

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Mon January 12th to Fri May 8th, 2026

PSYC208 sections 001 & 002 — Spring 2026 — 3 credit hours

Class times:

- **Lectures:**

Location: Founder's Hall room 0207

- Section 001: Mondays & Wednesdays 12-1:15pm
- Section 002: Mondays & Wednesdays 3-4:15pm

- **Final Exam:**

- Section 001: Thurs May 7th 10-11:40am in Founder's Hall 0207
- Section 002: Tues May 5th 2-3:40pm in Founder's Hall 0207

- **Office hours:** get help, and/or chat! No appointment necessary, just drop in.

- **When:**

- Fridays 12-2pm (if you can't make that day/time, email me to schedule)

- **Where:**

- Alumni Hall room 0130 (basement) & online
- Zoom link:

<https://wustl.zoom.us/j/99303242865?pwd=CDMJHQ428ymYykdUZqLmJm6gbeZWaF.1>

- **Last day to drop (100% refund):** Jan 23rd, 2026
 - **Last day to withdraw (W grade):** Mar 27th, 2026
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Your instructors:

- **Dr. Jason Finley**

- email: jafinle@siue.edu
- phone/text: 949-433-4216
- office: 0130 Alumni Hall

- **Teaching Assistant: Mackenzie Carter**

- She is an excellent student who has taken this class before. You can email her any time with questions!
- She will also hold online review sessions ahead of the exams.
- email: maccart@siue.edu

Required course text:

Goldstein, E. B. (2019). *Cognitive psychology: Connecting mind, research, and everyday experience* (5th ed.). Cengage.

You can get a physical copy from SIUE Textbook Service, or use the eBook available via links from Blackboard.

Tech we will be using:

- **Blackboard:** <https://bb.siue.edu>
 - PowerPoints, quizzes, and links to online experiments will be here.
- **Cengage MindTap** [linked via Blackboard]
 - eBook, CogLab experiments, optional Mastery Training for practice
 - We are using the Cengage online platform which will give you access to the textbook readings as well as the Mastery Training and CogLab assignments. You can access all this via links from the Blackboard page. When you first go to MindTap, you will have to log into Cengage and you may have to create a new account. Be sure to use your SIUE email address.

My Teaching Philosophy

My goal is to spark a sense of wonder in students, and to equip them with the skills to think better and become better people.

How to communicate with me?

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. Please use a descriptive subject line (e.g., “PSYC208: question about visual imagery”). *You don't need to email me about missing a class. And please don't email me asking for deadline extensions;* there is already a flexible late policy built into the syllabus, read it below. Please address me as Dr. Finley, Professor Finley, or Prof. Finley.

Course Catalog Description: This course offers a broad survey of cognitive psychology. Topics covered include attention, perception, memory, language, reasoning, and decision making.

Prerequisite(s): PSYC111 or equivalent (intro psych).

Course Description from Dr. Finley:

How does the mind work? Here's an analogy: think of the brain as the hardware of a computer, and the mind as the software. Cognitive psychology is about using science to try and reverse-engineer the software of the mind. How does the mind receive information from the world, how does it store and process that information, and how does it output responses? The topics of cognitive psychology underly everything about the everyday human experience. You will learn a lot of really interesting things about your own mind, and you will learn about the research that has yielded such knowledge.

Course Objectives:

The learning activities, assignments, and exams in this course assess your mastery of these learning outcomes:

- **Understand the key findings and theories in cognitive psychology.**
- **Understand the scientific process by which findings are evaluated and theories are created and tested.**
- **See how cognitive psychology is relevant to your existence.**

Note that my job is to *help* you learn, not *force* you to learn. Learning requires time and effort. I am here to help you, but you need to also take responsibility for your own learning.

Class Etiquette/Logistics:

- Come to class, *unless you are sick*.
- Be kind and considerate to each other.
- **Take notes**. Whether it's lecture, lab sessions, or reading the book, you'll want to be taking notes. On paper or on computer? Both have their advantages; use whatever works best for you.
 - **A note about the powerpoints:** The powerpoint slides will be posted before each lecture. **If you're going to have them opened on your laptop during lecture, don't let them distract you from what I'm presenting up on the main screen.** I use a lot of animations in my slides to pace when and where things appear on the screen. If you're just staring at the slides on your laptop during class, you won't see those animations and will instead see everything all at once and it may be confusing. It may also spoil any in-class demonstrations we do. The slides are helpful for you to have when studying outside of lecture, and I often have additional notes in the notes section for each slide. But during lecture, you're better off paying attention to the main screen that I'm presenting at the front of the class, and taking your own notes.
- Please be mentally present. I will strive to not be boring.
- Please do your part to *minimize distraction*. Silence your cell phone, no texting. Computers are for note-taking and other course-related activities, *not* for TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, etc.
Don't mess around with your phone for purposes unrelated to class.
- No antimatter in class; trust me on this.
- **Ask questions!** Seriously! Speak up whenever you have questions, don't understand something, have answers, have ideas, etc. Asking questions is a sign of WISDOM, and it's also a great way to learn.
- You may make recordings of class, but note that instructional material created by the professor is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike

4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). Meaning that you can share and adapt the material as long as you give credit and it is for non-commercial purposes. Content created by third parties (e.g., movies, textbooks) is covered by its own copyright licenses.

Overview of what you need to do for this course:

- **Attend class and participate.** Students who don't attend do much worse on the exams. Holy crap, I can't even tell you how many students just don't even bother showing up and then miserably bomb the exams. What the hell?! COME TO CLASS!!!
- Do the assigned reading from the textbook (and any other assigned sources).
 - *When should you do the reading?* Before class is best. Soon after class is ok too.
- Do the online experiments before the assigned class days
- Do the chapter quizzes
- Take the three exams
- Ask me for help when you don't understand something. Coming to office hours is a great idea!

HOW TO LEARN AND DO WELL IN COLLEGE:

Lessons from Cognitive Psychology

1. Create a study group that meets before each exam to review class material. Talk through things together, explain things to each other, make connections between concepts.
2. If you have three hours total to study, three 1 hour sessions spaced apart are much more effective than one three hour session the night before the exam.
3. Learning requires adequate sleep. So get some sleep.
Also, stay hydrated (i.e., drink water).
4. **Taking notes in your own words** is a far more effective learning tool than either writing down exactly what I say or simply reviewing the text or lecture notes. Simply reviewing PowerPoint slides may be the worst strategy you could use, especially if you were not in class that day. Also, if you take notes on paper, the process of physically organizing your notes will influence your mental organization as well. Taking notes on computer can be fine too, and has the added benefit of searchable text.
5. **QUIZ YOURSELF.** The retrieval practice effect (aka the testing effect) shows us that every time you retrieve something from memory, you strengthen that memory. Wanna hear some really ineffective study strategies? Re-reading your notes, looking over the powerpoints, re-reading the book and highlighting/underlining. Those things might make you *feel* like you understand and remember stuff, but that doesn't mean you actually do! Instead, try things like this:
 - a. After class, think back over the topics you learned. Flip to a blank page in your notes and jot down the main topics from memory. Make an outline. Maybe try explaining to someone else what you learned that day.

- b. When reading the book, read a few pages, then pause to mentally review what you learned. Jot things down on a blank page without looking back at the text yet. See? You're quizzing yourself!
 - c. Make and use flashcards (on paper or online using websites like quizlet.com). But don't cheat! Look at one side of the card (e.g., a key term) and actually retrieve the meaning and say it out loud before flipping over the card to see the answer. If you just flip without retrieving first, and you're like "yeah I knew that!" you're not doing yourself any favors. *On Blackboard I've given you a link to flashcards made by the publisher in the MindTap platform!*
 - d. Use any practice exam/quiz questions if available. Don't look at the answers until after you've tried to retrieve from your memory. *On Blackboard I've given you links to interactive practice activities called Mastery Training for each chapter in the MindTap platform!*
 - e. Use any review questions in the textbook chapters.
 - f. Try writing your own multiple choice questions about key topics
 - g. Think of it this way: let's say an upcoming test would require you to throw a basketball into the hoop from a certain distance. What do you think would be the most effective way to prepare for that test: (a) reading about basketball over and over again, (b) watching videos of other people throwing basketballs, or (c) actually practicing throwing the basketball yourself? Obviously, c. It's the same with academic tests. Your task on the test will be to remember things and apply the concepts you've learned; so that's what you should actually practice!
6. *You are not the multi-tasker you think you are!* You can only do one task at a time that requires controlled attention. Switching between tasks has cognitive costs. If you're using a computer to take notes, and you also have other programs like messages going, your attention is divided and your comprehension will suffer. If you're studying and there is noise or other stuff going on, your attention is divided and your comprehension will suffer. Study in a quiet environment with no distractions.
 7. Relate concepts to your personal experience when applicable.
 8. If you've made it this far in the syllabus, go to the Syllabus Extra Credit on Blackboard and enter the underlined key phrase from point 5 above to get some extra credit.
 9. Don't wait until you are struggling to come to me for help! **Thinking you understand** and **actual understanding** is not the same thing. Successful people seek out feedback about their knowledge rather than rely on subjective internal evaluations of learning.
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Evaluation: Your grade in this course will be based on:

Exams Exam 1 (chapters 1-4): 20% Exam 2 (chapters 5-8): 20% Exam 3 (chapters 9-13): 21%	61%
Syllabus Quiz	1%
Online Experiments 11 worth 2% each (drop lowest)	20%
Chapter Quizzes 13 worth 1.5% each (drop lowest)	18%
Total:	100%

There are 100 points possible in this course.

A note about this, since a few students complain every year: There will be fractional points available on everything, so having “only” 100 total points in the course does *not* make the course more difficult. It just makes your grade calculation simpler and easier to understand. If this still bothers you, just imagine there is an extra zero after everything and it’s 1,000 total points instead, okay?

Final letter grades will be based strictly on the following scale:

89.50	≤	A	≤	100
79.50	≤	B	<	89.50
69.50	≤	C	<	79.50
59.50	≤	D	<	69.50
0	≤	F	<	59.50

Final scores will be rounded to two digits. For example, a final score of 89.495 would be rounded up to 89.50, and a final score of 89.494 would be rounded down to 89.49.

Exams (61%):

There will be three in-class exams in-person in our regular classroom (see the schedule on the last few pages of this syllabus), worth 61% of your class grade total. Exams will consist of multiple choice questions on Scantron forms that I will provide. You’ll need to bring a pencil.

1. **Exam 1** will cover chapters 1-4, including material from lecture, the textbook, and online experiments. It will be worth 20 points and consist of 50 questions. Each question will be worth 0.40 points.

2. **Exam 2** will cover chapters 5-8, including material from lecture, the textbook, and online experiments after Exam 1. It will be worth 20 points and consist of 50 questions. Each question will be worth 0.40 points.
3. **Exam 3 (final exam)** will cover chapters 9-13, including material from lecture, the textbook, and online experiments after Exam 2. It will be worth 21 points and consist of 56 questions. Each question will be worth 0.375 points.

There will be study guides available on Blackboard for each exam, outlining the major topics. There will be practice questions too, and other resources to help you study (e.g., flashcards, Mastery Training in MindTap). The exams will be based more on lecture than textbook, although the two sources of information are complementary.

Make-up policy: If you are absent for an exam, you will get a score of 0. If illness or other extraordinary circumstances beyond your control will prevent you from being present for an exam, you must notify me BEFORE THE EXAM in order to be considered for a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be given and scheduled at my discretion, and may be different (i.e., *more difficult*) from the regular exams given in class.

Syllabus Quiz (1%)

This is just what it sounds like. A quiz that forces you to read the syllabus. It's on Blackboard, and due at the end of Week 2 (see schedule).

CogLab Online Experiments (20%)

These give you some background and also firsthand experience participating in tasks like those in the research you will be learning about! There will be 11 of these, linked from Blackboard. There are two steps to each CogLab online experiment:

1. Complete the CogLab experiment in the MindTap platform, linked from Blackboard [1 point].
2. Back in Blackboard, answer some questions about the CogLab experiment you just completed [1 point].

Thus, each experiment is worth 2 points total (2% of your grade). Your lowest score will automatically be dropped; that means you could miss one completely and still potentially get the full 20 points if you got full credit on all the others. Experiments completed late will earn half credit if completed before the next exam (e.g., a late experiment that went with chapter 5 would have to be completed before Exam 2 to earn half credit).

Chapter Quizzes (18%):

For each chapter there will be a short multiple-choice quiz for you to complete on the course website. Each quiz must be completed by 11:59pm on the Sunday indicated in the schedule at the end of this syllabus. There is no time limit for the quizzes, as long as you submit your answers before the deadline. You can retake the quizzes an unlimited

number of times and your highest score will be the one that counts. You can use the book and your notes on the quizzes, but you must work individually.

The quizzes will be *mostly* based on question banks from the textbook. It seems likely you could find a way to cheat on these questions by finding the answers online, and I have no way to prevent that. But, you'd only be harming your own learning, and you're in college to learn, right? So don't cheat. Instead, use your brain and the book and your notes to help you answer the questions. The quizzes serve to boost your learning, as well as rewarding you for keeping up with the reading. Also, they're good practice for the exams.

Each quiz is worth 1.5 points (1.5% of your grade). Your lowest score will automatically be dropped; that means you could miss one completely and still potentially get the full 20 points if you got full credit on all the others. Quizzes completed late will earn half credit if completed before the next exam (e.g., a late quiz for chapter 3 would have to be completed before Exam 1 to earn half credit).

Extra Credit (?%)

There will be a limited number of extra credit opportunities, mostly to be found in the Extra Credit folder on Blackboard. Any extra credit opportunities are equally available to all students, so don't ask me for special extra credit just for you.

I am also likely to offer some in-class extra credit from time to time, to reward you for attending. One example would be a second chance to answer some of the more challenging questions from a recent exam. Or I might even just hand out extra credit like candy on random days, when I notice students slacking off and not coming to class.

Services for Students Needing Accommodations

It is the policy and practice of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement—such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content or the use of non-captioned videos—please contact Accessible Campus Community and Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) as soon as possible. In order to properly determine reasonable accommodations, students must register with ACCESS either online at <https://siue.edu/access> or in person in the Student Success Center, Room 1203. You can also reach the office by emailing us at myaccess@siue.edu or by calling 618-650-3726. If you feel you would need additional help in the event of an emergency situation, please notify your instructor to be shown the evacuation route and discuss specific needs for assistance.

If you have accommodations from ACCESS, you MUST COMMUNICATE WITH ME, so I can know what your needs are and work with you. For example, if you are approved for extra time on exams, and you want to use that accommodation, you have to talk to me about it first so we can schedule you to take exams at the ACCESS Center.

Diversity and Inclusion

SIUE is committed to respecting everyone's dignity at all times. In order to learn, exchange ideas, and support one another, our virtual and physical classrooms must be places where students and teachers feel safe and supported. Systems of oppression permeate our institutions and our classrooms. All students and faculty have the responsibility to co-create a classroom that affirms inclusion, equity, and social justice, where racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and other social pathologies are not tolerated. Violations of this policy will be enforced in line with the SIUE Student Conduct Code.

The Hub <https://www.siu.edu/kimmel-hub/> is an excellent resource for students for support and community. Any person who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment can contact Mary Zabriskie, Director in the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access and Title IX Coordination at (618) 650-2333 or mzabris@siue.edu. There is also an online form for reporting bias incidents at <https://www.siu.edu/diversity/campus-climate/report-a-concern/>

Academic and Other Student Services

As an enrolled SIUE student, you have a variety of support available to you, including:

- [Lovejoy Library Resources](#)
- [Academic Success Services](#)
- [Tutoring Resource Center](#)
- [The Writing Center](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Campus Events](#)
- [Counseling and Health Services](#)

If you find that you need additional support, please reach out to me and let me know.

Mental Health Support

Dealing with the fast-paced life of a college student can be challenging, even when we're not in the midst of a worldwide crisis. I encourage you to reach out when you need mental health support (e.g., anxiety, depression). Students have access to counseling services on campus (Student Success Center, 0222).

Make a free counseling appointment by visiting cougarcare.siu.edu or by calling [618-650-2842](tel:618-650-2842).

Through either a mobile app or your desktop, TimelyCare provides 24/7 access to virtual care from anywhere in the United States at no cost. Visit timelycare.com/SIU or download the TimelyCare app from your app store and register with your school email address.

Find an online therapist covered by your health insurance: <https://www.rula.com/siu/>

If you're in crisis: <https://www.siu.edu/counseling-health/type-of-visit/emergency.shtml>

Self-help resources: <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself>

Online therapy worksheets and activities: <https://www.therapistaid.com/>

Student Success Coaches

[Student success coaches](#) work across campus to serve the SIUE student population with the tools and resources to adjust to and meet the demands of the college experience. Success coaches provide direct services such as time management support and referrals to campus resources. If you find yourself in need of academic or personal support, or in a situation that is preventing you from being successful in the classroom, please utilize [Starfish](#) to connect with a coach as soon as possible. The sooner you engage, the sooner you can access the information or tools you need that may help you get back on track.

Academic integrity/plagiarism

The expectations and academic standards outlined in the [Student Academic Code \(3C2\)](#) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, or dismissal from the University, per the [SIUE academic dishonesty policy](#). Students are responsible for complying with University policies about academic honesty as stated in the [University's Student Academic Conduct Code](#).

Unless expressly allowed by the instructor, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.

We have ways of detecting plagiarism and use of AI, so don't do it! Use of AI will result in failure of the assignment. Second use will result in failure of the course and an academic integrity violation report.

ANY case of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on a writing assignment, quiz, or exam or allowing others to cheat off of you, or other dishonest act *regardless of the point count*) will result in a zero on the particular assignment, possible failure of the course, and reporting of the case to the Provost. Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the Student Academic Code (3C2) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. The full text of the policy can be found here: <https://www.siu.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>

Psychology Department writing policy

As a student in this course, you will be expected to display university-level writing, which includes completing course assignments that meet the following basic writing criteria. Specifically, all written assignments completed for this course should include:

- clear transitions from sentence to sentence and idea to idea (i.e., paper is organized/flows well);
- verb tense consistency;

- clear and unambiguous sentences and ideas;
- writing that is free of typos, spelling errors, and major grammatical errors;
- properly formatted citations and references (if relevant).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of basic writing skills, but will give you an idea of what we are looking for in our papers. If you feel you need help with your writing, you are encouraged to seek assistance from the [writing center](#) on campus or utilize one of the many [online resources](#) they have identified to help students. If your graded written assignments fail to meet the basic writing requirements listed above (and any others found to be appropriate by your instructor), the instructor will stop the grading process and return the paper to you with the grade of 0. You will have 48 hours to return the assignment in an acceptable form; if it still fails to meet the basic writing criteria, the grade of 0 will remain.

Technology Privacy Information

We will be using Blackboard in this course. View the [Anthology Blackboard Privacy Statement](#) to review how your data is being used and stored.

Subject to change notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Chapter	CogLab Due by 11:59pm	Quiz Due by 11:59pm
1	Mon Jan 12	Intro to Cog Psych, the Science of the Mind	Ch. 1		
	Wed Jan 14	Intro to Cog Psych, the Science of the Mind	Ch. 1		
	Sun Jan 18			Simple Detection	Ch. 1 Quiz
2	Mon Jan 19	No Class MLK Day			
	Wed Jan 21	Cognitive Neuroscience	Ch. 2	<i>Syllabus Quiz</i>	
	Sun Jan 25				Ch. 2 Quiz
3	Mon Jan 26	Cognitive Neuroscience	Ch. 2		
	Wed Jan 28	Perception	Ch. 3		
	Sun Feb 1			Muller-Lyer illusion	Ch. 3 Quiz
4	Mon Feb 2	Perception	Ch. 3		
	Wed Feb 4	Attention	Ch. 4		
	Sun Feb 8			Stroop	Ch. 4 Quiz
5	Mon Feb 9	Attention	Ch. 4		
	Wed Feb 11	Exam 1: chapters 1-4			
	Sun Feb 15				
6	Mon Feb 16	Memory: short-term/working	Ch. 5		
	Wed Feb 18	Memory: short-term/working	Ch. 5		
	Sun Feb 22			Memory Span	Ch. 5 Quiz

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Chapter	CogLab Due by 11:59pm	Quiz Due by 11:59pm
7	Mon Feb 23	Memory: long-term: structure	Ch. 6		
	Wed Feb 25	Memory: long-term: structure	Ch. 6		
	Sun Mar 1			Serial Position	Ch. 6 Quiz
8	Mon Mar 2	Memory: long-term: encoding, retrieval, consolidation	Ch. 7		
	Wed Mar 4	Memory: long-term: encoding, retrieval, consolidation	Ch. 7		
	Sun Mar 8			Encoding Specificity	Ch. 7 Quiz
	Mon Mar 9 - Fri Mar 15	SPRING BREAK WEEK OFF			
9	Mon Mar 16	Memory: everyday and errors	Ch. 8		
	Wed Mar 18	Memory: everyday and errors	Ch. 8		
	Sun Mar 22			False Memory	Ch. 8 Quiz
10	Mon Mar 23	Memory: everyday and errors	Ch. 8		
	Wed Mar 25	Exam 2: chapters 5-8			
	Sun Mar 29				
11	Mon Mar 30	Conceptual Knowledge	Ch. 9		
	Wed Apr 1	Conceptual Knowledge	Ch. 9		
	Sun Apr 5			Lexical Decision	Ch. 9 Quiz
12	Mon Apr 6	Visual Imagery	Ch. 10		
	Wed Apr 8	Visual Imagery	Ch. 10		
	Sun Apr 12			Mental Rotation	Ch. 10 Quiz

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Chapter	CogLab Due by 11:59pm	Quiz Due by 11:59pm
13	Mon Apr 13	Language	Ch. 11		
	Wed Apr 15	Language	Ch. 11		
	Sun Apr 19			Word Superiority	Ch. 11 Quiz
14	Mon Apr 20	Problem Solving & Creativity	Ch. 12		
	Wed Apr 22	Problem Solving & Creativity	Ch. 12		
	Sun Apr 26				Ch. 12 Quiz
15	Mon Apr 27	Judgment, Decisions, Reasoning	Ch. 13		
	Wed Apr 29	Judgment, Decisions, Reasoning	Ch. 13		
	Sun May 3			Typical Reasoning	Ch. 13 Quiz
16	Tues May 5	Section 002 FINAL EXAM: 2-3:40pm (chapters 9-13)			
	Thurs May 7	Section 001 FINAL EXAM: 10-11:40am (chapters 9-13)			