

PSY4312 – Cognitive Control in Action

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The course followed the same format as previous years, with the main change being a new topic for one of the seminars. In total, the course included seven seminars, each with a brief opening lecture, small-group discussion of selected readings, and a concluding plenary. The course ended with an oral examination.

This evaluation is based on a synthesis of responses to a post-exam student survey, along with relevant informal feedback during the course. In total, 5 out of 12 students responded to the survey.

Academic benefit

Overall, all survey respondents reported having a good or very good academic benefit from the course, and they reported high learning outcomes for the key course objectives. Several also commented on additional learning outcomes. For instance, one reported having learned more about engaging critically with literature and connecting concepts in general, while another reported that synthesizing across the literature was one of the more challenging aspects of the course. However, some also reported that the course contained some overlap in content either with other programs or with other courses, which could potentially limit overall benefit from the course.

Learning environment

Most felt that the overall balance between teaching and discussion during the seminar was good, but several asked for more plenary discussion and teacher input throughout. The learning benefit from the discussion component was quite mixed, with specific comments indicating that small-group discussions were sometimes limited by others not having read or not wanting to discuss, and that plenary discussions were sometimes too short to properly explain or clarify mistakes. Most were happy with the teaching, but some felt they benefited less from this component. Both survey feedback and informal feedback throughout the course pointed out that the initial lectures were sometimes dense or hard to grasp in the short time available during the seminar.

Overall, most respondents felt that they had sufficient information about what the course and the exam would require, and what was expected throughout the course. Everyone reported that there was a good or very good correspondence between the course content, learning outcomes and the exam, with more specific comments saying the overall exam format was fair.

Course scope and own effort

All respondents read the entire curriculum, and most attended all or most of the seminars. The majority felt that the course required roughly as much work as the credits would suggest, but one reported that it required much more work. Informal feedback throughout the course also indicated that several students found the workload high, especially earlier in the semester when the overall content was more novel.

Course changes

None of the respondents reported that it was important to make changes to the course, but several highlighted possible improvement points. One also suggested a potential discussion topic for the future. Most consistently, several asked for more plenary discussion, and some also wished for more explanations during the lectures.

Summary and conclusions

Overall, the evaluation suggests that students experience the course as academically valuable. They report high learning outcomes, not only for core objectives but also for broader skills such as critical engagement with literature. At the same time, the feedback also highlights that several would like longer plenary discussions and/or more time for lectures. This is also consistent with feedback in previous years, where several have asked for more teacher-involvement.

Considering this, it could be valuable to pilot one or two fully “flipped” seminars next year, where students not only read assigned readings in advance, but also get access to a pre-recorded lecture to watch before the seminar. This way, students could watch the lectures at their own pace, and the full seminar could be used for small-group work and extended plenary discussion. Depending on student experience with this format, it could be developed further in future iterations of the course. In addition, future course evaluations should aim to clarify to what degree the students perceive there is overlap with topics covered in other courses, and if this overlap limits or extends their overall learning outcomes.