

PSY 471H1 Seminar in Visual Cognition

Instructor

- Professor Jay Pratt
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- Office hours: By appointment

Course Time and Location

- Thursdays, 5:00 – 7:00 pm, BL 312

Prerequisites

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you will be removed. No waivers will be granted.

Course Communication

- Please email the instructor directly. When doing so, please use the subject header “PSY471” in your email. Otherwise, it may take longer to respond to your email. In general, course related emails will be responded to within 48-72 hours, between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, during the weekdays (Monday – Friday).
- Note that the instructor will be available after each class for quick in-person questions.

Course Goals

- Gaining in-depth knowledge of current research in the field of visual cognition
- Gaining knowledge of experimental designs, data analyses, and data interpretations
- Developing critical thinking skills
 - Evaluating experiments, data, theory, and published articles
- Developing scientific communication skills
 - Academic posters, oral presentations, written literature reviews, research proposals

Course Readings

- There is no textbook for this seminar. The target articles for each week will be posted on the course quercus site, as pdfs, in advance of each seminar.

Assessments

Each week the seminar will center around a target article – a recently published article on visual cognition from a major journal. In the first half of each seminar will have student presentations and summary papers. The second half of each seminar will be a discussion of the target article and the other articles read by students on that topic. In addition, one week in the middle of the term will involve a poster & script assignment and there will be a literature review & research proposal at the end of the term. These assessments will provide training for activities that will be encountered in graduate or professional schools; giving talks, presenting posters, and writing literature reviews and research proposals. The details of these assessments are given below.

Presentations: Each student will be required to prepare a 10 minute Powerpoint-style presentation for each class. These presentations will be based on a recent paper (2017-2022) on the topic covered in the target article for that week. The number of presentations in each class will depend on the size of the

class, and the presenters will be randomly selected at the start of each class. The presentations from each class will be rank ordered by both the instructor and the students that did not present that particular week. The rank order scores will be averaged across all the presentations for each student and this will determine 35% of the course grade for each student. Missing a presentation (i.e., being selected at the start of the class but not being present) will result in a grade of zero for that presentation.

Summary papers: A short summary paper will be due each week for the students that did not present on the previous week. For this one page paper (double spaces, 12 pt. font), each student will summarize one of the presentations from the previous week. The summaries will be graded pass/fail, and students will receive 10% if all of their summaries “pass”. One “fail” will result in 0%.

Discussion participation: On each class, following the presentations, there will be a discussion on the target article and the presented papers. Participating in the discussions is an important aspect of the course, and this will determine 5% of the course grade for each student.

Poster & Script: On February 12th, a poster and script is due. The poster and script is worth 15% and details of this assignment will be given in class. The late penalty is 5% per day.

Literature review & research proposal: On the last class (April 6th), a written assignment consisting of a literature review and research proposal (up to 12 pages, 12 pt. font, double spaced) on some topic in visual cognition is due. A wide range of topics are possible, so check with the instructor before committing to a plan of action. The paper will consist of a review of (at least) three research papers and a proposal for a new experiment. The paper will be worth 35% and the late penalty is 5% per day.

Class schedule

Date	Class
January 12	Introduction to the seminar (no readings, no presentations, no summary papers)
January 19	Reading articles and creating presentations (no readings, no presentations, no summary papers)
January 26 – April 6	Class presentations, summary papers, and discussions
February 12	Poster and script due
April 6	Literature and proposal due

Specific Medical Circumstances

For 2022 F-term, a Verification of Illness (also known as a "doctor's note") is temporarily not required. Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration. The declaration is available on ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu. This must be done within one week of the miss test or assignment. Students should also advise their instructor of their absence.

If an absence extends beyond 7 consecutive days, or if you have a non-medical personal situation preventing you from completing your academic work, you should connect with your College Registrar. They can provide advice and assistance reaching out to instructors on your behalf. If you get a

concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Mental Health and Well-being

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. Everyone feels stressed now and then—it is a normal part of university life. Some days are better than others, and there is no wrong time to reach out. There are resources for every situation and every level of stress. There are many helpful resources available through your College Registrar or through Student Life (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca> and <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/new-registration>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Writing Centre

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The University provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centers and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

- Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)
- Academic Success Services (<http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/>)

Religious Accommodations

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 cultural and religious traditions. 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 (such as 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 to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Academic Integrity

All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>

Some Quercus Information

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for PSY 471 (Seminar in Cognition). You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the PSY 471 (Seminar in Cognition) link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column. SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Technology in the Classroom

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.

A Note on Privacy

Personal information is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971 and at all times it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Please note that this course requires presentations of one's work to the group. For more information, please refer to <http://www.utoronto.ca/privacy>.