Special Problems: Cognitive & Brain Sciences – PSYC 8907 (Summer 2026)

Course Information

Course Prefix and Number: PSYC 8907 (53899)

Credit Hours: Variable (1–9, arranged)

Instructor: Rick Thomas

Term: Summer 2026

Course Description

This course provides academic credit for independent studies under the direction of a faculty member. The scope and direction of the studies are determined by the student (or small group of students) in consultation with the instructor. Within the Decision Processes Laboratory, projects may include behavioral experimentation, cognitive modeling, and meta-science investigations. Students are expected to engage in sustained, self-directed inquiry and contribute to ongoing research programs.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Gain experience conducting independent research on topics not covered in formal coursework.
2. Develop theoretically grounded research questions within cognitive and brain sciences.
3. Apply appropriate experimental, computational, or analytical methods.
4. Analyze and interpret data using statistical or modeling techniques.
5. Communicate research findings clearly in written and/or oral formats.
6. Engage in collaborative research when appropriate and contribute to lab-based projects.
7. Demonstrate ethical and responsible research practices consistent with RCR training.

Required Course Materials

No textbooks are required. Readings, datasets, software tools (e.g., Python, R), and other resources are determined in consultation with the instructor based on the specific project.

Grading Policy

This course is graded on a Satisfactory (S) / Unsatisfactory (U) basis. Evaluation is based on:
- Demonstrated progress toward project goals
- Quality and rigor of research activities
- Engagement and initiative
- Communication with the instructor

An S indicates meaningful and sustained progress; a U indicates insufficient engagement or progress.

Attendance Policy

This course does not include scheduled class meetings. Students are expected to meet regularly with the instructor, with frequency proportional to credit hours (e.g., weekly or biweekly). Additional meetings may occur as part of lab activities.

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.

Students must complete Responsible Conduct of Research training and adhere to all ethical guidelines.

Any suspected violations will be reported and handled according to Georgia Tech policy.

Core IMPACTS

Not applicable.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services and notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Student-Faculty Expectations

Mutual respect, professionalism, and accountability are expected. Students should maintain consistent communication, meet agreed-upon milestones, and actively contribute to research efforts. The Expectations of Advisors and Advisees provide additional guidance.