

Learning and Plasticity (PSY260) Fall 2021

Fall Online Asynchronous Section 2021

Content

Lectures Posted: Most Weeks: Tuesday 6:00 PM EDT on Quercus (check schedule for exceptions)

Optional Live Question Session: Every Wednesday at 3PM EDT (Link on Quercus)

Text: Learning and Memory. Mark A. Gluck; Eduardo Mercado; Catherine E. Myers (3rd or 4th Edition)

Text material will be referenced during class and material not covered in lecture and can appear on tests; therefore, it is advised students use the textbook.

Communication with You

Please reserve the use of email addressed to the instructor for personal matters, only. To ask content-related questions, please see the instructor or TA during office hours, before or after lecture, or during the lecture break. The course instructor will not respond to content-related emails. You may also use the discussion board for content-related questions. Many students will likely have the same question, so it will benefit the whole class to see the question and answer (whether posted by fellow students or the TAs).

Important course communication will come through announcements so please make sure that you are checking them at least 3 - 4 times per week OR turn on your email notifications for the course.

Contact Information

Instructor: Prateek Dhamija

For: personal matters & accommodations

Contact: prateek.dhamija@mail.utoronto.ca

Office hours by Appointment: <https://calendly.com/prateek-dhamija/15min>

Details regarding additional hours will be posted on Quercus

Teaching Assistants:

For: questions about marked assessments, general inquiries

Natalia Ladyka-Wojcik	psy.teaching.help@gmail.com
Ann Zhang	
Ade Oyefiade	

Discussion Board: Will be monitored every day of the term.

For: Content questions. General questions about how the course works.

TA Office Hours: details will be posted on Quercus throughout the semester

Prerequisites: PSY100H1 / COG250Y1 or registered in the Cognitive Science program Exclusions: PSY360H5 / PSYB45H3

Course Description

This course will provide a strong background in the basics of learning. We will examine how behaviour and the brain change with experience in both humans and animals.

Course Schedule (topics subject to change)

Week	Day	Date	Topics	Readings	Assessments and Deadlines
1	Fri	Sept 10	Introduction and Overview of Syllabus		
2	Tues	Sept 14	Fundamental Themes in Learning & Memory	Ch.1	Reflection 1 – Sep 18 11:59 PM
3	Tues	Sept 21	Neuroscience of Learning and Memory	Ch.2	Reflection 2 – Sep 25 9:00 AM
4	Tues	Sept 28	Habituation, Sensitization, & Familiarization	Ch. 3	Reflection 3 – Oct 2 9:00 AM
5	Tues	Oct 5	Test 1 Start (24 hours; 20%)	Covers weeks 1 – 4	Test 1 Start – Oct 5 5:00 PM
	Wed	Oct 6	Test 1 End (24 hours; 20%)	Covers weeks 1 – 4	Test 1 Due – Oct 6 5:00 PM Reflection 4 – Oct 9 9:00 AM
6	Tues	Oct 12	Classical Conditioning	Ch. 4	Reflection 5 – Oct 16 9:00 AM
7	Tues	Oct 19	Operant Conditioning	Ch. 5	Reflection 6 – Oct 23 9:00 AM Outline - Oct 23 @9:00 AM
8	Tues	Oct 26	Generalization, Discrimination and Concept Formation	Ch. 6	Reflection 7 –Oct 30 9:00 AM
9	Tues	Nov 2	Test 2 Start (24 hours; 20%)	Covers weeks 6 – 8	Test 2 Start – Nov 2 5:00 PM
	Wed	Nov 3	Test 2 end (24 hours; 20%)	Covers weeks 6 – 8	Test 2 Due – Nov 3 5:00 PM Reflection 8 –Nov 6 9:00 AM Reflection 9 - Nov 13 9:00 AM
Reading Week Nov 8 – Nov 12					
9	Tues	Nov 16	Episodic Memory & Guest Lecture	Ch. 7	Reflection 10 – Nov 20 9:00 AM
10	Tues	Nov 23	Skill Memory and Expertise & Guest Lecture	Ch. 8	Reflection 11 – Nov 27 9:00 AM
11	Tues	Nov 30	Emotional Learning & Memory	Ch. 10	Reflection 12 – Dec 4, 9:00 AM Assignment – Nov 30 9:00 AM
12	Tues	Dec 7	Addiction and Review of Course Concepts		
		TBD: Dec 10 -22	Final Exam (30%)	Covers all material	Cumulative

Course Objectives

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

- Describe basic learning principles
- Critically assess the learning principles involved in novel situations
- Link learning principles with specific psychological disorders
- Connect learning principles to your own life
- Explain how certain types of experiences change the brain

Lectures

- Most weeks, lecture will be posted by Tuesday at 6PM EDT. Please refer to the syllabus for exception weeks.
- Watching lectures is crucial. Lectures will help to you to focus on the relevance information as well as form connections between information.
- The course webpage is on Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca>).
- PDFs of lecture slides will be posted
- Lecture videos are not to be reposted to the world wide web.

Live Q&A Session

- A live, informal, Q&A session will occur on Thursday at 3PM – 5PM.
- This is completely optional to attend.
- Students can submit questions they want to be answered.
- Will be recorded so students who cannot attend can see the sessions.

Grading Criteria

Grades for this course will be determined through several assignments. I recognize that different kinds of assignments feed into the strengths of different students, and I work to provide a range of opportunities for you to show what you've learned. This course will have a strong focus in communicating your thoughts in writing.

Final Grade Breakdown

Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Final Exam	30%
Popular Science Writing Assignment	30%
Outline	5%
Final Submission	25%
Reflection Journals	1% x 10 = +10% (optional bonus to final exam grade)

Tests and Final Exam

- **How much are they worth?** There will be two term tests. Test 1 is worth 20% and Test 2 is worth 20%. Please refer to the table at the for dates/times.
- **What is on the test?** Everything that was in lecture material (unless otherwise noted) or in the textbook. The syllabus notes what chapters will be the focus.
 - **Test 1:** only on Chapters 1 - 3
 - **Test 2:** only on Chapters 4 – 6
- **Communication during Tests:** If for whatever reason, more information is required to be provided during an exam (typo, correction etc.) it will be provided through announcements, so please check periodically throughout the test OR turn on your email notifications for the course.
- **Are tests cumulative (does material from test 1 show up on test 2)?**
 - No, they will only focus on material in those chapters.
- **Is the final exam cumulative?**
 - Yes. It will cover all material that was covered in lecture and all chapters that were assigned for reading in the textbook.
- **When?** Each test will start on Tues at 5:00 PM EDT and end on Wednesday at 5:00 PM EDT. Check Quercus for more information.
- **What kind of questions will there be?** Tests will consist of multiple-choice, fill-in, and/or short and long answer questions. Assessments will be based on lectures, including videos, and readings from the textbook.
- **The tests will be open note/book but individual.** Please make sure that you are doing the tests on your own.
- **More information to come as we approach the tests.**

Popular Science Writing Assignment

Students will have the opportunity to think more deeply about one of several topics related to the material presented in this class. Broadly speaking, students will be asked to compare two pieces of written work – one “popular” (e.g., a blog post or website) and one “scholarly” (e.g., a peer-reviewed journal article). Further details are provided in the writing assignment handout and will be discussed in class.

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>).

If you wish to opt out of submitting work to the plagiarism detection tool, you must do the following:

1. Email the psy.teaching.help@gmail.com no later than two weeks before the due date indicating you wish to opt out.
2. Submit a paragraph describing why this topic is of particular interest to you with your final essay.
3. Submit handwritten notes used for the design of your essay with your final essay.

Reflection Journals

There will be 12 opportunities for writing a reflection journal. These will have a minimum of 100 words and require that students reflect on their own learning and or the course material. This is very open and is designed to encourage regular writing, which will help you to get used to expressing your thoughts in writing. This process has been shown to help improve writing as well as improve students understanding of their own progression in the course by identifying what they understand and what they do not. It can also help to inspire further

These will be graded for completion (requiring at least 100 words) and can be completed by Saturday at 9AM for the previous week. Each journal entry completed will result in a .5% bonus to the final exam, with up to a maximum of 10% bonus. Completion of more than 10 journals would not result an any further bonus. There will not be extensions offered for these journals.

Writing Help

Book an appointment online with the Writing Centres on St. George Campus:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>

Attend a free group workshop with Writing Plus: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/>

English is not your first language? Take a look at these resources:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/support/english-language-support>

Strategies for Effective Questions

- Effective questions require thought from the person asking the question. Specifically - what is it about the topic that is confusing?
 - To solve this:
 - first find the location of the answer yourself – where in lecture and the text was this topic mentioned?
 - Second: listen to the explanation of the topic again – what do you understand about the topic? What is the main idea?
 - Third: What is confusing or unclear? Describe what it is (and maybe why you are confused). That confusing part is what you want the person answering your question to focus on.
- Questions that are stated as “What is X” will most likely result in an answer directing them to the correct answer in the lecture material or textbook and this may not be what you are looking for!
 - Ex) What is a Tomato?
 - This would result in someone providing an answer from a dictionary
- When you are not sure about a certain topic, think about what you find confusing and are not sure about and frame your question around that:
 - From lecture #2, I understand that that Tomatos are red, flowering plants but why are they considered fruits when they are prepared like vegetables?
 - This would result in someone answering a much more specific question!

Course Policies

Discussion board Climate and Etiquette

- The discussion board can be a great resource for students when used effectively.
- Students are encouraged to ask questions in the Q&A session and discussion board. Many times, there are others who also share the same question!
- Please feel free to answer questions on Quercus yourself! Asking and answering questions is a great way to help out fellow students and also improve your own understanding of the material.
- Be polite and kind to each other when discussing issues on the discussion board

Missed Assignment Deadline or Assessment

If a student misses an assessment or assignment deadline due to illness, an absence declaration form citing an issue within 48 hours of the missed assessment or deadline typically must be submitted within two weeks of the missed deadline.

Any work (quiz, assessment, writing assignment) that is turned in late without an absence declaration will incur a 5% penalty for every 24-hour period or portion thereof. Work will not be accepted more than 4 days after the due date.

Questions About Grading

Any questions regarding a grade received for an item of work in this course should be brought to the attention of the TAs within **two weeks** of receipt of the graded work. The student will be given a form to fill out, detailing where the marking error may have occurred. References to the textbook and/or lecture slides are also required for quizzes and exams. If the student is not satisfied with the response of the TA, the student can submit an appeal letter to the course instructor. This letter must detail the item(s) in contention and why it has not been assessed accurately. A legitimate request will result in a re-grade of the entire work, which may result in a higher, lower, or identical grade.

Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto takes cases of academic misconduct seriously. The UofT Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) is a detailed document describing policies regarding misconduct, which includes:

- quoting another person's ideas in your work without clear acknowledgement
- using or possessing an unauthorized aid or obtaining unauthorized assistance in taking an exam or writing a paper
- submitting forged or altered documentation for excuses for missed exams

Any of these offenses will result in referral to the central academic integrity office and consequences that the University deems appropriate after investigation.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another writer's words or ideas without the proper acknowledgement. Know what plagiarism is so you can avoid it: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>. If you have any questions about whether what you are doing constitutes plagiarism, contact a TA.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a specific learning style, any other special needs, disabilities or any health considerations that require special arrangements and accommodations, please notify Accessibility Services during the first week of class at 416-978-8060 or via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. For more information, visit the following website: accessibility.utoronto.ca

For any accessibility requests, they must be made in advance of at least 72 hours.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons or Sickness

If you are unable to complete course work or are going to be unable to participate in the academic work for medical or non-medical reasons, please fill out the absence declaration form on ACORN. **You still must contact the course instructor as the absence information is not automatically sent to them.** Assessments missed due to not contacting the instructor may not be eligible for an optimal accommodation.

Please take a screenshot of the final screen and send a copy as well as any information about how long you will be absent for to the course instructor so that we can work out any accommodations that may be required. For help on absence declaration: <https://help.acorn.utoronto.ca/blog/uFAQs/declare-an-absence/>

If you have other concerns, speak to the 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 accommodation.

They may be able to provide you with a College Registrar's letter of support to give to your instructors, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation. It is also a very good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation. I will accept their recommendation in lieu of documentation such as the VOI or where documentation may be difficult to produce.

If anything comes up for you over the semester, please email the course instructor as soon as possible and we will try to find a solution.

Religious Accommodation

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 backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I 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 (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Mental Health

These years can be challenging, both in and out of the classroom. University of Toronto offers services to assist students facing a wide range of emotional and psychological challenges: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

List of Resources

Student Life Programs and Services: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca>

Academic Success Services: <http://www.asc.utoronto.ca>

Health & Wellness Centre: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

Counselling and Psychological Services: <http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>

Resources for Distressed Students: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>

English Language Resources: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

Writing Centre: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>