

**PSY 3360 / CGS 3325
Historical Perspectives
on Psychology
Minds and Machines since 1600**

Dr. Peter Assmann

Instructor: Dr. Peter Assmann
Office: Green Hall 4.126
Office hours: Tues 11:00 am-12:00 noon
Tel: 972-883-2435
Email: assmann@utdallas.edu
TA: Hillery Gross
TA office: GR 4.404
TA office hours: MW 10:00-11:00 AM
TA email: hillery.gross@student.utdallas.edu
Teaching intern: Michelle Halper smyle.mlh@verizon.net

Course requirements

- **Quiz (10%).** Short-answer and medium-length questions similar in format to the midterm.
- **Midterm exam (30%).** Mixture of short-answer, medium-length, and essay questions. There will be a choice of questions to answer. Study questions will be provided.
- **Final exam (40%).** Same format as midterm. Study questions will be provided.
- **Term paper (20%).**

Grading Scheme

Letter grade	Percent
A+	96
A	93
A-	89
B+	84
B	80
B-	75
C+	70
C	65
C-	60
D+	55
D	50
F	<50

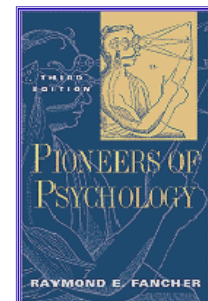
Course web page:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/~assmann/PSY3360/>

- Syllabus and study guides
- Review sheets for the exams
- Additional (optional) course readings

Course Text

Fancher R. E. 1996.
Pioneers of Psychology.
Third edition.
New York: Norton.



In addition, choose one of the following as the basis for your term paper:

1. V.S. Ramachandran (2004). *A Brief Tour of Human Consciousness*. (Pi Press).
2. David Buller (2005) *Adapting Minds: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature*. (MIT Press).
3. Daniel Dennett (2004) *Freedom Evolves*. (Penguin).
4. Rita Carter (2004) *Mapping the Mind*. (University of California Press).

Term Paper

- Due **April 10**.
- Start early in the semester; choose one of the four books from the list, and read it early in the semester. We will be happy to discuss ideas for paper topics.

Term Paper

- Note: a penalty of one letter grade notch per class period will be assigned if the paper is late. This policy ensures fairness to students who turn their paper in on time and do not have the advantage of extra time to improve its quality. Late papers will result in lowering the paper grade by one notch (e.g. from A- to B+) per class period.

Term Paper

- 7-8 (typed, double-spaced) pages
- based on one of the four recommended books
- relate some aspect of the book to something outside of the book, either in the course or in your more general experience.
- The paper should not be a "book report" or a summary of the book.
- Focus on one topic in the book and relate it to something outside the book.

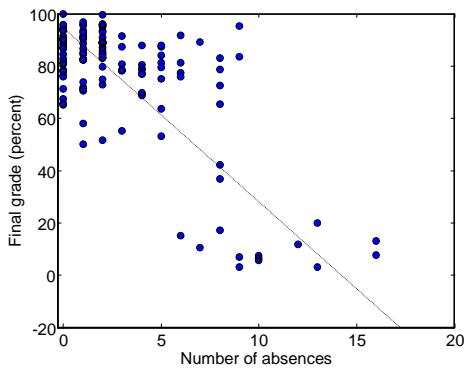
Attendance policy

- Class attendance is mandatory. There are two reasons for this: (1) each lecture builds on materials covered in previous lectures; (2) exam questions are based both on lecture materials and the textbook.

Attendance policy

- If you miss **more than 3** lectures, each unexcused absence will result in lowering the final grade half a notch (that is, from A to A-, or A- to B+).
- If there are circumstances that lead to missed classes please see us to discuss the situation.
- There will be no makeup tests except for medical/family emergencies.

Why is class attendance mandatory?



Research Credits

All core courses in Psychology and Cognitive Science include a research participation component.

- Sign-up online:
<https://utdallas.sona-systems.com>
- Use UTD NetID to login / sign up for experiments.
- New experiments appear every few days throughout the semester; keep checking the board if you cannot find a suitable time slot.

Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- Historical and philosophical antecedents of our present conceptual frameworks in psychology
- 17th century to the present day
- What is it that psychology studies?
- What counts as data?

Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- Is psychology ultimately reducible to biology, chemistry, and physics?
- Are humans mere deterministic machines?
- Do we possess a free will?

Historical Perspectives on Psychology

- rationalism and empiricism
- the mind/body problem
- the problem of free will
- scientific status of mental events

What counts as data in psychology?

Reductionism: “The attempt to explain objects or events in one domain by using terminology, concepts, laws, or principles from another domain.”

(Hergenhahn, 1992: p. 54)

Origins of psychology

- Philosophical questions:
- **epistemology** (how do people acquire knowledge of the world)
- **metaphysics** (what kinds of objects exist in the universe)
- perception, memory, thought and emotion

Elements of scientific explanation

- **Description**
- **Prediction**
- **Control**
- **Falsifiability**

Key concepts

- **Empiricism vs. rationalism**
- Empiricism: the philosophical belief that all knowledge is derived from experience of the outside world.
- Rationalism: the belief that knowledge can only be attained by mental activity.

Problem of free will

- **Free will vs. determinism**
- Determinism: the view that everything occurs as a result of known or identifiable causes.
- Free will: the opposite position; a belief in human control of events.

Mind-body problem

- **Dualism vs. monism**
- Dualism: the philosophical position that the world is made up of two kinds of things, the *physical* and the *mental*.
- Monism: the position that there is only one kind of substance (mental *or* physical).

Zeitgeist

- **Zeitgeist** (spirit of the times) – the idea that progress in science is linked to previous discoveries and theories. The prevailing ideas, concepts, and habits of thought of a period in history are referred to as its Zeitgeist.

The Renaissance (1450-1600)

- Major advances in science, art, humanities
- Religious reforms and religious conflicts
- Rediscovery of classic Greek and Roman writings
- Rejection of **Scholasticism** – dominant philosophical position, derived from Aristotle (384-322 BC).