PSY342H
Cognition and Psychopathology
Fall 2010
Tuesdays, 6:00PM to 9:00PM
Sidney Smith 1088

Instructor: Dr. Michael Gemar

Office hours: Immediately after class and by appointment

Email: michael.gemar@utoronto.ca (best way to contact me)

Daytime telephone: 416-596-2714 (Please use only for emergencies)

TA: Lily Riggs (lriggs@rotman-baycrest.on.ca)

Course website: psych.utoronto.ca/web/psy342/

Text: There is no formal textbook for this course. Course material will be presented via lectures (with notes available online) and research articles.

Course summary:
Research into the causes and effects of psychopathologies has increasingly become informed by work in experimental cognitive psychology. This course will explore the ways in which researchers are taking the theories, concepts, and methodologies used to understand normal cognition and applying them to clinical dysfunctions. We will look at a variety of disorders and examine the ways in which cognitive theory and experimental methods can illuminate such issues as the origin of a disorder, the cognitive dysfunctions which give rise to many of its symptoms, and ways in which such symptoms might be eliminated or alleviated.

Evaluation:
• Two in-class exams (120 minutes; primarily medium answer format, non-cumulative): 25%
• Paper proposal: 5%
• Critical review paper: 10%
• Research project paper: 35%

Note:
• Missed exams cannot be made up for any reason except for a medical excuse with a note from a physician.
• Late assignments will be assigned a penalty of one-third letter grade for each day or part-day (including weekends) late. This penalty will apply to all late assignments except those due to documented illness -- for these cases I will determine a new due date, after which the late penalty will again apply.
• The course paper is due at a very busy time of year for all students. You are responsible for managing your time appropriately. There will be no extensions granted on the final course paper due to your workload.

Course notes:
The course material will consist primarily of course notes and assigned readings. The course notes for each topic will be available on the course website roughly a day or so before the particular topic is to be covered in class. You are encouraged to read these notes prior to class, and it is suggested that you print them off and bring them with you to class. Lectures will consist of in-depth discussions of particular areas or topics covered in the notes, discussion of any additional assigned readings, and the answering of any questions on that topic that students might have.
**Tentative Syllabus**

This schedule is subject to change.

*Note that there are readings for each lecture – the readings information will be posted on the course website.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>Introduction; Background on psychopathology, cognition, and methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td></td>
<td>RESEARCH PROJECT PAPER PROPOSAL DUE</td>
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<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
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<td>(Paper proposal returned)</td>
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<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>EXAM (120 minutes)</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CRITICAL REVIEW PAPER DUE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Exam returned and discussed)</td>
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<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Psychopathy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Critical review paper returned)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Last day for submitting paper draft for feedback)</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Autism</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>EXAM (120 minutes)</td>
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<td>RESEARCH PROJECT PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS</td>
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General information

The application of cognitive methods, concepts, and theories to psychopathology is a burgeoning research domain, and there are many empirical and theoretical questions that have yet to be answered. The main writing assignment in this course will be a paper on some such question (likely involving a single disorder). The paper should review prior research that is relevant to the area, outlining how the specific issue you are addressing has been left unresolved. It should then present a proposed empirical study that would examine the question, providing the relevant methodological detail. Finally, the paper should discuss the possible outcomes of the study, and how these results would address the topic issue.

The intent of this assignment is for you to produce a paper similar to those found in research journals (without the actual results, of course), or perhaps more accurately, similar to the research proposal section of a research grant application. The best way to learn how your paper should be written is simply to read journal articles. Pay attention to how the authors structure their argument, the way they cite prior research to build their case, and the way they choose to attack a problem in their empirical work.

Note that, in addition to the main research proposal paper, there are two smaller writing assignments related to it -- the paper proposal, and the critical review paper.

Proposal topic paper

To assist you in starting the paper, and make sure you are on the right track, you will initially turn in a paper on your proposed topic. This assignment will include an overview of the issue that you plan to explore in your paper, including appropriate background, and three relevant references (again, these references must be original research articles). There is no set length for this paper, but generally it will take at least 3 page (~750 words) to provide appropriate information on the issue you choose. You are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with me prior to the due date for this assignment if you are having trouble with it. Photocopies of the first page of the articles you cite must accompany your proposal. Failure to do so will lose 2 points (of the possible 5) on the assignment.

Critical review paper

The critical review paper gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of research literature and critical skills in a narrower format than the term paper. For this assignment, you are to choose one study that you are likely to cite in your term paper. This study should be fairly central to your main topic (do not choose an article that is only marginally relevant). In the critical review paper, you are to review the study: summarize the background research that prompted the work; discuss what the authors felt their study could add; briefly describe the methodology of the study (noting any key features of interest); summarize the results and their conclusions; and, most crucially, provide a critical analysis of the work (what are its strengths? what are its shortcomings? etc.). Your critique should concentrate on relevant aspects of the research, and not on irrelevant shortcomings. Also, your critique need not be solely negative; if there are positive or novel aspects of the research, you should note that as well. Your critical comments need not appear solely in a separate section, but can be interlarded where appropriate (although a final critical summary would likely be useful). You are expected to use other references in the background to the article, and possibly in the critique itself (others may have cited the article and had insights about it). These references must be cited in your review paper (in appropriate format). There are no length criteria, but a thorough critical review of most research articles would likely be between 4 to 8 pages (1000-2000 words) long.

Research proposal paper

Focus

The focus of the paper must be on a cognitive issue in psychopathology, addressed with a proposed empirical cognitive study. A paper on general clinical issues (such as treatment effectiveness, even if that treatment is cognitively oriented) is not appropriate, nor is a paper with a solely biological or psychoanalytical emphasis. If you are unsure about the focus of your proposed paper, see me as soon as possible to discuss this.

Structure

The paper should be structured exactly like an empirical study in a journal article (see the section on format below). Such studies address a specific theoretical question by a) first providing background on the issue, including reviewing the relevant literature (in the Introduction section of the paper); b) describe an experimental methodology that is designed to address the theoretical issue empirically (Methodology); c) describe the specific outcome of this experimental study (Results); and d) discuss what the theoretical implications are of the results found -- how they answer the question posed, what the broader implications (theoretical and/or practical) of these results might be, what the potential drawbacks or shortcomings of the study are, and what possible further research might be conducted (Discussion). Your paper should follow this structure, with one modification: because you will not be collecting actual data, your Results section instead should focus on the possible empirical outcomes of your proposed study -- what results could be generated by your study, and how would they speak to the theoretical question you address.
Rewrites

The course paper is due no later than the last course lecture. However, you should note that I will be happy to look over completed drafts of your paper prior to that date, and give you extensive feedback on what changes or corrections might need to be made (please allow one week for feedback). You are not limited in the number of times you can request feedback. The only restrictions are: a) You must allow at least one week for me to provide feedback (and I do not guarantee one week turnaround), b) Papers will only be received and returned in class, c) I can only look over paper copies, not electronic version, and d) I will not accept any papers for feedback after the date noted on the syllabus (three weeks prior to the paper due date).

You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this offer, as this process can be of great assistance in helping you write a better paper. Such preliminary feedback is not available for the critical review paper (although I will be happy to discuss this assignment with you outside of class, and will look over completed drafts of the course paper prior to you turning in the critical review paper). Note that, depending on the number of papers I receive, I may not be able to return them all in one week’s time.

Format

Your course paper should conform to the style presented in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association -- this is the format that most journals demand, and thus the format that most articles you will read will use. The Publication Manual lays out the way papers should be structured, and the format in which references are to be cited. (This formatting means that your paper should have such sections as an Abstract, Introduction, Methods, and Discussion, with appropriate headings.) You do not need to purchase the Publication Manual if you are already familiar with the format, but if you are not, it would be a wise investment. The UofT Bookstore will likely have copies, or can order it for you.

The writing style of the paper should be appropriate to an academic paper, in that it should not be excessively informal. Please also note that, as you will not actually be conducting the study you propose in the paper, please do not write about the methodology or results in the past tense – write as if you are proposing the research, and so discuss it as if it is in the future (e.g., “Participants will first fill out a questionnaire...”; “The results are expected to show...”).

There are no length criteria, but a paper that covers the issues appropriately will generally be 12-16 pages (3000-4000 words) in length. As a guideline, a good paper will likely contain approximately 15-20 references of original research articles.

You are to hand in one hardcopy of your paper, using the coversheet that is downloadable from the website. Please use the coversheet provided, stapled only -- do not place the paper in any additional binder or cover. In addition, for each reference you cite you must hand in a photocopy of the first page of that article (or title page if using a book). These photocopies should be stapled together with the References cover page (also on the website) on top, and handed in separately. A further electronic copy of your paper must be submitted by email in either RTF (Rich Text Format) or Microsoft Word.

Yes, there are a lot of formatting details. Please note that failure to provide your course paper in the appropriate format (e.g., no electronic copy, no reference photocopies, no cover sheets, not APA style etc.) will result in the loss of one-third of a letter grade from your papers final mark for each formatting error.

References

Part of writing a research paper involves the summarizing and proper citation of prior research. For the purposes of all three writing assignments, your primary references should consist of original articles appearing in a peer-reviewed journal that either report on research the author(s) performed or present a theoretical account that the author(s) developed. You may cite review articles (articles that primarily review other people’s research), but such articles should not make up a large portion of your references. You should not cite textbooks, newspaper articles, or articles from popular science magazines; instead, find the original articles to which they refer. You must read every article you cite in your paper – you cannot cite a study referred to another article if you have not read the study yourself. To do otherwise is intellectually dishonest and/or lazy.

Finding articles

Articles can be found using such library resources as the Medline or PsychINFO databases -- if you are unfamiliar with these tools, please consult a librarian. Almost all journals you will need are available online.

If you need paper versions, the University of Toronto library system will have some of the journals that you need; most of these will be located at the Gerstein Library. However, many of the articles you want may not be in journals that UofT has. You will likely find these less popular journals at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Library, which is open to the public. This library is located at the former Addiction Research Foundation building (now CAMH - ARF Division), and can be found on the second floor of the Tower at the ARF Building, which is behind the main building on 33 Russell Street (just north of College between Spadina and Huron). You can photocopy materials, and if you like you can apply for a library card. A copy of the library's hours can be found on the second floor of the Tower at the ARF Building, which is behind the main building on 33 Russell Street (just north of College between Spadina and Huron). You can photocopy materials, and if you like you can apply for a library card with appropriate identification. Note that their hours are fairly limited. The library phone number is 416- 595-6144. The website is at:

http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/CAMH_Library/index.html

Plagiarism

Representing someone else’s work as your own is wrong, and will not be tolerated. You will receive a handout on plagiarism from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences later in the course. The simple message is: don’t do it.