GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Cognition and Emotion (H000107)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

B (semester 1)	English	Gent	lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Pourtois, Gilles	PP21	lecturer-in-charge
Boddez, Yannick	PP21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027	**crdts**	**offering**
Bachelor of Science in Psychology(main subject Education)	5	B
Bachelor of Science in Psychology(main subject Theoretical and Experimental Psychology)	5	B
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	B
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy	5	B
Master of Science in Psychology(main subject Clinical Psychology)	5	B
Exchange Programme in Psychology	5	B
Linking Course Master of Science in Psychology(main subject Theoretical and Experimental Psychology)	5	B
Preparatory Course Master of Science in Psychology(main subject Theoretical and Experimental Psychology)	5	B

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

cognition, emotion, experimental psychology, appraisal, action tendencies, emotional experience, facial exressions, emotion regulation, basic emotions, attentional bias, judgments, actions, decisions, motivation.

Position of the course

This course focusses on the scientific analysis of the relationship between cognition and emotion. Theoretical debates concerning this topic are evaluated in the light of old and new empirical findings. Good knowledge of experimental psychology and research methodology is recommended.

Contents

The first part deals with cognition, the second part with emotion, and the third part (the largest) with the mutual relation between cognition and emotion.
The topics discussed in this course are:
Cognition
- What is cognition?
- Levels of analysis.
- automatic vs. non-automatic cognition.

Emotion
- What is emotion?
- Theoretical models (affect program; dimensions/core emotions; appraisal).
- Empirical research concerning components of emotion (mostly based on facial expressions).

Relation between cognition and emotion

- Attention (bottom-up/stimulus-driven vs. top-down/attention bias).
- Cognitive control (conflict processing and adaptation).
- Regulation of emotions (self-regulation vs. emotion regulation).
- Actions/decisions and their monitoring.
- Psychophysiology (timing).
- Brain-imaging (amygdala)

Emphasis is on the link between theory and empirical research. Theoretical choices of researchers determine the research questions that are pursued. Knowledge of theories allows to situate existing research and to understand their implications for theoretical debates.
The research methods discussed are experimental behavioural methods with indirect measures (reaction time) and direct measures (self-report). Neurophysiological methods are also considered.

Initial competences

This course unit builds on certain course competencies of Cognitive psychology and Methods in psychology.

Final competences

1 Adopt a componential definition of the concept 'automaticity'.
2 Diagnose the automaticity features of research paradigms.
3 Evaluate research findings in terms of automaticity conditions.
4 Be familiar with the various definitions of the term 'cognition' used in the literature.
5 Describe classic theories of emotion.
6 Critical evaluation of research findings in the light of classic theories of emotion.
7 Describe research findings concerning the (causal) relation between cognitions and emotions.
8 Development of a new research protocol aimed at testing classic hypotheses in the domain of Cognition and Emotion.
9 Exhibit a critical understanding of research questions and findings reported in the domain of Cognition and Emotion.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

The lectures are recorded (in the absence of technical difficulties). The lecture recordings are made available the day after each lecture and remain online until after the second exam session.
This course assumes the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI). During the lessons, what this means will be explained.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides of the lectures
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Other

Name: One scientific article per lecture
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

- Fox, E. (2008). Emotion Science: Cognitive and neuroscientific approaches to

understanding human emotions. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moors, A. (2009). Theories of emotion causation: A review. *Cognition and Emotion* 23, 209-237.
- Awh, E. S., Belopolsky, A. V., & Theeuwes, J. (2012). Top-down versus bottom-up attentional control: A failed theoretical dichotomy. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences 16*, 437-443.
- Pourtois, G., Schettino, A., & Vuilleumier, P. (2013). Brain mechanisms for emotional influences on perception and attention: what is magic and what is not. *Biological Psychology* 92(3):492-512.
- Pessoa, L. (2008). On the relationship between emotion and cognition. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9:148–158.
- Inzlicht, M., Bartholow, B.D., & Hirsh, J.B. (2015). Emotional foundations of cognitive control. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 19(3):126–132.

Course content-related study coaching

- Interactive support using Ufora.
- Via email.
- By appointment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Calculation of the examination mark

The examination includes 6 open questions.