

# Cognitive Psychology

PSYC 221 — Winter 2026

**Course Times/Location:** Information available via onQ

**Drop-in Hours:** Information available via onQ

**Instructor:**

Dr. Monica Castelhana

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## General Course Information

**Course:** PSYC 221

**Course title:** Introduction to Cognitive Psychology

**Pre-requisites:** PSYC 100

**Semester and year:** Winter 2026

**Number of credits:** 3

**Learning hours:** 36

**Modality (on campus, blended, or online):** On campus

**Classroom accessibility:** Wheelchair accessible classroom

## Course Description

This course is a survey of the topics in cognitive psychology. We will examine the basic processes involved in perception, attention, memory, representations, thinking, language and other topics. Cognition is far more complex than it appears. The simple act of answering a cell phone involves dozens of processes that you probably don't think about. Also, we'll learn about quirky things your brain does and have fun doing it!

Be prepared to read quite a bit and think in new ways about how we think, act and do everyday things. All material (in the textbook and the lectures) is fair game for testing. Attendance is expected for all lectures, but not mandatory (slides will be available on onQ a couple of hours before each class). Bonus points are awarded for participation and active engagement in the class (see below for more details).

## Course Learning Outcomes

- Describe cognitive processes with respect to the brain, sensory, and perceptual mechanisms
- Evaluate the distinction of top-down and bottom-up processes to cognitive phenomena
- Describe the contribution of memory to cognition
- Describe higher order cognition processes and how lower level processes interact with higher order processes
- Connect cognitive processes to everyday activities and real-life applications
- Critically evaluate cognitive phenomenon as they are described in the media

## Important University Dates

Please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Sciences Sessional Dates website](#) for all academic deadlines.

## Course Materials

### **Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research and Everyday Experience**

5<sup>th</sup> Edition

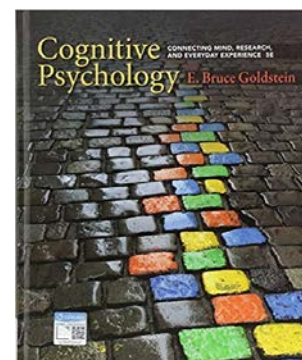
E. Bruce Goldstein

University of Pittsburgh and University of Arizona

ISBN-10: 1337408271 | ISBN-13: 9781337408271

\$99.95 (available as a bound copy at the campus bookstore)

**Mindtap Course key: MTPNCP553C84**



**Please Note:** Mindtap and CogLab are NOT REQUIRED, so a used hardcopy or just a pdf copy of the textbook is sufficient.

## Land Acknowledgement

The territory that Queen's University occupies is included in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe and Allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community as well as First Peoples from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

Queen's University recognizes that the values of equity and diversity are vital to and in harmony with its educational mission and standards of excellence. It acknowledges that direct, indirect, and systemic discrimination exists within our institutional structures, policies, and practices and in our community. These take many forms and work to differentially advantage and disadvantage persons across social identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith, and socioeconomic status, among other examples. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and accountable environment where everyone feels welcome. Every member of this class is asked to show respect for every other member.

## Workload: Descriptions of Learning Activities and Assessments

First an aside: Student life is hard and now it feels harder somehow. So, before diving into details about the assignments, there is one **optional** podcast episode that I include here for your first week. It's about time management, taking care of your mind and body, and other good stuff for both neurotypical and neurodiverse alike:

Podcast: Oologies  
Episode: [LIFE ADVICE: For anyone who is tired & needs some hacks](#)

Again, **this is not required**, but Alie Ward is the host and is the perfect example of openness and curiosity about science that I love listening to – and you may like it too.

### Podcast Reaction Papers

Throughout the semester, there will be 3 low-stakes writing assignments (3% each). This is really so that your first written assignment is some high-stakes research paper in your upper years. It will give you a chance to practice and it is a way of learning about something new in (hopefully) a different way).

For this assignment, you will submit (via *onQ*) a brief paper **anywhere between 250 to 500 words**. The podcasts will discuss ideas/situations that are connected to the topic for that week. The reaction paper is meant to show me that you have read appropriate chapter, listened to the podcast and that you have thought about them enough to synthesize new ideas! I am interested in *your* ideas. **A summary or description of the podcast is insufficient.**

You are encouraged to write a new idea that goes **beyond a summary**, like:

- a *critique* of coverage – what things did not fit with the textbook explanations of the concepts, what concepts were too simplified or glossed over or perhaps exaggerated;
- talk about the *implications* of something discussed in the podcast;
- suggest a *new experiment* to explore a specific question raised in the podcast.

**Use of AI Tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot).**

Generative AI can be a powerful learning aid when you use it to engage your thinking, not when you use it to substitute it. Research shows that relying on AI to do your thinking and writing can undermine the development of critical reasoning, writing fluency, and long-term learning. However, when used to support learning, like for brainstorming, explaining difficult ideas, generating practice exam questions, organizing thoughts, then we see that AI can support understanding, memory, and creativity (OECD, 2024; Holmes, 2023).

In this course, you may use AI as a learning support (e.g., to clarify concepts, outline study strategies, or get feedback on drafts) but not as a substitute for completing assignments yourself. Anything you submit must reflect your own thinking, and you are responsible for fact-checking, citing sources appropriately, and acknowledging any meaningful AI assistance. If you are unsure whether a use is acceptable, ask first.

**Grading of Podcast Papers** is based on Young’s I-C-E (Ideas, Concepts, and Extensions):

- **3/3** Comments and responses reveal a capacity to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material and give evidence of *original thinking* and an extensive knowledge base. They demonstrate a careful, concise, critical analysis with a clear and well-argued hypothesis based on the material. They exhibit evidence of learning that is willing to explore beyond the initial learning situation.
- **2/3** Comments and responses reveal a good analysis and some critical reasoning. They demonstrate a reasonable understanding of relevant issues and familiarity with the material. They demonstrate a solid understanding of the relationship or connections among the basic concepts. They show a need to be more concise or precise in details and more carefulness in articulating arguments.
- **1/3** Comments and responses show an acceptable treatment of the subject matter. They demonstrate an understanding of the basic facts, vocabulary, details, and elemental concepts and show an ability to deal with simple issues arising out of the material. The student needs to engage the subject matter more fully and formulate ideas more clearly.

**Podcast Assignments are due at 11:59pm on Friday of the assigned week and are to be submitted via onQ.**

Topic	Show	Episode	Due Date
Attention (Chpt 4)	What Next  TBD	<a href="#">Can You Pay Attention, Please?</a>	23-Jan
Memory (Chpt 7)	Science vs.	<a href="#">Memory: How to Boost it</a>	13-Feb
Creativity (Chpt 12)	BBC  Business Daily	<a href="#">Boredom: The secret to creativity?</a>	27-Mar

**Assignment Submission Policy**

*Universal Accommodations Policy: The written assignments will have a three-day grace period. That is, your assignments are due on the due date posted, but will be accepted without penalty up to 72 hours afterwards (3 days). After the grace period, the late penalty will be 10% per day for a maximum of 4 days, after which you will receive a grade of 0.*

## Evaluation

Podcast Reaction Papers	9%
Midterm Exam 1	25%
Midterm Exam 2	25%
Final Exam	41%
Bonus: Class & Experiment Participation	5%*

*\*Bonus is conditional. See below for details.*

## Grade Bonus

There is a chance to get a 5% bonus on your FINAL Grade. Please note, the bonus credits cannot be used to change a failing mark to a passing mark. There are two sources for the bonus.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION Bonus (3%):** Here is how it works – during each class there will be mini-pop quizzes that will ask you to enter in a response to a series of questions. The number of quizzes will vary from class-to-class. The percent earned will be equivalent to how many quizzes you have completed over the entire semester and will be calculated at the end of the term. So, to earn the full bonus marks, you will need to participate in ALL such quizzes. If you can't, don't worry as you are awarded whatever portion of the bonus that you do participate in.

This bonus is based on learning and memory research! It's called the Test-Retest effect: The best way to gain knowledge is through repeated quizzing and testing. That means, when you study – make some practice exam questions as you go (in a separate document or scrapbook). Then, as part of your material review, test yourself! Studies have shown that people who perform multiple tests (even with no grading or low stakes), do much better at LEARNING the information. Then lather, rinse and repeat! *Make up multiple sets of questions for each chapter and use it as part of your end of year review.*

Participation will require a device connected to the internet: phone, tablet or laptop. It will require that you sign-in to <https://kahoot.it/> with your STUDENT# as your nickname (in order for us to allot the correct bonus for each student). Please check onQ for more detailed instructions.

**Please Note:** *This bonus is very much conditional on fair class participation. If there is cheating or the system works poorly (for whatever reason), I reserve the right to revoke the bonus completely from all students. So play fair and we'll see how this goes.*

**EXPERIMENT PARTICIPATION Bonus (2%):** Students in this course have the option of volunteering in psychological research conducted by faculty and advanced students in the Psychology Department. For every half hour of research completed, you can increase your final mark in this course by 0.5% up to a maximum of 2%. **If you are enrolled in more than one eligible course, you will have to select the course towards which your research participation will be credited when you sign up for a study.** This way you can complete studies toward each course. However, you cannot apply the same study credit to more than one course. Also, the penalty for missed experiments is the same as the one in PSYC 100.

As with PSYC 100, studies will be listed on SONA, and you will receive an email with the information you need to register your account on SONA after the end of the drop/add period. Expect the email around the middle of the third week of the semester. In addition, during the first week of the semester, you will be emailed a link to an

online pre-screening questionnaire that will be due by the end of the drop/add period (second Friday of the term). If you complete the larger pre-screening questionnaire online, you may become eligible for additional studies, and those researchers will contact you directly to find a time to participate.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. If you want to earn credit but don't want to participate in a particular study, you can complete an alternative assignment instead. For the alternative assignment, researchers will offer either a walk-through of their experiment, or they will have you to read an article or blog post, listen to a short podcast, or watch a short video and then answer questions about it. Researchers of the particular study for which you wish to get credit will administer the alternative assignment (NOT course instructors -- course instructors are not involved in the crediting for studies or alternative assignments). You must contact the researcher of a particular study (see the study's contact information on SONA) before the last week of classes for the semester to complete the alternative assignment option. Although the length of studies will vary, the alternative assignment will take less time (approximately 30 minutes), so you will earn 0.5% for each alternative assignment that you complete.

Please check onQ for more detailed instructions. For further details, please follow this [link](#).

## Class Schedule

Below is a schedule of the lectures and assignments that will be given. Reading the chapters before the lecture will aid you in understanding the lecture but *is not necessary*. I've designed the lectures so they can serve as an introduction to the chapter. Sometimes reading right after the lecture will serve to consolidate information more easily. Find a reading schedule that fits you and stick with it.

Please note, for all podcast assignments, you will need to have done the readings for that week to be able to answer intelligently and thoughtfully, so plan ahead on how you are going to complete the readings and the assignments for those weeks.

The exams and assignments due dates are listed below.

**NOTE: The schedule of topics is subject to change.**

Week	Date	Topic	Required Reading	Podcast Assignments
1	06-Jan 09-Jan	Introduction	Chpts 1 & 2	
2	13-Jan 16-Jan	Perception	Chpt 3	
3	20-Jan 23-Jan	Attention	Chpt 4	Podcast Assignment #1
4	27-Jan 30-Jan	Short-term and Working Memory	Chpt 5	
5	03-Feb 06-Feb	<b>MIDTERM 1 Chapters 1-5 &amp; Lectures</b>		
		No Class		
6	10-Feb 13-Feb	Long-term Memory: Structure Long-term Memory: Encoding & Retrieval	Chpt 6 Chpt 7	Podcast Assignment #2
7	17-Feb 20-Feb	Reading Week		
8	24-Feb 27-Feb	Long-term Memory: Encoding & Retrieval Everyday Memory & Memory Errors	Chpt 7 Chpt 8	
9	03-Mar 06-Mar	Knowledge	Chpt 9	
10	10-Mar 13-Mar	Language	Chpt 11	
11	17-Mar 20-Mar	<b>MIDTERM 2 Chapters 6-9,11 &amp; Lectures</b>		
		No Class		
12	24-Mar 27-Mar	Problem Solving & Creativity	Chpt 12	Podcast Assignment #3
13	31-Mar 03-Apr	Decision Making	Chpt 13	

## Grading Method

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale:

### *Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale*

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

## Questions about the Course and Contacting the Teaching Team

Throughout this course, you may come upon some general questions about the course and any assignments. If you think that your question may benefit other students, you are invited to post your question in the Course **Q&A discussion forum**. Feel free to help answer your peers' questions on this forum. The teaching team will monitor this discussion forum and answer questions. Most questions are answered within 48 hours, usually sooner. Any other questions that you would prefer to share privately, please contact me or the TAs at one of the emails (listed on p. 1).

## Policy Review of Graded Work

Students who believe grades on their assessments are inaccurate should first discuss the grading and feedback with the teaching assistant who graded their work. Requests for re-marking should be emailed to the instructor and must explicitly and clearly state how the work deserves a different grade than assigned. The request should include: the assignment, all feedback from your TA (including your discussion with them), and why discussions with the teaching assistant did not resolve the situations. If I decide to approve re-mark, another teaching assistant will re-mark the assessment under my supervision. The re-mark will stand as the final mark, even if it is lower than the original mark.

## Course Announcements

Throughout the course, I will routinely post course news in the Announcements section of the course homepage. I encourage you to actively check the course onQ main page for course announcements throughout the semester for reminders and additional course information or learning opportunities.

## Academic Integrity

Queen's University is dedicated to creating a scholarly community free to explore a range of ideas, to build and advance knowledge and to share the ideas and knowledge that emerge from a range of intellectual pursuits. Each core value of academic integrity, as defined in the [Senate Academic Integrity Policy](#), gives rise to and supports the next.

Honesty appears in presenting one's own academic work, whether in the context of an examination, written assignment, laboratory or seminar presentation. It is in researching one's own work for course assignments, acknowledging dependence on the ideas or words of another and in distinguishing one's own ideas and thoughts from other sources. It is also present in faithfully reporting laboratory results even when they do not conform to an original hypothesis. Further, honesty is present in truthfully communicating in written and/or oral exchanges with instructors, peers and other individuals (e.g. teaching assistants, proctors, university staff and/or university administrators).

Trust exists in an environment in which one's own ideas can be expressed without fear of ridicule or fear that someone else will take credit for them.

Fairness appears in the proper and full acknowledgement of the contributions of collaborators in group projects and in the full participation of partners in collaborative projects.

Respect, in a general sense, is part of an intellectual community that recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honours and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas. However, "respect" appears in a very particular sense when students attend class, pay attention, contribute to discussion and submit papers on time; instructors "show respect by taking students' ideas seriously, by recognizing them as individuals, helping them develop their ideas, providing full and honest feedback on their work, and valuing their perspectives and their goals" ("[The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity](#)", 3rd Edition, p. 8).

Ultimately, responsibility is both personal and collective and engages students, administrators, faculty and staff in creating and maintaining a learning environment supported by and supporting academic integrity.

Courage differs from the preceding values by being more a quality or capacity of character – "the capacity to act in accordance with one's values despite fear" ("[The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity](#)", 3rd edition, p. 10). Courage is displayed by students who make choices and integrous decisions that are followed by action, even in the face of peer pressure to cheat, copy another's material, provide their own work to others to facilitate cheating, or otherwise represent themselves dishonestly. Students also display courage by acknowledging prior wrongdoing and taking proactive measures to rectify any associated negative impact.

All of these values are not merely abstract but are expressed in and reinforced by the University's policies and practices.

## Accommodation Statement

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities.

Students seeking Academic Accommodations for a chronic or ongoing health/mental conditions, learning disability, or an existing disability should register with [Queen's Student Accessibility Services \(QSAS\)](#). For further information, please contact the QSAS Intake Coordinator at: [qsas.intake@queensu.ca](mailto:qsas.intake@queensu.ca).

If you need to request academic consideration related to your accommodations, please contact the Course Coordinator for Accommodations:

**Course Coordinator Name: Tara Karesewich**

**Course Coordinator email address: [psyc.accom@queensu.ca](mailto:psyc.accom@queensu.ca)**

## Academic Considerations for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

Academic consideration is a process for the university community to provide a compassionate response to assist students experiencing unforeseen, short-term extenuating circumstances that may impact or impede a student's ability to complete their academics. This may include but is not limited to:

- Short-term physical or mental health issues (e.g., stomach flu, pneumonia, COVID diagnosis, vaccination, etc.)
- Responses to traumatic events (e.g., death of a loved one, divorce, sexual assault, social injustice, etc.)
- Requirements by law or public health authorities (e.g., court date, isolation due to COVID exposure, etc.)

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances. For more information, please see the [Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#).

The Faculty of Arts and Science has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances, which can be found here: <https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/undergraduate/student-services/academic-consideration>. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

For guidance on **submitting requests**, please see refer to the Resource Guides available on the [Academic Consideration website](#) under "Applying for Academic Consideration."

If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the name and email address of the coordinator:

**Course Coordinator Name: Tara Karesewich**

**Course Coordinator email address: [psyc.accom@queensu.ca](mailto:psyc.accom@queensu.ca)**

Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as the need becomes apparent and to contact their Professors/Course Coordinators as soon as possible once Consideration has been granted. Any delay in contact may limit the Consideration options available.

**Please follow up with the Coordinator (Tara Karesewich, [psyc.accom@queensu.ca](mailto:psyc.accom@queensu.ca)) within 2 days of receiving verification of your Consideration request.**

For more information on the Academic Consideration process, what is and is not an extenuating circumstance, and to submit an Academic Consideration request, please see the [Academic Consideration website](#).

## Building a Classroom Community

University is a place to share, question, and challenge ideas. Each student brings a different set of lived experiences. You can help to create a safer, more respectful classroom community for learners by following these guidelines:

- Make a personal commitment to learn about, understand, and support your peers.
- Assume the best of others and expect the best of them.
- Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to the course.
- Acknowledge the impact of oppression on other people's lives and make sure your words and tone are respectful and inclusive.
- Encourage others to develop and share their ideas.
- Pay close attention to what your peers say/write before you respond. Think through and re-read what you have written before you post online or send your comments to others.
- Be open to having your ideas challenged and challenge others with the intent of facilitating growth.
- Look for opportunities to agree with one another, building on and intentionally referencing peers' thoughts and ideas; disagree with ideas without making personal attacks, demeaning, or embarrassing others.

## Name/Pronoun

If, for whatever reason, you wish to change how your name appears in onQ and/or on class lists, please follow these steps. You may also use this process to add your pronouns to the appearance of your name.

1. Log into SOLUS.
2. Click on Personal Information tab.
3. Click on the Names tab
4. Click on the Add New Name tab
5. Choose Preferred from the Name Type drop down menu
6. Enter the name you would like to appear in onQ and/or on class lists.
7. Click Save.

Please allow 24 to 48 hours for your name to be registered within the system. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact ITS at Queen's University.

## Educational Technologies, Help, Privacy, and Accessibility

This course makes use of the following website(s), program(s), and/or application(s) for specific educational use/purposes.

**Privacy:** Be aware that your independent use of the website(s), programs, and/or application(s) used in this course, *beyond what is required*, is subject to their terms of use and privacy policy. You are encouraged to review the applicable privacy statements before using the site.

## Timing of Final Examinations

Once the exam schedule has been finalized, the exam date will be posted on your SOLUS account. The exam dates for each term are listed on the Faculty of Arts and Science webpage under "[Important Dates](#)." Student exam schedules for the Fall Term are posted on SOLUS immediately prior to Thanksgiving and on the Friday before Reading Week for the Winter Term. **Students should delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted. Exams will not be moved or deferred to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans or flight reservations. For information regarding what is considered extenuating circumstances and qualifications for Academic Consideration, please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Science's Academic Consideration webpage](#).**

**If you are unable to attend an exam and receive approval for a deferred proctored exam, a further deferral of that exam will not be accommodated.**

## Copyright Statement

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

## Questions about the Course and Contacting the Teaching Team

The Teaching Team is available for weekly Office hours (see onQ for scheduled days and time, and room). We are also all available via email.

## Queen's Email

The university communicates with students via Queen's email. Please check your email regularly to ensure you do not miss important information related to your course.

## Course Feedback

At various points during the course, you may be asked to take part in a variety of feedback activities, such as surveys and questionnaires. This feedback enables the teaching team to improve the course. All surveys are anonymous and are directly related to activities, assessments, and other course material.