

Modern Everyday Cognition
COGS 127, Fall 2015
University of California, Merced

Instructor:

Rick Dale, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Ph.D. Program Chair
Cognitive & Information Sciences
Office: SSM 261A
rdale@ucmerced.edu (**primary mode of communication**)

Office hours:

Tuesdays, 11am-12pm
Wednesdays, 3pm-4pm

TA:

Maryam Tabatabaeian (mtabatabaeian@ucmerced.edu)
Ph.D. Student in Cognitive Science.
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4pm, SSM cubicle 18B

Lecture / activities: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:30 - 5:45pm, KOLLIG 217

URL: www.cognaaction.org/moderneveryday.f15 (**all course content delivered here**)

Course description:

The past two decades have seen an enormous shift in the way that individuals in industrialized societies seek out, share, and evaluate information. This advanced undergraduate course will provide in-depth examination of core findings from the cognitive sciences, and apply them to everyday modern life. Topics will include the integration of technologies with our cognitive processes, the changes in real and virtual social structures, the influence of technologies on those social structures and institutions, the use of virtual crowds to solve real-world problems, and more. These topics relate to many areas of the social sciences, so the course will be interdisciplinary, and will integrate information from several fields (cognitive science, economics, management, political science, anthropology, psychology, etc.). Although the classes will mostly be lecture-based, activities will be included each week, and discussion is always encouraged. Students are expected to attend each class and do all readings (before or after each class).

Readings:

There is **no textbook** for this course. **Readings will be available for free on the website.** They will be in HTML or PDF format. You can read them on your portable device if you wish, or print them out. Readings come in two types. “Intro” readings are very basic, sometimes from newspapers or magazines, and they summarize some research finding or project. “Challenge” readings are primary sources, and will push your comprehension if you are new to this domain (I imagine most of you will be new to many of these diverse topics!). Please aim for general comprehension in the “challenge” readings; I am not expecting you to master them. Don’t hesitate to email us with

questions. For fun, sometimes required “readings” will include a relevant video you can watch on your handheld or computer.

Course goals:

1. Identify and describe ways in which technologies have become integrated with our cognitive processes, and have changed them.
2. Learn and describe behavioral experiments that are used to test ideas above in (1).
3. Use principles from cognitive science to describe technological innovations that help us think, make decisions, and carry out tasks.
4. Articulate how cognitive science applies to tasks in your everyday life, such as face-to-face interaction, decision making, shopping and other consumer behavior, choice and use of technologies, etc.
5. Apply and communicate these ideas in terms of cognitive science: using core principles of cognition, behavioral experimentation, brain imaging, linguistic analysis, technological innovations, and other topics in the course.
6. Gain introductory experiences with technical skills that are part of the 21st-century move to integrate technology with cognitive processes.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, through attending lecture, completing quizzes and in-class activities, communicating your ideas in the short papers, and expanding them in the final paper, you should be able to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the ways that technologies and cognitive processes interact in our society.
- Perspectives on everyday activities and behaviors based on cognitive science principles, such as attention, vision, memory, language, and so on.
- The ability to describe and evaluate research methods used in these domains, including behavioral research, observational studies, and in some cases brain imaging and large-scale data analysis.
- Enhanced skills to read and critically evaluate primary-source research.
- The ability to communicate your knowledge in a clear way to others.
- Introductory technical skills needed for research in, and application of, cognitive science.

Points / grades:

(Almost) weekly quiz on CatCourses (x8)	3 points each	= 24
Activities (outside of class) (x3)	10 points each	= 30
Short paper (prep for final project)	16 points	= 16
Paper final	30 points	= 30
<i>(Extra credit on SONA</i>	<i>+4 points)</i>	
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Total points:		out of 100

Grading scale:

97-100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+
93-96 =A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D
90-92 =A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-

Important class coordination:

The class schedule, readings, grading outlines and quiz information will be supplied through the course URL offered above. **It is expected that you will consult this website regularly to keep up with course content.**

URL: www.cognaaction.org/moderneveryday.f15 (all course content delivered here)

Quizzes:

Each quiz will be posted on CatCourses. If you attended the corresponding lectures, you should get 100% on these without any problem. I will activate the quizzes shortly after Wednesday lecture on the weeks that I'll give a quiz, and I will keep them active for 1 week. By attending class regularly, you will be able to achieve this part of the course without any difficulty. Quizzes ensure that we all keep up with the material, and we are all engaged as the course rolls along.

Activities:

On 3 occasions in the course, we will ask you to submit an activity on CatCourses (formerly UCMCROPS). This might be a response to an online website / activity, or some product / file that we produce in class together. The assignments will be part of class or on the website and very clear instructions will be provided in class and on the website.

Short papers:

Later in the semester, I will ask you to submit a paper that is 2 pages, single-spaced, with 1" margins, 12 pt. font (no longer, no shorter). This paper will help prepare you for the final project. I will give you at least 3 weeks in advance to submit the paper, and will give you a grading outline to guide your writing. Guidelines for this short paper will be described in class and on the website. *Points will be deducted for late papers as specified in the grading outline.*

Final paper:

The final paper will be in lieu of a final exam. It will be based on an open-ended topic of interest to you, but must be based on an integration of multiple topics from the course. At least 1 month before the final class I will give you a grading outline to guide your writing. *Points will be deducted for a late final paper as specified in the grading outline.*

Extra credit on Sona:

You can seek out extra-credit opportunities by participating in experiments on UC Merced's Sona Systems website. This is an important part of your educational experience as a student in the social sciences. Of course you will gain extra credit, but this is also supposed to be a learning experience for you. You can contribute to research on campus, and you should be carefully debriefed following the experiment so that you gain some understanding (and potentially some interest!) in cognitive science and related fields (such as psychology, etc.). Points map onto Sona points in the following way: 1 point = 1 hour of Sona participation (1/2 point = 30 Sona minutes).

Note: If you are enrolled in two courses that use Sona, you must participate in different research projects for each course—that is, you cannot count the same research twice. The Sona System website is here: <http://ucmerced.sona-systems.com/>

Ground rules:

Let's be nice. Please don't engage in disruptive actions that may distract your fellow students or me. I'm sure this goes without saying, but it is important to note it. There.

Important information about academic integrity:

This class, like all at UC Merced, observes the guidelines on academic integrity and honesty. Please don't cheat. Your work should be your own. Please see this:

<http://studentlife.ucmerced.edu/what-we-do/student-judicial-affairs/academicy-honesty-policy>

Special needs:

The University of California Merced is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances. Students are encouraged to register with Disability Services Center to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. [adapted from CRTE]

Final note:

Anything on this syllabus is subject to change, and if so, this change will be clearly communicated by the instructor in advance. Any information not contained on this syllabus should not be assumed, and students are responsible for consulting with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities or missing details.

Looking for the schedule down here? As noted, all details are on the course website (see above). See you there!