**Psychology 4500: Cognitive Psychology** **Spring 2011**

**Professor:** Diego Fernandez-Duque

**Office:** 220 Tolentine Hall

**Telephone:** 610-519-6207

**Office Hours:** Mondays immediately after class, Fridays 10.30-11.30, and by appointment

**Email**: diego.fernandezduque@villanova.edu

**Course Web Site:** http://www18.homepage.villanova.edu/diego.fernandezduque/

**Lecture Room**: Tolentine 303

**Lab Room**: Tolentine 305 or 301

**Course Description:**

 This is a three credit course with laboratory. It is writing intensive. It provides a broad examination of vision, attention, memory, and other cognitive processes from an information processing perspective, with emphasis on contemporary theory and experimental research. Although exceptions may arise, the course normally consists of two hours of lecture (usually on Mondays) and one of laboratory (on Wednesdays or Fridays).

**Course Objectives:**

- To provide students with knowledge of the fundamental issues in contemporary cognitive psychology.

- To provide students with an understanding of the methods used to study cognitive processes.

- To provide laboratory experience with research on human cognition.

**Course Website**:

The **syllabus** for the course is posted in my personal website. The website also includes the schedule, power-point presentations of the lectures, study questions, links to on-line videos for the course, and other useful links. Complete the study questions each week to prepare yourself for the exams; together they make up your study guide. I will be updating the course website on weekly basis, so it is probably best for you to download the materials on weekly basis, rather than downloading everything the first day of class.

**Course Prerequisites:**

 Psych 4000 (Statistics) and Psych 4050 (Research Methods) are pre-requisites for this course. You must have taken and passed one of these courses AND at minimum be enrolled in the other one.

**Required Text:**

 *Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind,* by Daniel Reisberg. Norton Publishing Company. The price ranges from $2 for a used copy of the 3rd edition to $120 for a new copy of the 4th edition. Either edition is acceptable. We will read about 80% of the book.

**Lab Assignments**

As an integral part of this course, you will participate in several Cognitive Psychology experiments. We will use CogLab, an internet-based program at <http://coglab.wadsworth.com/>

The first day of lab, I will teach you how to register electronically for CogLab. The registration costs $27 (approx) and can be paid with a credit card over the internet. If you do not have a credit card, come to see me after class so we can solve the problem. Do not try to buy this code from other students, it won’t work.

 Most weeks I will assign as homework one or more experiments that illustrate the topics covered in lecture (occasionally we may do the experiments in class). The duration of each experiment ranges from 15 to 40 mins. Each assignment will be due by midnight before the lab. That is, if your lab meets on Wednesdays, your assignment is due Tuesday at 11.59 pm. If your lab meets on Fridays, your assignment is due on Thursday at 11.59 pm. To account for potential problems in the network, I will apply an 8-hour grace period. Thus, assignments completed by 8 am of the lab day won’t get a late penalty. Assignments completed after 8 am of the lab day will receive a score of 0 (zero). The reason for this strict criterion is that data need to be compiled into group averages for the lab discussion. For this same reason, you will receive no credit if the data indicate that you have not cooperated with the experimental instructions.

 CogLab has been tested and is known to work properly in the Computer room in the basement of Tolentine, which is open 24 hs a day. Problems running CogLab on other computers is **not** a justified reason for a late assignment. You are welcome to try CogLab from the comfort of your own computer. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that your computer has the settings and system requirements for the normal functioning of CogLab. The student manual would be useful in this regard.

 When doing the CogLab experiments, there is a temptation to skip the background information and jump directly into doing the task. Don’t do that! It would greatly decrease your educational experience. It is absolutely critical that you read carefully the background information from CogLab **before** you complete the experiment. I also recommend you read that information for a second time, after completing the task. This same information is likely to be part of the exams.

**Lab Reports**

 In addition to participating in the experiments, you will sometimes be asked to complete an individual report. The individual report is based on your own data and your interpretation of it. To help you in these matters, I will provide a set of summary questions. The individual report is due at the beginning of the lab. Reports should be typed, and no handwritten assignments will be accepted. It is meant to get you ready for lab discussion. Occasionally, I may ask you to do an oral presentation.

 The answers to most of the questions can be found in the course material (textbook, lecture handouts, and CogLab background information for the experiments). Those answers would take precedence over your intuition, unless you are explicitly asked to report your intuition. Please cite, whenever possible, the reference on which you are basing your answer (textbook, cog lab, handout)

 You are encouraged to use resources available to this course (textbook, CogLab, class hand-outs). However, you should answer the questions **in your own words**. If for any reason you feel compelled to copy directly from a source (e.g., you cannot come up with a better way to define certain concept), you must use quotation marks and indicate the page and source.

 You are encouraged to talk to your classmates. However, **the writing process is an individual enterprise**. Unless I explicitly state it otherwise, there will be no group assignments for the lab reports.

**Research Paper**. The idea behind this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to explore a particular topic in Cognitive Psychology in depth. You will critically review the literature on a topic of your choice, and then propose an experiment that would help to address a question related to this topic. It should be approximately 12 pages long (double-spaced). I will provide you with more information about this assignment later in the semester. You should know that the final draft is due in class the last Monday of the semester.

**E-Mail.** If I need to communicate with you (e.g., change in assignment, change in class time, etc), I will do so by e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your Villanova University e-mail account regularly in order to receive any such messages. If you want to use another e-mail address, it is your responsibility to modify your Villanova account so that your e-mail messages are forwarded to the appropriate address. You should expect a delay of two working days for receiving a reply to your email, although often I may be able to give a quicker response.

**Academic Integrity.** Participants in this class are expected to adhere to the standards, and will be bound by the procedures set forth in the Villanova University Code of Academic Integrity, which can be found at <http://www.villanova.edu/vpaa/office/facultyservices/policies/integrity/code.htm>

**Exams.** The exams will include multiple choice, short answers and essay questions. Exams will include all readings, lectures, discussions, videos, and activities. If you miss an exam, you will be allowed to take a make-up exam if I judge that your absence was unexpected and unavoidable. If you take a make-up exam, please remember that it is departmental policy that you present a picture I.D. when reporting for the exam.

**Grades.** The course has four components, each one with its own grade. At the end of the semester, I will drop your worst grade, and average the other three to compute your final grade. The components are:

* Lab Activities (lab reports, oral presentation, and class participation)
* A Research Paper,
* A Midterm Exam
* A Final Exam

Grades will be assigned according to Villanova’s “Definition of Grades”, available at http://www.villanova.edu/enroll/registrar/grades/policy/defined.htm

Grades will not be assigned on the basis of a curve. Instead, letter grades will be assigned on the basis of the following percentages of the possible points that you can accumulate:

 A = 95 - 100% C = 73 - 76%

A- = 90 - 94% C- = 70 - 72%

B+ = 87 - 89% D+ = 67 - 69%

B = 83 - 86% D = 63 - 66%

B- = 80 - 82% D- = 60 - 62%

C+ = 77 - 79% F = Below 60

**Incomplete Grades.** Receiving a grade of "incomplete" (N) requires my approval and usually is given only in emergency situations. In any event, do not assume that an incomplete grade will be given automatically if you do not complete all the exams and reports by the time the final exam is given. Nor should you assume that leaving a message on my voice mail or email means you have my approval.

**Disabilities.** If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, please make arrangements to register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5636 or nancy.mott@villanova.edu as soon as possible. Registration with the learning Support Office is required in order to receive accommodations. <http://www.villanova.edu/vpaa/learningsupport/>

**Other resources**

Writing Center:Old Falvey, Dalton Room 202 610-519-4604

- It offers one-to-one sessions of tutoring aimed at improving students’ writing. <http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/vcle/writingcenter/>

Counseling Center. Room 206, Health Services Building, 610-519-4050

- The counseling center provides *confidential* services designed to enhance students’ ability to function optimally, so that they can benefit from their college years. <http://www.villanova.edu/studentlife/counselingcenter/>