

## **Psy3850B: Human Cognition**

**Prof. Javid Sadr**

Fall 2017, University of Lethbridge  
Lectures: Wed 3:00-5:50pm, Rm C640

### **Course Goals and Requirements**

Our goal in this course is for students to actively learn and master concepts, issues, and research findings in Human Cognition (and, to some extent, Psychology, science, and critical thinking in general), and we pursue this primarily through the course readings and lectures. This course extends and critically relies on material learned at an introductory level in Psy 1000, 2030, and 2330, and it serves as a credit equivalent to Psy 2320. Three examinations, regular in-class quizzes and activities, and appropriate well-prepared participation in lecture serve to evaluate students' progress and their comprehension and mastery of the course readings and lecture material. This course also serves as a crucial pre-requisite for Psy3360, "Sensation and Perception".

### **Pre-requisite Courses and Equivalent/Duplicate Credit**

There are two mandatory pre-requisite courses that must be successfully completed before taking Psy3850; these pre-requisites provide crucial background necessary for succeeding in Psy3850 and will not be waived. These courses are: Psy2030 (Methods and Statistics) and Psy2330 (Learning and Cognition). Because Psy1000 (Basic Concepts of Psych.) is a pre-requisite for these two courses, it is assumed that all students in Psy3850 have also successfully completed Psy1000. The registrar's office regularly produces a report of all enrolled students and will de-register any students lacking these pre-requisites prior to the add/drop deadline; these students are advised to transfer to another course rather than waiting to be removed by the registrar.

This Psy3850 provides course credit equivalent to Psy2320, "Cognition and Perception". Students who have completed Psy2320 should not register for this course; you can receive credit for 2320 or this 3850, not both.

### **Course Readings**

The required text for this course is a customized reader, available from the university bookstore, that brings together a collection of key articles from the fields of Human Cognition, including papers of particular historical importance. These readings range from articles in popular science publications to specialized research papers published in science journals for the professional scientific audience. Supplementary materials will be provided as hand-outs at lecture and/or electronically via email or the course website. VERY important: students are required to read and study/prepare assigned readings **before** attending lectures related to that material (e.g., carefully study the first reading, Vokey & Read (1985), before lecture on Sept. 6).

### **Course Exams, Evaluations, and Grading**

Students' final grades will reflect their performance on three exams as well as their preparation for and participation in each lecture, including answering questions during lectures, active note-taking, in-class quizzes and activities, home readings and assignments, lecture attendance, punctuality, and conduct (see below). More details about these components are provided below, and they will also be discussed in greater detail in lectures as we proceed (e.g., specific instructions for each exam). These items contribute to the final grade as follows:

- 6% preparation for and participation in lecture
- 30% exam 1
- 31% exam 2
- 33% exam 3 [final exam period]

Standard UofL guidelines (see below) will be used to convert total percentage scores into final letter grades, and letter grade assignment at grade boundaries (e.g., B+ vs A- at ~80%) will be based on end-of-term evaluation of students' daily preparation, participation, in-class activities, quizzes, attendance, conduct, etc.

90% - 100% A+	77% - 80% B+	67% - 70% C+	55% - 60% D+
85% - 90% A	73% - 77% B	63% - 67% C	50% - 55% D
80% - 85% A-	70% - 73% B-	60% - 63% C-	0% - 50% F

### **"Is this going to be on the exam?"**

"Yes."

The quizzes and exams will cover assigned readings as well as material from the lectures. There will be substantial overlap of lecture material and assigned readings; however, exams and quizzes will include assigned reading material that is not specifically discussed in lecture, and lecture material (including in-class activities, hand-outs, videos, etc) that might not appear in the textbook/readings. As such, it's important to take very good notes in lecture to study along with the readings. Then, as to whether exams are "cumulative":

- The first exam covers all lectures and assigned readings up to the time of the first exam.
- The second exam covers all the material that comes after the first exam and before the second exam.

However, many of these topics, concepts, and terms build on material from the first third of the course. So, although the second exam is not explicitly "cumulative", understanding the material in the first third of the course is very important for doing well in the second exam and, just as importantly, throughout the course.

- The third exam will be more comprehensive than the first two. The main focus of this exam (and the majority of its questions) will be on the material that follows after the second exam; in addition, however, there will be questions on the first two thirds of the course. As such, the third exam will be "cumulative", although the selection of questions will be strongly aimed at material from the last third of the course.

### **"Make-Up" Exams, Quizzes, etc**

There will be no "make-up" exams, quizzes, or other graded work. There is no system to exclude low scores or missed work, exams, quizzes, etc from the final grade, and there are no sources of "extra credit".

No special arrangements can be made for alternate exams or exam times, and students are advised to not make travel plans or other commitments beyond the official dates for UofL holidays or to begin prior to the end of the final exam period. The timing of the third exam, during final exam period (Dec. 9 - 18), will be based on the registrar's scheduling; see below for currently anticipated date and time.

Students who miss a lecture must immediately obtain the missed lecture notes from one or more classmates -- not the professor -- including missed announcements, readings/assignments for the next lecture, etc.

[ Serious emergency medical situations -- which must always be specifically supported by documentation obtained the same day, signed and dated by a medical Doctor -- will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. ]

### **Attendance, Daily Preparation, Punctuality, Note-Taking, etc**

Students are expected to attend all lectures. Attendance, punctuality, proper note-taking, and appropriate, well-prepared participation in class are important components of each student's evaluation and crucial for digesting, relating to, and mastering the course material. Classes will provide a forum for demonstrations, activities, elaboration, ancillary material, and evaluations, as well as a context for students to further clarify, explore, and apply the material read, studied, and prepared outside of class. It is in the students' best interest to attend lectures regularly also because lectures will include examinable material not present in the readings and because there will be a number of in-class quizzes and other activities throughout the semester.

Along with other aspects of class conduct, students who distract themselves and/or others by text-messaging, reading, talking or communicating by writing notes, playing with toys, etc, will lose all credit for attendance on that day and may be asked to leave the classroom.

Students are expected to arrive on time for each class (ideally, a few minutes early) to be ready to start on schedule without disturbing other students or the professor. Also, many in-class quizzes and activities will occur at the beginning of class (and not repeated or extended later into the lecture), so punctuality is crucial.

Because of their close integration in the lectures and discussions and their timing relative to the students' ongoing readings/studying, any questions or discussion regarding quiz questions/answers must take place during the associated lecture itself, not put off to a later time or setting when doing so would have virtually no value; that is, students are very strongly advised to ask questions about lecture or reading material when and where it will be most valuable and timely: during the relevant lecture itself, not outside of class, hours, days, weeks, or months later. Along the same lines, questions and discussions outside of lecture or during lecture breaks will not contribute to students' graded evaluation of lecture participation and preparation.

It should be clear that attendance and proper conduct at lecture are necessary -- but not sufficient -- for students to succeed in this course. Students are required to prepare for lectures by reading and fully studying relevant textbook and other material before each lecture. Also, it is an extremely bad idea to bring the readings to class to read or review during lecture -- do not do this. At lecture, students are advised and expected to actively take notes on the material presented; well-prepared students will find this relatively easy, avoiding unnecessary duplication of textbook material/figures, focusing instead on new material presented in lecture. Outlines or duplicates of lecture material (i.e., notes, diagrams, etc) will not be created or distributed.

### **BestBuy in the Classroom**

During lectures, all phones, computers, tablets, text-messaging devices, PDAs (e.g., "smart" watches, etc), gaming devices or toys (electronic or not), and all other portable electronic, communication, or entertainment devices (e.g., music/video players, etc) must be turned off and put away. The same is required during exams.

Students are not permitted to use a computer in class without the professor's prior permission [very rare]. Students are very strongly advised to take lecture notes with pen and paper, and spare paper is required for completing and submitting quizzes and activities. Very rarely, by prior arrangement, special exceptions to this may be permitted on an explicit and individual basis (e.g., certain students with documented disabilities specifically requiring assistive technology) and would require formally and consistently demonstrating exclusive note-taking activity, as well as exceptional maturity and conscientiousness, during computer use; wireless/internet use is prohibited and must be disabled by anyone pre-approved for electronic note-taking.

As noted above, students who distract themselves and/or others by text-messaging or using other devices gain no credit at all for attendance and will be asked to stop doing so or to leave the classroom. In terms of grades and actual learning, there is no value at all in physically attending lecture while being mentally absent.

### **Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Code of Conduct**

All students are required to learn and follow university policies on academic honesty and student conduct. These are outlined in the University Calendar for Undergraduate Programs, particularly in Part 4.

These policies include specific notes on inappropriate behaviour, cheating, plagiarism, shared/combined work, etc. They relate not only to exams, quizzes, and assignments but to one's daily behaviour at the UofL.

It is a mistake to consider some transgressions to be minor or inconsequential, e.g., looking at a neighbor's work while "confused" during a quiz or activity. If, for example, suspiciously similar answers appear on two or more submissions, all students involved typically suffer serious sanctions. Also, it is usually impossible to establish who copied from whom and/or, just as importantly, lack of consent, so it is as important to protect your work as it is to not exploit the work of others. It certainly has happened that students have earned marks of zero for tainted work and academic dishonesty (e.g., duplicate answers on quizzes or exams) and thus received failing course grades and additional sanctions and disciplinary action. For any suspected violation, the required first step is an official letter to the Dean, which enters the student's permanent record.

## Announcements, Course Material, and Communication Online or via Email

Lectures will be the primary source for course announcements, assignments, exam information, hand-outs, etc. Occasionally, there may also be online/mailed announcements and materials, so it must be the students' responsibility to regularly and frequently check their university email account and the Moodle system at [moodle.uleth.ca](http://moodle.uleth.ca) for any additional announcements, materials, or other communication. For all computer-, email-, and Moodle-related questions or problems please email [help@uleth.ca](mailto:help@uleth.ca) or visit [www.uleth.ca/it](http://www.uleth.ca/it)

Email sent to the professor will be read during business hours usually within approx. three business days and responded to either via email or in person at the classroom. All course-related email must be given a title that starts "**psy3850 - "** and has a clear, descriptive subject line, otherwise it will likely be sorted as junk mail.

Any requests to review an exam must be made and scheduled within three weeks (21 days) of that exam; after this period, office hours must be dedicated to helping students prepare new material for the next exam.

Students who come for office-hour meetings are required to bring their lecture notes, course readings/text-book, course outline, and paper and pen to make notes.

**Students with Documented Disabilities** must consult the Accommodated Learning Centre immediately for guidelines on arranging accommodations: <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/accommodated-learning-centre/>

**Students on University Sports Teams** must provide a schedule of anticipated absences, endorsed and signed by their coach; this must be done in the first two weeks of classes, providing advance explanation of missed lectures due to games/travel. However, no exams can be rescheduled to cover an athletics conflict.

## Some Important Dates and Deadlines

Tue	Sep 12	Add/Drop deadline
Wed	Oct 4	<b>Exam 1</b>
Wed	Nov 1	<b>Exam 2</b>
	Nov 13-17	Fall "Reading" Week -- no lectures
Sat	Dec 16	<b>Exam 3</b> (6pm - 9pm) -- tentative day/time

**Additional Comments:** It is very important during the first week to get to know a few classmates in order to cover gaps left by missed lectures or incomplete/messy notes; recall that it is not the professor's responsibility to repeat, on email or in person, missed lecture material, announcements, or reading assignments for absent students. At the same time, be extremely careful about your privacy and security before sharing any personal/contact information. Also, it might be helpful sometimes to supplement one's studying with quiz/review sessions in a group, which may benefit from multiple viewpoints and self-examination styles, but most students eventually find that studying in groups is not very productive; for most people, active reading, note-taking, and serious study is best pursued alone. Over the course of the semester, we may also discuss some other strategies for approaching the study of the readings and textbook material in particular, as well as the course content in general.

Finally, it is very important to realize that it is not and can not be the professor's role to motivate students to want to do well in a course -- to care about learning the course material, to read and to study, to attend and participate in class, to take notes and remain attentive, etc; it must be that each student has made a conscious and deliberate choice to enroll in each particular course with the intent to learn the associated material, to attend and participate in lectures, to engage in activities and assignments, etc -- all the work necessary for the student's learning and engagement, none of which can be externalized to a course's teaching and instruction.

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As we proceed, some syllabus items will be described in greater detail (e.g., exams), potentially updated (e.g., exam schedule), or corrected. For complete, up-to-date details on course events, requirements, etc, this outline cannot substitute for regular lecture attendance (and attention to supplementary information via email/Moodle).