Psychology 316, Cognitive Psychology  
Fall 2006  
Course Syllabus

**Time/Room:** MWF 11:00-11:50 in Lago W162  
**Instructor:** Dr. Veronica J. Dark  
**Office:** Science I Room 374  
**Office Hours:** Tues 1:30-3, Wed 9:00-10:30  
**Phone:** 294-1688  
**Email:** vjdark@iastate.edu

No appointment is needed during office hours. Feel free to drop by at other times. If I'm busy when you come by, we'll set up an appointment. I typically will be available for quick questions after class on Monday and Friday, but I have another class at noon on Wednesday.

**Textbook:** *Cognitive Psychology (4th edition)* by Douglas L. Medin, Brian H. Ross, & Arthur B. Markman

**Instructorial Goal**
Psychology is a very complex and abstract science--there is no one accepted theory of behavior because it is so complexly determined. My goal as an instructor is to help students to learn the many different ways that psychologists have conceptualized the topics comprising cognitive psychology. We will consider some older approaches and some newer approaches. Because there is no one approach (old or new) that can capture ALL the phenomena that have been identified as "cognition", it is my belief that students should be exposed to a variety of different approaches. This gives students the tools that are needed to think critically in the future about cognition and how it relates to the behavior of humans and other animals.

**Course Format**
This is a junior-level lecture class, so I will assume some background in psychology and in research methodology. The textbook and lectures will overlap somewhat, more so on some topics than others. Both sources of information are important and will be tested. **Please ask questions** when the lecture is not clear. Please feel free to bring up text questions during lecture when they relate to the topic being covered. I plan to give you opportunities during class to ask questions about the text material. (Remind me if I forget!)

**Class Attendance**
Attendance is strongly encouraged. Attendance will indirectly affect course grades because over 50% of each exam comes from lecture. Attendance also will directly affect course grades through in-class quizzes as described in a later section of the syllabus. Only those people who attend the class when the quiz is given will be eligible to earn the associated points.

Remember that you are responsible for the material and announcements presented during any class, even those classes you miss. If you miss class, please do not email me asking what we covered--That is like asking me to give you the lecture in an email response!! 😊 Rather, you should check WebCT for announcements and slides, ask to read the notes of another student in the class, and seek clarification from me either before or after class or during office hours.

**Disability Accommodations**
If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to contact the Disability Resources (DR) office, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-6624 to obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) that describes the needed accommodations.
WebCT
I lecture at a fast pace and I typically use a lot of overheads/slides. Because I have not taught the
course in a number of years and because I am using a text chosen by another person, I do not have
an already prepared course pack of overheads/slides. Luckily, we have WebCT! I will make
available on WebCT copies of the overheads/slides as they are developed. In the beginning, you
may not have access to the material until just prior to class, but as the semester progresses, you
should be able to download the material at least a few days before each class.

Readings
In addition to some short articles, we will read the entire book. Very tentative reading assignments
for each exam are indicated at the end of the syllabus. Please check WebCT regularly for actual as
opposed to tentative assignments. The actual assignments also will be announced in class. The
additional articles will be announced in class and posted on WebCT.

Written Assignments
I am a firm believer in the idea that students benefit from expressing their ideas in writing. However,
the class is a bit large for efficient grading of multiple longer papers. So, here's the compromise—
there will be three types of written assignments as described in the next few paragraphs. My fourth
year graduate student, Wah Pheow Tan, and I will share in the grading of assignments and exams.

1. Examples. Many short news articles and cartoons are directly related to cognitive
psychology. During the semester, I would like you to turn in examples of such news articles
and cartoons. You need to find 2 examples and turn them in to me along with a paragraph
(about 1/2 page typed, double-spaced, with a reasonable font) explaining how the
article/cartoon relates to the material in the class. You may turn in up to 4 examples and I will
count the highest 2 scores. The examples should be contemporary (i.e, they need to be from
2006). Only the first person to turn in a specific cartoon/article will be allowed to use it (so if
you see something that you want to use, turn it in as soon as you can!). I will let you know if
someone else has already used that example. Examples returned in this way will not count
against your 4. Each example is worth up to 5 points, depending on how well you relate it to
the class (e.g., just saying "This illustrates X" will not earn full points). Examples are due by
the last day of class, Friday, December 10.

2. Reaction papers. Cognitive psychology is fascinating and I would like to give you the
opportunity to share your fascination with me! As noted on the tentative calendar, a reaction
paper is due the Wednesday before each exam. The paper should be one-page, double
spaced, with a reasonable font. Each paper should describe your reaction to some aspect of
cognition (i.e., a concept or finding or principle) that was presented during the lectures or that
was in the readings for the material associated with the upcoming exam. The content is up to
you (e.g., you could describe an example of a concept in your personal life, you could critique
the logic of an experiment that is described, or you could relate aspects of some cognitive
principle to something from another course). Each reaction paper is worth up to 5 points
depending on the level of effort and critical thinking. Only the top 4 scores from the 5 reaction
papers will be counted in determining your grade.

3. Critical review. A longer paper is due November 17, the Friday before Thanksgiving
break. The paper should be a critical review of any empirical article on some aspect of
cognition from Psychonomic Bulletin & Review (PB&R), call number BF1.P991, or Memory &
Cognition (M&C), call number BF371.M45. Each of these journals is published by the
Psychonomic Society, the main professional association of cognitive psychologists. PB&R
contains both review articles and empirical articles—you want an empirical article. PB&R
empirical articles are short, typically not more than 6 pages. All issues of PB&R are available
online from the library. M&C articles vary quite a bit in length. In fact, you may find that a
The paper will be worth **20 points**. It should be typewritten, double-spaced, with reasonable margins and a readable font. The text portion of the paper should be 4-6 pages in length. The title should be “A Critical Review of XXXX” (fill in the X's by referring to the journal article in APA citation style as is used in your text (e.g., a review of the text would be titled "A Critical Review of Medin, Ross, & Markman (2005)"). The paper should have three sections of text plus it should have a reference section. **One text section** should describe the research in your own words. The description should include the hypothesis being tested, the general experimental procedure (not nearly as detailed as the actual method section), the general results (not the actual values of the statistics), and the conclusions. (If you choose a multiple experiment article, you may limit your description to just one of the experiments if you wish, but you must explicitly say that in the paper.) **Another text section** should relate the research to the material discussed/read in class. That is, this section should place the research in the context of material from psychology 316. The order of the first two sections is up to you. The **final text section** should be a critical evaluation in which you show that your have critically considered the research. This final section should address questions like these: Is the research well done? Does the author tell a coherent story? Do the conclusions follow from the results? Are there alternative explanations for the findings? Do the findings raise additional questions? The reference section at the end of your review should include the reference for the reviewed article (this is the reference to the article, not the references in the reference section of the article) and the references for any other works that you cite in the review (e.g., you might cite your text). All references should be in **APA format** (the format used in the reference section of your text).

Grammar and sentence construction will be considered in the assigned grade but a major determining factor will be the extent to which the paper shows that you understood the research, could relate it to the class content, and reacted to it in a manner illustrating critical thinking. Please see me if you have questions about what you read and what is expected in the critical review.

**Plagiarism.** All written assignments are to be **WRITTEN BY YOU**. Assignments should be **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. Some students in the past have copied sections almost verbatim from the article in their critical reviews (e.g. one student copied the method and said "How could I do a better job than the author in describing the method?"). Some students in the past have copied from another student’s paper or copied a paper written by someone else. All forms of copying are plagiarism and are **completely unacceptable**. Plagiarism will result in a score of 0 and likely will result in referral to the Dean of Students.

**Exams and Quizzes**

There are three types of tests: quizzes, noncomprehensive exams, and a comprehensive final.

**Quizzes.** A 2-point quiz will be given at the end of class on average once a week, but some weeks might have two and some might have none. Typically, the quiz will consist of a single question over the material covered that day in lecture. Only those people who attend the class when the quiz is given will be eligible to earn the associated points. The top 10 quiz scores will be counted in determining your grade.
Noncomprehensive exams. There will be 5 noncomprehensive exams, as indicated on the class calendar. Each exam will consist of 30 points (20-21 points from multiple-choice questions and 9-10 points from short answer questions) and will cover only the material since the last exam. The last (5th) noncomprehensive exam will be given along with the final during our final exam period in finals week. Only the top 4 exam scores will count.

You are expected to take all exams at their scheduled times. You will need to bring a #2 pencil and a picture ID to each exam. Makeup exams will be given for serious illness or other extraordinary situations. They are likely to be essay exams.

Comprehensive final exam. There will be a 40-point comprehensive final exam. It will consist of both multiple choice and short-answer questions. The final exam will be given during our final exam period in finals week. Graduating seniors are expected to take the final exam with the rest of the class.

Cheating. Cheating on quizzes and exams is completely unacceptable. It will result in a score of 0 and very likely I will refer you to the Dean of Students.

Course Grades
Course letter grades will be determined by performance on the exams, the quizzes, and the writing assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Number Counted</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In class quiz</td>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncomprehensive Exam</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Final exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction paper</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical review</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>230</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, there are 230 possible points, but the highest number of points out of 230 earned by a student in the class will be counted as 100%. Each student's percentage score will be his/her total number of points earned divided by the highest total. The percentage range for each letter grade is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94.0-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>77.0-80.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60.0-63.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>73.0-76.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>55.0-59.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.0-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>68.0-72.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>50.0-54.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.0-85.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>64.0-67.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>0.0-49.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that this grading scheme is a form of MASTERY grading in that no curve is imposed—There is no upper limit on the number of As or Bs and there do not HAVE to be any Ds or Fs. It is theoretically possible for everyone to make an A. But, making an A requires quite a bit of work because the material to be learned is complex and abstract. I am willing to help you, but you have to take the initiative to ask me questions when you don't understand something.
## Tentative Class Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Tentative Topic</th>
<th>Tentative Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Written assignment due dates</th>
<th>Exam dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 21, 23, 25</td>
<td>Overview &amp; History</td>
<td>Text Ch. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug 28, 30, Sept 1</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Text Ch. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 4, 6, 8</td>
<td>Perception &amp; Pattern Recognition</td>
<td>Text Ch. 3</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; reaction paper due Wed, Sept 6</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Exam on Friday, Sept 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 11, 13, 15</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Text Ch. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 18, 20, 22</td>
<td>Memory, Part 1: Episodic Memories</td>
<td>Text Ch. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sept 25, 27, 29</td>
<td>Memory, Part 2: Semantic Memories</td>
<td>Text Ch. 6</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; reaction paper due Wed, Sept 25</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Exam on Friday, Sept 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 2, 4, 6</td>
<td>Memory, Part 3: Other Phenomena</td>
<td>Text Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 9, 11, 13</td>
<td>Memory, Part 4: Nonverbal Memories</td>
<td>Text Ch. 8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 16, 18, 20</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Text Ch. 9</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; reaction paper due Wed, Oct 18</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Exam on Friday, Oct 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 23, 25, 27</td>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Text Ch. 10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Oct 30, Nov 1, 3</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>Text Ch. 11</td>
<td>Critical review article approval by Friday, Nov 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 6, 8, 10</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Text Ch. 12</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; reaction paper due Wed, Nov 8</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Exam on Friday, Nov 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 13, 15, 17</td>
<td>Expertise &amp; Creativity</td>
<td>Text Ch. 13</td>
<td>Critical Review is due in my mailbox on Friday, November 17. There is no class that day; I will be at the Psychonomics Society Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 20, 22, 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 4, 6, 8</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Course evals Wed Dec 6</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; reaction paper due Friday, Dec 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Final Exam Week—tentative online schedule has the exam on Monday, Dec 11, 9:45-11:45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Exam &amp; Comprehensive Final Exam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The topic schedule and reading assignments are **very tentative**, so check WebCT regularly for actual assignments. Barring unforeseen circumstances, **exam dates will not change**.

The **fine print**—I intend to conduct the class as described in the syllabus, but I reserve the right to change the assignments and their due dates if I determine it is necessary in order to reach my instructional goals.