Cognitive Psychology

G89.2025

When and Where

Term: Fall 2012

When: Mondays (Section 001: 4:20-6:10, Section 002: 6:20-8:10)

Where: MEYR 159

Instructor Information

Name: Professor Scott Barry Kaufman, Ph.D.

Web: http://www.scottbarrykaufman.com

Email: scott.barry.kaufman@nyu.edu

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

Cognitive psychology, the scientific study of the mind, is one of the most exciting and all-compelling areas of psychology. Given that the mind lies behind all of our thoughts, desires, dreams, judgments, emotions and resultant behaviors, having an understanding of the mind will help us to gain a much better understanding of ourselves and those around us. In fact, by the end of this course you'll no doubt be surprised just how important human cognition is in nearly everything you do! Throughout this course we will be examining theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding both lower level and high-order mental processes. Topics will include neuropsychology, modularity, evolution of the mind, perception, attention, mental imagery, infant cognition, language, memory, knowledge and concept formation, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, human intelligence, artificial intelligence, creativity, social cognition, emotions, morality, love, sex, laughter, humor, religion, and happiness. By the end of the class, you should be up to date on the most cutting-edge research and debates in contemporary cognitive
psychology/science. I look forward to taking you on a tour of the fascinating and perplexing nature of human cognition and its many manifestations!

**Course Readings**

*Cognitive Psychology, 6th edition* by Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Sternberg  
*How The Mind Works* by Steven Pinker  
Various additional readings assigned along the way

**Course Requirements**

- **Attendance/Class Participation:** 5%
- **Quizzes:** 50% total, 10% each
- **Blogs:** 20% total, 10% each
- **Final Paper:** 25%

**Extra credit:** As extra credit opportunities arise, they will be announced in class.

**Course Schedule**

**Lecture 1: Monday, September 10th: Introduction to Cognitive Psychology**

- *Sternberg: Chapter 1 (pp. 1-41)*
- *Pinker: pp. 1-27*

**Lecture 2: Monday, September 17th: Cognitive Neuroscience**

- *Sternberg, Chapter 2 (p. 41-84)*
- *Pinker: 98-131*

**Lecture 3: Monday, September 24th: Innateness, Modularity, and Evolution of the Mind**

**Quiz #1: Chapters 1 & 2**

- *Pinker: pp. 27-44, 149-210*


• *Conversations on Creativity* with Allan Snyder


• *Conversations on Creativity* with Daniel Tammet


  ***Submit Blog post #1 by Sunday, September 30th***

**Lecture 4: Monday, October 1st: Perception & Attention**

• *Sternberg, Chapters 3 & 4*

• *Pinker: 211-284*


**Lecture 5: Monday, October 8th: Memory I, Acquisition, Retention, and Retrieval**

***Quiz #2: Chapters 3 & 4***

• *Sternberg, Chapters 5 & 6*

***October 15th—FALL BREAK***

**Lecture 6: Monday, October 22nd: Memory II, Knowledge & Mental Imagery**

• *Sternberg, Chapter 7 & 8*

• *Pinker, pp. 284-298; 306-314*


• Additional reading TBA

**Lecture 7: Monday, November 5th: Language, Part I**

***Quiz #3 on Sternberg, Chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8***

• *Sternberg: Chapters 9 & 10*

**Lecture 8: Monday, November 12th: Language, Part II**

**Lecture 9: Monday, November 19th: Problem Solving, Decision Making, & Expertise**

***Quiz #4 on Sternberg, Chapters 9 & 10***

• *Sternberg: Chapters 11 & 12*

• *Pinker: 333-352*


**Lecture 10: Monday, November 26th: Reasoning, Intelligence, & Creativity**

• **External Reading**: *Human and Artificial Intelligence*, 483-524.

• *Pinker*: pp. 360-362


• *Conversations on Creativity* with Joshua Waitzkin
  (http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beautiful-minds/200811/conversations-creativity-repeat-bloomer-joshua-waitzkin)

**Lecture 11: Monday, October 29th: Infant Cognition**

***Quiz #5 on Sternberg, Chapters 11 & 12***

• *Pinker*: pp. 299-306; 314-333; 352-360


**Lecture 12: Monday, December 3rd: Social Cognition, Emotions, and Morality**

• **External Reading**: *Emotion and Cognition*, pp. 325-365.
• Pinker: pp. 363-424


• The New Science of Morality, An Edge Conference. ([http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/morality10/morality10_index.html](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/morality10/morality10_index.html))

***Submit Blog post #2 by Sunday, December 2nd***

**Lecture 13: Monday, December 10th: The Meanings of Life**

• Pinker: pp. 460-493; 517-567

***FINAL PAPERS DUE***