

Cognitive Psychology

UConn PSYC 2501 · Spring 2025

Time Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00pm–6:15pm
Room Monteith 110

Instructor Emma Wing, M.S. (she/her)
Email emma.wing@uconn.edu
Drop-in hours Thursdays, 3:30-4:30pm & by appointment
[via this Webex link](#)
Or email me with your availability!



1 Overview

The biological organ that is the human brain supports all the extraordinary things our minds can do. This course introduces the foundations of mental phenomena by exploring key theories, concepts, and discoveries in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. As we delve into topics such as perception, memory, and reasoning, we'll develop skills in scientific thinking, scientific communication, and the ability to test and refine models and theories through experimental research. We will also learn about the methods used to study the mind, including behavioral, neuroimaging, and clinical methods. Cognitive psychology is a highly interdisciplinary field, interacting with neuroscience, philosophy, anthropology, biology, linguistics, physics, computer science, engineering, chemistry, sociology, medicine—the list goes on! For this reason, cognitive psychology depends upon diverse perspectives and relies on interdisciplinary communication. We will also practice interdisciplinary communication in this class: each of us brings a unique set of background knowledge, experiences, and perspectives that together will lead us to rich discussions and innovative ideas as we learn about the human mind.

I am here to help you learn and succeed in this class! Please let me know what I can do to support you in that throughout the semester. You will be graded on the basis of your personal improvement throughout the class, so just give it your best shot, and enjoy the learning process! And just like in science, teamwork and collaboration are encouraged.

2 Learning objectives

By the end of this course, (among other things!!) you will be able to...

- Skim and scan texts on topics in cognitive psychology to extract main ideas
- Formulate specific questions about what confuses you in a research article
- Evaluate experimental predictions based on theoretical assumptions
- Create arguments by following the scientific method
- Describe 1+ cognitive model and a set of predictions that stem from it
- Write and revise a research proposal based on relevant literature and feedback

Quick Links

Course modality	Attendance and make-up policy
Weekly readings	Student responsibilities and resources
Grading breakdown	Course schedule
Extra credit	

3 Modality

We will meet synchronously and in person during our scheduled class times. Participation, including asking questions and saying when you're lost or don't understand, is crucial to learning! Your presence and voice will be noticed in class, and your contributions always encouraged. When you can't make it to class, please email me ahead of time.

Course slides, readings, and assignment specifications will be posted on HuskyCT.

4 Texts and readings

Required readings will be posted on HuskyCT with their due dates clearly indicated.

Textbook

Anderson, John (2015). Cognitive Psychology and its Implications, 8th Ed. Worth Publishers, New York, NY.

Journal articles

- *Journal articles will be assigned some weeks. See HuskyCT for details.*

5 Grading

Your grade will be made up of the following activities:

Grading breakdown	
Participation	10%
Readings, questions, & "muddiest" point	10%
Research proposal	80%

Participation (10%)

Attendance and participation is noticed! Traditional forms of participation, such as asking questions and speaking in class, are encouraged for the benefit of your learning, for the

useful dialogue it creates in class, and because asking questions, giving your opinion, and having the courage to say when you don't understand are crucial skills for a scientist. On my end, I will work to make the classroom space one you feel comfortable participating in.

Traditional forms of participation aren't the only way you can contribute. When you have comments or questions, you can send me an email or come to drop-in hours. You can also participate in group work and group discussions during class. If you have a different preferred way of participating, please let me know!

Your participation grade also relies on your participation in two "elevator pitch" activities, one in the middle of the semester and one at the end of the semester.

Readings, questions, and "muddiest" point (10%)

Each week you'll read for class either from a chapter in a textbook, a research article, or both! You'll write two questions you have from the reading on a HuskyCT discussion board that are sparked by the topic or what you read, or are to help you understand the reading. You'll also write down the "muddiest" part of the reading for you—the hardest part of the reading or an idea that didn't really make sense to you. Submit these before class on Tuesday of each week. You'll have 12 chances (12 weeks) to post questions and your muddiest point. You are only required to post 10 times.

Research proposal (80%)

Five required assignments build toward a research proposal for an experiment on a topic in cognitive psychology/neuroscience. This endeavor has multiple purposes:

- To learn the steps of creating a solid proposal for experimental research
- To experience submitting drafts and receiving feedback from an "advisor"
- To practice hitting incremental deadlines that create a long-term project

Required assignments:

Research question	10%	
Annotated bibliography	15%	<i>Due Friday 11:59pm of the week the assignment is listed on the schedule</i>
Background	15%	
Methods	15%	
Full proposal	25%	

Drafts. You can optionally submit drafts of these assignments, which have specific requirements and are designed to scaffold the work. Each draft is worth 1 extra point toward that assignment (but note that total points are capped at the total for that assignment). You do not need to complete a first draft in order to submit a second draft. Draft details are included in the assignment requirements. They are due Friday at 11:59pm the week they are listed on the schedule (see [Schedule](#)).

Group work. Collaboration is essential in research. You can choose to collaborate with two other people on this proposal. Requirements differ for group and individual proposals.

Feedback. Don't wait for my feedback before starting to edit, add to, and improve your work for a later submission.

6 Attendance and make-up policy

Attendance

Please be respectful of the learning environment and others in it by engaging fully with course activities when attending. For example, you may use technology to aid your learning by using a tablet or laptop to take notes, but please refrain from using a device for non-class-related activities during class time. Please silence all devices to avoid disrupting other learners' experiences.

Late assignments

Each day your assignment is late (including weekends), you will lose 1 point on that assignment. While I will accept late assignments, I will not accept late drafts.

Make-up & extra credit assignments

Participation. Each additional discussion board post after 10 is worth 1 point toward your participation grade.

Research proposal. Complete drafts for 1 additional point toward the assignment grade (see above under [Drafts](#)).

Extra credit. You can receive additional points on your final grade, but please note that final course grades cannot exceed 100% (100 total points).

- 1pt: Be nominated by a peer for collaborating with or helping them
- 2pts: Choose a topic not discussed in class and present on it for 5-10 min.
- 2pts: Propose the statistical analysis you would run for your experiment
- 3pts: Create a full set of materials for your experiment

7 Student responsibilities and resources

Academic Misconduct

There will be absolutely no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. If you are found to be in violation of the University of Connecticut's Student Code for plagiarism or cheating to write an assignment (please reference the Student Code link below), you will receive a failing grade for that assignment or exam. You could also be suspended from the university. Please always cite the source of the information you use, and if you have any questions about the referencing of material, please refer to the student conduct code or speak with me. [Link to Conduct Code](#).

Plagiarism includes having ChatGPT (or equivalent) write your entire assignment for you or lifting sentences of text directly from ChatGPT. Using tools like ChatGPT as an aid is allowed, however. Finally, be aware that the information that AI provides is often incorrect due to "illusions". Always check the information elsewhere, and cite your sources!

Accommodations

If you have conditions that require accommodations, please contact the Center for

Students with Disabilities and we will work together to meet your needs. If you have approved CSD accommodations but I haven't emailed you to confirm within the first two weeks of class, please contact the CSD and request that they forward me your accommodation information. Please don't hesitate to talk to me about your specific needs regarding your accommodations if you feel comfortable doing so.

Resources for Students Experiencing Distress

I believe firmly that your, and my, mental health is of paramount importance. Stress can manifest in different individuals in quite different ways. If you are unsure how to deal with any mental health issues (whether depression, anxiety, inability to sleep or focus, or any of the myriad ways in which you may be affected), please reach out to me for advice on available services that can help.

If you feel you may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional, you can find support and resources through the Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health (SHaW-MH) office. Mental health services are included as part of the university's student health insurance plan and also partially funded through university fees. If you do not have UConn's student health insurance plan, most major insurance plans are also accepted. You can also visit the Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health located in Storrs on the main campus in the Arjona Building, 4th Floor, or (recommended) contact the office at (860) 486-4705, or <https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/> for services or questions.

Statement on Copyright

Lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression, and when informed by others' courses, I will state that clearly. Students are authorized to take notes in class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use.

This course syllabus has been informed and enriched by those of Drs. Whit Tabor and Arielle Keller. It is also subject to change. The most recent copy will always be made available promptly on HuskyCT.

Course schedule

	Week	Tuesday	Topic	Thursday	Topic	Assignments
Unit 1: <i>Foundations</i>	1	Jan 21	Welcome & introduction	Jan 23	Brief history of the field	
	2	Jan 28	Cognitive neuroscience 1	Jan 30	Cognitive neuroscience 2	<i>Research question draft*</i>
	3	Feb 4	Experimental methods 1	Feb 6	Experimental methods 2	Research question
Unit 2: <i>Core Cognitive Processes</i>	4	Feb 11	Sensation & perception 1	Feb 13	Sensation & perception 2	<i>References draft 1*</i>
	5	Feb 18	Sensation & perception 3	Feb 20	Attention 1	<i>References draft 2*</i>
	6	Feb 25	Attention 2	Feb 27	Attention 3	References
	7	Mar 4	Knowledge representation 1	Mar 6	Knowledge representation 2	<i>Background draft*</i>
	8	Mar 11	Memory & learning 1	Mar 13	Memory & learning 2	Background
	9	Mar 18	<i>Break</i>	Mar 20	<i>Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
	10	Mar 25	Elevator pitches	Mar 27	Big picture discussion	<i>Methods draft 1*</i>
Unit 3: <i>Higher Order Processes</i>	11	Apr 1	Problem-solving	Apr 3	Reasoning	<i>Methods draft 2*</i>
	12	Apr 8	Decision-making	Apr 10	Language 1	Methods
	13	Apr 15	Language 2	Apr 17	Language 3	<i>Proposal draft 1*</i>
	14	Apr 22	Individual differences	Apr 24	Review	<i>Proposal draft 2*</i>
	15	Apr 29	Elevator pitches	May 1	Big picture discussion	<i>Proposal draft 3*</i>

Final Research Proposal & Extra credit assignments

Hard deadline: Friday, May 9, 2025 at 11:59pm (finals week)

Note: Schedule does not include reading assignments. See HuskyCT!

Key Dates:

Jan 21: first day of class

Mar 16: spring break starts

May 2: last day of classes

May 5: final exams week

Each assignment is due Friday 11:59pm of the week it is listed

**Earn extra points by submitting these drafts*