

Psychological Processes in Reading
Psychology 308
Fall, 2017
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:30-9:20

Instructor: Professor D. Besner

Office: PAS 4034

If you want to set up a meeting or ask questions outside of class, then I welcome you e-mailing me (dbesner@uwaterloo.ca) or coming to my office (I'm happy to see students in my office at most times, or, failing that, to set up a time to meet). You can always email me with questions, including most nights and weekends; I try and answer all questions within several hours. Please do not email me the night before a quiz.

T.A: Olivia Merritt

e-mail: oamerritt@uwaterloo.ca

Class Meet Times: 8:30-9:20 Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Location: HH139

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to introduce the student to some of the literature on basic processes in reading, with an exclusive concentration on visual word recognition because “reading” doesn’t happen without it, and because “comprehension” is not specific to reading (one also understands spoken language; indeed reading comprehension and understanding speech are highly correlated). Suffice it to say that there are about 2 million Canadians who can’t “read” because they cannot decode print (but they do understand speech).

We will consider a variety of theoretical possibilities as to how visual word recognition might unfold over time, stated in verbal form. We then turn to a consideration of various acquired dyslexia’s (people who were literate, but who now have problems reading because of acquired brain damage (usually a stroke or tumour—but driving your car into a tree at high speed may also leave one dyslexic) and developmental dyslexias. We will also consider a wide range of experimental results from studies of intact university level readers, and examine how these results inform various theoretical perspectives. A good deal will also be said about a number of computational accounts (models implemented on a computer that take print as an input and produce an output that corresponds to speech) that attempt to simulate visual word recognition in both intact readers and those with an acquired dyslexia. Much will be said about such topics as “attention”, “automaticity”, and “mental set” insofar as they relate to visual word recognition.

There is no book for the course. Instead, I will regale you, in a series of lectures, with some of the views on what has happened in this rather large literature over the last 30 years or so. If you know and understand the material presented in class that will be sufficient (which means that not attending class will hurt your performance).

I don’t much favour lecture courses, particularly for material such as this which requires a fair bit of sustained concentration. However, the class is too large to run easily as a seminar. What this means is that this course works best when students **ask questions** when they aren’t

understanding something (trust me, if you think you don't understand something it is bound to be the case that 50% of the class also doesn't understand). I frequently ask students, in class, what they think about material that is being presented (e.g., in terms of the soundness of an argument, soundness of an experimental design, etc.). If you feel that you do NOT wish to be called on in class please let me know in private. I do not think this material is "hard" but nor it is easy, in part because your intuitions likely will not help here. Coming on time and paying attention helps. In the first class I will attempt to learn everyone's name as a way to facilitate our interaction. I hope that you will all be willing to also learn each others names.

Grading Scheme

Your grade in the course is based entirely on a series of weekly quizzes; these are not cumulative, except for the very last one. I will take the average (except that the two quizzes with the lowest grades are dropped). The literature on testing effects suggests that frequent testing leads to better performance within a course, and may also have benefits for performance in other courses.

There will be a short multiple choice quiz (approximately 20 questions or so) every Friday when there is a class. This quiz is given at the beginning of the lecture, starting the second week of class. *There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.* These quizzes will typically (but not always) cover the prior two lectures. The last quiz will cover the entire term (but is worth no more than any other quiz). There is no quiz on Week 1.

Participation in Psychology Research: Guidelines for Psychology 308, Fall 2012

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 2 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".

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

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 TA to get approval before writing the review. 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 2% points.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (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](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Concerns About a Course Policy or Decision

Informal Stage. We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs (Richard Eibach) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca; Ph 519-888-4567 ext. 38790

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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodation for course requirements

- Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (assignments, midterm tests, final exams, etc.) due to illness should do the following:
 - Consult the University's [examination regulations](#) for information about procedures and policies for requesting accommodations

- seek medical treatment as soon as possible
- obtain documentation of the illness with a completed uWaterloo

Verification of Illness Form

- submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours. Students in Centre for Extended Learning (CEL) courses must submit their confirmation of the illness to CEL.
- (if possible) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.
- In the case of a missed final exam, the instructor and student will negotiate an extension for the final exam, which will typically be written as soon as possible, but no later than the next offering of the course.
- In the case of a missed assignment deadline, midterm test, or quiz, the instructor will either:
 - waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
 - provide an extension.
- In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required.
- Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties.
- Elective arrangements such as travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting accommodations to course requirements per the uWaterloo Examination Regulations and Related Matters.

Official version of the course outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSYCH cross-list will count in the Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Psychology rubric.

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services aim is to provide holistic programming and services to help you lead a healthy and balanced life. We strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds.

Students suffering from problems with anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsessions or compulsions, relationship difficulties, severe winter blues, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within two days of initial contact with one of our medical doctors. All contacts are completely confidential.

Contact Health Services

Health Services Building

Call 519-888-4096 to schedule an appointment

| 1-866-797-0000 for free 24/7 advice from a health professional

Contact Counselling Services

[Needles Hall Addition, NH 2401](#)

Call 519-888-4567 x 32655 to schedule an appointment

counserv@uwaterloo.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

