

Cognition Summer 2013

Psychology 305 01:830:305:B2

General Information

Dr. Cordelia Aitkin

Monday - Thursday, 10:10 am -12:05 pm

Beck Hall, Room 253

Goals and Policies

Learning Goals:

1. Develop scientific and critical reasoning skills.
2. Learn about the fundamental theories and approaches to the field of cognition.
3. Understand some of the links between mind and brain, and how those links are discovered.
4. Increase participation in class by asking questions and contributing to discussions.

Class Policies:

Missed classes: You are responsible for material covered in classes that you may miss. To find out what was covered, borrow notes from another student. If you still have questions about the material, please either come to office hours or make an appointment to see me.

Cell phones/laptop/other electronics: As this class will be discussion-based, there will be **no** electronics in use without express permission of the instructor prior to the start of each class meeting.

Nine Helpful Hints

1. The most important requirement for doing well in this class is to participate in class.
2. The course content is cumulative so if you miss class, your understanding of material in subsequent classes will be compromised.
3. Ask questions during class if you're confused. New material relies on the concepts already developed.
4. Ask questions for information, to test your own knowledge and to develop critical skills. If you're not convinced by an argument, say so. Answer questions that are posed during class.
5. Make sure you understand the main points of each class and the main points of the reading material. You should be able to understand how specific examples and specific details relate to the main themes. Test yourself by writing a short summary or an outline of the discussion. Don't rely on the feeling that you know what's going on. See if you can state the main points.
6. Each class builds on the material of the prior classes. Review your notes, with special emphasis on the main themes, before coming to class.
7. When reading the text pay particular attention to the key words and to the graphs and figures. This is where the authors are putting the most important information.
8. Pace your reading wisely. Do not leave it all for the last minute.
9. For individual help, see me after class, during office hours, or make an appointment.

Contact Information

Office hours: Tuesdays 1- 2, or by appointment. Appointments may be made by email or after class.

Email: cdaitkin@rci.rutgers.edu. Feel free to send an email whenever you need to, but be aware that it may take up to two business days to respond. If you have not received a response after 2 business days, please resend the email. Lengthy or complex issues will be discussed in person, during office hours.

Grading

Grades will be based on in-class participation and activities

Schedule

The class will be flexible within the guidelines given below. You will be actively participating in determining the specific topics we will focus on within the general guidelines.

The material covered in the course is cumulative. Ideas introduced in the first few lectures will be amplified and developed throughout the session. The required reading overlaps only in part with the corresponding lectures. Some issues developed at length in lecture may be given scant attention in the text while some issues discussed in detail in the text will not be covered in lecture.

Week	General Topic	Tentative Readings*
1	Introduction to major themes; history and biology	Chapter 1; Turing, 1950
2 -3	Input: How does information get into the brain? How do we know what to focus on?	Chapters 2-4; Rescorla & Wagner, 1972; Love, Rouder & Wisniewski, 1999
3-4	Storage: how is information kept? what kind of information is kept?	Chapters 5-8; Miller, 1956
4-5	Representation: how is information represented? how is information transmitted?	Chapters 9-10; Rosch, Simpson & Miller, 1976
5-6	Manipulation: how do we process the information? how do we create new information out of the old? how do we use the information to work in the world?	Chapters 11-14; Atchley, Strayer & Atchley, 2012

***Note**: Based on the class's interests as a whole, equivalent readings may be substituted.