

SYLLABUS
Cognition Lab: Spring 2012
1:803:306:05
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Wednesday 12-3 pm in Psych 105

You are responsible for knowing all of the information contained in this syllabus. Please read it fully and refer to it throughout the semester, and make sure you understand all of the information before coming to class or beginning any assignments.

Prerequisites: In order to take this class, you should have a background in quantitative methods (statistics), a basic understanding of general psychology (e.g. general methods and approaches), and should either have completed or currently be enrolled in Cognition. We will review concepts and statistical methods in class.

General Aims: The aim of this course is to provide hands-on experience and training in some of the methodologies, experimental designs, and analytical methods that are common in research in cognitive psychology. The course will be devoted to situating experiments in the context of previous work (introduction), running some simple in-class experiments (methods), analyzing the data (results), and interpreting the results (discussion).

Writing Component: This lab counts towards your SAS Writing And Communication credits. There are 4 goals of SAS writing classes (copied verbatim):

1. Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, &/or supervisors through successive drafts & revision.
2. Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
3. Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
4. Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

What I like best about this class:

1. A chance to see how experiments are really done! How do psychologists really come up with the things you learn about? How do you know if your hypothesis is right?
2. A chance to do things on your own. . . But also to collaborate.
3. For researchers, it's all about getting published. Practice putting together your results in a clear and convincing way.

Schedule: The labs follow a two-week cycle. During the first week of each unit, students will act as subjects in an experiment. I will give some of the theoretical background and motivation of the week's experiment, and explain the experimental design. During the

second week of each unit, the class will analyze and interpret the results. I will discuss the relevant statistical methods, both in general and as they apply to the results at hand. The assignment, part of a lab report, is generally due in class 2 weeks from the start of each lab. (Occasionally I will have you hand in something small during class as well, to check that everything is clear, and this will be worth 1 or 2 of that lab's 10 points.)

The schedule of units is as follows:

Lab 1: Categorization and typicality

Experiment: Jan 25

Analyses: Feb 1

Abstract due: Feb 8 (10% of grade)

Lab 2: Mental rotation

Experiment: Feb 8

Analyses: Feb 15

Introduction (including references) due: Feb 22 (10% of grade. -2 for no refs)

Lab 3: Numerical estimation

Experiment: Feb 22

Analyses: Feb 29

In class assignment: Feb 29 (10% of grade)

Methods due: March 7 (10% of grade)

Lab 4: Category learning

Experiment: March 7

NO CLASS MARCH 14: SPRING BREAK

Analyses: March 21

Results due: March 28 (5% of grade)

Discussion (including references) due: March 28 (10% of grade. -2 for no refs)

Lab 5: Decision making

Experiment: March 28

Data brought in: April 4 (5% of grade)

Analyses & results done in class: April 4 (5% of grade)

Lab 6: Working memory

Experiment: April 11

Analyses: April 18

Optional editing workshop: April 18

Full lab report: due April 25 (NO CLASS, due via turnitin on Sakai by 12 p.m.)

Final Lab Report:

Worth 35% of final grade and based only on the "Working Memory" lab.

Breakdown of Grade:

Abstract (7 points)

Introduction (7 points)

Methods (7 points)

Results (7 points)

Discussion (7 points)

References (not worth any points, but you will lose 7 points if you don't include this section)

Basic Rules:

Attendance is mandatory, for obvious reasons. All assignments are due IN HARD COPY at the start of class on the due date. The only assignment that should be handed in via turnitin on Sakai is the final assignment, since there is no class that day. I'll hand assignments back the following class, and I'll post your grades on Sakai as soon as I've entered them.

Feel *very* free to ask questions throughout the lecture portion!! Please let me know if you'd like to go over something again. If you don't understand something (and you've been paying attention), that means most of your classmates don't either, so let's get it cleared up right away.

Absences/late assignment will **only** be excused if for serious illness, death in the family, religious obligation, etc. If your excuse is known ahead of time (e.g. religious obligation) you must let me know ahead of time. If you cannot let me know ahead of time, you must let me know as soon as possible after the absence or late assignment and preferably give me evidence (e.g. a doctor's note). We will then try to work out a reasonable way for you to make up the missed class or assignment. However, multiple missed classes or assignments may not be able to be made up, even if you have a legitimate excuse, simply because of the hands-on nature of the class. Communicating with me about this is your best bet for working something out.

You **must** be on time to class. I know the bus system sometimes makes this difficult but realize that we will start on time, and that if you come in 5 minutes late, you may miss crucial information. Anything you miss is **your responsibility**, and if you're sufficiently late/consistently late, I may not allow you to begin a lab. (It's not fair to hold back the rest of the class or have to explain things multiple times because of one late student.)

When you come in there will be a sign-in book on my desk. Print and sign your name. (Signing someone else's name counts as cheating. . . not something you want to do!). You can also pick up graded work from my desk and hand in work that is due.

No printing while I'm lecturing/explaining things to the class. The printer is extremely noisy. If you need to print something, you may do so before class starts or during a time when I'm not talking to the class as a whole.

Computer rules: Please do not go on facebook, twitter, gmail, youtube, etc. during class. During the short lectures, only use the computer to follow along with the slides and take notes. The slides are only guidelines, but if you miss what I say, you're going to have a lot of trouble when it comes time to do your assignments. If I see you going on these

sites, I may ask you to leave the lab, and you will not be allowed to make up missed work.

Saving your work: You must sit in the same seat every class. You must save your work in 2 places.

1. The folder on the **desktop** that corresponds to your section
2. On a flash drive or by emailing it to yourself.

(Don't come to the second week of a lab, realize all your work has been deleted, and have to start over.)

Plagiarism: You can view the complete academic integrity policy here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

You are free to DISCUSS your work with your classmates, but you must write up your work independently. It is very obvious when two students have written up their work together or copied from each other.

If you are including an idea that you got from another author, you don't need to put it in quotes, but rather, you cite it at the end of the sentence like this (Smith, 2012).

If you are found plagiarizing you will get a 0 for that assignment. Let me know if you have questions about what is/isn't allowed.

Extra Help: Ask if you need extra help! You can always contact me at nisacoff@ruccs.rutgers.edu. You're welcome to send me drafts or questions regarding your assignments. However, realize that the **earlier** you send something, the more likely you will get a response in time. I can't promise you that I'll have time to comment on a draft sent the night before an assignment is due. If you want to go over something in person, we can arrange to meet before or after class, or at another time.

Extra Credit: During the lecture portion, I'll often ask for volunteers to answer questions or write something on the board. If you contribute, you'll get 1 extra credit point added to your final grade, up to 1 point per class.