

Maximizing Your Memory - First Year Seminar (191CNS19)

Fall 2024 Syllabus



Course Logistics

Class Location: Hasbrouck Lab Room 104A

Class Time: Mondays 4:00-4:50PM (1 credit)

Instructor: Anna McCarter (she/her) acmccarter@umass.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00PM and Tuesdays 2:00-3:00PM (or by appointment)

Sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/AnnaMOfficeHours>

Course Overview

How can you maximize your memory for success in college classes? How can you remember the meaningful moments of your first semester of college? In this course you'll find out! Get ready to explore the fascinating field of cognitive neuroscience to see how sleep, storytelling, and even sketching contribute to your memory! We will also cover general skills to help you succeed as a UMass student.

Course Objectives

- You will be able to optimize your study plan, sleep schedule, and note taking for better memory of academic content.
- You will be able to use mnemonic strategies to better remember the meaningful moments of your first year of college.
- You will be able to succeed as a UMass college student!

Assignments

Participation

You are expected to attend and actively participate in class. Everyone has an important perspective so I hope that we can find ways to make space for everyone to share in ways that they find comfortable. Some examples of good levels of participation include answering a question posed by me or a classmate, asking a question, attentive listening, or engaging productively during small group or individual work time. Some examples of poor levels of participation include arriving late, leaving early, sleeping during class, distracting others, or doing non-class related activities on your device.

Reflections

After each class you will have a reflection to do. You will receive ample information about what is involved in each of these reflections, but essentially you will articulate your thoughts on a given topic after considering it for a few days. For instance, after learning about the benefits of practice tests and flashcards, you'll use that strategy to study for a class. Then, reflect on how that strategy worked for you and whether you'd like to continue using it. This reflection can take a variety of forms – written journal, video, audio recording, etc.

Office Hours Visit

At least one time this semester, I'd like you to come to my office hours. To make sure I have time to talk with each of you, you'll sign up for a visit day on Google Calendar (see link above). If my posted hours don't work with your schedule, email me and we'll set up another time. Office hours tend to be intimidating for students, but they shouldn't be. It's an opportunity to get class questions answered, learn more about the field, and get to know the instructor. When you come to office hours, we can discuss any questions you have, and I'll ask about how your semester is going.

Extra Credit

I want you to get involved on campus! You can earn 4 points of extra credit for attending a campus-sanctioned event such as a concert, workshop, art exhibit, or show. Please email me with the name of the event, the day and time of the event, and a short paragraph about what the event was like. You can find events here: <https://umassamherst.campuslabs.com/engage/events>. You can submit up to 3 times for a maximum total of 12 points.

Grading

Please email me at least 1 hour before class if you will need to miss class due to extenuating circumstances and we will figure out a makeup plan. If I don't hear from you within a day of your absence, you will get a 0 for the participation for that day. If you have extenuating circumstances that warrant an extension on an assignment, please email me. If I don't hear from

you, there will be a 10% penalty for each day it is late. (For example, if the assignment is due on Sunday and you submit it on Tuesday, the maximum you can earn is an 80%.)

Here is a summary of how each course component will be factored into the total grade:

Course Component	Points Each	Total Points
Participation	10 (x 13 classes)	130
Reflections	10 (x 12 reflections)	120
Office Hours Visit	20 points	20
		270

The standard grading scale will be used:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	59.99% and below

Communication

Check your UMass email and Canvas regularly as any updates will be shared there. I encourage you to email me if you have any questions or issues. I'm here to help you! I commit to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. I may not respond promptly to messages over the weekend or after 5pm on weekdays. I would love to see you at office hours. They are a great time to ask questions about the class, UMass, or anything else you want to talk about! If my posted hours don't work for you, email me to set up another time. Make sure to be courteous in your communication with me and your classmates. We are all deserving of respect and kindness. I strive for a safe, open, and welcoming classroom.

Diversity Statement

All students who are willing to learn are equally welcome. If I ever say or do anything insensitive in class, I welcome you to communicate your discomfort to me after class, during office hours, or by email. Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they wish. You can indicate your preferred/chosen first name and pronouns on SPIRE, which appear on class rosters. Our chosen names and pronouns are to be respected at all times.

Academic Honesty

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. **Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty.** Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/). This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. **Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any substantive portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments or using artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT.**

Accommodations

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. **If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester** so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For further information, please visit Disability Services (<https://www.umass.edu/disability/>). I am committed to your success in this course. **Please let me know if there are any ways that I can better support you.**

Title IX Statement

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits gender-based discrimination in educational settings that receive federal funds, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. This includes interactions in person or online through digital platforms and social media. Title IX also protects against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, or related conditions, including recovery. There are resources here on campus to support you. A summary of the available Title IX resources (confidential and non-confidential) can be found at the following link: <https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources>. You do not need to make a formal report to access

them. If you need immediate support, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year at the SASA Hotline 413-545-0800.

For purposes of Title IX reporting, I am considered a “responsible employee” at UMass (<https://www.umass.edu/titleix/about>). That means that **if you tell me about a situation involving sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation, I must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator**. Making a report to the Title IX Coordinator is my legal obligation, meets the University's goal of providing members of our community with supportive resources they might need, and enables the University to obtain a more accurate picture of the extent of sexual violence in our community. It will be **completely up to you to determine if and how you want to work with the Title IX Coordinator's office**. You will not be in trouble for reporting to me that you have experienced any of these situations, and the law prohibits retaliation against anyone who participates in a Title IX process.

Resources

Student Success <https://www.umass.edu/studentsuccess>

- So many resources!! Geared specifically towards first-year students like you

Disability Services: <https://www.umass.edu/disability/>

- Reach out to them to register for accommodations

Center for Counseling and Psychological Health: <https://www.umass.edu/counseling/>

- Offers individual therapy, group therapy, workshops
- Has a lot of tips and recommendations on their website

Learning Resource Center: <https://www.umass.edu/lrc/>

- Free tutoring, review sessions, and supplemental instruction

Writing Center: <https://www.umass.edu/writing-center/writing-center-1>

- Offers free sessions with writing tutor to discuss your papers

Dean of Students Office: https://www.umass.edu/dean_students/student_services

- If you face a significant academic, medical, or financial hardship, reach out to them for assistance

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Fall 2024 Schedule

Dates	Topic
September 9 th	Welcome
September 16 th	College Crash Course: What to Do?
September 23 rd	College Crash Course: Where to Go?
September 30 th	Introduction to Memory
October 7 th	Introduction to Forgetting
October 15 th (Tuesday)	Strategy #1: Get Sleep
October 21 st	Strategy #2: Practice Tests & Flashcards
October 28 th	Strategy #3: Context-Dependent Learning
November 4 th	Strategy #4: Drawing
November 18 th	Strategy #5: Try New Things
November 25 th	Strategy #6: Use Your Senses
December 2 nd	Strategy #7: Outsourcing
December 9 th	Closing