CS 3790 Course Syllabus

Summer 2026

Course Information

Course Prefix and Number: CS3790
Course Name: Introduction to Cognitive Science
Instructor: Varma, Sashank

Course Description

This course will offer a multidisciplinary perspective on cognitive science. These disciplines include computer science, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and philosophy. This course will utilize electronic readings ranging from textbook chapters, recent reviews of scientific literatures, and seminal papers from multiple fields to ground the lectures. Students will be expected to attend all lectures, keep up with the readings, write discussion board posts, write reflection papers, complete a short assignment, and write a longer paper on a cognitive science topic of their choice.

Course Learning Outcomes

By enrolling in this course, students will:

1. Learn about the broad spectrum of disciplines, theories, methods, experiments, and models that comprise cognitive science.

2. Develop the ability to read the primary scientific literature and write critically.

3. Explore a topic at greater depth that interests you in your final paper..

Required Course Materials

The readings for this course will come from a variety of sources. Some of the initial lectures will be anchored in the following textbook:

- Thagard, P. (2005). *Mind: Introduction to Cognitive Science* (2nd Ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

This book is freely available as a PDF from the author. A copy can be found on the Canvas site. There will also be many book chapters and journal articles from numerous sources. Some will be classics in the various fields that comprise Cognitive Science; others will represent the cutting edge of research. All will be available on the Canvas site.

Grading Policy

This course is graded on an A – F basis.

Grading will be based on 6 components.

- Quizzes 20%
- Discussion Posts 10%
- Reflection Papers 25%
- Empirical Paper Summary 5%
- Abstract + References 5%
- Final Paper 35%

Grades will be assigned based on the following cut-offs.

- A: percentage ≥ 90
- B: 90 > percentage ≥ 80
- C: 80 > percentage ≥ 70
- D: 70 > percentage ≥ 60
- F: 60 > percentage

Note that your final percentage will not be rounded up. For example, a 79.6% will be assigned a grade of C.

Attendance Policy

This will be an active classroom. You will be expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions.

Academic and Research Honesty/Integrity Statement

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code, especially Appendix A: Graduate Addendum to the Academic Honor Code.

Students are expected to perform research in an ethical and responsible manner. All Doctoral and Master's Thesis students are required to take the Responsible Conduct of Research training, and it is expected that students abide by the principles taught in that training while performing research for this thesis course.

Allegations of scientific or scholarly misconduct are handled in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific or Other Scholarly Misconduct.

Core IMPACTS

Not applicable.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Expectations of Advisors and Advisees

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Expectations of Advisors and Advisees articulates some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.