

Psych 1A3 Course Outline (1999-2000)

Listed below are the topics to be covered in this course, and the approximate dates on which they will be presented, and the required readings that accompany each module.

Topic:	Introduction to Experimental Psychology (Sept. 9 th and 10 th)
Readings:	None
Description:	During the first class you will meet your tutor and review the structure of the course, the evaluation methods, and the materials you will need. If your particular section of the course normally meets on both Thursday and Friday, only the Thursday meeting will be held.

Topic:	Research Methods in Psychology (Week of Sept. 13 th)
Readings:	Basics and Beyond , section on Research Methods
Description:	In this section, we will discuss the basic logic of scientific research in psychology (and other sciences). The two lectures in this section deal with basic research methods, focusing on the logic of experiments.

Topic:	The Brain and Behavior (Weeks of Sept 20 th , 27 th and Oct. 4 th)
Readings:	Basics and Beyond , section on The Brain and Behavior
Description:	We look at how our thoughts, feelings and behaviors are related to the brain activity. We begin with the neuron, the basic functional unit of the nervous system. After a tour of the brain from brainstem to cerebral cortex, considering the functions of the most important (or at least best understood) of the brain's internal structures, we examine the phenomena of sleep and dreaming, and consider the specialization of the two sides of the brain.

Topic:	Sensation and Perception (Weeks of Oct 11 th , 18 th and 25 th)
Readings:	Basics and Beyond , section on Sensation and Perception
Description:	We examine how we construct our understanding of reality from sensory information. We emphasize vision, looking at how the brain takes information from the eye and constructs our perception of a world of stable objects. We consider how the eye and brain create the perception of colour and form.
Midterm Test	Thursday, October 28th and Friday, October 29th

Topic:	Basic Learning Processes (weeks of Nov. 1 st , 8 th , and 15 th)
Readings:	Basics and Beyond , section on Basic Learning Processes
Description:	We look at the most fundamental forms of learning: the learning of signals through classical conditioning, and the modification of behavior by its consequences - instrumental conditioning.

Topic:	Human Cognition (Weeks of Nov. 15 th , 22 nd , and 29 th)
Readings:	Basics and Beyond , Section on Human Cognition
Description:	We discuss how we process information from and about the outside world. Our primary focus will be on memory. We will consider how information is encoded, stored, and retrieved. After considering several models of memory, we will ask how accurately we recall past experiences. We will end with a brief look at how we reason and make decisions.

Course Structure

Psychology is a very broad discipline, covering many areas, so we have divided our first-year survey into two courses: This course (Psychology 1A3) provides a general introduction to experimental psychology by introducing **research methods** in psychology, and then describing findings and theorizing in several of the most basic areas of psychological research, including **neuropsychology**, **sensation and perception**, basic forms of **conditioning**, and **cognition** (memory and thinking). Our second introductory course (Psychology 1AA3) describes psychological research and theory related to interpersonal behavior, including child development, personality, abnormal psychology, and social behavior. Both courses have the same general format.

Each class section of 1A3 contains about 40 students, and is scheduled to meet three times per week. In most weeks, each of the first two class meetings includes a videotaped lecture, 30-35 minutes long, followed by a question and review period conducted by the Psych 1A3 teaching assistant (tutor) assigned to your section. The third weekly meeting of your 1A3 course section will be devoted entirely to a tutorial. The content of tutorials vary, but all will include activities designed to review information from previous lectures, illustrate or clarify psychological phenomena, or explore important ideas and issues in psychology. During some weeks (e.g., the week of the midterm test), there are no tutorials scheduled. This information will be available from your tutor, and will be posted outside the 1A3 classrooms and on the IntroPsych web site.

If you were **not** assigned by the Registrar to a section of Psych 1A3 **please see Kathy Steele, the Introductory Psychology Secretary, in room 107 of the Psychology Building as soon as possible.** She will see that you are assigned to a section of the course.

What You Need

The only required text for this course is this book, which you obviously have already. There is one additional **suggested** text, and that is Henry Gleitman's *Psychology*, published by W.W. Norton. Although no test questions will be drawn from this text, it provides an excellent alternative presentation of much of the material covered in the lectures. It also contains much additional information that you may find quite interesting. If you are considering going on in a psychology program, I highly recommend that you get (and keep) this text.

How You Will Be Evaluated

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your performance on a midterm test and a final examination, both of which will consist entirely of multiple-choice questions. Suggestions for preparing for and taking multiple-choice tests can be found later in this book.

The Midterm Test

Thirty-five percent of your final mark in this course is based on the midterm test, which takes place approximately halfway through the course. The midterm consists of 40 multiple-choice questions, which you will have 50 minutes to complete. There is no penalty for guessing (a wrong answer is the same as a question left blank), so you should answer all questions, guessing whenever you are not sure.

Normally, the midterm test is written during the last scheduled class meeting of the test week - either **Thursday** or **Friday**, depending on your course section. Your tutor will announce the date of the midterm for your section near the beginning of the course. That information will also be posted outside the Intro Psych Office (room 107 in the Psychology Building), in each Psych 1A3 classroom, and on the IntroPsych web site. Normally, the midterm is written in your regular 1A3 classroom. If there is any change to this location, it will be announced by your tutor and posted in the locations mentioned above. **It is your responsibility to determine the date, time, and location of the midterm for your section.**

Test results will be posted on the bulletin board in the first-floor study area of the psychology building approximately one week after the test has been written. Results will also be posted on the Psych 1A3 web site. Copies of the midterm test, together with the accepted answers, will be available on Reserve in **Mills Library** shortly after the test results are posted.

The Final Examination

The remaining sixty-five percent of your mark in Psych 1A3 will be based on a final examination, covering the work of the entire course, which will take place during the December examination period. The final examination will consist of 80 multiple-choice questions, which you will have two hours to complete. The date, time, and place of the final examination will be announced by the Registrar's Office about the middle of the term, and posted in a number of areas around the campus, including the Psych 1A3 web site.