

**Psychological Processes in Reading**  
**Psychology 308**  
 Fall 2008  
**Tuesday/Thursday 8:30-10:00 AM**

Instructor: Serje Robidoux

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Appointments: Instead of formal office hours, meetings outside of class will take place on an appointments basis. To arrange an appointment, please email me with some prospective times that you would be available. My “general” schedule is available at <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~smrobido/tea/schedule.html>

Class Meet Times: 8:30-10:00 AM Tuesday/Thursday (I’m as thrilled as you are)

Location: AL 208 (Arts Lecture)

### **Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to introduce the student to some of the literature on basic processes in reading. We will focus almost exclusively on visual word recognition because reading doesn’t happen without it, and all other aspects of reading (grammar, syntax, comprehension) are part of the broader field of language development and linguistics. Suffice it to say that there are about 2 million Canadians who can’t “read” (but they do understand speech).

We’ll start by discussing some broader theoretical frameworks that have been presented to explain how reading unfolds over time. We’ll then turn to some neurological data based on acquired dyslexics (people who were once literate, but who now have problems reading because of brain damage, either from an accident or stroke/tumor). We will then examine results from “intact” college readers and discuss their implications for the various frameworks. Throughout the course, we will discuss and possibly demonstrate what happens in various computer-based versions of the more popular models.

### **Course materials**

**There is no textbook.** Instead, I will give a series of lectures that cover the field of visual word recognition over the last 30 years or so (with a brief dip into the last century). In lieu of a textbook **you will be responsible for weekly readings**, which will be directly related to the material presented in the lectures. The readings are fair game for tests/quizzes, but you can expect the bulk of the testing to focus on material presented in the lectures.

A particular challenge with this material is that much of the discussion is very abstract, and thus difficult to wrap your head around. As a result, everyone will benefit if you **ask questions**. I know, I know, I know. You’ve heard it before. I really mean it this time, though.

### **UW-ACE**

All course materials will be made available on UW-ACE (<http://uwace.uwaterloo.ca>), including readings, lecture presentations, and any other useful stuff. If I’m feeling playful, other stuff will end up there just for fun.

## **Grading Scheme**

### **1. Short quizzes (25%)**

There will be a short multiple choice quiz (10 questions) every Thursday at the beginning of the lecture (the first will be on September 18<sup>th</sup>). We will take up the quizzes immediately after writing. As a result, there will be no make-ups for missed quizzes, however I will only consider your five best quizzes for grading so a missed quiz won't count as a zero. These quizzes will cover the prior 2 lectures (you will not be quizzed on that day's lecture). There will be no quizzes during the weeks scheduled for a test (see below). Quizzes will not be cumulative.

I will be away for one conference. Depending on my travel schedule I may cancel the November 13<sup>th</sup> lecture/quiz. As a result, there will be either 7 or 8 quizzes in total.

### **2. Tests (75% total, each worth 25%)**

There will be three tests each given as a replacement for one of the Thursday lectures. This means that there is no formal final taken outside class time. These tests are not cumulative (though they will cover material from quizzes). They will take the same form as the multiple choice quizzes, though I reserve the right to include one or two short answer questions if the fancy strikes me. Make-ups for missed tests will require a doctor's note. **TEST DATES: October 2, October 30, and November 27**

## **Academic Offences**

**Academic Integrity:** in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

## **Note for students with disabilities**

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

## **Participation in Psychology Research: Guidelines for Psychology 308, Fall 2008**

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Participation in research is one example of this. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to volunteer as research participants enabling them to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience.

Student participants may earn up to 4 percentage points towards their final mark in Psychology 308 by participating in Cognition or Behavioral Neuroscience Psychology studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation is worth .5 participation credits (percentage points) for each half hour session. Researchers will record student's participation and will advise the course instructor of the total points earned by each student at the end of the term. Students who do not wish to participate in research may choose an alternative approach to earning the same number of points; this is explained below in "Alternative to participating in research".

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students can earn a "bonus" of 4% by participating in these experiments (i.e., the maximum possible final grade is 104%).

Please note that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

### Educational focus of participation in research

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results
- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which sh/he participated.

### ***How do I sign up?***

Once you are registered in the course, you will get an account on SONA (our web-based Study Sign-Up system) at <http://uwaterloo.sona-systems.com>. User ID is your Quest ID (eg. j2smith), temporary password is your Student ID (eg 2001234). Log in to your account, read/acknowledge the ORE "Human Subjects/Privacy Policy" then complete a very brief (10 minute) "Prescreen" questionnaire to provide basic demographic info. You won't receive a credit for this and you may decline if you wish however \*completing it will increase your eligibility for other studies\*. Once you have completed (or declined) the Prescreen questionnaire you should go to "My Profile" and enter your preferred (Alternate) email address. Then you can go to "Study Sign-Up" and select a Psych 308-eligible study that interests you and a day/time that fits your schedule. You'll receive a confirmation email and a

reminder the day before the study. Upon completion of the study you are granted your Study Credit and given feedback about the study hypothesis, design and predictions.

***When should I sign up?***

Right away, the sooner the better!!! The On-line study “Mass Testing Survey F08” (one full credit) will only be offered for a few weeks and you \*should do this study as soon as possible\*. Researchers often select participants based on their responses and doing this survey increases your eligibility for other studies. Note that you can only do this survey if you have completed the Prescreen questionnaire. Doing both Prescreen and Mass Testing Survey helps you (by providing more qualifying studies and it helps researchers (by identifying more qualified participants) so we would greatly appreciate it if you would do both.

***Are there any restrictions to the studies I can sign up for?***

Yes ... i) the study must be eligible for a credit in this class (as noted in the study description) ii) only 2 of your 4 credits can be for On-line studies and iii) you should try to spread your participation out over the term. The last day to participate for credit is December 1 but you can participate for pay until December 19.

***Where can I get more information, instructions, help with login problems etc?***

REG website: <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~regadmin/regparticipant>

REG Coordinator: [regadmin@watarts.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:regadmin@watarts.uwaterloo.ca)

Alternative to participating in research

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative to participation in research, students may submit short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of journal articles relevant to the course material. Each review article counts as one percentage point. You should contact your instructor for an assigned paper. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The review must:

- **Be submitted before November 24. Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.

Students may complete any combination of a) participation in research or b) article review up to a total of 4% points.