

Psychology 394 Winter 2010

Instructor: Derek Besner

E-mail: dbesner@uwaterloo.ca

Office: PAS 4034

TA: N. Barr

E-mail: nbarr@uwaterloo.ca

Office: PAS 4044

Office Hours: 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 over email within several hours. Office hours for N. Barr (tba).

Time and place: **Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-12:30 PAS 3026 (Alice Bast room)**

What is this course about? The intent is twofold. First, there are some nuts and bolts that you should learn about doing experiments, from a case study approach to multiple subjects, from human experimentation to computational modeling. This includes a mercifully short introduction to topics like signal detection theory, speed/accuracy issues, ceiling and floor constraints, underlying psychological scales, factorial experiments from the viewpoint of additive factors analyses, range effects, asymmetrical transfer effects, etc. **Do not be alarmed** at the fact that all of these terms are probably completely unfamiliar to you. If you knew them all you wouldn't have to take this course. Yes, you took 291, but no, these issues were not, in the main, covered there. Secondly, the intent is to expose students to a fair number of issues that have concerned some cognitive psychologists in recent years. These issues can be considered enduring in several senses. One is that they have attracted a lot of attention at one point or another (or it seems likely that they will do so in future). Another reason they are hot is because the results are often not immediately "intuitive" and in some cases they tend to make people who are products of Western civilization uncomfortable because they challenge our ideas about memory, consciousness and control. **The main idea here is to have you be challenged and have some intellectual "fun".**

Marking scheme

Formal marking, in today's climate, tends to undermine learning for the sake of learning (intellectual curiosity). Students tend to be very anxious about their marks and how they will affect their future choices (e.g., graduate school). In an attempt to balance the formal need for marking with the goal of stimulating "interest" in the papers themselves, I've adopted the following scheme.

Presentations (15%)

Each student will present at least one and likely more papers. This presentation should be clear, comprehensive and yet concise (but please, let's not get bogged down in the details of things like the F ratios). It is a good idea (but not required) for the presenter to meet with me well in advance of their presentation to discuss the paper.

Participation (10%)

I'm well aware that some students are shy and find speaking in class to be onerous. That

said, part of a university education involves the formal presentation of self (and this matters in all walks of life). Like everything else, skill develops with practice.

Quizzes (60%)

These will be **short**, multiple choice or short answer quizzes every week (not counting our first week). They will be held at the beginning of class and take up no more than 10 minutes. There are sound, evidence based reasons for testing you every week. (Trust me, I'm a doctor). There are no make ups for missed quizzes. You mark will be based on the best 8 quizzes.

Commentaries (15%)

There are 4 of these. You will summarize or provide a commentary on any **one** of the week's topics. The **maximum** length is **one** double spaced page, and the paper must be typed. The font size can be no larger or smaller than 12 point. Spelling and grammar count (just as they do in the real world--like it or not, people make judgments about you based on your writing, along with your attention to detail, and care in presentation). **Reading material**. References for these papers will be provided in due course.

Computer information

All undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts may obtain a free computer account on Waterloo Polaris. The account gives students free access to applications such as word processing, statistical and graphics packages, spreadsheets, and electronic mail, as well as the Internet. Students are charged for printing and can put money for printing on to their Arts Computing Resources Account at PAS 1080 using their WATCARD. Instructions for obtaining a Polaris account are available from the Arts Computing Office. Course materials will be available on ACE. If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline and the outline posted on ACE, the outline on ACE will be deemed the official version.

Students with Disabilities

"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."

Academic Offences

"Note on avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p.1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

In addition, I would like to direct your attention to the following link to the Arts Faculty Web page, "How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors" (<http://wataris.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html>)