Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Winter Semester (January – May 2018)

School:		Undergraduate Studies		
Programme with title:		BA (Honours)		
Semester to which offered: (I/ III/ V)		II semester		
Course Title:		Human Cognition		
Credits:		4 Credits		
Course Code (new):		SUS1PS702		
Course Code (old):		P01		
Type of Course:	Compulsory	Yes	Cohort	BA (H) Psychology
	Elective	yes	Cohort	BA (H) other than Psychology

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory) X
4. Discipline (Elective)
5. Elective X

Course Coordinator and Team: Gangmumei Kamei

Email of course coordinator: gangmumei@aud.ac.in

Pre-requisites: None

Aim: This course introduces students to the area of human cognition: what are the ways in which we come to know ourselves and the world in which we live. Questions such as how does the human mind develop, how do we perceive and remember, how is intelligence understood, how does culture influence what we know will be taken up. The course will cover the historical development of the field of cognitive psychology, approaches to cognition, and contemporary issues in thought and memory. This is a compulsory course for those pursuing a Major in

Psychology. It is also available to students of other streams as an optional discipline course in Psychology.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

The objective of this course is to introduce the discipline of Psychology to the students and how our human cognition develop, function and applied in our everyday life.

1. **Cognition and Psychology:** This module introduces students to the field of cognitive psychology and the information processing model, the underlying assumptions of the cognitive approach, its primary domains- perception, attention, consciousness, memory, imagery, language, thinking and intelligence. A brief history of the field will be traced through early associationism and introspectionism, to modern developments in communication theory, linguistics, and computer sciences.

2. **Theories of Cognitive Development:** In this module, cognition will be approached through the route of developmental psychology. Two of the most famous theories of cognitive development in the twentieth century- that of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky will be taken up in detail to examine how the human mind develops in the early phases of one's life. Students will be additionally exposed in brief to the cognitive neuroscience approach. Instances of cognitive impairment will also be discussed.

3. **Attention:** Given the flood of information around us, how do we use our attention selectively? How is concentration made possible? Is attention deliberate or automatic? This module takes the students through answers to these questions.

4. **Memory:** In this module, we take up the question that has long fascinated philosophers and psychologist: how do people remember. Do we have different types of memories for different kinds of information? Can memory be improved? The structures and processes in memory will be taken up through different models. Students will also learn about mnemonics- methods for improving memory.

5. **Intelligence and Creativity:** This module exposes students to the definitional problems in intelligence and creativity. Theories of intelligence beginning with the factor theories to cognitive-contextual theories of Sternberg and Gardner will be taken up. A brief foray into the idea of artificial intelligence will also be made, through the use of film material.

6. **Language:** In this module, we take up cognitive psychology's treatment of language as a system of communication and information exchange between minds through sounds and symbols. What comes first: language or thought? Are the essential components of language innate and universal? Or do people who speak different languages conceive of the world in different ways? Chomsky's theory and the linguistic-relativity hypothesis will be taken up in detail.

7. **<u>Culture and Cognition</u>:** In this module, contemporary ideas on the role of culture in cognition will be taken up. How do people in different cultures process information? How does cultural context influence learning, memory, intelligence? Films can be used for an anthropological understanding of the above.

<u>Refererences/ Reading lists</u>:

- Solso R.L. (2001), 'Introduction and the Neural basis of Cognition', Cognitive Psychology (Sixth ed.), Pearson: Delhi, (p. 1-33)
- Braisby N. & Gellatly A. (2005), 'Foundations of Cognitive Psychology', Cognitive Psychology, OUP, (p. 1-32)
- Goswami U. (2008), 'Theories of cognitive development,' Cognitive Development: The Learning Brain, Psypress: NY.
- Baron-Cohen, S, (2002) The extreme male brain theory of autism. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 6, 248-254.
- Peter Carruthers (2008). Language in Cognition. In E. Margolis, R. Samuels & S. Stich (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Cognitive Science. Oxford University Press.
- Boroditsky, L. (2003). Linguistic Relativity. In Nadel, L. (Ed.) Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science. MacMillan Press: London, UK, pages 917-921.
- Nisbett R. & Norenzayan A. 'Culture and Cognition' D. L. Medin (Ed.) Stevens' Handbook of Experimental Psychology, Third Edition

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage

S.No	Assessment	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Weightage
1	Class test	3rd week	20%
2	Mid Semester Exam	Mid of Semester	40%
3	End Semester Exam	As per AUD Academic Calendar	40%