

## **Psychology 330: Thinking**

**Winter 2016 CRN: 25259**

**Email:** tbell1@uoregon.edu

**Instructor:** Dr. Theodore Bell  
11 Tuesday LISB 123

**Office Hours:** 10-12 Monday Straub 385/ 10-

**Teaching Assistants:** Stefania Ashby (stefania@), Alexander Garinther (agarinth@)

**Meeting times:** 12PM-1:30 PM Tues/Thurs **Location:** 123 GSH

**Text:** Thought and Knowledge (5th edition)--D.F. Halpern.

Supplemental readings will be provided on Canvas on a weekly basis (see homework section below)

**Course Description:** This course is an exploration of the psychology of thinking, and will rely heavily on discussion, in-class exercises and demonstrations on the topics of judgment, decision-making, problem-solving, reasoning, belief formation and evaluation, and creativity. A reasonable sub-title for this course could be: "How to get fooled less often". We will put special emphasis on understanding the limitations of human cognition, memory, biases, heuristics, habits of thought, and situational/environmental factors which influence critical thinking. Through an examination of scientific research on the topic, and critical ideas from philosophy and education we will discuss ways to develop attitudes and provide tools for supporting effective reasoning and critical thinking in a variety of domains. There will be a strong emphasis on demonstrations, exercises, and assignments that engage with the course material both during lecture and outside of class.

### **Educational Objectives: course goals:**

- 1) Understand and articulate the theories and research on human thinking in the specific areas covered by the course (Memory, Attention, Language, Reasoning, Hypothesis testing, Probability, Errors, Decision Making, Problem solving, Creativity)
- 2) Through exercise, homework, and discussion evaluate the research and apply it to everyday thinking, taking steps to become a more critical thinker.
- 3) Communicate understanding of the topics through examination, and a final 'outreach' project, wherein students will communicate the essentials of one of the course topics in a form suitable for a laypeople.
- 4) The pedagogical approach incorporates research supporting distributed practice, and also the efficacy of testing over mere repetition, therefore students will engage with the material repeatedly through weekly quizzes, short homework, larger exams, and course projects.

### **Grading and Exams**

Midterm 1	50pts	25%
Midterm 2	50pts	25%
Final Exam (a makeup exam, can be averaged together with one midterm)		

Quizzes: 6 weekly quizzes	36pts	18%
Homework/Reading questions	32pts	16%
Course Project:	32pts	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grading Scheme:**

The final grade assigned for the course should reflect the student's overall performance in the course, as described by the following guidelines: A excellent work, complete mastery of course material, B good work, grasps most of the important concepts, C average work, grasps many but not all aspects of course material, D poor work, insufficient understanding of material, F failing

Grades will be assigned based on your total percentage points in the course:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
A+	99-100%	C	72-77%
A	92-98%	C-	70-71%
A-	90-91%	D+	68-69%
B+	88-89%	D	62-67%
B	82-87%	D-	60-61%
B-	80-81%	F	59% and Below
C+	78-79%		

**Ground rules for discussions:** We will be discussing a wide range of topics and ideas, some of which may be frustrating, controversial, or politically charged. It is extremely important to me that we maintain a respectful environment while promoting a diversity of opinions and ideas. Participants should feel free to offer up their ideas, and should expect that those ideas be the focus of any critical analysis rather than the person discussing them. In other words, ideas are fair game for criticism, but personalizing attacks will not be tolerated.

### **Calendar**

#### **Week 1**

**Introduction,  
Memory**

#### **Week 2**

**Memory/Attention**

#### **Week 3**

**Language  
Reasoning**

#### **Week 4**

**Arguments  
Midterm I**

#### **Week 5**

### ***Readings***

**Chapter 1-2**

**Chapter 2,**

Attention supplement

**Chapter 3**

**Chapter 4**

**Chapter 5**

Science, hypothesis testing	Chapter 6
Week 6	
Probability	Chapter 7
Decision making	Chapter 8
Week 7	
Summary, where we go wrong	Chapter 11
Week 8	
Problem Solving	Chapter 9
Week 9	
Creativity	Chapter 10
Midterm II	
Week 10	
Course Projects due.	
Poster presentations	
Final	
Final 8:00 AM Friday March 18th, cumulative exam.	

**This syllabus and reading list may be subject to minor changes.**

**Homework and Readings:** These will consist of short essays and reactions to readings or assignments graded on a 3 point scale. Details will be posted on Canvas. No homework assigned first week. Most weeks will have one additional reading.

**Quizzes:** We will have weekly quizzes each Thursday.

**Course Project:** The course project will be an educational poster / power-point exploring one of the topics of this course, plus a summary paper explaining your topic in more detail.

**Exams:** I have scheduled two exams (required), plus a final exam (not required). The exams will be cumulative. The final exam will cover all the material in the course, but will be an opportunity to recover some, but not all of the points lost during previous exams.

**Teaching Philosophy:** A teacher is part coach, part actor, part thief (lifting from anywhere that will help), and part student (still always learning). A student is open to new ideas, diligent in effort to master new things, eager to surpass him/herself, is an active partner in the process, and part cowboy (always willing to get back up on the horse that bucked him or her off).

**Academic Misconduct:**

Plagiarism will result in a zero on any assignment.

Cheating on any exam, or assignment will result in a failing grade in class.

All academic misconduct and suspected misconduct will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, this is mandatory and not at the discretion of the instructor

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me. Also, please request that the Accessible Education Center (164 Oregon Hall, <http://aec.uoregon.edu/contact.html>) send me a letter verifying your disability. The phone number for AEC is 346-1155 and the email address is [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu)

**Students for Whom English is Not Their Native Language:** Foreign language dictionaries are permitted during exams. If you find that you do need additional time to complete the first exam, please let me know, and we will make arrangements ahead of time for all future exams.