

Psychology 2330

Learning and Cognition

Dr. Scott Allen
Department of Psychology¹
University of Lethbridge

Section A Fall 2013
(Tues. Thurs. 10:50 - 12:05, PE250)

Objective

The principal objective of this course is to provide you with a grounding in learning theory that will serve you well in further courses in psychology. Thus, the first portion of the course will deal with historically interesting findings and interpretations in learning theory many of which happened before either of us were born. An additional objective is to introduce you to some of the current research in psychology that focusses on the interaction between learning theory and other cognitive processes including memory and categorization. Thus, the latter portion of the course will focus on more recent issues in learning theory including such topics as general learning mechanisms in perceptual and addictive processes, higher-level cognition in nonhuman (and human) animals and neural network models of learning and memory.

Textbook

The textbook for this course is:

Pearce, J.M. (2008). *Animal learning & cognition: An introduction (Third Edition)*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Additional readings will be made available on [Moodle](#).²

Structure of the course

As noted above, we will begin with the basics of classical and operant conditioning relying largely on the textbook and additional lecture notes to be provided via Moodle. More recent work covered in the latter part of the course will rely more on additional readings as well as more lecture notes, once again provided via Moodle

¹ If you've printed a paper copy of this document (and thus lost all the links), it is available by logging into [Moodle](https://moodle.uleth.ca/) <<https://moodle.uleth.ca/>> and entering this course.

² To log into Moodle use your uleth username (the part of your email address that precedes "@uleth.ca" and your email password.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on 2 midterm exams (worth 30% each) and one final exam (worth 40%). The exams will be cumulative only in the sense that life is cumulative—that is, each exam will focus on the information presented since the preceding exam, but understanding that information will depend on mastering the earlier information (i.e., I won't be going back and asking trivia questions from chapter 1 on the final exam). Each exam will be computer administered via [Moodle](#). It will be up to you to go to the Testing Centre some time within the allotted period to take the tests (information on the testing centre is available from the top menu of Moodle or [here](#)). The tests will not be administered during class periods. The tests will contain multiple guess questions and may contain short answer questions. The dates during which you will be allowed to write the tests are as follows (These times may change due to the availability of the computer lab for the tests):

Midterm 1: October 4 - 10

Midterm 2: November 8-14

Final Exam: December 9-17

No excuses for missed tests will be accepted other than documented, prolonged illness. Make-up tests will not normally be provided.

Grading:

Your final letter grade will be calculated as follows (of course, if you're precisely on the border you will receive the higher grade) there will be no rounding of grades to the next category (i.e., 79.9 is less than 80 so is a B+, not an A-):

% Grade	% Grade	% Grade	% Grade
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

Experimental Research Participation:

This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to participate in active research programs of faculty members. This participation allows you to get direct experience in how many of the experiments and studies you will read and hear about (at least those involving human participants) are actually done, and provides an opportunity for you to see what goes on in the labs, and meet senior undergraduate and graduate students conducting their own laboratory research projects. Calls for volunteers to assist in these projects will be made during the semester, through the Sona system. If you are asked to volunteer, and you accept, each project usually requires one hour or less of your time, but this will depend on the individual research project. In recognition of your time, and in recognition that you are learning something about the discipline of psychology beyond what you would in the normal classroom environment, an extra credit of 1% for each study in which you participate will be added to your total grade to a maximum of 5% (so, it is theoretically possible to score 105% in this course—go for it!). Note that there is *no* guarantee that all, or even any students will be able to achieve the maximum extra credit. As these are *extra* credits, students who choose not to participate are not disadvantaged.

The available studies will be listed on the system at <http://psychleth.sona-systems.com>. Your username will be the same one you use to access Moodle. A password will be emailed to you (i.e., it *won't* be your email password). The system should be available starting around September 16th and the deadline for participating in studies is December 6th.

Contacting me

The most effective way of reaching me outside of class is by email at allens@uleth.ca. There is also a [class, email discussion list](#) that you may use to raise questions and discussion with me and your fellow students and that I will use for class announcements; I encourage you to use it.

Welcome to the course. I hope you will have a fruitful and enjoyable semester -S.A.