

PSYCHOLOGY 761: "COGNITION": COURSE SYLLABUS

WINTER 1977

GRAF

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW: In this course, I have set several broad and several specific objectives. FIRST, I shall try to help you develop your skill in planning, conducting, and writing up research. This is a skill which is acquired through doing and redoing, using appropriate feedback as to what you're doing right and should continue doing, and what you're doing wrong and should change or recycle.

SECOND, I'd like each of you to develop your familiarity with the terms, concepts, ideas, and procedures currently associated with cognitive psychology. The text I've selected is Ulric Neisser's Cognition and Reality. The pace I suggest is one chapter per week, with additional time being spent in use of the index.

THIRD, I'd like for you to pull together the concepts from the text and the information I provide in class ... to form an organizational framework for cognitive behavior. I expect for this organization to be fluid, changing when necessary as you move through the course, but developing into an organizational hierarchy that will be available for retrieval long after the course is over (i.e., 5 years from now).

FOURTH, I'd like for you to keep track of your own progress through the course on Standard Behavior Charts which will be provided. These charts should give both of us an idea of your performance on a four-times a week basis. As the weeks go by, we'll narrow the focus from frequency of words and letters to frequency of concepts.

FIFTH, I would like each of you to record your reaction to instruction each day on a form provided for that purpose. A magnitude estimation of instructional effectiveness will provide me a source of ongoing feedback as to your own reactions which I'll summarize for the class, and attempt to utilize.

PROCEDURES: One minute timings will be given daily in class on several topics. Each student will chart his or her result. Timing sheets and charts will be kept in a binder that I'll periodically access and monitor. While grades are not attached to these daily timings, I consider them to be quite essential. They will help you prepare for the culmination of the course.

An experimental idea will be developed, carried out as an experiment, and written up following the American Psychological Association format. The paper will be due on a specified day, at a specified hour.

On each of two days during the 10th week, a 30 minute paper will be written in class. One will require an organization of cognitive behavior and a rationale for that organization. The other will require a summary of important ideas with the text as a focus, with the ideas embedded in an appropriate language context.

GRADES: Your grade will be determined by the product of your "weighted scores" on your experimental paper, your 30 min. organization/rationale of cognitive behavior, and your 30 min. summary of important ideas. The "weights" for each of these 3 components will be determined by the class. I'd veto this result only if wide discrepancies came up between the amount of work involved and the weight assigned.

The weights are: (1) EXPERIMENTAL PAPER ____ ; (2) ORGANIZATION ____ ; (3) TEXT IDEAS ____ .

On each of these, each idea presented will receive a "rating". The product of all the ratings will be the "score", and this will be multiplied by the "weight" to produce the "weighted score". A preview of how the grading works will occur about the middle of the quarter. This preview will not count towards the ultimate grade. The criteria for specific grades will be determined after the preview. Student input as to the appropriate cut-off points for various grades will be solicited.

On the "score" for the experimental paper: For each hour after the deadline that the paper is not yet in my hands, a penalty factor of .1 will be added to the denominator of a fraction whose numerator is 1. This penalty factor times the "weighted score" will yield the "adjusted weighted score".

FINAL EXAM: The final will be optional and will count only if it improves one's grade. The final will consist of two 30 minute papers following the same format as those written the 10th week of class. Either or both of the 30 minute papers may be attempted, and will replace the previous "score" if it is, in fact, a better performance.