Junior Colloquium in Cognitive Science
CGSC 395
Spring 2019

Instructor: Mark Sheskin
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Time/Location: Tuesdays, 9:25-11:15; Location K207
Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:30-1:30; SSS 205 H   (inside "Panda Lab")
Course Website: on Canvas

Overview

This course is required for juniors in Cognitive Science. The purposes include (a) learning about a cross-section of cognitive science research directly from professors engaged in the research, (b) having the opportunity to engage in a "lab meeting" setting with the professors and your peers, and (c) solidifying plans for your senior thesis.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

(1) Weekly assignments account for 40% of the final grade. A pre-class "initial thoughts" assignment is due 48 hours before class, and the deadline is strict so that I have time to compile the most common responses and send them to the guest speaker (some speakers modify their plans in response to pre-class assignments). A post-class "update" assignment is due roughly 24 hours after class. On the course website, you can find an example for each type of weekly assignment, as well as instructions for how to submit the assignments, and what to do if you miss class (i.e., because you will not be able to complete the update in the typical manner). You will only be able to complete a replacement assignment for the first time you miss class.

(2) Class attendance and participation account for 40% of the final grade. Please keep in mind that most weeks consist of a guest lecture, and so (with apologies for the morning time slot) it really is important that everyone be on time. This is for two reasons: (1) the professors are volunteering their time to come and talk to us, and (2) each week will be on a radically different topic, and often the first few minutes will include important framing information. Also note that it is really not possible to make up absences (though the weekly assignment instructions indicate what you should do if you miss a single class).

(3) At the end of the semester, you will submit a short description (2-3 pages) indicating where you are in your senior thesis process. If you are still early in the process, this might be a description of a topic you would like to study and a professor you might contact about it. If you are further along in the process (e.g., if you have already started a project that might turn into your senior thesis), your short paper would provide a description of the project and your current progress with it. The transparent (and here explicitly stated) goal of this assignment is to emphasize to you that it is important that you be seriously pursuing a senior thesis plan by the end of your Junior year, if not before. This paper will account for 20% of the final grade.

Laptops

Before I took it over in 2016, this class had a laptop ban. In 2016, I allowed laptops and then asked the Juniors for feedback at the end of the semester. A majority of responses (on an anonymous survey) indicated that laptops should NOT be allowed in the future. Explaining their votes, several students indicated that the benefits (of being able to type notes and quickly look up information related to the lecture) were lower than the costs (of decreased engagement with the lecture, due to distraction by both one's own screen and others' screens). The 2017 Juniors (who were then not allowed to use laptops), again voted in favor of banning them for 2018. And then… 2018 banned them for you! All of this is to say: laptops are banned whenever we have a guest speaker (though you can use them when we, e.g., discuss previous senior theses at the start of the semester). I will elicit your feedback about this rule at the end of the semester (so you can help decide the fate of next year's Juniors!). See also:

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/27/learning/should-teachers-and-professors-ban-student-use-of-laptops-in-class.html

Statement on Academic Integrity

Please do not violate academic integrity during this course. Most notably, do not plagiarize. As defined in the Yale College Undergraduate Regulations (1), "Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were one's own." There are many reasons to avoid plagiarism. Two of them highlighted in materials from the Yale College Writing Center (2) are that plagiarism is a "detriment to your intellectual and moral development" and that "Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely." The Yale Writing Center has many resources you can consult to learn how to use sources properly and avoid plagiarism (3). Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of this information in more detail.

(1) http://yalecollege.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/URegs_14-15.pdf
(2) http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-faculty/addressing-plagiarism/sample-plagiarism-warnings
(3) http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-students/using-sources

Introductory Meetings
January 15   Class introduction
January 22   Discuss an example senior thesis and the peer review process

Guest Lectures
January 29   Mark Sheskin   (CogSci)
February 5   Bob Frank   (Linguistics)
February 12   Mark Graham   (STEM Program Evaluation and Research Lab)
February 19   Scaz   (Computer Science)
February 26   Woo-kyoung Ahn   (Psychology)
March 5   David Watts   (Anthropology)
March 26   Josh Knobe   (CogSci)
April 2   LA Paul   (Philosophy)
April 9   Ifat Levy   (Medicine)
April 16   Three Seniors   (Various)
April 23   Molly Crocket   (Psychology)