Introduction

PSY 200
Greg Francis
Lecture 01

Four great mysteries.

Humans face four great mysteries about the universe:

1) Why is there something instead of nothing?
   - This is the domain of physics
   - Most of us are not going to understand the ideas

2) How did life form?
   - This question is addressed at the boundary between chemistry and biology

3) Why is there so much diversity of life?
   - This is the domain of biology
   - Evolution and natural selection answer this question

4) What is the basis of human intelligence and consciousness?
   - Cognitive psychology and neuroscience
   - Far from a complete answer
   - Lots of issues to discuss

Topics

- Discuss a sample of issues in cognitive psychology / cognitive neuroscience
- Try to relate cognitive psychology to stories you may have heard in the popular press
- Identify how the topics can help you to be a better person
Topics
- For example
  - What's the deal with left and right brains?
  - Why does everyone love Prozac?
  - Why telephone operators seem rude.
  - Why there is a gate at the first floor stairway in the Psychology building.
  - What to do if you are drunk while studying for an exam.
  - What is the plural of walkman?

Textbook
- There is no textbook
- Lecture notes are used instead
- If you want a book, borrow from a past class
- There are optional readings to in syllabus
  - Not for every subject

Lecture notes
- Downloadable from the class web page
  - Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format
  - Reduced form (6 to a page)

Lecture vodcast
- Vodcast of the lectures will be provided
- To me, these are a poor substitute for attending lecture
- Links will be posted on the class web page as the vodcasts become available
  - Often takes a few days

Course web page
- Syllabus on the web
  - updates to the syllabus
  - links to labs
  - Study guides for the exams
  - Links to optional readings
  - Grades will be posted after the first exam
- This course does not use Blackboard

Course outline
- Neuroscience -- EXAM (17%)
- Perception, Attention & Memory -- EXAM (17%)
- Memory & Mental representation -- Exam (17%)
- Language -- Exam (17%)
- Reasoning
  - Cumulative Final (17%)
Exams
- Mix of multiple choice and short answer
  - Students are often surprised at how much detail is expected in the short answer questions
- Detailed study guides will be provided at least one week in advance of an exam
- Beware the scheduling of the final exam!
  - The exam is during the final exam week
  - There are few excuses for changing the date

CogLab
- Homework
  - You participate in classic experiments
- Total lab grade contributes to 15% of your class grade.
  - Grade is based solely on completing the experiment, not on the quality of the data

CogLab
- Labs are listed on the syllabus
  - They must be completed by 8:00 am at the date indicated in the syllabus
  - else you get no credit
- Since I wrote CogLab, you get access to the experiments for free
  - (a $50 value!)
- See handout for instructions on getting started
- Registration code is on a label on the instructions
  - First lab is due at 8:00 am on Wednesday!

Grading
- Straight scale
  + 98%-100%  A+
  + 93% - 97%   A
  + 90% - 92%   A-
  + 88% - 89%   B+
  + 83% - 87%   B
  + 80% - 82%   B-
  + 78% - 79%   C+
  + 73% - 77%   C
  + 70% - 72%   C-
  + 68% - 69%   D+
  + 63% - 67%   D
  + 60% - 62%   D-
  + 0% - 59%   F
- No rounding up: 82.99 is a B-

Instructor office hours
- Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:00 - 11:00 am
  • Or by appointment
  • Psych 3186
  • Email: gfrancis@purdue.edu

PSY 200: Intro. to Cognitive Psychology
Teaching assistants

- Grade exams
- Keep track of grades
- May lecture when I am out of town
- Have office hours
- Provide out-of-class study sessions for exams

Teaching assistant

- Liz Wiemers
- Office: PSYCH 3198
- Office hours:
  - Tues/Thurs 1:30-3:00 pm
- Email: ewiemers@purdue.edu

Attitude

- During lectures: turn off cell phones, don’t read newspapers, don’t play games
- Questions are always welcome. I can adjust my lecturing pace accordingly
- Print out the lectures and bring them to class. Take notes during class. Not everything is on the slides.
- Everything we talk about in class is important
- This class is an introductory class, but that does not mean it is easy
  - It’s like Introduction to Physics or Introduction to Chemistry
  - Almost every other subtopic in psychology depends on the ideas in cognitive psychology
  - Everything is at least 10,000 times more complicated than what we discuss
- If you don’t find a topic interesting, just wait a week

Next time

- Cognitive neuroscience
- The brain
- The modularity hypothesis
- CogLab on Brain asymmetry due!
- What’s the deal with left and right brains?