PSY471H1 S

Seminar in Cognition: Current Research in Visual Cognition

Winter 2025 Syllabus

Course Meetings

PSY471H1 S

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC0101 Current Research in Visual Cognition	Wednesday, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	In Person: BL 113

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

Course Contacts

Instructor: Dr. Zachary Hamblin-Frohman
Email: z.hamblin@utoronto.ca
Phone: 4376626957
Office Hours and Location: Sid Smith Room 586 Ground Floor By Appointment only

Course Overview

An in-depth examination of current research and selected topics in cognitive psychology. Content in any given year depends on the instructor. Course capacity is limited to 20 students and enrolment priority is given to PSY Specialists and Research Specialists. There may be additional prerequisites based on the seminar topic given.

This seminar focuses on the fundamental properties of the visual system that work to build our representation of the visual world. Students will be reading both foundational cornerstone articles, as well as articles that represent the current state of the research field. Topics will broadly include Perception, Visual Attention, and Visual Working Memory. Emphasis will be placed on understanding how the modern articles have incorporated what was learnt from the cornerstone articles. Students will be encouraged to think of the 'next steps' themselves and to propose further research questions and experiments. Prerequisites are PSY 202H1 (or equivalent) and one of PSY 270H1/PSY 270H5/PSYB57H3.

Course Learning Outcomes

There are two main goals for this seminar.

1. To provide an overview of the current state of literature in visual attention and visual working memory.

2. Learning to critically analyse scientific articles and how to generate new research questions and experiments to progress the field

Prerequisites: PSY202H1/ ECO220Y1/ SOC252H1/ STA221H1/ ECO220Y5/ PSY202H5/ STA221H5/ PSYC08H3/ STAB27H3/ STAC32H3, **and** PSY270H1/ PSY270H5/ PSYB57H3/ COG250Y1
Corequisites: None
Exclusions: PSY471H5/ PSYD50H3
Recommended Preparation: None
Credit Value: 0.5

All Journal articles will be available on Quercus.
It is imperative that you complete the reading before each class.

Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
In-class Presentation	30%	A short presentation on an assigned journal article. This will be followed by facilitated class discussion. Your presentation week will be assigned on the first class of the term	No Specific Date
Pre-Seminar Quizzes	20%	There will be a short quiz for the week's journal articles. This is due before the class for that week occurs. Best 10 out of 11 quizzes	Weekly
Participation	10%	Attending (5%, 0.5% for each class attended) and Participating (5%) in the class discussions.	Weekly
Research Proposal Essay	40%	A 4000-5000 word research proposal. The student will choose any topic that has been covered within the semester and propose a follow-up study to that work.	2025-04-04

Late Assessment Submissions Policy

5% per day for the final essay

Course Schedule

Week	Description
Week 1 Jan 8	Introduction to the course. In this class you will be assigned your presentation week. An example presentation will be delivered.
Week 2 Jan 15	Top-down Attention.
Week 3 Jan 22	Bottom-up Attention
Week 4 Jan 29	Item History
Week 5 Feb 5	Inhibition 1.
Week 6 Feb 12	Inhibition 2.
Week 7 Feb 26	Other Forms of Guidance
Week 8 Mar 5	Visual Working Memory Capacity
Week 9 Mar 12	Attention and Memory
Week 10 Mar 19	VWM storage
Week 11 Mar 26	Real world VWM
Week 12 Apr 2	Summary and Assignment Prep

Policies & Statements

Late/Missed Assignments

There will be penalty of 5% (e.g., 38/40 becomes 33/40) per day for the final essay.

Weekly quizzes cannot be submitted late. Alternative arrangements can be made only with submitted medical documentation (see medical circumstances section).

The presentation can only be rescheduled in case of emergency. If the rescheduled presentation is also missed a make-up essay will be assigned on a case-by-case basis.

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).

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.

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements

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 https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/. 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.

Academic Integrity

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019)](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, 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 [A&S Student Academic Integrity (https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity (https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.