PSYC 4315-001: Cognitive Psychology
University of Texas at Tyler
Department of Psychology and Counseling
Fall 2026
Format: Face-to-Face with Flipped Online Content

Instructor Information

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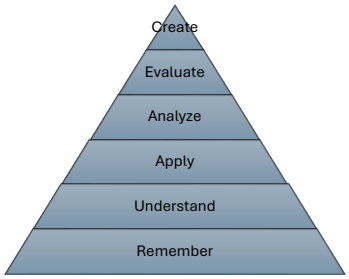
Course Overview

An examination of the cognitive processes involved in human mentation. Includes the study of attention, perceptual processes, memory, knowledge representation, language, decision making and problem solving. Recommended: Prior completion of PSYC 1301 or equivalent. The course meets Tuesdays and Thursdays in Stewart Hall Room 127 (the auditorium-style lecture hall with outdoor access near the UC breezeway) from 3:30-4:50pm.

Course Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes

These are things you should know or be able to do by the end of this course (called course objectives). They will consist of smaller goals, called learning objectives.



Cognitive levels indicate the complexity of thinking required for the course outcome or learning objective. “Remember” and “Understand” are the least complex levels, whereas “Evaluate” and “Create” are the most complex levels.

The big Course Outcomes in this class are as follows. Each course outcome’s Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are listed below it.

- CO 1. Remember and understand basic vocabulary terms and concepts for cognitive psychology (Remember, Understand). The closed-book, multiple-choice Pretest and Posttest will assess your mastery of CO 1. We will study and practice these terms throughout the term. The Pretest will introduce them, the module lectures and activities will expand upon them, and the Posttest will cumulatively test your knowledge of them.
- SLO 1.1). Identify key names, movements, and events in the historical development of cognitive psychology.
- SLO 1.2). Understand common methods of cognitive research.
- SLO 1.3). Define sensory memory and attentional network processes.

  - SLO 1.4). Distinguish between sensation and perception, as well as between top-down and bottom-up processing.
  - SLO 1.5). Define key features and components of short-term, working, and long-term memory.
  - SLO 1.6). Remember common memory biases, forgetting processes, and knowledge storage theories.
  - SLO 1.7). Identify language milestones, theoretical positions, and disorders.
  - SLO 1.8). Remember common features of human problem-solving, reasoning, and decision-making capabilities, as well as heuristics and fallacies.
- CO 2. Break down the background, method, results, and limitations of a cognitive psychology research article for a lay audience. (Analyze). The Science Communication Project will assess your mastery of CO 2.
- CO 3. Create a portfolio showing improvement on learning outcomes and reflecting on your achievement of course outcomes and learning objectives (Create). The Final Portfolio will assess your mastery of CO 3.

Required and Recommended Resources

- Required textbook: Pilegard C. (2024). Cognitive foundations, edition 2. GitHUb. PDF or Website (no ISBN). Createive Commons license: CC-BY-NC-SA. Retrieved from https://pilegard.github.io/cogfoundations/ This textbook is FREE, but I am required to put this note here in the syllabus anyway by the University. Note: A student at UT-Tyler is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.
- Required Microsoft 365 access: office.com. Log in with your university account, NOT one you created personally.
- Required Zoom access: https://uttyler.zoom.us/ Log in with your Patriots account, NOT one you created personally.
- Recommended website for APA Style 7th Edition: Purdue University Writing Lab. APA formatting and style guide (7th Edition). Purdue online writing lab (OWL). https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/index.html

Assignments

Assignments will be described in more detail on Canvas.

Science Communication Project: The project is a summary of a research article you will choose from a provided list. You have two formatting choices—oral presentation (video) or written article—and a few choices of topics. You are invited to write an article or record yourself giving an oral presentation explaining the purpose, methods, results, and implications of a single research article. Your successful project will be considered understandable by a general, non-expert audience (such as junior students, family members, coworkers, etc.). The project is planned in stages on which you will receive feedback before proceeding to the next step. This project as a whole will account for 40% of your final course grade. Each stage will be assessed on a letter grade basis. Stages 1 and 2 will count 1 point each, but will have to be perfected before moving on to Stage 3. Stage 3 will count for 38 points.

- Paper Stage 1: Brainstorm
- Paper Stage 2: Rubric Activity
- Paper Stage 3: Project Submission

Final Portfolio: The Portfolio creatively showcases what you have learned in the course. It is turned in during Week 16. It is worth 40% of your final grade.

Exam: You will screen- and face-record yourself using Canvas Studio to demonstrate your academic integrity while taking embedded Canvas "Quiz" exams. This assignment category will be worth 20% of your final grade.

- Pretest for a participation grade only worth 15 points (all or nothing grade).
- Posttest for an accuracy grade worth 15 points.

Grading Policy

No assignments in this course can be skipped over. Each activity builds upon previous knowledge. In order to be "qualified" to begin a new module's content and assignments, you must have mastered the previous module's assignments at a grade of a B or higher (they are assigned as letter grades). For formative assessments (practice assignments that build up to the summative assessments—the final Pretest and Data Paper), you can reattempt assignments as many times as needed (within reason, considering time needed for feedback and the abbreviated nature of a summer course term) to reach this mastery. A is considered as fully meeting expectations. B indicates that the assignment is complete but needs revisions. C indicates that the assignment is incomplete (half completed or more, but still less than all elements are included). D indicates that the assignment is "barely there" (less than half completed). F is only assigned as a "placeholder" grade until a real submission is turned in. This "placeholder" F is also applied if an assignment has strong evidence of inappropriate AI use (see AI policy below). All formative assessments (including resubmissions) must be completed by the Thursday of Week 15, Dec 3, 2026. Furthermore, you will not be allowed to turn in multiple late formative assessments at once. You must wait for feedback on one before attempting the next one. Thus, it is in your best interest to treat your first submission as the only one and the suggested deadline as a firm one.

Makeups, Late Work, Re-attempts, and Attendance

There is no such thing as a grade of "zero" for any completed assessment in this course, whether it is on time or late. If a zero is entered into Canvas, it is as a placeholder until you complete the assignment. You can request assignment extensions for any reason at any time before the due date. I do not request documentation for excuses or extension requests. When you ask for an extension, it is good professional practice to propose your own modified due date in your first request email. If you do not request an extension ahead of the due date, but the work is still missing, I will reach out to you to create a plan for late submission and request a short reflection narrative about the consequences of late work and failing to notify the instructor. Your number of re-attempts in this course or on a given assignment is unlimited: I want you to be successful, even if it takes multiple tries. Due such generous assessment policies, I do not offer extra credit or round grades up.

Attendance Policy

Please note that for financial aid purposes, I am required to report to the Registrar whether you attended class at all within the first 2 weeks of class: this is a binary measurement (has attended or has not attended). If you have not attended at all within the first 2 weeks of the course, your financial aid may be adjusted accordingly. For these purposes, in this course, "attendance" will mean having completed any assignments or activities at all (graded or ungraded).

Course Calendar

Calendar Note: All due dates are suggested below to help you keep on track. The modules are designed in sequence: newer modules will only open for you if you have completed the activities in the previous ones. It would be helpful to your learning for you to allow for the instructional team to provide feedback on some assignments before completing the next ones. You also have

unlimited re-attempts on all assignments except for the mid-term project (hard deadline of Sunday, 10/11/26 at 11:59 PM) and the final project. All pre-final assignments have a hard deadline of the final day of class (Thursday, 12/03/26 at 11:59 PM), however. The course closes at 11:59 on 12/10/2026, at which time the final project is due. If you are still not finished with the final paper and we have made extension arrangements (and have a passing grade at that time), I will put in an "I" letter grade, which represents "incomplete" and you can finish your assignments after the completion of the term. We will need to meet and do some paperwork to discuss revised due dates in that case. Additionally, this course calendar and syllabus are subject to changes, which will be announced by the instructor in a timely manner.

Course Calendar

Target Due Dates	Module	Readings	Assignments
08/30/26	0: Getting Started	Syllabus; Pretest	
09/06/26	1: History and Research Methods; Reading Research	Sci Comm Assignment Guide, Chapter 1	Sci Comm Brainstorm
09/13/26	2: Sensation and Perception	Chapter 2, Sci Comm Assignment Guide	
09/20/26	3: Attention	Chapter 3	
09/27/26	4: Short-Term Memory	Chapter 4	Sci Comm Rubric Activity
10/04/26	5: Long-Term Memory	Chapter 5	
10/11/26	6: Memory in Context	Chapter 6	
10/18/26	7. Knowledge	Chapter 7;	
10/25/26	8: Research and Science Communication	Sci Comm Assignment Guide	Sci Comm Project
11/01/26	9: Language	Chapter 8	
11/08/26	10: Problem-Solving	Chapter 10	
11/15/26	11: Reasoning	Chapter 9	
11/22/26	12: Decision-Making	Chapter 9; Study Pretest	Final Exam
12/03/26	Last Call for Pre-Final Assignment Submissions		
12/11/26	Final Module: Portfolio	Final Portfolio	Final Paper

AI Policies

UT Tyler's AI Policy

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible

for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

Dr. Kirby's AI Policy

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available. Well-known examples include ChatGPT for text, DALL•E for images, and Sora for video. The learning opportunities in this course are useful only when you complete original work rather than using generative AI tools for any portions of any assignments. I encourage you to take advantage of the learning opportunities and submit only your own work, unless otherwise indicated. I have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. If you choose to use generative AI tools, please remember that they are typically trained on limited datasets that may be out of date. Additionally, generative AI datasets are trained on pre-existing material, including copyrighted material; therefore, relying on a generative AI tool may result in plagiarism or copyright violations. Further, LLMs (e.g., ChatGPT) do not know, remember, or reason: they are "fancy predictive text." They predict which words tend to be near other words. GenAI is also circular: its training data are being corrupted by AI products themselves. Further, GenAI usage has a large environmental impact (stressing power grids and polluting neighborhoods), it involves hidden human costs (including exploiting low-wage labor), and GenAI image generation software has been trained on disturbing criminal material, including child sex abuse material. Finally, keep in mind that the goal of generative AI tools is to produce content that seems to have been produced by a human, not to produce accurate or reliable content; therefore, relying on a generative AI tool may result in your submission of inaccurate content. I invite you to take responsibility—instead of leaving it up to the tool—to assure the quality, integrity, and accuracy of work you submit in any college course. I am committing to the same expectations, as I am also refraining from using available AI tools in designing this course and evaluating your work. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values. This policy was drafted using the
UT Tyler Artificial Language for Syllabi document and Chris Heard's Generative AI Syllabus Statement Tool (which itself not an AI tool). You may find UT Tyler's general AI syllabus policy and other resources here: https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/digital-learning/ai/

Please note that Grammarly (and especially Grammarly Plus) is considered generative AI for the purposes of this course, and is not allowed. Online paraphrasing or translating tools are also considered off-limits for this course. Please use only the grammar check already embedded into Microsoft Word Online. In order to verify the originality of your work, you will be asked to use only specific technology in this course that allows for verifiable version history tracking. If such evidence is not found for your work (e.g., you used a different software), you will be asked to reattempt the assignment (unless it is the final project, in which case there would be no time to do so, so it would earn a zero). If your work has other signs of AI use (e.g., fake "hallucinated" references), further consequences may be applied. Other possible consequences of inappropriate (i.e., ANY) generative AI use on assignments may include documentation with the Student Conduct office, or other consequences, such as being required to complete reattempted assignments under live supervision instead of as a "take-home" assignment.