Syllabus*  
Cognitive Psychology, PSYC 325, Spring 2006  
T / Th [9:30 – 10:45 am], TLC 044

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Phone: (208) 885-9241  
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Course Web Site: http://www.uidaho.edu/psyc325/oncampus.htm  
E-mail: swerner@uidaho.edu

Online Course Web Site (same material): http://www.uidaho.edu/psyc325

Assigned Readings and Materials (additional readings will be announced in class)
Washington, DC: Author. (short APA – you need access to it for your paper only)
COGLAB online experimentation software – a license for your use should be included with your textbook.

General Comments
This course introduces students to the fascinating topic of human cognition. Cognitive psychology deals with the way humans (and sometimes other organisms) acquire, store, and process information. While the main emphasis of cognitive psychology is on the human mind and abstract concepts, such as mental representations, processing models, etc., new advances in the neurosciences are now linking many behavioral phenomena to particular structures of the brain. Topics will range from basic studies in perception and memory to studies of language, decision making, and even applied problems, such as the validity of eye-witness testimony.

Class Requirements and Grading
Assigned Readings. Readings for each week are given in the class schedule and are mainly taken out of the course textbook. In addition, research articles or other sources of information might be assigned for selected topics. All materials should be read before the class meets on Tuesdays. There will be quizzes most weeks, and sometimes there might be two quizzes in one week. We will go over the main points of the topic during the week’s lectures and I will add additional material whenever appropriate. You will be asked to read an additional book or three additional research articles for your main writing assignment.

Weekly assignments. Throughout the semester, you will have to work on a number of smaller assignments. The assignments consist of participation in a number of online experiments (CogLab) and other small assignments that will be announced in class. The purpose of these assignments will be to deepen the understanding of the materials covered in class. They will count towards class participation.

Main writing assignment. Throughout the semester, students will have to work on a main paper for the course. Your task is to write a paper (between 1200 – 1600 words, APA style) on a book (or at least 3 journal articles) that is related to the topic of cognitive psychology. The writing assignment will comprise three phases: An initial proposal, a first version, and the final version of your paper. The paper has to be submitted via email and has to follow the APA standard (5th edition). If format, orthography, quality of writing, or content are below threshold, the assignment will be returned not graded as if it had not been submitted. Please submit only quality work that you have thoroughly proofread and revised! A few sample papers with correct formatting will be posted on the course’s web site. If you are unfamiliar with APA style, please contact me or the TA asap to make sure that your assignments will be correctly formatted.

CogLab assignments. Throughout the semester, you will take part in CogLab experiments. We will monitor your participation but not your performance on those. The deadline for CogLab experiments (at least 10) is May 1st, after which we will stop evaluating your CogLab participation. However, information from the CogLab experiments might be part of the exams. Please try to keep up with these assignments!

Quizzes. There will be unannounced quizzes during some lectures. Some of the items on each quiz might be directly taken from the assigned readings for that week, regardless of whether it has already been discussed in class or not! This will reward those students who have read the assigned chapters on time. We will count your best 10 quiz results towards your
final grade. Since more than 10 quizzes will be given (we shoot for at least 12-13), no additional make-up opportunities will be offered unless there is a medical emergency that has prevented you from taking part in a number of these quizzes.

**Exams.** There will be three exams throughout the semester (see schedule). We will only count the top 2 of your exams for your course grade – you thus can drop one of the exams. We would encourage you to participate in all three to take advantage of this. Exams will be presented via the web-CT interface and will be done outside of class. We have allotted a 3-day time window for each one. Exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

**Attendance and Participation.** Attendance and participation in class will be a determining factor in deciding the final grade if a person is borderline between two letter grades. Questions and participation in class are encouraged and welcome. The above mentioned CogLabs are part of your participation grade and 10 of them are required for this course.

**Experiment credit.** You can add up to 2.5 percent to your grade through participation in an eligible study at the Department of Psychology at the University of Idaho (the eligible studies will be pointed out in class. Each hour of experiment is worth 1 percentage point). If you don’t want to participate in any study, you can substitute additional CogLab experiments for .1% for each one.

**Working as a team:** It is encouraged that students work together in study groups and that students help each other out in trying to understand difficult or abstract concepts. Although discussion about class material is thus encouraged, each assignment has to clearly be identifiable as an individual effort.

**Course Grades**

Your final grade is based on the total of points (out of 500) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A ≥ 450 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second best exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>B ≥ 400 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>5+15+80</td>
<td>C ≥ 350 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (best 10)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>D ≥ 300 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (incl. CogLab)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment credit</td>
<td>max +12.5</td>
<td>F &lt; 300 points</td>
</tr>
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**Deadlines**

**Assignments.** Assignments have to be submitted electronically via the web-CT interface! Each assignment will have its own assignment drop box where you can upload it into web-CT. They have to be received before the beginning of class on the day that they are due or before the explicitly stated deadline for the assignment. Please allow for some technical difficulties when uploading to avoid problems with the deadlines. CogLab assignments have to be completed 05/01/2006.

For the main paper, we have established three deadlines for the individual phases:

- Proposal: Paper topic, main question to be addressed (5 points) 02/03/2006
- First version of full paper (15 points) 03/10/2006
- Final version of full paper, complete (80 points) 05/01/2006

**Email and Web-page**

**Email.** Personal, face-to-face encounters during office hours or right after class are the preferred method of communication with the instructor outside the classroom. If you cannot make it to the office hours, please feel free to email me. The email address is given at the beginning of this syllabus. Please put the following keyword in your message’s subject header: PSYC325 (spelled exactly like this, without a space between PSYC and 325!). I will filter all incoming messages and the ones pertaining to this course will be put in a separate folder. If you do not use this keyword, I cannot guarantee that I will read your email! Please keep this in mind. Please don’t try to call since I don’t check my voicemail regularly.

**Web-page.** I will post news, comments, materials or special homework assignments on the course’s web site and will email them to you. Please check this site frequently for announcements and information on assignments. The schedule and the lectures are very similar / mostly identical to the online version of this course. If you have missed a lecture, you can go there to listen to the material presented by a slightly younger version of myself :-)