the case for your group, you can choose (as a group) to award individual grades for the report. *If the group decides that it is not fair that every person receives the same grade for a particular report, I will let the group decide on grades for each member. For example, if the group grade on a particular assignment is 85 and there are 5 members in the group, the group will have a total of 425 points (85 times 5) to spread among its members. The group can then negotiate with all members and spread out the total points to all members in any way the group sees fits, as long as all members agree to the point spread. The only requirement is that the group negotiates who gets what grade and that all members of the group give me a written agreement to the point spread. It will be the responsibility of the group to notify me of the point spread if they wish to use this alternative*

**What about extra credit?** *Extra-credit will be awarded for class participation and occasional in-class assignments/group work/discussions.* You can earn **up to 4 points** in extra credit for **Class Participation**. These points will be **added to your final grade** at the end of the class. So, if you score an 80% with tests and assignments, and you earn 3 points of extra credit, your final score will be 83%.

**Participation** is based on **attendance and discussion**. Attendance will be taken during some (*random!*) class periods and after specific class activities. This can be at any point during the class period. All students who participate in the activity and sign attendance at that time will be awarded EC points. It is important that you come to class. Many of the exam questions are derived from lecture content that is not in the assigned readings. If you miss a class, please try to get a copy of the lecture notes from a classmate.

**Due Dates** Due dates for the term paper are contained in the course outline. **Assignments are due by the start of lecture on the appropriate date**. An assignment turned in after its deadline will be marked down 10% for each day late. If you do not expect to be in class on the day an assignment is due, you may turn it in to me or your GTF during office hours before the due date.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor as soon as possible. *The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at*



346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu) . Also, please request that an AEC adviser to send a letter verifying your disability and accommodation needs. For a list of resources provided by the Accessible Education Center, please see <http://aec.uoregon.edu/about/index.html>

**Students for whom English is a Second Language:** If you are a non-native English speaker and think you may have trouble in this course due of language difficulties, please see the instructor as soon as possible. Please note that you may NOT use electronic dictionaries/translators during exams/quizzes. However, if necessary, please discuss the need for a paper dictionary/translator with the instructor at the beginning of the term and appropriate arrangements will be made.

**Academic Honesty:** **Cheating will NOT be tolerated in any form in this class.** All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may be required to submit writing assignments to **SafeAssign**. SafeAssign is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. For more information on SafeAssign refer to guidelines on Blackboard. By enrolling in this course you grant the instructor permission to submit your work to SafeAssign or some other plagiarism program analysis and detection program. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. If your responses on assignments are suspected of plagiarism or if a proctor has any reason to be uncomfortable about your conduct during a test, they may ask you to move seats, confiscate your test and/or mark an “F” for that test/assignment. All violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructors before you complete any relevant requirements of the course. (For more information, see the UO web site regarding academic honesty at:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>

**Course Outline:** This is only a working draft of the course outline; it will be revised as the term progresses. **Dates on which particular topics are to be presented in lecture are subject to change, as are reading assignment due dates; however, I will not change the dates of quizzes and exams unless absolutely necessary.** The official updated version of the outline will reside on the Blackboard web site. **Version Updated: 9/14/2015 3:14 PM**

Date	Topic	Recommended readings	Assignments/ Due dates/ Quizzes
28-Sep	Overview of Cognitive Psychology	Ch. 1	
30-Sep	Neural Basis of Cognition I	Ch. 2	
5-Oct	Neural Basis of Cognition II	Ch. 2	
7-Oct	Object Perception	Ch. 3	Quiz 1, <b>SGR 1 due<sup>#</sup></b>
12-Oct	Interacting with the world around us	Ch. 3	<b>Paper Topics due</b>
14-Oct	Selective & Divided Attention	Ch. 4	Quiz 2
19-Oct	<b>Midterm 1 (Chapters 2,3,4)</b>		<b>PSY535 Presentation topics due</b>
21-Oct	Memory acquisition- Working memory	Ch. 5	<b>Articles for paper due on Canvas</b>
26-Oct	Memory consolidation	Ch. 6	<b>SGR 2 due<sup>#</sup></b>
28-Oct	Memory retrieval & errors	<b>Class notes*</b> *(Ch.7 & 8 for ref.)	Quiz 3
2-Nov	Concept Formation & Knowledge	Ch. 9	<b>SGR 3 due<sup>#</sup></b>
4-Nov	Visual knowledge & Neural substrates	Ch. 11	Quiz 4
9-Nov	<b>Midterm 2 (Chapters 5,6,7/8*,9,11,1-4**)</b>		
11-Nov	Thinking -making judgments <b>Class presentation</b>	Ch. 12	<b>Paper drafts due for peer-editing</b>
16-Nov	Reasoning – logic <b>Class presentation</b>	Ch. 13	<b>Edited drafts due</b>
18-Nov	Decision making – applying knowledge <b>Class presentation</b>	Ch. 13	Quiz 5
23-Nov	Problem solving <b>Class presentation</b>	Ch. 13	<b>SGR 4 due<sup>#</sup></b>
25-Nov	Problem Solving – expertise & creativity	Ch. 14	<b>Final term paper due</b>
30-Nov	Conscious and Unconscious Cognition	<b>Class notes*</b> *(Ch.15 for ref.)	Quiz 6
2-Dec	<b>Midterm 3 (Chapters 12,13,14,15*, presentation topics,1-11**)</b>		<b>SGR 5 due<sup>#</sup></b>
8-Dec 2:45pm!	NO FINAL EXAM; Comprehensive makeup exam (if needed)		

\* Emphasis on class notes; chapter for reference

\*\* Included for conceptual continuity; see study guide for specific topics.

<sup>#</sup> Due dates for SGRs depend on pace of class discussion and may change; check Canvas for updates.