Course Syllabus: Psychology 683 C, “Interference and Forgetting”
Fall 2003: Fri 9:30-12:20; 579 Eberhart Building

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Course Description
In this seminar we will discuss empirical research on human memory and forgetting, particularly from the perspective of interference theory. This research spans much of the 20th century and continues to be important in the 21st.

Grades & Requirements
As this is a graduate seminar, my assumption is that you are interested in learning about this topic, that you will accordingly come to class well prepared for discussion, and that you will dutifully complete all required assignments for the course. The idea is that we will be learning together about a topic that interests me greatly, and that I hope will come to interest you, too. This is a seminar, and not a lecture, so my hope is to have spirited, collegial discussion that is led by you, the students. Although I must give each of you a grade in this course, the purpose of the course is not evaluative, nor is it to ensure that you have mastered some corpus of knowledge. Rather, I see the purpose of this course as engaging you (and me) in a dynamic exploration of an important research area within cognitive psychology. It will, I hope, feel more like fun than work, although there will be work to do. As far as I’m concerned, you will earn an ‘A’ in this class unless you disabuse me of my assumptions above. To be explicit, here are my expectations:

1) You will attend every class meeting (barring an emergency) and you will come to each class meeting well prepared to discuss the reading materials.

2) As a “Ticket For Admission” (TFA) to each class meeting, you will write a brief (1-page, single-spaced) “reaction paper” about the readings assigned for that meeting, and you will email a copy to the entire class, including me. The TFAs MUST be emailed by 5 pm on the Thursday before class.

   THE TFA IS NOT A SUMMARY OF THE READINGS; assume that the class has read the articles. The TFA should be a critical reaction to any aspect of the reading. It may be a focused criticism of one or more of the experiments in the readings. It may be a principled, scientific evaluation of some theme or idea that runs through multiple readings. It may be an experiment proposal that would improve upon, or answer a question raised by, one or more of the readings. It may be an argument for or against some conclusion(s) drawn by a reading. It may be a discussion of a specific link between a reading and your area of expertise, but I ask that you resist the temptation to discuss anecdotes and personal experiences.

   3) For each class session, a student will be assigned the role of summarizing each of the articles for that session (so, typically, 3 or 4 students will each be assigned one summary per class meeting). This oral summary must be no longer than 5 minutes, no matter how long or complex the source article is. You must not prepare more than 5 minutes because we all will have read the paper, and longer summaries will leave insufficient time for us to discuss each article. On the other hand, this is not to be a 30-second summary, either. You should aim to succinctly and eloquently summarize and explain the motivation/background for the paper, the methods and results, the main conclusions and lingering questions. You may choose to use hand-outs/overheads/PowerPoint if helpful, but they are not required. Although you may make limited use of notes as support, you should not read them verbatim.

Paths to earning a B or C in this course: Unexcused absences, late reaction papers, inadequate participation in class sessions, inadequate performance as discussant.

Paths to earning an F in this course: Unexcused absence when assigned to be a summarizer, poor performance in class sessions.
Schedule of Topics and Readings

Italicized citations are available in pdf format through “Journal Finder” on the UNCG Library website. All others have pdfs available through electronic reserves for this course.

Week 1: Syllabus & Introductory Comments

Week 2: Early Research on RI and PI


Week 3: RI and Unlearning


Week 4: RI, PI, and Spontaneous Recovery


Week 5: RI, PI, List Differentiation and Source Confusion (I)

**Week 6: RI, PI, List Differentiation and Source Confusion (II)**


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**Week 7: Interference, Selection, Control and Suppression (I): Theory & Test**


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**Week 8: Interference, Selection, Control and Suppression (II): More Data & Some Alternatives**


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**Week 9: Interference and Encoding Factors**


**Week 10: Interference, Relational/Distinctive Processing, Context and Source Memory (I)**


**Week 11: Interference, Relational/Distinctive Processing, Context and Source Memory (II)**


**Week 12: Interference, Control & Directed Forgetting**


**Week 13: Interference, Inhibition, and Retrieval-Induced Forgetting (I): The Basics**


Week 14: Interference, Inhibition, and Retrieval-Induced Forgetting (II): The Complexities


