Psychology 200-002: Cognitive Psychology Spring Semester 2026

Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:50 pm – Life Sciences A133
Online information: D2L course SS26-PSY-200-002 Cognitive Psychology

General information

Instructors: Jan Brascamp (course instructor; brascamp@msu.edu), Lexi LaChappa (graduate TA; lachappa@msu.edu), Sahar Aghaei (undergraduate assistant; aghaeisa@msu.edu), Angel Hannapel (undergraduate assistant; hannape4@msu.edu), and Natalie Stangis (undergraduate assistant; stangisn@msu.edu).

Course description and objectives: This course is an introduction to the field of cognitive psychology and will provide an overview of the major theories, findings and methods of the cognitive approach. Cognitive psychology views the mind as an information processing system and attempts to discover and explain the mental processes underlying perception, attention, memory, language, thinking, and decision making. The course will also introduce a number of different methods that are used to investigate brain processes and their functions. At the end of the course, you should be familiar with the main theories, methods, and findings of cognitive psychology.

Prerequisite: PSY 101.

Recommended text and assigned reading: The recommended text is *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience* by E. Bruce Goldstein. Both the 4th and 5th edition are suitable. The text is not required, and the exams are only about material that came up during the lectures. If you do decide to use the book, then it is a good idea to keep up with reading at the pace indicated in the course schedule below, because the recommended reading will match the material of the associated lectures.

Online or in-person? This is an in-person course. This means that lectures will be in person, and exams will be in person as well. No lecture videos will be posted online, but nevertheless this course will offer a substantial proportion of its content via the internet. Namely, all lecture slides (but no lecture videos) will be posted on D2L ahead of lectures, and a study guide will be posted ahead of each exam. Also, as part of this course you will be completing cognitive psychology experiments in your browser. Please see below for details on each of these points.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at http://rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (exam, online experiment, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored. If you require testing accommodations (additional time, etc.) please contact me and send your VISA well ahead of the date of the test.

Honors option: This course has an honors option. Please email the course instructor if you are interested to learn more about that.

Where to get course information during the semester

D2L: Aside from communication inside the classroom, almost all communication for this course will run through the D2L course page: look for *SS26-PSY-200-002 Cognitive Psychology*. You will need to make sure you receive D2L emails (see next section), and you will find yourself logging into D2L frequently throughout the semester.

D2L email: Important course information will be sent to you via D2L email, so make sure you don't miss D2L emails. The best way, which I recommend, is to set up D2L to forward D2L emails to your regular inbox (if you haven't done this at some point already). That way you won't miss important announcements. To set up D2L email forwarding please log onto D2L and navigate to Help > MSU Documentation > D2L Tools and Tips at MSU > D2L Email Forwarding. If you prefer, then you can also view your D2L emails in the D2L interface itself rather than in your normal inbox. To do this please navigate to the email interface in D2L, and make sure the 'Filter By:' field is set to 'All Messages'. Without that filter setting important emails may not show.

Questions about Sona: The Sona system is a department-wide system, and the instructors of this particular course don't know all of its details. So for questions about research participation / the Sona system, please contact the Research Participation Coordinator: Ms. Audra Jeffrey. Her email address is jeffre22@msu.edu.

Getting help, and office hours: For questions that have a short answer and that are not about the Sona system, you can come talk to us after class or send an email to one of the course instructors. For questions that require more interaction, please visit one of the office hours listed in the table below.

Time and day	Instructor in attendance	Contact information for appointment
In person, by appointment	Course instructor: Jan Brascamp	brascamp@msu.edu
In person, by appointment	Graduate TA: Lexi LaChappa	lachappa@msu.edu
On Zoom, Fridays 1-2 pm. Link: https://msu.zoom.us/j/98531675630. Passcode: 357205	One of the undergraduate assistants	N/A: just drop in

How to get credit for this course

Credit from exams: There will be three multiple choice exams: two midterms and a non-cumulative final exam. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions about material that has been discussed in lectures since the previous exam. Each exam counts for 25% of your final grade, except for your best exam: that one counts for 30%. Everything that is discussed in lectures and/or shown on the lecture slides may be part of an exam. Material from the textbook that did not feature in lectures will not be part of the exam. Material from online experiments (see next section) that did not feature in lectures will not be part of the exam.

Credit from online experiments: 14% of the credit for this course can be earned by completing cognitive psychology experiments in an internet browser, and submitting your experiment results on time, along with answers related to your experiment results. The online experiments can be found under 'Assignments' on D2L, and you need to submit your materials by uploading them to those same D2L assignments. Each online experiment has its own deadline, which has been determined to create a good match between the contents of the experiment and the contents of the lectures that take place around the same time. Those deadlines can be found in the course schedule below. Details about the online experiments will be provided during the first lecture, and can also be found in two PDF documents in each experiment's D2L assignment.

Credit from subject pool participation (HPR/Sona): 3% of your total grade for this course comes from participation in the subject pool, which is coordinated through the Psychology department's Sona system. This is equivalent to 3 hours of research participation. Please make sure you participate before the final deadline for Sona participation, which is the Friday before MSU's exam week. Details for how to create your Sona account are

available in the document *Class SONA Instructions.pdf* in the folder *Practical matters* on D2L. For all questions about research participation, please contact the Research Participation Coordinator (Ms. Audra Jeffrey; jeffre22@msu.edu). Here are two further pointers. First, be careful because some experiments posted on Sona compensate with money, not course credit. Second, be sure to sign up for the Psychology department's Sona system; some other departments have their own Sona system but participation in those systems doesn't count for Psychology courses.

Subject Pool Participation (HPR/Sona) alternative assignment: If you are under 18 years old and therefore cannot participate in research, you can perform an alternative assignment. Information on this alternative assignment can be found in the document *Class SONA Inst.pdf* in the folder *Practical matters* on D2L, and for further details please contact the Research Participation Coordinator (Ms. Audra Jeffrey; jeffre22@msu.edu). If you are not under 18 years old but nevertheless prefer not to participate in research, then you can complete an alternative assignment that consists of reading scientific texts related to cognitive psychology, answering questions related to those texts, and meeting with the course instructor to discuss the texts and your answers. If you are interested in this second alternative assignment, please contact the course instructor before the date of Exam 1 -- if you contact the instructor later, there may not be time to complete this second alternative assignment. The deadline for participating in subject pool research is the last Friday before exam week at 5 pm.

Credit from attendance: There will be attendance credit: you can earn both regular credit and extra credit by attending the lectures. Attending 60% of the lectures earns you 3% of your final grade, which is all the regular credit you can earn through attendance. Any lectures that you attend over 60% will earn you extra credit. The maximum amount of overall credit you can earn through attendance is 5%, namely 3% regular credit plus 2% extra credit, earned by attending each lecture. If you attend less than 100% of the lectures, then credit will be assigned in proportion. (Aside from credit, it is generally a good idea to attend the lectures because everything that is discussed in the lectures may be part of an exam. The lectures will present some topics in a different way than the textbook and the lectures will also include material that is not covered by the textbook.)

Extra credit: This course has a total of 2% of extra course credit that you can earn by attending lectures. Please see section 'Credit from attendance' for details.

Final Grade Breakdown:

	# points	% of final grade
Best Exam	60*	30.0%*
Other Exam	50	25.0%
Other Exam	50	25.0%
Online experiments	28	14.0%
Subject Pool	6	3.0%
Attending 60% of lectures	6	3.0%
Course total	*200 points*	*100%*

*Each exam has 50 questions. In calculating your overall grade, you can treat your best exam as if it contained 60 questions, while keeping your *proportion* of correct questions on that exam the same as it was in reality (e.g., 25 out of 50 becomes 30 out of 60).

Final Grade Scale:

90 % and above	4.0
86 % and above	3.5
80 % and above	3.0
76 % and above	2.5
70 % and above	2.0
66 % and above	1.5
60 % and above	1.0
Less than 60 %	0.0

Important times and dates

Exam dates/times, and requesting alternatives: The times and dates for exams are listed in the course schedule below. If you have a good reason why you cannot take an exam at the assigned time, then please send an email to the graduate TA identifying the issue. The email address is listed near the top of this document. For valid requests that come in before the exam time, we can reschedule the day and/or time for you. Please be sure to review your availability right now: if you miss an exam or quiz and contact the TA after the assigned time has already passed, then there is little we can do to help.

Course schedule:

Date	Lectures	Recommended book chapters accompanying lectures	Online experiment deadlines
Mon 1/12	1. Introduction to the course		
Wed 1/14	2. History of cognitive psychology 1	Ch 1	
Mon 1/19	*NO Class (MLK Day)*		
Wed 1/21	3. History of cognitive psychology 2	Ch 1	
Fri 1/23			Weber Fechner
Mon 1/26	4. Cognitive neuroscience 1	Ch 2	
Wed 1/28	5. Cognitive neuroscience 2		
Fri 1/30			Donders decisions
Mon 2/2	6. Cognitive neuroscience 3	Ch 2	
Wed 2/4	7. Methods		
Fri 2/6			Sternberg search
Mon 2/9	8. Review for exam 1		
Wed 2/11	***Exam 1***		
Mon 2/16	9. Perception 1	Ch 3	
Wed 2/18	10. Perception 2		
Fri 2/20			Tilt Adaptation
Mon 2/23	11. Perception 3	Ch 3	

Wed 2/25	12. Perception 4 + Attention 1	Ch 4	
Fri 2/27			Blind spot
Mon 3/2	*NO Class (Spring break)*		
Wed 3/4	*NO Class (Spring break)*		
Mon 3/9	13. Attention 2	Ch 4	
Wed 3/11	14. Attention 3 + Memory 1	Ch 5	
Fri 3/13			Stroop effect
Mon 3/16	15. Memory 2	Ch 6 and Ch 7	
Wed 3/18	16. Memory 3	Ch 8	
Mon 3/23	17. Review for exam 2		
Wed 3/25	***Exam 2***		
Mon 3/30	*NO Class (Instructor absent)*		
Wed 4/1	18. Imagery	Ch 10	
Mon 4/6	19. Language 1	Ch 11	
Wed 4/8	20. Language 2		
Mon 4/13	21. Language 3 + Problem solving 1	Ch 12	
Wed 4/15	22. Problem solving 2		
Fri 4/17			Word superiority
Mon 4/20	23. Judgment, decisions and reasoning	Ch 13	
Wed 4/22	24. Review for exam 3		
Mon 4/27	***Exam 3 at 7:45am, Life Sciences A133***		

Drop dates (can be found online in Class Search):

Last day to drop with refund: 02/05/2026
Last day to drop with no grade reported: 03/09/2026

Academic honesty, plagiarism, legal considerations, etc.

Distributing lectures: Students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:
1. Students may not post the recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings.
2. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

Plagiarism: If there is evidence that your answers for the online experiments are partially or completely plagiarized/copied from another source (a different student, etc.), then points will be subtracted, and you will be reported to the appropriate authorities (see https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html). The course instructors may use an automated tool to check your answers for the online experiments for plagiarism. What now follows is MSU's official language about that automated tool, which applies here.

Consistent with MSU's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a "similarity score." The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not.

Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit their answers for the online experiments without identifying information included in the document (e.g., name or student number), the system will automatically show this information to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin. Student submissions will be retained only in the MSU repository hosted by Turnitin.

Academic honesty: Article 2.III.B.2 of the Student Rights and Responsibilites (SRR) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Psychology department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)
Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the Academic Integrity webpage.)

Limits to confidentiality: Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the MSU Police Department) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.