

COGNITION

SPRING 2017



■ Instructor

Dr. Julien Musolino
www.julienmusolino.com
julienm@ruccs.rutgers.edu
Office hours by appointment

■ TA

Joseph Sommer
Joseph.sommer@rutgers.edu
Office hours by appointment

■ Class meetings

Monday/Wednesday, 4:30pm-5:50pm, AB 2125

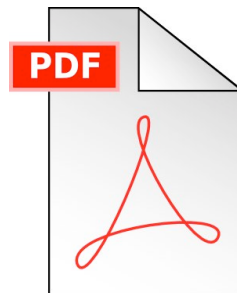
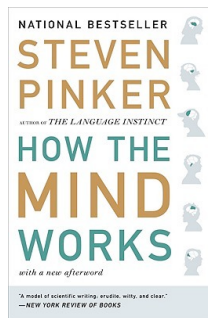
■ Course description

Understanding how the human mind works represents one of the last scientific frontiers. Some of the most influential thinkers in history have grappled with this problem. Within the last half-century or so, remarkable progress has been made in our understanding of mind, thought, and intelligence. This course provides a survey of the historical landscape, the state of the art, as well as some of the implications of what we have learned about how the mind works for pressing issues of global societal importance.

■ Learning objectives

- Students will apply psychological concepts and content to become engaged citizens.
- Students will use critical thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to ask, answer and understand questions related to behavior and mental processes.

■ Reading materials



The book assigned for this course is Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works*. In addition, other required readings (in the form of PDF files) are posted on SAKAI. I will mention a number of books throughout the class, bearing on various topics that we will discuss, any of which students are welcome to purchase and read. None of these books are required.

■ Lectures

Due to the large enrolment for this class, lectures will not be interactive. However, I will be available after class for more informal discussion.

• Exams and grades

Grades will be determined by performance on the following activities:

• 2 midterms

The midterms will be taken in class.

- **4 online assignments**

The assignments will be due at regular intervals during the semester and will need to be posted on SAKAI by a specific deadline. For each assignment, students will be asked to answer a series of questions (between 5 and 10) bearing on either the assigned readings or issues discussed in class. A complete assignment will typically consist of two or three pages of text, including the questions themselves. Students can of course write more if they feel so inclined.

- **Final Exam**

The final exam is CUMULATIVE (i.e., it covers the entire content of the course over the whole semester). For university policy regarding finals exams, please visit:

<http://registrar.rutgers.edu/NB/EXAMRULE.HTM>

- **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken and is linked to the extra credit policy described below.

- **Extra credit**

Students will be given the opportunity to earn extra credit in an amount which will increase their final grade by up to 2%. Extra credit will be based on attendance and calculated in the following manner: a student who does not miss any lectures will get the full 2%, a student who misses 1 lecture will get 1.5%, and a student who misses 2 classes will get 1%. A student who misses 3 lectures will not get any extra credit but will not incur any penalties either. ***Each additional class missed after the 3rd missed lecture will lower your final grade by 1%.***

Exam format

All exams (with the exception of online assignments) will have the same format and include some or all of the following activities:

- Multiple choice questions
- True/false
- Fill in the blank
- Short answer

Grades will be computed using the following weights

- Midterm 1 (30% of final grade)
- Midterm 2 (30% of final grade)
- Assignments (10% of final grade)
- Final Exam (30% of final grade)
- Attendance (see above)

Percentages converted to grades

90% - 100%	--- A
87% - 89%	--- B+
80% - 86%	--- B
77% - 79%	--- C+
70% - 76%	--- C
60% - 69%	--- D
59% - 0%	--- F

Changing Grades

Students sometimes ask professors to change their final grade, usually based on the need to achieve a certain grade in order to, for example, get into the business school, retain a scholarship, or avoid academic probation. Although I wish all of you the best of success in your studies, please understand that changing one student's grade is unfair to all the other students in the class. Therefore, requested grade changes will not be considered. Likewise, additional assignments to earn extra credit are not available. Your final grade will be based solely on your scores on the course exams and assignments, as described above.

■ Responsibilities

• Exams and assignments

Barring exceptional circumstances, all exams and assignments must be completed on the date they are assigned (in the case of exams) or by the relevant deadline (in the case of assignments).

• Make-up exams and assignments

Under exceptional circumstances, e.g., severe illness, injury, etc., students will be allowed to make-up for a missed exam or assignment. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor so that proper arrangements can be made.

- **Conduct and Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and respect. Conduct other than this will be disciplined following procedures detailed in Rutgers University policy on such matters. Academic dishonesty is defined as, but not limited to, plagiarism, harassment, cheating, disrupting behavior, or representing another student's work as your own. Please also note that use of computers and other electronic devices for anything other than note-taking is distracting to other students and is not permitted.

For further information on this topic, please visit:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

- **Absences**

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

- **Religious observances**

Rutgers University's policy on accommodations for religious observances or holidays is available at the following site:

<http://registrar.rutgers.edu/NB/ENROL-NB.HTM#religious>

- **Special accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

■ Course content and schedule

Date	Lecture topic	Readings
<p>Week 1</p> <p>Sept 06</p>	<p>Introduction</p>	
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Sept 11 Sept 13</p>	<p><u>Part 1: The big picture</u></p> <p>Body and mind: the basic problem and the main approaches</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> The last wall to fall, --- Steven Pinker</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Sept 18 Sept 20</p>	<p>Modern minds: The cognitive revolution and the computational brain</p> <p>No class</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> What's in your mind? -- Zenon Pylyshyn</p> <p><u>HTMW:</u> Chapter 1</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Sept 25 Sept 27</p>	<p>The hidden mind: the role of unconscious cognitive processes</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> Do defaults save lives?</p> <p><u>HTMW:</u> Chapter 2</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Oct 02 Oct 04</p>	<p><u>Part 2: The details</u></p> <p>Assignment 1</p> <p>Language: minds, apples, and planets</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> How language works – Steven Pinker</p> <p><u>HTMW:</u> Chapter 3</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Oct 09 Oct 11</p>	<p>Atypical minds: genes, language, and cognition</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> genes, language, and the nature of scientific explanations – Musolino and Landau</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Oct 16 Oct 18</p>	<p>Memory: total recall?</p> <p>Midterm 1</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> Memory – Baddeley, Eysenck, Anderson</p> <p><u>HTMW:</u> Chapter 4</p>

<p>Week 8</p> <p>Oct 23</p> <p>Oct 25</p>	<p><u>Attention</u>: did you see the gorilla?</p> <p>Assignment 2</p>	<p>HTMW: Chapter 5</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>Oct 30</p> <p>Nov 01</p>	<p><u>Decision making</u>: homo economicus vs. human beings</p>	<p>Reading: A six pack of problems</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Nov 06</p> <p>Nov 08</p>	<p><u>Reasoning</u>: don't believe everything you think</p>	<p>Reading: medical decision making</p> <p>HTMW: Chapter 6</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Nov 13</p> <p>Nov 15</p>	<p><u>Moral cognition</u>: the science of good and evil</p>	<p>Reading: The new synthesis in moral psychology</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>Nov 20</p> <p>Nov 22</p>	<p>Assignment 3; <u>The hard problem</u>: a look at the problem of consciousness</p> <p>No class - Thanksgiving</p>	<p>Reading: The mystery of consciousness</p> <p>HTMW: Chapter 7</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>Nov 27</p> <p>Nov 29</p>	<p>Part 3: implications and controversies</p> <p>Midterm 2</p> <p>Climate change: reality or Chinese hoax?</p>	<p>Reading: climate change and moral judgment</p> <p>Reading: the psychology of denial concerning climate mitigation measures</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Dec 04</p> <p>Dec 06</p>	<p>The psychology of climate change</p>	<p>Reading: When morality opposes justice</p> <p>Reading: Why do people misunderstand climate change?</p>

Week 15		
Dec 11	Assignment 4	HTMW: Chapter 8
Dec 13	Course summary	
Dec 21	Final exam, 4:00pm-7:00pm	

* Please note that this schedule is subject to changes and modifications which, if they occur, will be announced in class.

■ **Student-Wellness Services**

Just In Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/

www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 /

www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.