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Spring 2013

Cognition Lab

TA: Peter Pantelis

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## Syllabus

**Class Time/Location:** Wednesdays, 12:00-3:00pm, Psych Building Rm 105  
**TA Office Hours:** by appointment only

**Overview:** 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 commonly applied to research in cognitive psychology. Most of the course will be devoted to running some simple in-class experiments, analyzing the data, and interpreting the results.

**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.**



Specifically, students will be able to:

- a) Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision (WCR);
- b) Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry (WCD);
- c) Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly;
- d) Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

**Handouts:** Online versions of handouts can be found at

<http://ruccs.rutgers.edu/~jacob/Psych306/labman.html>

**Sakai** will be a *very* important tool for communication within the class and the dissemination of announcements and materials, so please check it periodically. Lecture slides will contain important information for the completion of assignments, and will be posted to sakai after class. Written assignments will all be submitted to sakai: *I request that they be submitted in PDF format. This is so that I can open the file on any computer, and so that your figures all have the appearance you intend (no format conversion issues on different versions of Word, etc.).*

**Schedule:** During the first half of each unit, I will give theoretical background and motivation for an experiment in cognitive psychology, and then students will act as subjects in the experiment. During the second half, the class will analyze and interpret the results. For each unit, I will discuss the relevant statistical methods, both in general and as they apply to the results at hand.

The schedule of units is, tentatively, as follows (subject to change at the discretion of the T.A.). The associated writing assignment for each unit is also given here.

Lab 1 (1/30): **Class Introduction**  
**Categorization and typicality I**

Lab 2 (2/6): **Categorization and typicality II**  
**Assignment: Abstract**

Lab 3 (2/13): **Mental Rotation I**  
**Assignment: Introduction**

Lab 4 (2/20): **Mental Rotation II**

Lab 5 (2/27): **Numerical Estimation I**  
**Assignment: Methods**

Lab 6 (3/6): **Numerical Estimation II**

Lab 7 (3/13): **Category Learning I**

(No Class 3/20, Spring Break)

Lab 8 (3/27): **Category Learning II**  
**Assignment: Results**

Lab 9 (4/3): **Decision making I**  
**Assignment: Collect and submit data for next class**

Lab 10 (4/10): **Decision making II**  
**Assignment: Discussion**

Lab 11 (4/17): **Working memory I**

Lab 12 (4/24): **Working memory II**

Lab 13 (5/1): **Final paper workshop**

**Grading:** Each unit will include a writing assignment: one section of a lab report on the experiment conducted in class. Each assignment will be explained at lab. 50% of the final grade will be based on these five partial lab reports and attendance. 50% will be based on the final assignment, a full write-up of our final experiment. This final paper will be tentatively due on Sakai on **Monday, May 6** (the last day of spring classes) **at midnight**.

Because our class meetings are long, time will typically be allotted during class time for you to work on a particular writing assignment. This will give you the opportunity to complete a draft, and have me look over your assignment, before you leave. The five unit assignments will be submitted on Sakai. Each unit assignment will be graded out of 10 points. After receiving a preliminary grade, you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit your assignment by a second deadline. If you do not resubmit your assignment by the second deadline you will, by default, be assigned your original grade. If both deadlines pass and you have not submitted an assignment, **you will receive a zero for the unit**.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory because so much of the class depends on the hands-on experience of running in the experiments. In addition, you will work on data analysis and written assignments during class, so that if questions come up you will have the opportunity to ask for help. If you need to miss a class with a good excuse, please let me know in advance. One absence (with prior notice) will not adversely affect your grade. Additional absences, or absences without prior notice, will result in a reduction of your grade for the unit.

**Current Academic Integrity Policy:**

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.