

# Cognitive Psychology (PSY 2215)

## Syllabus

Instructor: Anna Babarczy

### Course Description

#### General Objectives

Cognitive psychology studies how the human brain/mind processes and stores information including visual signals, sounds and language, and how people use this information to solve problems and make decisions in their everyday lives. Cognitive psychology is an empirical science: Theoretical models of how the mind works are tested and improved through observations and experiments. These models can help us understand why things may go wrong, how to help people with certain neurological disorders, how to improve the performance of education systems, how to make smarter computer programs and robots, and how to make better business decisions.

The main goals of the course are:

- To understand the basic principles and methods of cognitive psychology
- To understand the applications of these principles to everyday life
- To develop critical thinking and problem solving skills

#### How the course will be conducted

About half of the class meetings will mainly be conducted in a lecture/discussion format while the other half will be dedicated to lab work and the discussion of case studies.

### Required Text

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat: And Other Clinical Tales*. Touchstone, 1998.

Recommended text: Stephen K. Reed, *Cognition: Theory and Applications*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth.

Other texts and materials will be distributed in class.

### Assignments and Grading

Most weeks there will be a short homework assignment. You will do a presentation on one of the chapters in the textbook.

#### Course Grade

Participation and homework:	25%
Midterm test:	25%
Project:	25%
Final Exam:	25%

## **Honor Code**

You are expected to adhere to the McDaniel College Honor Code.

First and foremost, do not attempt to hand in any work that is not your own. This will result in a failing grade on the work, and it will be reported to the Dean.

Second, and perhaps a bit more difficult to understand, is the use of proper source citation. In composition you are expected to use outside sources, for example websites, critical essays, interviews, etc. Without proper citation, an essay is claiming that the author is the source of such information. This is a form of academic dishonesty, and it is taken seriously in this course. Grades will be affected severely by any violation.

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

Your presence in class is required. If you miss more than three classes your grade will drop 1/3 of a letter grade. Then with each subsequent absence the grade will drop another 1/3 of a grade. If you must miss class for medical reasons, please provide a signed excuse from a doctor.

### **Tardiness**

Attendance will be taken during the first fifteen minutes of class. If you cannot arrive in that time you will be marked absent.

Date	Topic	Sacks	Reed
3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	What is cognitive psychology?		Ch 1
10 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Introduction to neuroscience: How the brain works		Ch 1
17 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Perception and pattern recognition	1 The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat 5 Hands 15 Reminiscence (18 The Dog Beneath the Skin)	Ch 2
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Attention and attentional performance limitations	3 The Disembodied Lady 4 The Man Who Fell out of Bed 7 On the Level 8 Eyes Right	Ch 3
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Short-term and working memory		Ch 4
9 <sup>th</sup> March	Long-term memory: Encoding, storing and retrieving information	2 The Lost Mariner	Ch 5
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Memory codes, processes and failures	12 A Matter of Identity 19 Murder	Ch 6
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	MIDTERM EXAM		
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Visual imagery		Ch 7
6 <sup>th</sup> April	SPRING BREAK		
13 <sup>th</sup> April	The organization and categorization of knowledge in the mind	13 Yes, Father-Sister	Ch 8, Ch 9
20 <sup>th</sup> April	Language	9 The President's Speech	Ch 10, Ch 11
27 <sup>th</sup> April	Problem solving		Ch 12
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Expertise and creativity	22 A Walking Grove 23 The Twins 24 The Autist Artist	Ch 13
11 <sup>th</sup> May	Decision making and reasoning		Ch 14
18 <sup>th</sup> May	FINAL EXAM		