

PSYC*4580 - Special Topics in Behavioural Sciences

Fall 2024 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of specific theoretical and methodological advances for understanding human and/or animal behaviour. Specific topics will vary according to the expertise of the instructor, but could include advances in Social Psychology, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Cognitive or Behavioural Neuroscience.

Prerequisite(s): 14.00 credits including PSYC*3290, 1.00 credits in Psychology at the 3000 level

Restriction(s): Restricted to students in BAH.PSYC, BAH.PSYC:C, BSCH.NEUR, or BSCH.NEUR:C with a minimum 70% cumulative average in Psychology courses.

Department(s): Department of Psychology

Course Description

Throughout the day we are bombarded by far more visual information than our minds and brains can process in detail. Yet, we can use this visual information to successfully guide complex behaviours like driving a car. This course reviews classical and recent basic research advances in the field of visual cognition that help us better understand our remarkable ability to make sense of the visual environments we live in.

Lecture Schedule

TuTh 8:30am-9:50am in MCKN*235 (9/5 to 12/13)

Instructor Information

Naseem Al-Aidroos

Email: naseem@uoguelph.ca

Office: Room 4018, MacKinnon Extension Building

Office Hours:

Drop-in, Wednesday's 2:30-3:20pm, Sept 11-Nov 29

Learning Resources

Assigned Readings

There is no course textbook. All assigned readings are primary research articles, and are available through CourseLink. Each reading is associated with one lecture, as indicated by its filename. Not all lectures have an assigned reading. The assigned readings are designed to help you develop:

- Your ability to process journal articles, which are the most reliable source for staying up to date with research
- Your ability to think independently. Many of the assigned readings will not be discussed in class, but will be tested through the in-class tests. Your challenge is to figure out how to make sense of these articles.

CourseLink

- Copies of the lecture slides will be posted to CourseLink by 7am on the morning of each lecture, at the latest.
- Grades for all in class quizzes will be shared through CourseLink. As soon as grades are posted, I will add an announcement to the CourseLink News Feed.
- It is your responsibility to periodically verify your grades on CourseLink

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors/>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons/>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

Specific Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Recall classical and recent discoveries in the field visual cognition and explain how these discoveries inform our current understanding of how the mind and brain make sense of visual environments.
2. Explain the questions that researchers posed to make these discoveries, and how the questions were eventually answered using cognitive and/or cognitive neuroscience paradigms.
3. Predict, based on past research, the results of hypothetical experiments.
4. Comprehend research articles reporting visual cognition discoveries, and assess the quality of the contribution made by a given article.
5. Understand and evaluate the methodologies employed by visual cognitive neuroscientists.
6. Describe how the data reported by visual cognitive neuroscientists relates to the conclusions they made about vision and the mind and brain.
7. Provide accurate oral descriptions summarizing visual cognitive research.
8. Independently read and understand visual cognition literature.
9. Differentiate between researchers (and university instructors) claims that are well founded on scientific research from those that are not (even if they sound plausible).
10. Appreciate how debates in visual cognition emerge, and are resolved through the practice of sound science.

Missed lectures

If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to make up the missed material. A discussion board is available on CourseLink to facilitate the sharing of lecture notes, and my lectures slides are posted to CourseLink. If you have specific questions about a lecture, I am happy to answer them during my office hours.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date:	Topic	Activities	Due
Thu	9/5	Introduction to visual cognition		
Tue	9/10	Attention basics		
Thu	9/12	Object attention		
Tue	9/17	Visual search		
Thu	9/19	Visual memory		
Tue	9/24			Test 1
Thu	9/26	Attentional capture		
Tue	10/1	Symbolic cues		
Thu	10/3	Control of attentional capture		
Tue	10/8	Memory of attentional goal		
Thu	10/10			Test 2
Tue	10/15	Fall Study Break		
Thu	10/17	Memory of searched distractors		

Tue	10/22	Reassessing VWM capacity	
Thu	10/24	Individual differences in VWM capacity	
Tue	10/29	Perception for action	
Thu	10/31		Test 3
Tue	11/5	Action affects perception	
Thu	11/7	SNARC	
Tue	11/12	Visual statistical learning	
Thu	11/14	Ensemble statistics	
Tue	11/19	Pupilometry and eye movement trajectories	
Thu	11/21		Test 4
Tue	11/26	Attention and emotion	
Thu	11/28	Reserved for extra presentations if needed. Otherwise, class cancelled.	

Assessment Breakdown

[NOTE: instructor can add another row by hitting "TAB" button when they are at the end of the row]

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
Oral Presentation	20%	Dates vary
Burning Questions	8%	Dates vary
Test 1	18%	Tue Sept 24
Test 2	18%	Thurs Oct 10
Test 3	18%	Thurs Oct 31
Test 4	18%	Thurs Nov 21

Grading Schemes

In-class tests: Tests are completed in class, on your laptop, using the CourseLink Quiz tool. Students registered with SAS must complete the test through the SAS office to accommodate additional time. The objective of the tests is to allow you to demonstrate that you have gained the relevant knowledge about the function of our visual minds and brains, and that you can synthesize this knowledge to make predictions about unanswered questions in visual cognition. The tests will contain both multiple-choice and written-answer questions. Test questions will cover lecture material and assigned readings. Tests are not cumulative. Please see note about missed tests below.

Oral presentation: In groups of 2, share a recent article (published in the last 5 years) with the class through an 8-minute oral presentation. Presentation instructions are available on CourseLink. Please see note below about missed presentations.

Burning Questions (aka participation): For every class with student presentations, you are required to submit a "burning question" based on any one presentation from that day. Questions must be submitted before the end of class using the Quiz tool on CourseLink. Each submitted question will contribute 1% of your final grade up to a maximum of 8%. There are 11 classes with student presentations, so you can miss 3 and still get the maximum 8% on the Burning Questions component of your final grade.

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Fall 2024 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: November 29

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Missed Tests

There are no make-up tests. You can miss one test without explanation, and your test grade will automatically be reassigned to the other tests (i.e., if you miss Test #2, each of the 3 other tests will be worth 24% instead of 18%). You do NOT need to provide documentation, nor inform the instructor.

If you miss more than one test, you must email the instructor immediately to discuss your options, or you will be given a grade of 0 and it will count toward your final grade. Having a conflict with your work schedule is NOT an acceptable reason for missing a test. If you write a test, the grade for that test will be counted (i.e., you cannot drop a test after writing it).

Missed Presentations

If you are unable to present your talk on the selected date for reasons out of your control, please contact the instructor AND your presentation partner by email immediately to reschedule your presentation.

Course Standard Statements

Policy on Group Work

Partners are expected to contribute equally to group presentations. If a member of a group has concerns, they must bring the concerns to the instructor during their office hours as early in the term as possible, and before the oral presentation is delivered.

CSAHS Academic Misconduct Policy

The *Academic Misconduct Policy* is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar. The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Instructors shall not determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors can determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct.

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first

business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas/>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/dropping-courses/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators/>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year/>). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/>)