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Faculty of Science

School of Psychology

PSYC231: Cognitive Psychology

**15 points**

Trimester 2, 2022

# Names and contact details

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| Course Coordinator | Dr David Carmel | For all course-related enquiries, use the email address:  [psyc231@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:psyc231@vuw.ac.nz)  **Start your email by addressing the relevant person!**  **- All admin issues: Course TAs (Jordan & Liam)**  **- Questions about lecture content: the relevant lecturer**  **The course TAs monitor the inbox, and will forward your message to the relevant person.** |
| Lecturers | Dr Todd Jones |
|  | Dr Tirta Susilo |
|  | Laura Kranz |
| Teaching Assistants | Jordan Schulde  Liam Crowley |
| Tutors | Tim Gastrell |
|  | Lizzie Collyer |
|  | Natalie Gajdusek |
| Kaiawhina | Albert Tibble |
| Technical Support | Jiun Youn |

Email is our preferred form of communication. Lecturers will post office hours during their teaching weeks on Blackboard.

# Class times and locations

All teaching in this course is synchronous. Lectures and labs will run at specific times. For students studying remotely, the lectures (given in a lecture theatre) will be broadcast simultaneously via Panopto (accessible through the VStream tab on Blackboard; To view the lecture remotely, you will have to go to the "VStream vidoes" tab in Blackboard, where the lecture will stream as it is recorded. It will only appear there once the recording has started). Each student will sign up for a lab group, choosing whether to attend an in-person group or an online group.

If the COVID-19 alert level increases, the course will go fully online. The schedule will not change.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Lectures | Monday/Wednesday/Thursday  12:00 – 12:50 pm | Student Union MT228 & Online via Panopto |
| Labs | Labs do not run every week. See schedule below. | Various times for different groups on different weeks – see MyAllocator |

# Sign up for labs through MyAllocator: Details are posted on Blackboard.

# Key dates

**Trimester dates:** 11 July – 12 November

**Teaching dates:** 11 July – 16 October

**Mid-trimester break:** 22 August – 4 September

**Note.** There is no final exam in this course. Instead, we have 3 tests during the trimester, worth 66% of the mark in total. We will count your best 2 out of the 3 tests toward your final mark (for 33% each). **See further details on the tests in the Assessment section below**.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination that might be eligible for aegrotat grading, refer to <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats>. **Important**: If you choose to do only 2 out of the 3 tests, an aegrotat will NOT be approved for either of these two tests; in other words, you can’t pass the course with a mark based on only one of the three tests.

# Communication of additional information

Announcements and additional information will be posted on Blackboard.

# Prescription

# This course draws primarily upon human research to provide an overview of cognitive phenomena as well as the theoretical underpinnings of those phenomena. Topics may include: perception, attention, learning, memory, language, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and mental imagery.

# Course content

Cognitive Psychology is the scientific study of thought processes. How do we perceive and understand the world around us? How do we remember the past, and imagine the future? How do we communicate our thoughts to others? How do we make decisions about the actions we should take? In this introductory course we will survey current theories in cognitive psychology pertaining to perception, attention, memory, knowledge, language, and decision-making. We will pay close attention to the methods that cognitive psychologists use, including behavioural experiments and neuroscientific approaches.

While studying cognitive psychology you should also learn something about yourself as a student. Attending, remembering, communicating – these are things we ask you to do as students every day. Knowledge of cognitive psychology should help you understand your own thinking processes, and develop better strategies for studying and learning.

# Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)

1. Understand the major theoretical perspectives on the cognitive processes of perception, attention, memory, knowledge, language, and decision-making.
2. Know the key experiments in cognitive psychology, and be able to show how they support or refute the theoretical perspectives.
3. Be able to communicate the aims, methods, results, and implications of cognitive psychology experiments.

# Teaching Format

There are three avenues for learning in this class: Lectures, Readings, and Labs.

**Lectures** are taught three times per week. Lectures are delivered live in a lecture theatre, and simultaneously broadcast on Panopto to students studying remotely. Everything covered in lectures can appear on tests. Condensed or skeleton PowerPoint slides will be posted before or after the lecture (depending on your lecturer’s preference). PowerPoint slides are not lecture notes. We post them only to give you some structure while you take notes, and to present images (like graphs or diagrams) that might be hard to draw. Taking notes in lecture is an important academic skill – it is harder than passive listening, but leads to better learning.

**If you are studying online, we strongly recommend that you access the lectures from a location where there is minimal distraction, and you will not be disturbed. We also recommend that you close all other applications on your computer during lectures.** Humans are really bad at multi-tasking. You might feel like you can listen to (and comprehend) the lecture and watch cat videos at the same time, but you really can only do this if you continually switch your attention back and forth between the two. And every time you do, you suffer a small processing lapse (called a “*switch cost*”).

Lectures videos remain on Blackboard. This means you can also review them later. Although reviewing recorded lectures can help you revise, we **strongly** recommend that you do not try to binge-watch them all before the test. They are too long, and it is too easy to try and do other things at the same time. It is also easy to tell yourself you are going to watch them, and never quite get around to it until the day before the test. Research shows that the availability of online lectures has no effect on the performance of good students, but hurts the performance of weaker students. Don’t let them hurt you.

**Readings**. There is no textbook to purchase for this course. However, each lecture or topic will have assigned readings and materials. These might be chapters, articles, blogposts, or even videos. Readings will be posted on Blackboard, and in some cases may be accessed through Talis. Readings will be classified as either “required” (which means their content will be assessed on tests), “recommended” (which means they provide further information/clarification on topics mentioned in the lecture), or “supplementary” (which means we recommend them if you want to expand your knowledge about a topic). Any content that appears in recommended and supplementary readings but was not mentioned in the lectures will not be assessed. We will clearly indicate which readings are required, and which are recommended or supplementary.

**Labs**. There are five labs (see the schedule below). There is usually some preparation to do before lab sessions; details are posted on Blackboard a week before the lab. The 5 labs are organised into 3 projects. Project 1 (Lab 1) is on Perception; Project 2 (Labs 2 and 3) is on Memory, and Project 3 (Labs 4 and 5) is on mental imagery. For Projects 2 and 3, you will collect data and learn the theory behind the experiment in the first lab, and analyse the data and discuss its implications in the second lab. You will submit poster assignments on Projects 2 and 3. Tests and quizzes will contain questions on both lecture and lab material. You will sign up for labs through My Allocator (see Blackboard for instructions). You must attend the lab you have signed up for. If you miss or cannot make your chosen lab, please contact the TA as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. Do not drop in on another lab without express prior arrangements with the TA as lab spaces are limited.

# Workload

This is a 15 point course, which corresponds to *approximately* 150 hours of work for an average student to earn an average grade. If you want a better than average grade, or you are not an average student, then that number will vary. You will spend 36 hours in lectures (including the tests), and 7.5 hours in labs. This means the other 106.5 hours will be spent on reading, note-taking, revising for tests, and writing lab assignments. That corresponds to approximately 7.5 hours per week across the semester (including the mid-trimester break). Think now about when you will find those 7.5 hours in your schedule. The “*spacing effect*” tells us that you will learn better from study that is spread across the semester than from the same hours of study “crammed” into a last-minute study period.

# Assessment

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment items and workload per item** | | **Date/due date** | **%** | **CLO(s)** |
| **1** | Online tests (3 tests; the best 2 of 3 count toward the final mark, for 33% each) | Test 1: August 4  Test 2: September 15  Test 3: October 13 | 66% | 1, 2 |
| **2** | Lab Assignments (2 x 12%) | Assignment 1: September 6  Assignment 2: October 6 | 24% | 1, 2, 3 |
| **3** | Online Quizzes (9 quizzes; 1.1% each) | See Blackboard | 10% | 1, 2 |

1. **Online tests (3 tests; 66% total. The best 2 of 3 tests count toward the final mark, for 33% each).** These are multi-choice tests. Each test covers the material taught in the preceding section of the course since the previous test (including lectures, required readings, and labs). The tests will be administered via BlackBoard. You will have one hour to complete each test, which you will be able to take during a 12-hour time window. Tests will occur on days that are scheduled for lectures – see schedule below (there will be no lecture on test days).

Because the tests are online, they are open-book. Therefore, the questions will focus on understanding rather than memorization.

1. **Lab Assignments (2 assignments, 12% each; 24% total).** You will submit lab assignments for Projects 2 (Labs 2 & 3) and 3 (Labs 4 & 5). Each assignment will be worth 12% of your mark. These assignments are posters, which will summarise the research question, method, results, and implications of each project. See Blackboard for more details on the Lab Projects.
2. **Online Quizzes (9 quizzes; 1.1% each; 10% total).** (Yes, 9 times 1.1 adds up to 9.9%. We will round to the nearest point) Online multi-choice quizzes are designed to help you revise for each upcoming test. They will be delivered via Blackboard, and must be completed by the deadline – which is just before the test on that content. Quizzes cannot be completed after the relevant deadline. There is a large pool of questions for each quiz, and you will do 10 randomly selected questions each time you do the quiz. Online quizzes have no time limit, and you can repeat them as many times as you like, using whatever resources you want. You will likely get different questions each time, and we will count your best score for each quiz. Therefore, it is to your advantage to do the quizzes as many times as possible. The quizzing policy allows you to take advantage of *the testing effect* – the finding that quizzing leads to better learning and memory of course material than the same amount of time spent simply revising the information.

# Submission and return of work

Lab assignments will be submitted online, via a BlackBoard link. Assignments will be marked within 3 weeks. A model answer will be posted on the 5th work-day after submission. Individual point-breakdowns will be returned with the overall mark, and a document describing common issues will be posted on Blackboard after marks are returned. Students are welcome to make an appointment for a chat with the TA if they require further feedback.

# Extensions

Extensions for lab assignments will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Please contact the TAs as early as possible to discuss.

# Penalties

Late assignments will be penalised 2 points per day (i.e., we will deduct 2% from your mark, out of the 12% allotted to that assignment, for each day; therefore, the best mark you can receive after one day will be 10/12, after two days it will be 8/12, etc.). Late assignments will not be accepted after more than 4 days (as that is when we will post a model answer).

# Mandatory Requirements

There are no mandatory requirements. All assessments contribute to the final grade in the class.

# Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

No additional materials, equipment, or expenses required.

# Set texts

There is no textbook for this course. However, there are required readings and other resources. These will be posted on Blackboard, and in some cases accessed through Talis. We will clearly indicate which readings are required (and assessable) and which are recommended/supplementary (and not assessable).

# Recommended reading

Supplementary readings, videos, and websites to complement course material will be posted on Blackboard.

# Class representative

# The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course and their contact details posted on Blackboard.

# Student feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php). We will be asking for your feedback on both teaching and the course itself toward the end of term.

# Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

* Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/support/student-interest-and-conflict-resolution/academic-integrity>
* Academic Progress: [https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress)
* Dates and deadlines: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/dates>
* Grades: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades>
* Special passes: Refer to the Assessment Handbook, at <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>
* Statutes and policies, e.g. Student Conduct Statute: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy>
* Student support: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/support>
* Students with disabilities: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/disability>
* Student Charter: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/partnership/student-charter>
* Student Feedback on University courses may be found at: <http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php>
* Terms and Conditions: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract>
* Turnitin: <http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/Turnitin.html>
* University structure: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/about/governance/structure>
* The Use of Te Reo Māori for Assessment Policy:  
  Victoria University values te reo Māori. Students who wish to submit any of their assessments in te reo Māori must refer to [*The Use of Te Reo Māori for Assessment Policy*](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/the-use-of-te-reo-maori-for-assessment-policy.pdf)  
  He mea nui te reo Māori ki te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika. Ki te pīrangi koe ki te tuhituhi i ō aro matawai i roto i te reo Māori, tēnā me mātua whakapā atu ki te kaupapa here, [*The Use of Te Reo Māori for Assessment Policy*](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/the-use-of-te-reo-maori-for-assessment-policy.pdf)
* VUWSA: <https://www.vuwsa.org.nz/>

**Tentative Course and Lecture Schedule (topics may change, but assessment dates won’t)**

**Lecturers**

DC – David Carmel

TJ – Todd Jones

TS – Tirta Susilo

LK – Laura Kranz

TBA – to be announced

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week/Date/Lecture | | | | Lecturer | Topic | | Lab |
| W1 | Jul 11 | | 1 | DC | Introduction to the Course | |  |
| Jul 13 | | 2 | DC | What is Cognitive Psychology? | |
| Jul 14 | | 3 | DC | History of Cognitive Psychology | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W2 | Jul 18 | | 4 | DC | Assumptions of Cognitive Psychology | |  |
| Jul 20 | | 5 | DC | Research Methods 1 | |
| Jul 21 | | 6 | DC | Research Methods 2 | |
|  | | | |  |  | |  |
| W3 | Jul 25 | | 7 | DC | Research Methods 3 | | Lab 1 |
| Jul 27 | | 8 | DC | Perception 1 | |
| Jul 28 | | 9 | DC | Perception 2 | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W4 | Aug 1 | | 10 | DC | Perception 3 | |  |
| Aug 3 | | 11 | DC | Perception 4 | |
| Aug 4 | | 12 |  | **Test 1** | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W5 | Aug 8 | | 13 | DC | Attention 1 | | Lab 2 |
| Aug 10 | | 14 | DC | Attention 2 | |
| Aug 11 | | 15 | TJ | Memory 1 | |
|  | |  | | | |  |  |
| W6 | Aug 15 | | 16 | TJ | Memory 2 | | Lab 3 |
| Aug 17 | | 17 | TJ | Memory 3 | |
| Aug 18 | | 18 | TJ | Memory 4 | |
|  | | **Mid-trimester break: Aug 22 – Sep 2** | | | | | |
| W7 | Sep 5 | | 19 | TJ | Memory 5 | | Deadline for Lab Assignment 1: 5pm, Tuesday Sep 6 |
| Sep 7 | | 20 | TJ | Memory 6 | |
| Sep 8 | | 21 | TJ | Memory 7 | |
|  | |  | | | | | |
| W8 | Sep 12 | | 22 | TJ | Memory 8 | |  |
| Sep 14 | | 23 | TJ | Memory 9 | |
| Sep 15 | | 24 |  | **Test 2** | |
|  | |  | | | |  |  |
| W9 | Sep 19 | | 25 | TS | Language 1 | | Lab 4 |
| Sep 21 | | 26 | TS | Language 2 | |
| Sep 22 | | 27 | TS | Language 3 | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W10 | Sep 26 | | 28 | TS | Thinking 1 | | Lab 5 |
|  | Sep 28 | | 29 | TS | Thinking 2 | |
|  | Sep 29 | | 30 | TS | Thinking 3 | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W11 | Oct 3 | | 31 | TS | Thinking 4 | | Deadline for Lab Assignment 2: 5pm, Friday Oct 6 |
| Oct 5 | | 32 | DC | Imagery 1 | |
| Oct 6 | | 33 | DC | Imagery 2 | |
|  | | |  |  |  | |  |
| W12 | Oct 10 | | 34 | LK | Belief formation and updating | |  |
| Oct 12 | | 35 | TBA | Guest lecture | |
| Oct 13 | | 36 |  | **Test 3** | |