

# CLPS0200

## Human Cognition

### Spring 2013

This course is an introduction to the experimental study of human cognition. We will discuss the historical background and key theoretical ideas guiding experimental work on the psychological study of attention and working memory, long-term memory, concepts, problem-solving, reasoning, judgment, decision making, and visual imagery. The course will focus on understanding how the mind works and on how to construct a strong empirical argument in psychology. We will encounter many controversies about the nature of cognition and some elementary computational models of mental phenomena.

**Instructor:**

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**Textbook & Readings:**

Benjafield, Smilek, Kingstone, Cognition (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Oxford University Press (available at the Brown Bookstore).

Other readings will be made available on the class's [canvas.brown.edu](http://canvas.brown.edu) website.

Most lectures will use Powerpoint slides that will be made available prior to each class on the canvas website. The slides will not be self-explanatory. They will provide an outline for the lectures but will only make sense in the context of what is said in class.

**Course Requirements:** I expect students to keep up with the readings and to attend class.

There will be two short paper assignments. For the first, you will defend a thesis of your choosing based on one of the class readings. Your argument should focus on the reading as well as at least two other scholarly papers related to your thesis. Your paper should be no more than 1000 words. It is due March 21.

Near the end of semester, we will divide the class into groups and stage a series of debates over controversial issues covered over the semester. You will be asked to write a second short (3-5 page) paper on one of the debate topics. This paper will be due the last day of reading period, May 7.

There will be a midterm and final exam. Credit will also be given for participation. Contributions in class, on the website's discussion board, and privately with the instructor or TA will all count toward participation credit. There will also be a few assignments scattered throughout the semester.

**Grading:**

Assignments	5%
First short paper	17.5%
Midterm	17.5%
Debate/short paper	25%
Final exam	30%
Participation	5%

Spring, 2013

## CLPS0200 Syllabus

**BSK:** Benjafield, Smilek, Kingstone, Cognition (4<sup>th</sup> Edition).

Week 1 (1/24): Introduction      **Reading:** BSK 1

Week 2 (1/29, 1/31): Overview & Consciousness and Attention  
**Reading:** BSK 3 (p. 63-71) and 4; Rumelhart & McClelland (1981)

Week 3 (2/5, 2/7): Working Memory & Acquisition vs. Retrieval  
**Reading:** BSK 6; Beilock & Carr (2005); Tulving (1974)

Week 4 (2/12, 2/14): Types of Memory and Amnesia  
**Reading:** Corkin (2002)

Week 5 (2/21): Schema and the Organization of Memories.  
**Reading:** BSK 5; Loftus (1997)

Week 6 (2/26, 2/28): Concepts and Categorization  
**Reading:** BSK 8; Rosch & Mervis (1975); Hampton (2012)

Week 7 (3/5, 3/7): Concepts cont'd & MIDTERM

Week 8 (3/12, 3/14): Visual Imagery and Spatial Knowledge  
**Reading:** BSK 7; Pylyshyn (2003)

Week 9 (3/19, 3/21): Problem solving.  
**Reading:** BSK 10; Gobet & Simon (1996)

3/21 1<sup>st</sup> SHORT PAPER DUE

Week 10 (4/2, 4/4): Judgment under Uncertainty  
**Reading:** BSK 11; Tversky & Kahneman (1974)

Week 11 (4/9, 4/11): Decision Making      **Reading:** Kahneman & Tversky (1984)

Week 12 (4/16, 4/18): Reasoning and Intelligence  
**Reading:** BSK 12; Fernbach et al. (2010); Stanovich (2009)

Week 13 (4/23, 4/25): Group debates

Week 14 (4/30, 5/2): Reading Period: Group debates

Week 15 (5/7): Review; 2<sup>nd</sup> SHORT PAPER DUE

Final exam: Fri., 5/10, 9am.