San José State University  
Department of Psychology  
PSYC 155-01, Human Learning, Fall 2016

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs, 4:30-5:30pm, and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Tues/Thurs, 10:30-11:45am
Classroom: Duncan Hall 243
Prerequisites: PSYC 1

Course Description
The goal of this course is to help you build an appreciation for the central role that learning and memory plays in our lives. None of us could have a conversation, ride a bike, sing the lyrics to a song, recognize our family, or even have a sense of our own identity if it were not for the ability to learn and to remember the past. As you’ll find, the function of memory is never as obvious and astonishing as when it fails us. In this course, we will survey the most influential theories and findings in this important and extensive area of research. Basic research and theory will be discussed, as well as a variety of fascinating topics including amnesia, the relationship between sleep and memory, false memories, and the accuracy of eye-witness memory.

Course Format
The material in this course will be presented through a combination of class lectures, in-class videos and demonstrations, and assigned readings from the textbook and scientific journals. Lectures will complement the reading material and will include additional information not covered in the readings. As such, attendance is essential for optimal performance in the course. Keeping pace with the reading schedule and being proactive about seeking help are similarly important in achieving a successful outcome. Please ask questions when you don’t understand information in lecture or in the readings -- asking questions and offering ideas during lecture is welcomed and encouraged!

Canvas
Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website at http://sjsu.instructure.com. You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas to learn of any updates.
Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- **Content goals**
  - CLO1: Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts of learning and memory
  - CLO2: Identify processes by which we encode, store, and retrieve information
  - CLO3: Explain research methodologies used in the study of learning and memory, primarily in humans, but also in other animals
  - Content goals will be assessed via midterms, quizzes, and the final exam

- **Critical thinking goals**
  - CLO4: Compare and contrast major theories of learning and memory, and evaluate evidence for and against these theories
  - CLO5: Apply key concepts in learning and memory to real-world problems and events
  - Critical thinking goals will be assessed with midterms, quizzes, homework assignments, the forgetting paper, and the final exam

- **Communication goals**
  - CLO6: Discuss complex topics of human learning and memory with a focus on failures of memory
  - Communication goals will be assessed via the forgetting project, which includes several smaller assignments as well as a final paper

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements, students will be able to:

- **Knowledge Base of Psychology**
  - PLO1: Identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

- **Research Methods in Psychology**
  - PLO2: Design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

- **Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology**
  - PLO3: Use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

- **Application of Psychology**
  - PLO4: Apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

- **Values in Psychology**
  - PLO5: Value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Required Texts/Readings

A small number of additional readings will be posted on Canvas as PDFs.
Course Requirements and Assignments

During this course, you will be required to participate in class and to complete the following: three midterms, a cumulative final exam, and a paper (see details below in “Grading Policy” and “Schedule”).

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

University policy F69-24 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf states, “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on three midterms (40%), a cumulative final exam (25%), a paper (15%), and participation (20%).

A (90 - 100%)
B (80 - 89%)
C (70 - 79%)
D (60 - 69%)
F (0 - 60%)

Students in the top or bottom 2.5% of each grade range will receive a plus or minus, respectively. The instructor reserves the right to relax (but not stiffen) this criterion, depending on the actual distribution of grades.

Midterms (40%) and final exam (25%)
Midterms and the final exam will contain multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, labeling, matching, and short answer questions that cover the assigned reading material and information presented in class. The lowest score of the three midterms will be dropped, such that the remaining two midterms will count 20% each. This is to allow for flexibility to accommodate family emergencies, medical problems, and other unplanned events. Because of this drop policy, please note that no makeup midterms will be given, even in the event of a family emergency or illness. The cumulative final exam is required and cannot be dropped.

Paper: Forgetting project (15%)
For this project you will record your own memory failures over a period of several days. You will then write a short paper describing two instances of forgetting, their underlying causes, and solutions for each that address that underlying cause. The purposes of this project are to (a) make you aware of the memory lapses that you experience daily; (b) emphasize the costs associated with those lapses, (c) allow you to relate the concepts and theories presented in this class to your life, and (d) encourage you to think about how such ideas might be applied to improving your own life. This assignment will be discussed in greater detail later in the semester.

Participation (20%)
Your participation grade will encompass homework, quizzes (always announced in advance), and group activities. Your lowest participation score will be dropped to allow for flexibility to accommodate family emergencies, medical problems, and other unplanned events. Because of this drop policy, there will be no opportunities to make up missed quizzes or group activities, nor will late homework be accepted. Should
you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what material you missed—preferably by contacting one of your fellow students—and to prepare for the next class session.

**Handing in assignments**

All assignments are due at the **beginning** of class on the specified due date. If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend class the day that an assignment is due, you must submit it **in advance** of class that day. As mentioned above, no late homework will be accepted. However, partial credit will be given for late forgetting papers as follows: for each day your paper is late, your score will drop 10%.

**Viewing grades**

Grades will be posted on Canvas in a timely manner. Note that “All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades.” See [University Policy F13-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf) for more details.

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**Classroom Protocol**

Students are expected to maintain a level of professional and courteous behavior at all times. You are required to silence your cell phones and other electronic devices before the beginning of class. **Note that although laptops are permitted, they are to be used for note-taking purposes only.** Students not abiding by these policies will be asked to leave the class and will not be permitted to use their devices for the remainder of the semester.

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**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at [http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/).
Schedule: PSYC 155-01, Human Learning, Fall 2016

Note: The schedule is subject to modification as the instructor deems necessary. You are responsible for noting any changes to the schedule announced either in class or via Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 25</td>
<td>Welcome and intro</td>
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<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Experimental methods</td>
<td>Skim Ch 1 and 2</td>
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<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>Habituation and sensitization</td>
<td>3.1 (71-81), 3.2 (91-94)</td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Perceptual learning and priming</td>
<td>3.1 (82-91)</td>
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<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Classical conditioning I; Quiz 1</td>
<td>4.1 (115-124)</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Classical conditioning II</td>
<td>4.1 (127-147)</td>
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<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Group activity: Rescorla-Wagner worksheet</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Operant conditioning</td>
<td>5.1 (167-189)</td>
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<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Midterm #1</td>
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<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Working memory</td>
<td>9.1 (351-356)</td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Episodic memory I</td>
<td>7.1 (267-274)</td>
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<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Episodic memory II; Quiz 2</td>
<td>7.2 (292-298), 7.3 (302-308)</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Semantic memory</td>
<td>7.2 (290-291)</td>
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<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>Skill learning</td>
<td>8.1 (311-331), 8.2 (331-334), 8.3 (344-346)</td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Midterm #2</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Encoding I</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Encoding II</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Memory expertise</td>
<td>Ericsson</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Retrieval I; Quiz 3</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Retrieval II</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Forgetting</td>
<td>Anderson (191-205)</td>
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<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>False memory</td>
<td>Loftus, Roediger</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Midterm #3</td>
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<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Sleep and memory</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Emotion and memory</td>
<td>10.1 (395-415), 10.3 (428-431)</td>
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<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>No class, Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Memory in the courtroom; Paper due</td>
<td>Lacy</td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Aging and memory</td>
<td>12.1 (485-489), 12.2 (499-501), 12.3 (507-514)</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Movie: The memory loss tapes; Quiz 4</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Final exam, 9:45am-12:00pm</td>
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