

Winter 2025 PSY270H1 LEC0201

Introduction to Cognitive Psychology

Can Mekik

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Time	W 10:00–13:00
Location	SS 2102
Instructor	Can Serif Mekik
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Office Hours	T 13:00-15:00
Office	SS 6015
TAs	TBD

1 Course Description

Cognitive psychology is the study of the psychological processes that enable intelligent human behavior. It encompasses the study of elementary cognitive processes, like perception, attention, and memory, as well as more complex phenomena, like knowledge, mental imagery, language, reasoning, problem solving, and individual differences.

In this course, you will become familiar with fundamental concepts and leading theories in cognitive psychology. You will also learn about the methods that cognitive psychologists use to answer questions about cognition and practice analyzing and criticizing these methods.

1.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe major terms, concepts and theories in cognitive psychology
- Understand how unconscious cognitive processes influence our everyday behaviour
- Understand how the historical development of cognitive psychology has shaped the questions researchers in cognitive psychology ask today
- Explain how empirical findings can support or refute psychological theories
- Identify key variables in empirical research and infer evidence-based conclusions
- Analyse and critique published research in cognitive psychology
- Communicate scientific ideas and data in the form of written reports

1.2 Course Materials

1.2.1 Quercus

This course uses the University’s learning management system, Quercus, to manage information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis.

Access to Course Website To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or “card” for ‘Introduction to Cognitive Psychology PSY270H1 F LEC5101’. You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the ‘Introduction to Cognitive Psychology PSY270H1 F LEC5101’ link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the “?” icon in the left side column.

1.2.2 Textbook

The textbook for this course is the following.

Barenholtz, E.; Burton, C.; Mavica, L.; and Webe, H. (2022) *Cognitive Psychology*. Tophatmonocle Corp.

This textbook is only available through the Top Hat platform. In addition to the Top Hat textbook, we will be using the Top Hat platform for homework, interactive labs, and other activities. Detailed instructions for purchasing and setting up your textbook and Top Hat account will be posted on Quercus. Please await these instructions prior to purchasing your materials. Please also note that there is a 14-day Free Trial available.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

2 Assessments

Assessments in this course fall under three main headings: Tests/Exams, Writing, and Class Engagement. There are multiple assessments under each heading.

Assessment deadlines and weights are summarized in Table 1.

Activity	Assignment	Due	Weight (%)
Tests/Exams	Final Exam	TBD	35
	Midterm Test	02-26	25
Writing	Assignment 1	02-05	14
	Assignment 2	03-19	14
Engagement	Reading Responses	Weekly	10
	Labs	Weekly	02

Table 1: Summary of assessments, deadlines, and relative weights.

2.1 Tests/Exams (60%)

Tests/exams serve to assess and consolidate your knowledge of course material. There is one midterm test (25%) and one final exam (35%) in this course. Both assessments will be in-person, consist of multiple-choice questions, and run for 120 minutes. The final exam is cumulative, covering all material in the course, and will be scheduled during exam period.

2.2 Writing Assignments (28%)

Writing assignments serve to help you refine your skills in developing, analyzing, and communicating scientific ideas. You will complete two short written assignments (about 1000 words max), to be submitted on Quercus. The first assignment will focus on theoretical/conceptual analysis of existing research whereas the second will focus more on methods and analysis of experimental results. In both cases, you will be expected to follow scholarly psychological writing standards, namely APA 7. Detailed instructions will be posted on Quercus.

2.3 Class Engagement (12%)

Class engagement activities serve to enrich your knowledge and learning experience throughout the semester. They consist of two activities which will be available for completion on a weekly basis, starting on Week 3, and will be due at the start of the next class.

Reading Responses (10%) Reading responses are designed to provide you a low-stakes and structured environment to practice reading and analyzing psychological research literature.

Starting on the third week of class, you will have the opportunity to complete one reading response every week, with the exception of Week 7 (midterm) and Week 12 (conclusion/review). To complete a reading response, you will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about a reading of your choice. Each week, you may select readings from a thematically relevant pool that the instructor will make available to you on Quercus.

The reading response questionnaire may include basic questions about the reading (e.g., what type of source it is), as well as prompts for deeper reflection. These questions are meant to guide your attention to essential details of the readings and help structure your

Date	Meeting	Agenda	Readings	Due
01-08	01	Introduction	Syllabus, Ch. 1	
01-15	02	Theory & Methods	Ch. 2, Ch. 3	
01-22	03	Perception & Attention	Ch. 4, Ch. 5	
01-29	04	Memory I: STM & WM	Ch. 6	
02-05	05	Memory II: LTM & Autobiographical	Ch. 7, Ch. 8	Writing 1
02-12	06	Knowledge & Decision Making	Ch. 9, Ch. 13	
02-19	–	Reading Week (No Class)		
02-26	07	Midterm Test		
03-05	08	Visual Imagery	Ch. 10	
03-12	09	Language	Ch. 11	
03-19	10	Problem Solving	Ch. 12	Writing 2
03-26	11	Individual Differences	TBD	
04-02	12	Conclusion & Review		

Table 2: Course Outline.

work. Each reading response will be assessed for completion. In total, you will be asked to complete 8 reading responses, each worth 1.25% of your final grade.

Interactive Labs (2%) You will be assigned to complete six interactive labs on the Top Hat platform between Weeks 3 and 11. These interactive labs will give you hands-on experience in cognitive psychological experimentation. Interactive labs will be graded solely on completion.

3 Schedule

The class schedule is summarized in Table 2. Ongoing assessments such as reading responses and labs are not shown but are generally due on a weekly basis at the start of class, starting on Week 3.

4 Polices

4.1 Contact

Outside of class and office hours, the best way to reach your instructor or TAs is through email. We will only respond to emails received from a `mail.utoronto.ca` account.

When using email, please take care to include the course code in the subject line. If your email is longer than a few sentences, please consider visiting the instructor or TA during office hours. If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours of sending your email, please feel free to send a reminder.

Your instructor will hold regular office hours starting on Week 3. TAs will hold office hours after returning grades for written assignments. If you are unable to attend scheduled

office hours, you may request an appointment via email.

4.2 Quercus

Grades Posted Online Please note that any grades posted online are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Warning: Quercus Inbox and Replies to Announcements Note that Quercus has a built-in communication tool, called “Inbox”. This is not the same as your `mail.utoronto.ca` email. You are strongly advised to use email instead, as your instructor and TAs will not be regularly monitoring the Quercus Inbox. Also please do not include attachments in replies to any Quercus system notifications you receive through email; messages with attachments included in replies to these system notification messages are not sent to the instructor.

4.3 Late/Missed Work

Time management is essential for your success and well-being. Nevertheless, you may sometimes be unable to honor deadlines or other time commitments.

If you find yourself consistently missing deadlines or other time commitments, it may be indicative of a more serious underlying issue. In this case, please consider getting in touch with campus resources who are equipped to help you identify and address the problem (see ‘Campus Resources’ section below).

Recurring Assignments Recurring assignments (Homework Quizzes, Top Hat Labs, and Reading Responses) will receive a grade of zero if they are not completed by the set deadlines.

Written Assignments Written assignments will be granted a 72 hour grace-period in case they are late. During this period you may still submit the assignment with no penalty. After expiry of the grace period, you will be penalized 10% of your mark for every additional day of lateness for up to four days, after which you will receive a zero.

Midterm If you think you might miss the midterm, please contact your instructor to arrange accommodations within one week of missing the test or, in the case of an extended absence, returning to class. In case of a legitimate absence, term marks will be reweighted to account for a missed test.

4.4 Accommodations

Departmental Guidance for Undergraduate Students in Psychology The Department of Psychology recognizes that, as a student, you may experience disruptions to your learning that are out of your control, and that there may be circumstances when

you need extra support. Accordingly, the department has provided a helpful guide to clarify your and your instructor's responsibilities when navigating these situations (see <https://www.psych.utoronto.ca/current-program-students/guidance-undergraduate-students-psychology>). This guide consolidates Arts & Science Policies for undergraduate students in one place for your convenience. As an instructor in the department, I will frequently consult with these recommendations when providing you with support, and I recommend that you also consult it to learn more about your rights and responsibilities before reaching out to me.

Specific Medical Circumstances If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult with your instructor right away. Normally, you will need documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI. For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Religious Accommodations As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. Your instructors and TAs will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please notify your instructor as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that you can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to your instructor or to an advisor in your College Registrar’s office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar’s letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

4.5 Grading Concerns

Upon receiving a grade, please allow 24 hours before contacting your instructor or your TAs about grading concerns and allow yourself to reflect on your performance and grade. If you still have a concern at the end of this period, you may submit one regrade request for your assignment via email.

Your request should consist of a short paragraph detailing your concern and it should be submitted within two weeks of receiving your grade. If your request is reasonable and well-justified, your work will be regraded. Please note that, upon reassessment, your grade may increase, decrease, or stay the same. The same assignment may be regraded only once and regrade requests for grades older than two weeks will not be considered.

4.6 Academic Integrity

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to your instructor or TAs. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructors, TAs, or from other institutional resources.

For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University’s policy and expectations. For more information, please see A&S Student Academic Integrity (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>) and the University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity (<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>).

4.7 Plagiarism Detection Tool

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

4.8 Generative AI

You are free to use artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI, in this course if you choose to do so. You may use such tools as learning aids or to help produce assignments. However, you are ultimately accountable for the work you submit and material generated by AI is subject to the academic integrity policy.

If you choose to use AI in your work, please carefully consider whether your usage may violate academic integrity and consult with your instructor if you have any doubts. In particular, you may not submit AI-generated material if submitting such material would constitute plagiarism had it been authored by a human other than yourself, found online, or released in print. Any AI-generated content must be cited appropriately. I will view violation of these requirements as academic dishonesty. Please also note that generative AI is not an appropriate or reliable source of factual information and should not be cited for this purpose.

4.9 Cell Phones and Laptop Usage

Technology can support student learning, but it can also become a distraction. Research indicates that multi-tasking during class time can have a negative impact on learning. Out of respect for your fellow students in this class, please refrain from using laptops or mobile phones for purposes unrelated to the class. Do not display any material on a laptop which may be distracting or offensive to your fellow students

5 Campus Resources

Mental Health and Well-Being Your mental health is important. Throughout university life, there are many experiences that can impact your mental health and well-being. As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>) such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit <https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare> to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

If you are in distress, you can access immediate support: <https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed>

Academic Success Centre Academic Success in Student Life offers programming and services to help you achieve your academic goals. Check out their study spaces, attend a workshop or meet with a learning strategist here: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/academic-success/>

English Language Resources If you would like to advance your understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT. Two examples are listed below.

- <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca>

Your registrar will also be able to direct you to other resources.