

PSYCHOLOGY 409
COGNITIVE NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

Section 001 Winter 2015-16, Term 2
Tu-Th 11:00-12:20

INSTRUCTOR

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ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course is not a traditional survey of topics and issues in cognitive neuropsychology as one might find in a textbook. Rather, it develops and explores the implications of a simple but neglected fact about our human brains: They evolved to support our physical mobility through space over time. The end result is what I call an *embodied* cognitive neuropsychology, or an understanding of how what makes us physically unique within the primate lineage—our adaptations for endurance running in hot, dry climates—explains what makes us neurocognitively unique.

READINGS

All readings assigned for each lecture, as well as the lecture slides, can be viewed/downloaded from the course CONNECT website. If you are unfamiliar with CONNECT, you can log on from the official UBC website (<http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/get-started-with-connect/>) using your CWL account. If you are enrolled in the course, then once you log in, there will be a link to the 409 site. On the home page of the course CONNECT website, you will see a menu on the left hand side of the screen. To access the readings for the course, click on the "Course Content" link. Once there, you will see a folder labeled "Part 1: Mobility and Cognition." In the folder you will find pdf copies of the readings assigned for Part 1 of the course, 1 paper for each of the four lectures in Part 1 (see below). Ultimately, the course will be broken down into four parts; before we start each part, a new folder will be added to the "Readings" link with the assigned readings for that course part, with each part having four assigned papers, one per each lecture in that part.

BASIC ORGANIZATION

Each of the four parts to the course will be broken down into the following three-week format. **Note that here are NO midterms, quizzes or finals in this course.** Rather, term marks will be based on assignments and responsibilities as described below.

Weeks 1 and 2: There will be one paper assigned for each of the four lectures, as designated in the "Readings" folder for each course part. I will begin each lecture with a introduction to that day's specific topic, and relevant background context as necessary. For each of these lectures, you will

need to bring to class a question of interest to you raised by the paper assigned for that day, printed on a single sheet of paper **with your name and student # on the back**, to hand in at the start of lecture. We will then use these questions as the basis for in-class discussions. What does each paper get you thinking about, such as with respect to a psychological topic or an everyday aspect of your own life and experience? The goal of this exercise is to get you to connect the paper to something of broader interest to you.

Week 3: Based on the readings/discussion from Weeks 1 and 2, you will need to identify a question/issue of interest, dig up an original research article that speaks to that question/issue, and then write a 1-page "think piece" explaining the question/issue and what the original research article addresses about it (details below). Each "think piece" will need to be handed in (as a hard copy) at the start of the first lecture that week (Tuesday). Each student will also need to upload an electronic copy of his or her research article to the course CONNECT site (details to come). For both course meetings during Week 3, the class will be broken down into four groups of approximately 12 students each. Six students in each group will take turns orally presenting his/her think piece and taking questions on it from the group (for 10 minutes each) on Tuesday, and the other six group members will present on Thursday. Without going in to detail here, a process will be in place to ensure that each student will present two times on a Tuesday and two times on a Thursday over the course of the term. For each student's presentation, the other group members will be asked to each individually (1) assign a mark from 1 to 5, and (2) give a brief, written justification for the mark.

GRADING

Term marks will be based on **FIVE** things, all designed to promote not just learning, but active course involvement, including attendance:

Questions: Each question turned in will be worth up to 2 points. Evaluation will be based on thought, quality and originality. Questions that go beyond rote methodological concerns or look like they weren't a hasty, unthoughtful attempt to fulfill the requirement will be marked higher. This is to help advance critical thinking skills beyond what is taught in courses such as 217 and 218. **32 points maximum over the term.**

Lecture Participation: The quality of the course is raised by active in-class discussion on lecture days. To encourage a greater breadth of engagement across those enrolled, each student will be given a lecture participation mark scaled to the magnitude/quality of his or her vocal contributions as weighed across the 16 lectures. **10 points maximum over the term.**

Thought Pieces: Each will be worth 15 points. Again, evaluation will be based on thought, quality and originality, as well as actual clarity of prose/writing. Again, issues pushing new insights and integrating different ideas will be given higher marks than those raising rote methodological/control concerns. **60 points maximum over the term.**

Class Presentations: Each will be worth 5 points. Each group member will individually provide a performance mark on a scale of 1 to 5; the group average will be taken as the presentation mark, after removing outliers. **20 points maximum over the term.**

Peer Marking: Each day you hand in marks for the presenters in your group, and a thoughtful justification for each mark, will be worth 2 points. **16 points total over the term.**

Marks for the term will thus be calculated based on a maximum of 138 possible points

DEPARTMENT SCALING POLICY

In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions for final course marks. Final course marks may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor or department in order to comply with these norms. For official UBC policy on grade scaling, please see: <http://students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0>

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

After Class: On most days I am available for brief questions immediately following each meeting.

Office Visits: Because many students' schedules inevitably conflict with a set weekly office hour, all office meetings for this course will be by appointment only. Scheduling must be done in advance via email.

Email: To avoid having your emails automatically deleted as spam, the subject header must read "Psych 409." The answers to questions regarding lecture/reading content may often be useful for the entire class to hear. As a consequence, questions may be answered in class rather than via email. Please also note that while I try to be responsive to student emails, there are limits that must be put in place. Unfortunately, I can not respond to students who generate excessive/frequent emails or who generate long lists of questions, as in the name of fairness it would be impossible for me to provide this level of service to all students. **Finally, in order to promote good problem solving skills, I will deduct 1 point from a student's final course mark for each email question that can be answered by consulting this syllabus, the Department of Psychology web page, and/or the UBC web page.**

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

If you run into trouble and need information on effective studying, preparing for exams, how to take notes, or manage your academic time, free workshops and advice are available from the Student Resources Center, which can be reached through the School and College Liaison Office at 822-4319.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- 1/5 -- Syllabus and course details
- 1/7 -- Course Introduction: An *Embodied* Cognitive Neuropsychology

PART 1: *Mobility and Cognition*

- 1/12 -- Lecture 1: Shumway-Cook (2000)
- 1/14 -- Lecture 2: Yogev-Seligmann (2008)
- 1/19 -- Lecture 3: Patla (1999)
- 1/21 -- Lecture 4: Webber(2010)
- 1/26 -- Presentations (*Thought Piece #1 Due*)
- 1/28 -- Presentations

PART 2: *Mobility and Human Evolution*

- 2/2 -- Lecture 1: (paper: TBA)
- 2/4 -- Lecture 2: (paper: TBA)
- 2/9 -- Lecture 3: (paper: TBA)
- 2/11 -- Lecture 4: (paper: TBA)
- 2/23 -- Presentations (*Thought Piece #2 Due*)
- 2/25 -- Presentations

PART 3: *Mobility and Human Neurocognitive Uniqueness*

- 3/1 -- Lecture 1: (paper: TBA)
- 3/3 -- Lecture 2: (paper: TBA)
- 3/8 -- Lecture 3: (paper: TBA)
- 3/10 -- Lecture 4: (paper: TBA)
- 3/15 -- Presentations (*Thought Piece #3 Due*)
- 3/17 -- Presentations

PART 4: *Mobility and Human Culture*

- 3/22 -- Lecture 1: (paper: TBA)
- 3/24 -- Lecture 2: (paper: TBA)
- 3/29 -- Lecture 3: (paper: TBA)
- 3/31 -- Lecture 4: (paper: TBA)
- 4/5 -- Presentations (*Thought Piece #4 Due*)
- 4/7 -- Presentations