

**Cognitive Psychology (PSY 3120, CRN 31989)**  
**Summer 2014, May 27 – July 18**  
**Prof. Robert Carlson**

**Class Information**

Class Days: Tues., Wed. & Thur.

Class Time: 11:00 – 12:50

Class Location: McDonald 209

**Contact Information**

Office: McDonald 201

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**Disclaimer:** Details of this syllabus are subject to change (I hope not, but you never know). Announcements regarding changes to the syllabus will be made in class.

**Contacting Prof. Carlson:** The most effective way to contact me is by e-mail. I check my e-mail regularly, and I am much more likely to remember to respond to an e-mail than to a comment made to me before or after class (I tend to forget those comments, unfortunately). If you speak to me in person, especially away from my office, **make sure to follow up any conversations with an e-mail** to remind me to address the matter in a timely manner. I am not likely to be in my office outside of office hours, but you are welcome to drop by any time to see if I have time to meet with you. If you want to be sure I will be there to talk with you during a time other than official office hours, please feel free to contact me via e-mail to make an appointment.

**Course Description:** “Introduction to basic principles of human and non-human cognition. Topics include perception, categorization, attention, memory, knowledge representation, judgment and decision making, and problem solving.” (Description from Course Catalog) Basically, we study many aspects of human behavior that are not directly observable. We learn how objective scientific approaches can be used to infer how mental processes are working “behind the scenes.”

**Course Objectives:** The purpose of this course is for students to demonstrate an understanding of how cognitive psychologists apply the scientific method to develop an understanding of the study of the mind. Students will demonstrate their learning of a variety of scientific techniques used in cognitive psychology, theories of various mental activities, and results of the application of techniques and theories through short quizzes and longer exams. This course does not fulfill a general education requirement but does fulfill a requirement toward the Psychology major.

**Course Requirements and Information:**

Textbook: *Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Required)

**Other Articles:**

Halpern, M., and Miller, G. Online dialog re: Disclaimer by George Miller, retrieved online from members.shaw.ca/philip.sharman/miller.txt.

Miller, G.A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *The Psychological Review*, 63, 81-97.

Canvas: We will use Canvas on a regular basis. (Required)

Office Hours: Tue., Wed., Thu. 10:30-10:50

Prerequisites: PSY 1010, PSY 2000

Course Fees: None

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating of any kind is not tolerated. Students must take all quizzes and exams independently (without the help of others, except for appropriate disability services). For further information regarding student responsibilities related to academic integrity, please refer to Section 5.33.5 of the DSC policy, which can be viewed at <http://www.dixie.edu/humanres/policy/sec5/533.html>. Other portions of this policy are also relevant, especially as they relate to fostering a learning environment that does not discriminate and is conducive to learning.

**Attendance Policy:** Many students find some of the main concepts taught in this class difficult to understand. For these students, missing class makes learning the material significantly more challenging. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you attend class regularly and participate in class discussions. Regardless of the reason for an absence, **the student is responsible** to find out about, and make up, missed work or announcements made in class. Arrangements to take exams **ahead of time** (never after the due date) **must be made prior to the absence**, including a plan for making up the exam approved by the instructor. It has been rare for me to grant make-up exams after the exam is scheduled, but it is common for me to allow students to take an alternate exam **before** the exam is scheduled.

**Classroom Policy:** All students are strongly encouraged to participate in classroom discussions, but appropriate levels of maturity and respect (to the instructor and other students) must be demonstrated at all times.

**Grading Information:** Final grades in this course will be based on a percentage-based system, and there will **not** be a “curve” used to determine grades.

**Grade Components:** Quizzes (15%), Midterm Exams (60%), Final Exam (25%).

**Quizzes will be administered through Canvas.** You can take the quizzes any time it is convenient up to a half-hour **before** Tuesday’s class (except for Week 1). The material covered on the quiz will be the **whole week’s reading assignment**.

**Midterm Exams will be administered in the Testing Center.** Each midterm exam must be taken during the exam time specified below.

The material covered on each exam will reflect the material from the previous exam until and including the material on the last class before the exam period.

<b>Grading Scale</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Range</b>
A	>91%
A-	89-91%
B+	86-88%
B	82-85%
B-	79-81%
C+	76-78%
C	72-75%
C-	69-71%
D+	66-68%
D	62-65%
D-	59-61%
F	<59%

## **Grading**

Grading will be based on three criteria: four Midterm Exams (60% of your overall grade), a Final Exam (30%), and quizzes (10%).

**Midterms:** There will be four Midterm Exams in this course. Each exam will consist of a combination of true/false and multiple choice questions, plus a few other types of questions, such as fill-in-the-blank. All midterm exams will be administered in the Testing Center and must be completed during the dates specified on the syllabus. Midterms 1-3 will be given over the long weekend between

<b>Exam</b>	<b>Window</b>
Exam 1	2/6/14 10:30 am – 2/10/14 10:00 pm
Exam 2	3/20/14 10:30 am – 3/24/14 10:00 pm
Exam 3	4/22/14 10:30 am – 4/23/14 10:00 pm

class periods; Midterm 4 must be taken in the afternoon or evening when it is offered. **It is your responsibility to make sure the Testing Center is open and available to take your midterm exams.** Your highest-scoring Midterm Exam will count 20% toward your final grade, the two middle-scoring Midterm Exams will each count 15%, and the lowest-scoring Midterm Exam will count 10% toward your final grade.

Final: The Final Exam will be administered in class during Finals Week and will cover material discussed throughout the semester. Your score on this exam accounts for 30% of your final grade and will consist of only true/false and multiple-choice questions. **You will need to provide an answer sheet for the Final Exam.**

Quizzes: There will be 8 quizzes administered during the semester, one for each week of classes. Each quiz will cover multiple chapters and test your basic understanding of the reading assignment for the coming week. Quizzes must be completed on Canvas at least a half-hour **before the first class of the week** (except for Quiz 1). The quizzes will be approximately 10-15 questions and will test your understanding of the basic concepts from the assigned readings for the coming class period. The combined average of all quiz scores will comprise 10% of your final grade, with the lowest quiz not counting toward your final quiz average (it will be “dropped”). **No make-up quizzes will be offered.** Remember, since quizzes can be taken online, even if you are out of town you still may be able to take a quiz during the assigned quiz period.

### Make-up Exam Policy

Make-up exams are not allowed, except in the event of *extreme* and *unanticipated* circumstances. If there is a reasonable reason to believe that a situation will arise that might prevent you from taking an exam at the scheduled time (such as participation in a school-related activity), it is **your responsibility** to make arrangements with the instructor **ahead of the scheduled exam date.** At least 2 days’ notice is customarily expected, and more time may be required in many cases to make adequate alternative arrangements. **In virtually all cases, the make-up exam will be taken before the scheduled date.**

Grade Calculation: Grades are calculated based on percentages for each quiz/exam and for each grade category (quizzes, midterms, final exam). **The total number of points does not matter in calculating your grade.** For example, if you score 4 out of 4 on one quiz, that counts as a grade of 100%; if you score 4 out of 5 on another quiz, that counts as a grade of 80%. Those two quizzes would lead to a Quiz Average of 90% (average of 80% and 100%), not 88.9% (8 out of 9 total points). The same principle applies to Midterm Exam grades, although for midterms each exam percentage is multiplied by a different percentage depending on whether it is your lowest or highest midterm score (based on percentage). To calculate your grade for the class, first calculate your Quiz Average (QA) by averaging the **percentage scores** from each quiz, except for the three lowest quizzes which are not counted toward your grade. Next, calculate your Midterm Average (MA) by averaging the **percentage scores** from your Midterm Exam scores, with the highest two Midterm Exam scores each counting 25% of your grade and the lowest Midterm Exam score counting 15% of your grade (based on each midterm’s percentage score). To calculate your overall grade, use the following formula:

$$(QA\% * .10) + (ME1\% * .20) + (ME2\% * .15) + (ME3\% * .15) + (ME4\% * .10) + (FE\% * .30)$$

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<sup>1</sup> ME1 = highest midterm percentage grade; ME2 = second highest midterm percentage grade; ME3 = third highest midterm

This sum will be your total percentage grade in the course; use this to determine your letter grade in the course based on the Grading Scale listed above.

### Course Outline

The reading assignments are listed below for each week of classes. Unless otherwise specified, the reading is from the Reisberg textbook; the Miller article is available on Canvas.

### Course Schedule

<u>Week: Days</u>	<u>Reading Description</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
1: May 27-29	Introduction to the course; what is perception	1-2
2: June 3-5	Vision and imagery	3 and 11
June 5-9	<b>Midterm 1</b>	<b>1-3 and 11</b>
3: June 10-12	Attention and working memory	4-5 (and Miller)
4: June 17-19	Long-term memory	6-7 (to p. 211)
5: June 24-26	Long-term memory	7-8
June 26-30	<b>Midterm 2</b>	<b>4-8 and Miller</b>
6: July 1-3	Generic knowledge and language	9-10 (to p. 312)
7: July 8-10	Language and heuristics	10 and 12
July 10-14	<b>Midterm 3</b>	<b>9-12</b>
8: July 15-16	Decision making and problem solving	13-14
July 16	<b>Midterm 4</b>	<b>13-14</b>
8: July 17	Review for Final Exam	1-14
Fri., July 18	<b>Final Exam (11:00 a.m. in class)</b>	1-14