

**Cognitive Psychology**  
**Course Syllabus**  
Psychology 437 (56-4370)  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Winter/Spring Term, 1992

**Instructor**  
Michael S. Wogalter  
Carnegie Hall 305c  
Office: 276-8513

**Class Meetings**  
Mondays & Wednesdays  
3:00 - 4:20 P.M.  
Carnegie 113

**Office Hours**  
Mondays & Wednesdays  
11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.  
or by appointment

**Course Objectives**

The aim of the course is to provide students with a broad introduction to cognitive psychology with particular emphasis on research data, theory, issues, and methodology. By the end of the course, the student should know the basics of modern cognitive psychology from the information covered in the text, readings, and lectures. Students will also develop an expertise in some subtopic area related to cognitive psychology. Students will work in groups to carry out some piece of research and report the results in oral and written. The purpose of the group project is to allow for the pursuit and development of an area of interest possibly leading to further empirical research. Student-teacher discussion is encouraged.

**Text and Readings**

The text will be:

Ashcraft, M. H. (1989). Human Memory and Cognition. Glenview, IL:  
Scott, Foresman and Company.

Several readings will be assigned in addition to the text. These materials will be announced later.

**Exams**

Two exams and one quiz will be given. The exams will be based on the text, the assigned readings, and the lectures. The first exam will account for 25% of the course grade. The other exam will account for 35%. All students are required to take the exams on the dates specified on the calendar. The quiz, given on the last day of class, will test information learned from the group project oral presentations, and will account for 10% of the course grade. Late exams will be assessed an automatic penalty equal to 25% of the exam grade per day.

**Group Projects**

Groups of two or three students work with the assigned T.A. on group research projects on topics related to cognition. Groups will present their projects to the class at the end of the semester. The oral presentation will account for 5% of the course grade. A group written report of the project is due on the last day of class, **April 29**, and will account for 20% of the course grade. Group assignments and discussion of topics will occur during the first three or four weeks into the semester. Group project topics must be approved by the instructor before the **February 19** deadline.

## ***Paper***

The format of the paper should be constructed in the form directed by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (i.e., APA style). It should be approximately 8- 12 pages of text—not including the cover page, abstract, tables, figures, and appendices). The text should include an Introduction section (including an evaluation of theoretical and empirical background information, a description of why research in the area is important, and a set of hypotheses/operational definitions for the proposed research), followed by a Method section (how you went about doing the study), a Results section (describing the data collected), and a Discussion section (telling what the results mean). Consult the instructor or assigned teaching assistant (T.A.) for project suggestions

## ***Attendance Policy***

Students will be expected to attend every class meeting. Other than excused absences, penalties for absences will be enforced by strict adherence to deadlines for work assigned. Excused absences will be limited to verifiable medical, legal or meteorological reasons. There may be other kinds of legitimate excuses and the instructor will rule on these individually. Of course, if you missed class you are responsible for the material covered in lecture and any assignments made when you are absent. Take the necessary precautions to avoid getting sick, breaking the law, etc.

When work is missed because of an excused absence, make-up will be by the class meeting following the missed session unless previously arranged with the instructor. Students anticipating missing class because of an excused academic-related activity are expected to complete work before the due date. Some of the excuses that are not considered legitimate include, but are not limited to: (1) ride leaving early or only available flight, etc., (2) big party or other social event, (3) other exam on same date, (4) did not know of the assignment, and (5) forgot the exam or assignment due date.

To facilitate the recording of attendance, students will be expected to sit in the same seat location after the first week. At the beginning of each class period the instructor will consult a seating chart and mark absent anyone not present at the time. Exception to the seating rule is allowed during the exam period when students are expected to spread out their seating locations in the classroom. The instructor reserves the right to rearrange student locations.

## ***Grading***

All students are expected to do and turn in their own work (except parts of the group project). Academic integrity is expected. Dishonorable behavior will not be tolerated and when necessary will be pursued through the Institute's judicial channels.

The grading scale is shown below:

A	At least 90.0%
B	At least 80.0%
C	At least 70.0%
D	At least 60.0%
F	Less than 60%



# Cognitive Psychology Calender

Jan 13	Course Introduction:	
Jan 15	History & Scope of Cognitive Psychology	Chapter 1
Jan 20	Human Information Processing System	Chapter 2
Jan 22	Sensory Memory: Iconic & Echoic stores	
Jan 27	Short-term Memory	Chapter 4
Jan 29		
Feb 3	Attention & Pattern Recognition	Chapter 3
Feb 5		
Feb 10	Episodic Memory, Long-term Memory	Chapter 5
Feb 12	Recognition/Recall	
Feb 17	Semantic Memory	Chapter 6
Feb 19	Neurocognition	pp. 665-681
	<b>Group Project Topic Deadline</b>	
Feb 24	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
Feb 26	Imagery & Spatial Processing	pp. 532-545
Mar 2	Imagery & Spatial Processing	Reading assigned
Mar 4		
Mar 9	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 11	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 16	Language Processing	Chapter 8
Mar 18		Chapter 9
Mar 23	Cognitive & Language Development	Chapter 10
Mar 25	<b>Group Project Topic Deadline</b>	
Mar 30	Decision Making, Judgments, & Reasoning	pp. 521-532;
Apr 1		545-581
Apr 6	Problem Solving	Chapter 12
Apr 8		
Apr 13	Other topics: Computers, Applications	Chapter 13
Apr 15	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
Apr 20	<b>Oral Presentation of Group Projects - Session 1</b>	
Apr 22	<b>Oral Presentation of Group Projects - Session 2</b>	
Apr 27	<b>Oral Presentation of Group Projects - Session 3</b>	
Apr 29	<b>Quiz and Written Report Due</b>	