

Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
PSYO / NESC 2130
Introduction to Cognitive Psychology
Winter 2025

	name	email	office hours
Instructor:	John Christie	john.christie@dal.ca	M11:00-13:00

Brightspace Online Course Schedule: there are 13 sessions of classes in the time period online asynchronous

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to cognitive psychology. It will introduce such topics as perception, attention, memory, mental representations, language, and thinking.

Course Prerequisites

PSYO 1011.03 (or PSYO 1021.03 or PSYO 1031.03) and PSYO 1012.03 (or PSYO 1022.03 or PSYO 1032.03); OR SCIE 1506.09/1507.09 (or SCIE1505X/Y.18). All prerequisite courses must have a grade of B- or better.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

You should acquire a basic understanding of the fundamentals of cognition. We'll focus primarily on how we find things out (methods) and the discoveries that have been made that appear robust. It is my goal that you'll be able to apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to cognitive psychology.

Course Materials

With an online course we need a common frame to aid discussion. We will be carefully going through the textbook so you absolutely need a copy.

Farmer, & Matlin (2019). Cognition (10th Edition). US: Wiley & Sons, available online.

The Dal bookstore link is <<https://bookstore.dal.ca/>>. Do a search under textbook for this course and you'll get links to purchasing. The rest of the course materials are online and detailed in session guides for each session and include videos, links to websites, and other documents. Note that a prior edition of the text is not suitable for the course. I generally tell students that you're sacrificing 5-10% of your grade getting a 9th edition. And used 10th editions are now plentiful.

Course Assessment

There is an assessment that you have to complete online for every session. This will be a test on a chapter of the text. You can start the assessment any time from session start but must complete by session end. Assessments will generally be timed but you will be allowed to begin it at your convenience any time

during the session. The assessment from each session, except session 1, will all be worth the same amount and the lowest session grade will be dropped at the end of term with the rest averaged together. That is your entire grade. There are no other exams or assignments.

There is a special assessment for Chapter 1. This does include a test but consider it a practice test for what comes later. This one is not included in the average and the grade is not counted in any way. You get one bonus point for completing the test on this session. You will be expected to understand terminology introduced in Chapter 1 regardless, in order to complete the rest of the material.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in experiments in the department for a maximum of two bonus points, on the SONA system.

It is important for students to note that all video and assigned reading material will be fair game in the tests. The readings are intended to supplement the videos and vice versa. Tests are naturally, but not explicitly, cumulative. That means that a test in session 3 may depend on your understanding material from session 2 but will not explicitly ask a question from session 2.

Conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D (50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F (<50)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)	

Course Policies

Please be reasonable people and read the boiler plate in section B from faculty of science, and in section C also on Brightspace. There's a brief guide to netiquette in the Brightspace Tips folder. Please follow it.

Assessments submitted late will be ignored. Note that you can select the time you wish to work on the assessment. It just has to be some time during the session. It is unwise to consider the deadline for the assessment the time you must do the assessment. I do not consider it that way and neither should you. Any requests for extensions or accommodations on time will consider that you typically had an entire week during which you could have done the assessment. Nevertheless, I recognize life happens and please feel free to contact me if you do genuinely need some accommodation for a session. Missed sessions will be counted as 0. Therefore, one missed session is allowed as this would become the dropped grade (see above). More than one missed session will contribute to your average.

Should there be a short essay question word limits count, don't go over. Small violations of word limits for essays (<4 words) will result in a marker bias such that if the material lies between two grades they will consult the word count and select the lower one. Higher violations will result in removing sentences from the end of the essay until it is under the word limit. For example, if you're over by 10 words and the last sentence is 17 words, all of them will be ignored. If that answer was over by 18, the last 2 sentences would be ignored.

On the other hand, if the assessment is multiple choice keep in mind standard rules. There may be more than one answer that could be correct but only one best answer in the context of the material studied. The best answer is always the correct answer. For multi-select questions any number could be correct from zero to all. I grade those by answer so that if there were 5 in the multi-select they are each worth 0.2.

One thing to keep in mind in this course is that I expect you to be active learners because that's the way brains learn of any species. There is quite a bit of research on how just passively absorbing information is not the best way to retain said information, some of which will be covered in this class. Videos in the class are there to just help you through difficult bits, help focus some issues in the text, provide some experiential learning, or as additional background. A substantial portion of them don't just tell you something but instead guide you through an activity. I don't provide long videos of voice over slides for

two reasons. A considerable amount would be redundant with the textbook and would increase your workload. That will be high enough and I have no desire to exacerbate it. Further, I selected a textbook that doesn't need a lot of clarification, correction, or expansion. In addition, videos are very hard to study from. You essentially study from your notes for the videos and those may contain errors.

Consider me, your instructor, as your guide on the side. **A good method to best utilize me is to write down questions when reading, or viewing the videos.** As you go further they may get answered and, if they are then jot down those answers. It will help you remember them. If there are any unanswered questions left over please feel free to send me them or ask during checkins. I will be happy to address them.

As a final note regarding policy, many students find, in a course like this one, that they feel like they are teaching themselves. I hope that you find that, at this stage in your education, that happens more and more often. My job is to provide you an environment, schedule, and guidance that allows you to facilitate your learning. It's the best, and really the only, genuine way to learn. Consider driving. You drove and that's how you learned. Your instructor only offered guidance, correction, and a sometimes a safety intervention or two as you learned. But make no mistake, you taught yourself to drive, otherwise you couldn't.

Course Content

The schedule is the same for all but the first two sessions. We'll go through the chapters in the text book in order over sessions. All but the first two sessions will open in Brightspace on a Tuesday. at 12:01 AM ADT and close the following Sunday at 6:00 PM. Each session will include a session outline (guide), videos that highlight specific points in the chapter, and an assessment. The specific details will be explained in each session guide on Brightspace. Note that it is critical that you read the session guide. If you dive right into watching videos then some of them may not make much sense without reading the guide. This is your schedule but there are, as indicated, exceptions for the first two sessions. The chapter 1 and 2 sessions will both open at the same time on the first day of the course. Session 1 must be completed by Sunday that week, and Session 2 by Tuesday night (10 PM) the following week. This is to give people time to complete session 1 and see what the tests are like and then start in on session 2. These two sessions do not have to be done in order. If you'd rather skip session 1 you can just go right into session 2, although this is not advised. Therefore, be cautious, **the course starts quickly but the pace eases up after the first two weeks.**

Another piece of content is a non-mandatory checkin online using Collab Ultra (under Content on Brightspace) every session where I'll share some useful additional information as well as answer questions. This is scheduled for 15:35 Thursdays. This will not go more than 1 hour. A recording will be attempted so that, if you can't make the live checkin, you can check out the recording. But it is much more useful to make the live checkin and bring chapter questions. Further, the recording of the checkins has not proved absolutely reliable so it is wise to attend the live one if possible.

And in addition, **make sure to read the section on Brightspace labelled "Tips."** Do this early because it is important to understand how to take the tests in the course and how to think about them. There are also other small important documents in there that are helpful.

Here is the content by session. Again note that the actual grade for Chapter 1 is not counted but the assessment for it can be taken as a bonus. You can expect that content in that session will be referred to in questions as if you have familiarity with it.

Session #	Topic
1*	Chapter 1, Introduction to Cognition
2	Chapter 2, Visual and Object Recognition
3	Chapter 3, Attention and Consciousness



- 4 Chapter 4, Working Memory
- 5 Chapter 5, Long-Term Memory
- 6 Chapter 6, Memory Strategies and Metacognition
- 7 Chapter 7, Mental Imagery and Cognitive Maps
- 8 Chapter 8, General Knowledge
- 9 Chapter 9, Introduction to Language and Language Comprehension
- 10 Chapter 10, Language Production and Bilingualism
- 11 Chapter 11, Problem Solving and Creativity.
- 12 Chapter 12, Deductive Reasoning and Decision Making
- 13 Chapter 13, Cognitive Development Throughout the Lifespan

University Policies and Statements

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit or e-mail the Indigenous Student Centre at 1321 Edward St or elders@dal.ca. Additional information regarding the Indigenous Student Centre can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Internationalization

At Dalhousie, 'thinking and acting globally' enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders." Additional internationalization information can be found at: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/internationalization.html>

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Additional academic integrity information can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact the Student Accessibility Centre (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro. For courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture, please contact the Student Success Centre in Truro (<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre.html>)

Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Additional diversity and inclusion information can be found at: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner - perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. The full Code of Student Conduct can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html

Fair Dealing Policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. Additional information regarding the Fair Dealing Policy can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy.html

Originality Checking Software

The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy. Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method. Additional information regarding Originality Checking Software can be found at: <https://www.dal.ca/about/leadership-governance/academic-integrity/faculty-resources/ouriginal-plagiarism-detection.html>

Student Use of Course Materials

Course materials are designed for use as part of this course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

Student Resources and Support

University Policies and Programs

Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates): http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

Classroom Recording Protocol: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/classroom-recording-protocol.html

Dalhousie Grading Practices Policies: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html

Grade Appeal Process: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html

Sexualized Violence Policy: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html

Scent-Free Program: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

Learning and Support Resources

General Academic Support – Advising (Halifax): https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html

General Academic Support – Advising (Truro): <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/ssc/academic-support/advising.html>

Student Health & Wellness Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html

On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond): https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/On-track.html

Indigenous Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Indigenous Connection: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/indigenous-connection.html>

Elders-in-Residence (The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803: <https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/academics/UG/indigenous-studies/Elder-Protocol-July2018.pdf>

Black Student Advising Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html

International Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html

LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/vpei/edia/education/community-specific-spaces/LGBTQ2SIA-collaborative.html>

Dalhousie Libraries: <http://libraries.dal.ca/>

Copyright Office: <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>

Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services: <https://www.dsu.ca/dsas?rq=student%20advocacy>

Dalhousie Ombudsperson: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html

Human Rights and Equity Services: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres.html>

Writing Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html

Study Skills/Tutoring: http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html

Faculty of Science Advising Support: <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/science/current-students/undergrad-students/degree-planning.html>

Safety

Biosafety: <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/biosafety.html>

Chemical Safety: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety.html>

Radiation Safety: <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety.html>

Laser Safety: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety/laser-safety.html>