Learning and Plasticity (Psy260H1F)
Fall 2023
Tuesday, 10:10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Thursday, 10:10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Room SS2135

Course Description

This course will provide strong background in the basics of learning. We will examine how behaviour and the brain change with experience in both humans and animals. Students will become familiar with theories and scientific data from the cognitive, clinical and neuroscientific perspective. Emphasis will be placed on critical thinking, problem solving and discussion of the primary literature in the field.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should 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

Textbook: Learning & Memory: From Brain to Behavior, 4th Edition; Gluck MA, Mercado E, and Myers CE (2020) Worth Publishers.

Instructor and T.A. Information

Instructor: Dr. Noelia Calvo

PLEASE NOTE: All questions concerning the course and material should first be directed to a TA through the Discussion Board.

Office Hours by appointment: https://calendly.com/noelia-calvo

Details regarding additional hours will be posted on Quercus

Email: noelia.calvo@utoronto.ca

Please reserve the use of email addressed to me for personal matters, only. I can only check email sporadically during business hours (9am-5pm). I do NOT check email after business hours (5pm). Please anticipate up to a 48-hour period before you receive a response to your email.

Teaching assistants (TAs)

*TAs will announce times to view term tests and assist with writing assignments; dates and locations will be posted on Quercus.

Prerequisite: PSY100H1/ PSY100Y5/ PSYA01H3/ COG250Y1

Exclusion: PSYB38H3

Grading criteria

Assessment	Weighting
Term test 1	20
Term test 2	20
Writing assignments (2 x15)	30
Final Exam	30
Total	**100%**
Bonus: 5% x 2 = 10% (optional bonus to final exam grade)	

Description of Assessment

Term Tests

The term tests and final exam may consist of multiple-choice, and/or short or long answer questions. All term tests and exams will be based on lectures, including videos, and reading. More details will be discussed about each assessment closer to its date. The dates and times of the term tests are fixed. Locations will be announced in lecture and on Quercus.

Writing Assignment

Students will have the opportunity to think more deeply about one of several topics related to the material presented in this class. Further details will be discussed in lecture.

Bonus: There will be 2 activities with bonus point:

1) Online forum discussion. Students who attend and participate in this activity will be awarded with 5% of the final mark.
2) Psy260H1F *goes to the Movies!* The last class before the final review, students will watch the movie "Still Alice" and reflect on how memory is depicted in the movie. After the movie, there will be some short activities. Students who attend and participate will be awarded with 5% bonus points of the final mark.

Frequently asked questions

- What is on the term test? Everything that was in lecture material (unless otherwise noted) or in the textbook. Term tests are not cumulative.

Test 1: only on Chapters 1 - 4

Test 2: only on Chapters 5, 7, 8

- 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.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Sept 7	Introduction and Overview of syllabus	
1	Sep 12	Fundamental Themes in Learning & Memory	Chapter 1
2	Sep 14	Neuroscience of Learning and memory	Chapter 2
2	Sep 19	Neuroscience of Learning and memory	Chapter 2
3	Sep 21	Habituation	Chapter 3
3	Sep 26	Sensitization, Familiarization	Chapter 3
4	Sep 28	Classical Conditioning: Behavioural processes	Chapter 4
4	Oct 3	Classical Conditioning: Brain Substrates and clinical perspectives	Chapter 4
5	Oct 5	**Term test 1**	
5	Oct 10	Operant Conditioning: Behavioral processes	Chapter 5
6	Oct 12	Operant Conditioning: Brain Substrates and clinical perspectives	Chapter 5
6	Oct 17	Episodic & Semantic Memory: Features & Models	Chapter 7
7	Oct 19	Episodic & Semantic Memory: brain substrates and clinical perspectives	Chapter 7
7	Oct 24	**Writing assignment 1**	
8	Oct 26	Skill Memory: behavioral processes	Chapter 8
8	Oct 31	Skill Memory: Brain Substrates *Forum discussion (Bonus 1)*	Chapter 8
9	Nov 2	Emotional Learning: Basics & Animal Models	Chapter 10

9	**Nov 7** **Nov 9**	**Reading Week**	
10	Nov 14	**Term test 2**	
10	Nov 16	Emotional Learning: Effects and Brain substrates (recorded lecture)	Chapter 10
11	Nov 21	**Writing assignment 2**	
11	Nov 23	Development & Aging: Infancy & Childhood	Chapter 12
12	Nov 28	Development & Aging: Adulthood & Genetics	Chapter 12
12	Nov 30	Movie *(optional activity for bonus 2)*	
13	Dec 5	Review before final exam	
	Final exam Period	**Final exam**	

Plagiarism Detection

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 plagiarism detection, you must do the following:

1. Email a TA 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.

Missed Assignment Deadline or Assessment

If a student misses a deadline for an assignment or assessment for any reason (illness, family situation, etc.), a documentation is required to support their request for academic consideration (e.g., extension, make-up test, re-weighting). The following are recognized forms of documentation:

- Absence declaration via ACORN. Students can only use the ACORN tool ONCE per course, per semester.
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form (VOI).
- College Registrar's letter.
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services.

Students should still declare their absence/submit their documentation to their TA within one week of missing a term test/writing assignment.

For the term tests, if the severity of the illness warrants the absence, the weight will be transferred to the final exam. Assignments will not be accepted more than 4 days after the due date. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, it is recommended they discuss their situation with their College Registrar.

Showing up Late for a Term Test

If a student is late, the student may still sit the term test for the time remaining, so long as no one has left the exam room before the student shows up. On term test days, students should allow enough time to get to campus so that they will still be on time, even with TTC delays and/or flat tires and/or city-wide transportation disruptions due to national feline juggling competitions.

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. For term tests, a TA will give the student 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 term tests. For the writing assignments, students must specify what parts of the rubric they believe were graded improperly, with evidence from their writing to support their complaints. If the student is not satisfied with the response of the TA, the student can submit an appeal letter to me. 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.

Cell Phones and Laptop Usage

Technology can support student learning, but it can also become a distraction. Research indicates that multi-tasking (texting or going online) 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 entertainment during class. Do not display any material on a laptop which may be distracting or offensive to your fellow students. Laptops may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading course information from Quercus, or working on an assigned in-class exercise. Checking social media, email, texting, games, and other online activities are not legitimate classroom purposes. Such inappropriate laptop and mobile phone use is distracting to those seated around you. If you are going to do this and still

want to sit in on class, please sit in the back of the lecture hall (you're less likely to distract your classmates this way).

Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto takes cases of academic misconduct seriously. UofT has detailed 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. For more information, please see: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/studentacademic-integrity

Use of AI

The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, writing assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Accessibility

University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have an accessibility concern about this course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as

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 me 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.

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