

## **Online Orientation Summer 2011**

### **Dr. Wegenek's Psych 4 Intro to Cognitive Psychology Course**

Hello and *welcome* to your online Introduction to Cognitive Psychology course! For those of you taking your first online course and for others who may be familiar with online courses, here is some important information to ensure your success in this course.

If you are able to log onto the course, you will receive credit for reading this orientation document and the syllabus by taking the "orientation/syllabus quiz" that is posted online in the Exams folder. FYI, this first (orientation) quiz and Discussion Board Posting #1 do not require the book, and the due dates for them are posted on the class Blackboard Web site in the Course Calendar document. If you already have the book, you can start reading and working on the upcoming week's assignments to get ahead!

First of all, please make sure that you read the syllabus thoroughly once you access the course. I cannot emphasize this enough, as many of the questions students have can be answered by reading the syllabus. The syllabus is your guide to specific requirements of the course.

Please do not wait until Friday evening to post both of your discussion board topic postings in weeks that require conversations (i.e., two posts) on the discussion board for full credit. We will have much more interesting conversations if people start them earlier in the week and I will make a note of who procrastinates if it affects the conversation. Please make sure you pay close attention to due dates on the Course Calendar posted on Blackboard. If you have any questions after reading the syllabus and viewing the course calendar, please make sure that you contact me for clarification.

Each week, we will have assigned reading (chapters in the textbook), either a quiz or exam, and/or a discussion board topic or additional video clips. There will also be one short written assignment meant to familiarize you with research in psychology. The chapter objectives posted are meant to help you pull out main concepts and theories from your readings and it may help you to look those over both before and after you read an assigned chapter.

All quizzes and exams will be taken online with a time limit applied only to the exams, but not the quizzes. Quizzes and exams can be taken at any time before the due date (i.e., they are not "scheduled" to be taken within certain hours). You should plan on devoting 10-12 hours per week to this course, just like any other course.

## **Blackboard**

Saddleback College online courses are offered through a Web site called Blackboard. The URL is: <http://socccd.blackboard.com>. If you are already enrolled in the class, you will be able to log in (using yourname, which is usually the same as the part of your e-mail address before the @saddleback.edu) and the last 4 digits of your PIN number (or other number used to identify you by the school) followed by two zeros.

Once you log in, you should see that this course is listed at your landing site/personal home page that allows you to choose among your class sites. When you click on our class, you will land on the Announcements page for our class. For further tips on how to use Blackboard, system requirements, see: <http://www.saddleback.edu/de/documents/BBInfoandFAQ>.

For BEGINNING Distance Education students, see:  
[http://www.saddleback.edu/de/new\\_students.html](http://www.saddleback.edu/de/new_students.html)

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## **PARTS OF OUR CLASS WEB SITE**

Please take some time to view the material on Blackboard and familiarize yourself with the platform. It is a good idea to know what material can be found under each of the different sections of your course Blackboard Web site.

### **Main page/Announcements page**

- Appears once you are in our course Web site after clicking on the link to your course title.
- Announcements- check here often, you can view them by day or week etc.
- Toolbar on the left that links you to each of the other areas on the Web site.

### ***Main Buttons on Left***

#### **Syllabus**

- Orientation information document (this document)
- Syllabus
- Directions on how to forward your Saddleback College email

#### **Course Calendar**

A table of all due dates for course assignments is posted here. Print this out, for you to have handy for reference.

**Group Discussion:** To find your Group Discussion page, Group Discussion button on the left of your class site. Then, you will see one group number appear that is hyperlinked. You should be assigned to only one group and see only one that is available for you to view there by clicking on the hyperlink. You should then be able to click on the tool called Group Discussion Board to find the forums (assignments). To post to the forum, click on the link that says Create Thread (box in upper left). To reply to another students' post, click on the post and then click REPLY while viewing their post. Remember to click on SUBMIT instead of Save. If you click on Save, only you can see your post and it will not be turned in.

Note: You may wish to view the entire forum in Tree View or List View (see upper right) on the group discussion page. If you choose the tree view, be sure to Expand All (also upper right when in tree view) so that you can see nested threads (i.e., reply posts that have been written in response to original posts). Hopefully, you should enjoy this part of the class and learn a lot through interacting with your peers. The rules and directions for Discussion Board postings are always available and remind you to be appropriate and thorough in your postings.

*Note: For all discussion board topic assignments (other than the first, introductory topic), two posts are required to receive full credit. The directions clearly state that you must post one initial post and also post a reply to another student. Both posts (initial post and reply to another student) must be posted by Friday by midnight for full credit.*

When posting in either of the two forums, click on “start a new thread” at the top of the screen. Be sure to click on “submit” when you want to post and not to click on “save” by mistake. For some topics, it is required that you engage in a discussion with your fellow students on each topic. You should be probing them with additional questions and offering comments that go beyond a basic statement such as “good job” or “interesting.” When you are adding to the discussion or responding to a specific student you will click on “reply”. Please note: grammar and spelling (the discussion board has spell check) as well as comprehensive coverage of the topic will be taken into consideration for grading the discussion board assignments. Be sure to complete each discussion topic fully by answering each of the questions posted.

### **Student Forum:**

There will be a “*Student Question Forum*” in which you can ask me or your fellow students’ questions. This might be a good place to post questions that you have on the weekends if you need a quick response from a classmate who would like to help out. Although your instructor will check and respond to questions here occasionally, you should always email me directly with any questions to ensure that you receive a response.

### **Exams**

- Exams will be posted here. All quizzes will be placed *in their respective chapter folder*. You should refer to the course calendar for all due dates.

Make sure you read the sections already posted under the Exam section of the site so that you know what types of actions will kick you off of the online exam by accident. Note that you will have 1.5 hours to finish each of the exams, and that you will be presented one question at a time and not be able to back track to previous questions.

### *Rules for Exams and quizzes:*

There is a document posted beneath the syllabus that you should read. It details how to take exams or quizzes and what to avoid doing that could potentially kick you off an exam or quiz.

### **Course Materials**

-Very important!

-Posted in this area is a folder corresponding to every chapter of assigned reading

-Chapter folders will be made available at least 1 week before the chapter due date, sometimes earlier.

-Within each chapter folder are the following items:

*-Chapter Objectives* Use this as a tool to figure out exactly what you should be getting out of the readings and slides. You will never have to turn in any of these answers, they are here as a guide to help you take out of the readings all the main points that you should be getting from the readings. You should be able to address each of these objectives in your own words in self-testing and studying for the quizzes and exams.

*-Chapter Slides with Notes* These should be used as a study TOOL, not as replacement for your course readings. They provide a nice visual outline of the chapter to read and study before and after reading your chapter. They are in PowerPoint format and instructions will be posted as permanent announcement on the Discussion board that detail different ways to access, view, and print the slides.

*-Movies to Watch*

These videos can to help reinforce your learning in the course. Most will be optional, there will be an announcement posted if a video is required to be watched for a quiz or exam. Your instructor will always make it clear before an exam whether questions from any of these movies will be covered on the exam. Look for an announcement the week before each exam.

*Multiple Choice Quiz*

Please follow the directions on your course syllabus about taking quizzes. They can be taken only once, although there is no time limit. This means that you should prepare/study beforehand.

## **My Grades**

-Check your grades- your grades will be posted here automatically after each Quiz or Exam has been taken. You should check to see that your score has posted after each assessment to ensure that there were no technical difficulties with the submission of your quiz or test. Grades are posted every week or biweekly and an email will always be sent out to let you know when grades have been updated. If there is no grade or some other symbol present for an assessment that you have completed, email your instructor.

## ***Grading of assignments***

Most quizzes will automatically be graded by Blackboard, and your grade should appear immediately. Most other assignments and exams will need to be graded individually by your instructor. As such, with a large class, it may take up to a week after the due date for me to grade any particular assignment. You may receive feedback on the discussion board throughout the week or in the days following the conclusion of each discussion forum. I will not respond to each response individually but I will read (and grade) each response in its entirety.

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## **Important note:**

*Class email announcements can only be sent to your Saddleback College e-mail account.* Therefore, you need to make sure you are checking your Saddleback e-mail account frequently. Your email account can be checked from anywhere using MySite ([www.saddleback.edu](http://www.saddleback.edu)).

*To forward your Saddleback email to your personal email:*

Log onto MySite. Click on My Email. Then, log onto your email account. Click on the OPTIONS tab in the upper part of the screen. Then, click on SETTINGS. There will be a place for you to type in a forwarding email address. Be sure to click on Save before exiting the screen.

## **Contacting your instructor:**

Email me directly at [arezec@saddleback.edu](mailto:arezec@saddleback.edu) rather than clicking on the link to email me from within Blackboard. Your email will reach me faster.

Make sure that the subject heading of your email says *COGNITIVE PSYCH* so that my email system filters your incoming email appropriately and I can address your questions promptly. I teach several other courses that contain online components, and including your class title will help distinguish your email from my other students' emails so I know what class you are writing about. Please also include your full name in the body of the email, so I know who you are. You can expect to receive a reply to your email within 24 hours on weekdays, and emails sent on the weekends will be replied to on Monday afternoons. If you do not hear back within this time frame for any reason, please write again.

**Additional Comments:** Online classes are not meant to be easier than onsite classes...if anything, they are typically more challenging as you need to take on a proactive role in your learning and stay organized. Furthermore, psychology is not a simple subject and many of you will have to shift gears your thinking about psychology for this course. Most of us think of mainly pop psychology when we think of the field, but psychology actually consists of a broad

range of over 54 defined subareas of research. We will cover research based findings and knowledge within the cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. I hope you enjoy learning about the material from an academic perspective as well as how to utilize the information to better understand human behavior as a whole.

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

- 1) **Print the syllabus, course schedule, and this orientation document**, and refer to them as needed.
- 2) **Set aside time every week to focus on this class.** With a regular schedule, you will be less likely to get behind or to miss an assignment. You will need time to read the textbook, examine the additional materials posted within the chapter folders under the Course Materials button, prepare/research for discussion topic posts, and study.
- 3) **Do not wait until the last minute.** Check in early during the week to see what needs to be done and when they need to be done.
- 4) **Be sure to have a secure wired internet connection (not a wireless) during quizzes and exams (or when writing long discussion posts).** Wireless connections constantly cut in and out for very brief, imperceivable moments of time. This wouldn't log you out of emails or regular websites, but Blackboard will usually kick you out of a quiz or exam when that occurs. Do not have any other windows or programs running while taking quizzes or exams. Some students have had success taking their quizzes and exams at local libraries or on Saddleback College computer centers because of their excellent internet connections.
- 5) **Check your grades often.** Make sure that you have credit for the quizzes/exams/assignments that you have completed. For example, because I grade and enter each discussion post by hand, please check that they have been entered correctly. Email me ASAP if you find a problem, so that I can fix it early.
- 6) **Similarly, check that your assignments or exams went through.** For example, check that your discussion board post was posted by clicking on your post. Or check that your paper, quiz, or exam was submitted by checking to see that you have either an exclamation point (meaning that it needs to be graded by me) or a score. A padlock symbol indicates that your item was not submitted correctly.
- 7) **Do not hesitate to email me if you have any questions about the course, about the course material, or about any other concerns.** I have heard students say that they feel nervous or uncomfortable asking too many questions. Because this is an online course, it is my job to respond to your emails containing questions or concerns. I want you to do well in the class and am happy to help! Just like any class, you will get out of this what you put into it. I look forward to guiding you along the way! Remember to a) take the first online quiz about the syllabus and orientation doc and b) finish the first discussion board topic posting and complete both by the due date listed in the course schedule in order to receive credit for completing the course orientation.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT CLASS WITH YOU ALL! –Dr. Wegenek, PhD