Overview:
Are there activities we can do to improve the health of our brain other than maintaining a healthy diet and physical exercise? Do mental exercises like crossword puzzles and brain games really help? As we age, how can we slow down cognitive decline associated with the retention of information, attention, and the speed at which we process information effectively?

In this course, we will examine these questions and practical ways to improve the overall health of our brain, including an important aspect of the brain—our memory. Beginning this course with a primer on how our brains and minds work, including central theories and cognitive models about them. We then will explore some of the research under way in the field of cognitive science. By the end of the course, students will come away with a better understanding of the mind, the role our genes and our environment play in making up who we are, and how we can work to improve our own mind and memory. Guest speakers from the field of brain health will visit the class to discuss recent research findings.

Text:

Policies:
- Please check the course website ([Canvas](https://canvas.stanford.edu)) often for any additional readings, announcements, and assignment guidelines. *Not all of the readings are listed on this syllabus. Readings are due on the same day in which they were assigned.*
- You are encouraged to e-mail me with questions on topics discussed in class, or you are welcome to talk to me after class.
- There will be in-class group activities and discussion so please respect your fellow peers.
- Plagiarism is not tolerated here at the university and may result in disciplinary action.
- Contact the instructor for accommodation of religious beliefs, disabilities and other special circumstances.
- Stanford Continuing Studies has a no-audit policy. Everyone must be enrolled.

Grading Options:
For **no grade requested (NGR)** students, no work is required. Just show up for class! NGR is also not a suitable grading option for students requiring proof of completion for tuition reimbursement purposes. Students who are taking this class for a **letter grade**, please see me for a lab assignment. For students taking **credit/no credit (CR/NC)**, attendance (at least 60%) and participation is required. Class sessions will be recorded and available for the duration of the course. Live attendance is required for students enrolled for credit.
**Tentative Weekly Outline** (last updated 7/14/21)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic/Readings due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Intro to the Mind: Mental Representations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: Introduction “Raising the Questions”&lt;br&gt;Read: CogSci 1 “Early Approaches to the Study of Human Cognition”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Intro to the Brain: What Structure Can Tell Us About Function</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: CogSci 3 “Exploring the Brain”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Memory Models, Case Studies, &amp; Theoretical Applications</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: CogSci 2 “The Approach of Cognitive Science” (pg. 65-80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>The Role of Genetics in Brain Health</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guest Speaker: Dr. Yaisa Andrews-Zwilling&lt;br&gt;Read: CogSci 4 “Modern Technology and Research”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Evaluating the Credibility of Brain Health Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guest Speaker: Dr. Melanie Das&lt;br&gt;Read: CogSci 11 “Who Are We?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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