

# Psychology 1A3 Course Outline

2001-2002 Academic Year

## Course Structure

Psychology is a very broad discipline, covering many areas, so we have divided our first-year survey into two courses: This course (Psychology 1A3) provides a general introduction to experimental psychology by introducing **research methods** in psychology, and then describing findings and theorizing in several of the most basic areas of psychological research, including **neuropsychology, sensation and perception, basic forms of conditioning, and cognition** (memory and thinking).

Each class section of 1A3 contains about 40 students, and is scheduled to meet three times per week. In most weeks, each of the first two class meetings includes a videotaped lecture, 30-35 minutes long, followed by a question and review period conducted by the Psych 1A3 teaching assistant (tutor) assigned to your section. The third weekly meeting of your 1A3 course section will be devoted entirely to a tutorial. The content of tutorials vary, but all will include activities designed to review information from previous lectures, illustrate or clarify psychological phenomena, or explore important ideas and issues in psychology. During some weeks (e.g., the week of the midterm test), there are no tutorials scheduled. This information will be available from your tutor, and will be posted outside the 1A3 classrooms and on the IntroPsych web site.

## What You Need

The only required text for this course is this book, which you obviously have already. There is one additional **suggested** text, and that is Henry Gleitman's *Psychology*, published by W.W. Norton. Although no test questions will be drawn from this text, it provides an excellent alternative presentation of much of the material covered in the lectures. It also contains much additional information that you may find quite interesting.

## How You Will Be Evaluated

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your performance on a midterm test and a final examinations, both of which will consist entirely of multiple-choice questions.

### The Midterm Test

Thirty-five percent of your final mark in this course is based on the midterm test, which takes place approximately halfway through the course, and covers all the material in the first three sections of the course (Research Methods, Brain & Behavior, Sensation & Perception). The midterm consists of 40 multiple-choice questions, which you will have 50 minutes to complete.

### The Final Examination

The remaining sixty-five percent of your mark in Psych 1A3 will be based on a final examination, covering the work of the entire course. The final exam will take place during the December examination period, and will consist of 80 multiple-choice questions. You will have two hours to complete the exam.

## Psych 1A3 Course Outline

Listed below are the topics to be covered in this course, and the approximate dates on which they will be presented, and the required readings that accompany each module.

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Introduction to Experimental Psychology</b> (Sept. 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2001)  |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | None   |
| <b>Description:</b> | During the first class you will meet your tutor and review the structure of the course, the evaluation methods, and the materials you will need. <b>If your particular section of the course normally meets on both Thursday and Friday, only the Thursday meeting will be held.</b> |

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Research Methods in Psychology</b> (Week of Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup> )  |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | <b>Basics and Beyond</b> , section on Research Methods   |
| <b>Description:</b> | In this section, we will discuss the basic logic of scientific research in psychology (and other sciences). The two lectures in this section deal with basic research methods, focusing on the logic of experiments. |

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>The Brain and Behavior</b> (Weeks of Sept 17 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> and Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> )   |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | <b>Basics and Beyond</b> , section on The Brain and Behavior  |
| <b>Description:</b> | We look at how our thoughts, feelings and behaviors are related to the brain activity. We begin with the neuron, the basic functional unit of the nervous system. After a tour of the brain from brainstem to cerebral cortex, considering the functions of the most important (or at least best understood) of the brain's internal structures, we examine the phenomena of sleep and dreaming, and consider the specialization of the two sides of the brain. |

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Sensation and Perception</b> (Weeks of Oct 8 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> )   |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | <b>Basics and Beyond</b> , section on Sensation and Perception  |
| <b>Description:</b> | We examine how we construct our understanding of reality from sensory information. We emphasize vision, looking at how the brain takes information from the eye and constructs our perception of a world of stable objects. We consider how the eye and brain create the perception of colour and form. |
| <b>Midterm Test</b> | <b>Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup></b>  |

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Basic Learning Processes</b> (weeks of Oct. 29 <sup>th</sup> , Nov. 5 <sup>th</sup> , and 12 <sup>th</sup> )  |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | <b>Basics and Beyond</b> , section on Basic Learning Processes   |
| <b>Description:</b> | We look at the most fundamental forms of learning: the learning of signals through classical conditioning, and the modification of behavior by its consequences - instrumental conditioning. |

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| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Human Cognition</b> (Weeks of Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , and 26 <sup>th</sup> )   |
| <b>Readings:</b>    | <b>Basics and Beyond</b> , Section on Human Cognition  |
| <b>Description:</b> | We discuss how we process information from and about the outside world. Our primary focus will be on memory. We will consider how information is encoded, stored, and retrieved. After considering several models of memory, we will ask how accurately we recall past experiences. We will end with a brief look at how we reason and make decisions. |
| <b>Final Exam</b>   | <b>December Examination Period - Date to be announced</b>  |