SYLLABUS
Cognition Lab: Fall 2012
1:803:306:06
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Mondays 6:40pm 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 course has been certified as satisfying four of the Writing and Communication Learning Outcome Goals (including WCR and WCD) of the SAS Core Curriculum):

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.

This means that writing is a big part of this class. To do well in this class, you will need to start writing assignments early and work on editing your own work. One of the best ways of improving your writing is to write something, wait a few days, and then read what you've written aloud.

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 classes 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 points.) I suggest putting all of these dates in your calendar so that you don't miss anything.

The schedule of units is as follows:
Lab 1: **Categorization and typicality**
Experiment: Sept 10
No class Sept 17
Analyses: Sept 24
Abstract due: Oct 1 (10% of grade)

Lab 2: **Mental rotation**
Experiment: Oct 1
Analyses: Oct 8
Introduction (including references) due: Oct 15 (10% of grade, -2 for no refs)

Lab 3: **Numerical estimation**
Experiment: Oct 15
Analyses: Oct 22

In class assignment: Oct 22(5% of grade)
Methods due: Oct 29 (10% of grade)

Lab 4: **Category learning**
Experiment: Oct 29
Analyses: Nov 5
Results due: Nov 12 (10% of grade)

Lab 5: **Decision making**
Experiment: Nov 12 (5% of grade)
Data sent to me: Nov 18th by 10am (5% of grade)
Analyses:Nov 19
Discussion due: Nov 26 (10% of grade)

Lab 6: **Working memory**
Experiment: Nov 26
Analyses: Dec 3
Optional editing workshop: Dec 3
Full lab report: Dec 10 (NO CLASS, due via turnitin on Sakai by 6:20 p.m.)

Final Lab Rport:
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 written assignments are due both IN HARD COPY and via turnitin under Assignments on Sakai at the start of class on the due date. You must turn in your assignment in both ways by the start of class in order to get credit. 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, for you to write 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.