

Cognition

PSYC 135

Spring 2026 Section 03 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/16/2026

Contact Information

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Instructor: | Dr. Christina Tzeng |
| Office Location: | Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 319 |
| Email: | christina.tzeng@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | TuTh 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM, or by appointment |
| Class Days/Time: | TuTh 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM |
| Classroom: | DMH 163 |
| Prerequisites: | PSYC 001 (General Psychology) |

Course Description and Requisites

The activity of knowing: acquisition, organization and use of knowledge. Processes involved in that activity, including perception, memory, thinking and language.

Prerequisite: PSYC 001.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Course Description

One of our most exciting and enduring intellectual quests is understanding how the human mind works. To understand the human mind, we must understand cognition, or how we perceive, think, communicate, learn, and remember. In this course, we will see where the field of cognition came from, the scientific methods that are used to study the mind, what the different components of cognition are, and how these different abilities support our interactions in and with the world around us.

Course Format

This is an **in-person** course. Each week, on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM**, we will meet for in-person class sessions. During these sessions, we will engage in lecture material and content-related discussions and activities.

Canvas

All course content, such as the syllabus, lectures, assignments, grades, etc. will be on the Canvas Learning Management System [course website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas for course announcements and updates.

Please see Module 0 on our course Canvas site for detailed information about the following:

- technology resources (e.g., tutorials on how to use Canvas)
- guidelines for classroom etiquette
- guidelines for online submission of assignments and exams
- guidelines for communication with the instructor
- student resources for academic, financial, and health support

Program Information

Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the Psychology BA degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
2. Research Methods in Psychology. Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
3. Critical Thinking Skills. Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.
4. Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

CL01: Demonstrate knowledge of the different components of cognition, including perception, attention, memory, language, and decision making

CL02: Identify the cognitive mechanisms that underlie behavior

CL03: Describe different research methods used in cognitive psychology research

CL04: Infer appropriate conclusions from cognitive psychology research

CL05: Communicate findings and implications from cognitive psychology research

CL06: Synthesize evidence in favor of arguments pertaining to debates in cognitive psychology

CL07: Evaluate and criticize arguments pertaining to issues in cognitive psychology

CL08: Articulate how concepts in cognitive psychology apply to their everyday lives

CL09: Respect the relative nature of empirical evidence

CL010: Recognize the value of intellectual curiosity and skepticism

Course Materials

Required Textbook

Goldstein, E. B. (2018). Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research and Everyday Experience. 5th Edition. Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 1337408271

*An electronic version of this textbook can be rented or purchased for the semester online. Please be sure to purchase or rent the **5th edition** of the book, as page numbers and content differ across editions. You do not need the MindTap feature.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation

Note that while students will not be graded on attendance per se, in-class participation is integral to success in this course. Class meetings will entail participating in small-group discussions and activities about relevant empirical findings, viewing demonstrations of phenomena in cognitive psychology, and exploring cognitive psychology concepts in the real world.

Note on Attending Class

- **If you are unable to attend class, please contact me beforehand to let me know.** As noted above, completion of in-class activities constitutes part of your course grade.
- Much research suggests that class attendance is a better predictor of college grades than any other known predictor of academic performance, including high school GPA and standardized test scores (Credé, Roch & Kieszczynska, 2010). Attending class:

- (1) helps students feel more accountable for their studies
- (2) helps them stay on track with course material
- (3) makes students feel more engaged with course content, their peers, and the instructor
- (4) allows them the opportunity to ask questions and receive an immediate response

All of these are factors that lead to a more positive overall class experience.

Readings

Students are responsible for thoroughly reading all assigned readings each week. Exams and homework assignments will include content from in-person class sessions as well as assigned reading materials.

Homework

Students will complete weekly homework assignments throughout the semester. Research suggests that frequent opportunities for students to think critically about course content enhances both the quality of their learning and their ability to self-regulate their study habits (e.g., Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009).

Homework assignments will assess your understanding of the material covered in the lectures and assigned readings. The purpose of these homework assignments is to (1) encourage you to complete readings in a timely manner, (2) provide practice applying course concepts to your own lives, and (3) ensure that you are prepared to participate meaningfully each week during our class sessions.

Exams

Students will complete three in-person exams. Students are responsible for all material covered in-person class sessions and assigned readings. The purpose of these exams is to assess your ability to not only understand course concepts, but also to think critically about them in the context of existing research and to apply knowledge of the concepts to real-life events.

Final Synthesis Project

Students will be asked to create a video presentation explaining several related major concepts in cognitive psychology and how these concepts relate to their own lives. Students will be asked to explicitly discuss the mechanisms underlying the chosen phenomena and explain how a particular experience in their own lives embodies the course concepts. The purpose of this project is to have students (1) make interesting connections between cognitive phenomena, (2) articulate how they underlie our daily lives, and (3) practice communicating these to a broad audience.

References

Credé, M., Roch, S. G., & Kieszczynska, U. M. (2010). Class attendance in college: A meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 80*, 272-295.

Kitsantas, A., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2009). College students' homework and academic achievement: The mediating role of self-regulatory beliefs. *Metacognition and Learning, 4*, 97-110.

✓ Grading Information

Weighting of Grades

| Assignment | CLO Assessed | Percent of Final Grade |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Homework Assignments | 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 | 10% |
| Participation | 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 | 15% |
| Exams | 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 | 35% |
| Final Project Outline | 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10 | 15% |
| Final Project | 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10 | 25% |

Final Letter Grade Scale

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| A plus: 97.00 to 100.00% | A: 93.00 to 96.99% | A minus: 90.00 to 92.99% |
| B plus: 87.00 to 89.99% | B: 83.00 to 86.99% | B minus: 80.00 to 82.99% |
| C plus: 77.00 to 79.99% | C: 73.00 to 76.99% | C minus: 70.00 to 72.99% |
| D plus: 67.00 to 69.99% | D: 63.00 to 66.99% | D minus: 60.00 to 62.99% |
| F: \leq 59% | | |

Course Policies

1. I will not change grades unless there is a clerical error in the calculation of your grade.
2. **Requesting extensions:** If you encounter an **unexpected** emergency outside of your control (e.g., COVID infection, eviction from your home, daycare closure, etc.) and you would like to request extension on an assignment, please email me with as much notice as possible in **advance** of the assignment deadline. **No late assignments will be accepted unless a request for extension has been approved prior to the original assignment deadline.** Although contacting me does not guarantee that

your request will be approved, know that I take all requests seriously and will work with you to find appropriate resources and a path forward for completing your coursework. All coursework, including exams, homework assignments, projects, and in-class activities that are not submitted within the agreed-upon time frame will result in a 0% for that exam, assignment, project, or activity.

Please note that my flexibility with respect to deadlines relates to emergencies **beyond your control**, and that this flexibility does not apply to vacation travel, conflicts with your work schedule, or other foreseeable circumstances that are within your control. I expect you to act ethically and honorably.

3. **Late assignments:** All assignments, including in-class activities, must be submitted by the indicated due date and time unless I have approved an extension (see above). For each 24-hour period that your assignment is late, your score will drop 10% (100% will become 90%). For example, if you submit a homework assignment two hours late, your grade will drop by 10%, and if you submit it 25 hours late, your grade will drop by 20%, and so on.

In-class activities must be completed and submitted during the class session that it is assigned with no exceptions unless you have contacted me prior to the class session that you will be missing.

4. **Exam make-ups:** No makeup exams will be given unless an extension has been approved **prior to the exam date**.
5. **Office hours:** Please take advantage of office hours to speak with me about anything related to this course, your research or career interests, or anything else that I may be able to help with. The more I know about how my students are doing and what they are thinking, the better I can ensure that the course will be an engaging and interesting experience. Please [book an appointment online](https://christina-tzeng.youcanbook.me) at <https://christina-tzeng.youcanbook.me> if you want to meet with me. If you cannot make my weekly office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment.
6. **Academic integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty, including submitting A.I.-generated content as your own, will not be tolerated. You are expected to work independently and on all homework assignments, exams, and projects. Any submitted work must be entirely your own and use only the course materials provided to you (e.g., textbook, lecture slides). All student-submitted work may be checked using plagiarism and A.I.-generated content detectors.

Any course material that is posted on Canvas (lecture slides, exam questions, homework questions, project assignments) are for your own private, educational purposes and **cannot be shared at any point in time**, even after the semester ends.

If I find evidence of academic misconduct (e.g., working with another student on assignments or exams, posting any course material online, plagiarizing, using A.I.-generated content), you will receive a 0% on the assignment(s) in question without an opportunity to repeat the assignment, and I will file a report with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Please visit the [office's website](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/) for more information at <https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/>.

7. **Accommodations:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must [register with AEC](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> to establish a record of their disability. [Academic Senate Policy F06-2](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/docs/F06-2.pdf) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/docs/F06-2.pdf>

8. **Statement of Inclusion and Diversity:** We all have diverse personal experiences, identities, and values that affect how we view the world. I hope that we can embrace this diversity and work together to ensure each student feels like a valued member of the learning community. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, immigration status, ethnicity, race, and culture. It is also my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as an asset.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Note: This course schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning) as the instructor deems necessary.

| Module | Date (in-person class sessions) | Topics | Assignments Due* [Textbook Chapter (CH), Homework (HW)] |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 0 | Th 1/22 | Welcome/Orientation | |

| Module | Date (in-person class sessions) | Topics | Assignments Due* [Textbook Chapter (CH), Homework (HW)] |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Tu 1/27 | Introduction to Cognitive Psychology | |
| | Th 1/29 | Introduction to Cognitive Psychology | · Complete Orientation Assignments (HW0; due on 1/30) |
| | Tu 2/3 | History of Cognitive Psychology | · Read CH1 |
| | Th 2/5 | History of Cognitive Psychology | · Complete HW1 (due on 2/6) |
| | Tu 2/10 | Perception | · Read CH3 |
| | Th 2/12 | Perception | · Complete HW2 (due on 2/13) |
| | Tu 2/17 | Attention | · Read CH4 |
| | Th 2/19 | Attention | · Complete HW3 (due on 2/20) |
| | Tu 2/24 | Exam 1 Review Session | |
| | Th 2/26 | Exam 1 | |

| Module | Date (in-person class sessions) | Topics | Assignments Due* [Textbook Chapter (CH), Homework (HW)] |
|---------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 2 | Tu 3/3 | Short-Term & Working Memory | · Read CH5 |
| | Th 3/5 | Short-Term & Working Memory | · Complete HW4 (due on 3/6) |
| | Tu 3/10 | Long-Term Memory | · Read CH6 |
| | Th 3/12 | Long-Term Memory | · Complete HW5 (due on 3/13) |
| | Tu 3/17 | Conceptual Knowledge | · Read CH9 |
| | Th 3/19 | Conceptual Knowledge | · Complete HW6 (due on 3/20) |
| | Tu 3/24 | Language | · Read CH11 |
| | Th 3/26 | Language | · Complete HW7 (due on 3/27) |
| | Tu 3/31 | No Class (Spring Break) | |
| | Th 4/2 | No Class (Spring Break) | |

| Module | Date (in-person class sessions) | Topics | Assignments Due* [Textbook Chapter (CH), Homework (HW)] |
|---------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 3 | Tu 4/7 | Exam 2 Review | |
| | Th 4/9 | Exam 2 | |
| | Tu 4/14 | Problem Solving & Creativity | · Read CH12 |
| | Th 4/16 | Final Project Meetings | |
| | Tu 4/21 | Problem Solving & Creativity | · Complete HW8 (due on 4/22) |
| | Th 4/23 | Judgment & Decision Making | · Read CH13 · Complete HW9 (due on 4/24) |
| | Tu 4/28 | Cognition in the World | Final Project Outline due on M 4/27 |
| | Th 4/30 | Final Project Meetings | |
| | Tu 5/5 | Cognition in the World | |
| | Th 5/7 | Exam 3 Review | Final Project Due on F 5/8 |

| Module | Date (in-person class sessions) | Topics | Assignments Due* [Textbook Chapter (CH), Homework (HW)] |
|---------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| | Tu 5/19 | Exam 3 (9:00 am – 10:15 am) | |

*Homework assignments are due on Canvas at **11:59 pm PST on Fridays**. Please see Canvas for specific textbook pages assigned.