### **Syllabus**

### **Psychological approaches to effective learning**

### **(Hack Your Brain)**

**PSY 128**

##### ID 5658

### **Summer 2022**

**Acknowledgements:** This course is based on ideas and materials collected and organized by Dr. Ida Sim, MA, and Cholpon Esenbekova, MA. All materials are used with Cholpon Esenbekova’s kind permission.

**Instructor:**  Gulnara Kurmanova, PhD, Associate Professor

**Office:** AUCA;  Psychology Department

**Pre-requisites:** No pre-requisites

**Credit hours:** 3

**Course status:** Required

**Office hours:** By appointment via e-mail

**E-mail:** [kurmanova\_g@auca.kg](mailto:kurmanova_g@auca.kg)

**Course language:** English

**Class meetings:** 75 minutes per 1 class, 5 classes per week, 3 working weeks.

**Class schedule:**

Monday-Friday 09:15 - 10:40 Lecture / Seminar

Room: 203

The course will be OFFLINE. No on-line or hybrid classes are scheduled. On-line course could be taken as individual one for the summer school only.

**Course description**

Want to become a ninja of your own mind? Hack your brain! The experience of best learners and the modern neuroscience will cultivate a nice fertile ground in order to become one. We will create such a course together with you. We will focus on your own challenges and preferences. Discussions instead of boring lectures, games instead of professor’s edification, and a funny final project instead of a scary final exam - what could be better to start the summer? More practice, less words - and everything you need is in one bottle. Join us and make learning a part of your individual life style!

This course is designed in order to assist students to learn, understand, and reinforce concepts and/or assignments presented in the general curriculum. Students will have an opportunity to develop and strengthen useful study habits through various instructional methods and strategies. We will learn why some learning methods are effective and some of them are not and discuss how learning processes work from psychological perspective and how brain influences on our ability to learn.

**Course goal**

The aim of the course is to explore how our brains learn and learn how to learn.

**Course outcomes**

After completing the course students will be able to:

* To demonstrate the understanding of physiological, psychological and cognitive mechanisms of learning;
* To use individual techniques of memorizing, chunking and recalling and to explain how they works on the neuronal and physiological levels;
* To develop and demonstrate:
  + the time management skills;
  + reading strategies;
  + note-taking strategies;
  + organizational strategies;
* To use a wide spectrum of advanced techniques based on social facilitation, collaboration and networking:
  + peer education in class;
  + using internet resources and communicative spaces;
* To summarize and analyze their own experience and find individual ways to improve their performance.

In the course we will use different techniques (i.e., mini-lectures, small/large group activities and discussions, issue exploration, games, observations, video production, etc).

**Key competencies**

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| Code of competence | Description of competence |
| **ОК-1**  **ОК-2**  **OK-4**  **OK-5**  **OK-6** | * Is able to demonstrate the understanding of modern learning theories * Is able to apply knowledge to improve students’ own performance * Is able to critically analyze information, set the goals and choose ways to reach them * Is able to plan the studying process, implement this plan properly and evaluate its outputs |
| **ИК-1**  **ИК-3**  **ИК-2** | * Is able to use the relevant informational sources available in AUCA; * Is able to analyze the effect of internal nervous processes and environment on the learning quality * Is able to use information technologies and sources |
| **ПК-10**  **ПК-6** | * Is able to conduct self-observation and self-management, to identify barriers to effective learning and overcome them successfully * Is able to be open minded, to perceive different scientific ideas and techniques, to discuss the most recent findings, published in scientific journal, as well as an experience of effecrive learners |
| **СЛК-3** | − To appreciate the multicultural environment of AUCA |

**Sources**

Cottrell, S. (2013). *The study skills handbook*. London: Red Globe Press.

Harris, M. A. (2018). The relationship between physical inactivity and mental wellbeing: Findings from a gamification-based community-wide physical activity intervention. *Health Psychology Open*, *5*(1), 205510291775385. doi: 10.1177/2055102917753853

Kafadar, T., & Tay, B. (2014). Learning strategies and learning styles used by students in social studies. *International Journal of Academic Research*, *6*(2), 259–267. doi: 10.7813/2075-4124.2014/6-2/b.39

Lally, P., Jaarsveld, C. H. M. V., Potts, H. W. W., & Wardle, J. (2009). How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *40*(6), 998–1009. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.674

Mcdonald, D. D., Wiczorek, M., & Walker, C. (2004). Factors Affecting Learning During Health Education Sessions. *Clinical Nursing Research*, *13*(2), 156–167. doi: 10.1177/1054773803261113

Pritchard, A. (2008). *Studying and learning at university: vital skills for success in your degree*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Svartdal, F., Granmo, S., & Færevaag, F. S. (2018). On the Behavioral Side of Procrastination: Exploring Behavioral Delay in Real-Life Settings. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00746

**All required reading will be available on e-course**

# Learning how to learn: Powerful mental tools to help you master tough subjects. Barbara Oakley. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/learning-how-to-learn>

**Course policies, rules and procedures**

**Attendance Requirements** It is important to attend classes to master the materials in the course. Please, keep in mind that attendance affects your final result. In case you are not able to come due to the health issues, please inform me about it before the class starts. Missing for other reasons will not be excused. Missing 7 or more classes for any reasons may result in a grade of “F” in the course, so, it is recommended strongly to think about “I” in such case. Please come before the class starts not to distract the attention of your colleagues and instructor and stay with us until the very end of classes. I check your presence in the classroom at arbitrary time, and if you are late or sit out the whole class time and leave just when I mark your attendance, what a misfortune it could be!

**Academic Honesty** I have zero tolerance policy for cheating. Students who have questions or concerns about academic honesty should refer to the University Plagiarism Policy for more information: <https://auca.kg/uploads/IBL%20Dept/Plagiarism%20policy%20final.pdf> In the case of plagiarizing the paper receives F automatically.

**Documents, devices and on-line policy.** The use of mobile phones and laptops to connect to the Internet for learning tasks is encouraged. In class, please put cell phones into silent mode. Keep all your written work on your computer or in the cloud until the final grading.If you lost your file needed to your work evaluation, you get zero points for this work automatically.I also expect the student to be able to use the Tracking > Track Changes option of the Word app.

**Individual program.** In exceptional cases, for academical reasons and for students showing excellent academic progress, it is allowed to take a course on an individual program. In this case, the students learn exactly the same topics like others, but follow her/his own schedule. Also, I make decision about the form and terms of her/his reporting.

**Review the course requirements carefully**. This syllabus provides information about the structure, content, organization, and requirements of the course but may change slightly to accommodate unforeseen events. Read it carefully and ask questions if you are confused by any part of it.

**Please, keep track of your points and grade in this course**, so, later on, you will not be surprised by your final grade.

**Communication with me is the best via email** at [kurmanova\_g@auca.kg](mailto:kurmanova_g@auca.kg) . As a rule, I answer your emails in 24 hours, except weekends and holidays. If you didn’t get my reply timely, please, contact me personally via phone or Whatsapp. Also, make sure my emails don't end up in your spam folder.

**Syllabus change** I reserve the right to change or modify this syllabus as needed; any changes will be announced in class. In important cases, we also vote for changes.

**Grading**

This course has only two grades - **passed** and **failed**.

The result is evaluated on the basis of attendance (20%), quizzes (20%) and the final group project (60%).

67% of 100 is enough to pass the course.

Anonymous assessment of the contribution of the participant by the group that implements the project is an important basis for the final assessment.

**Group project.** The decision on the form of presentation of the final group project is made by us all together, taking into account the competencies of the course participants. It could be a video project, a blog, a tutorial, or even a curriculum. Work on a group project starts from lesson 7. The results of the group project will be presented and evaluated at the last session.

For individual course, an individual project has to be completed.

**Issues of grading**

If you feel that the evaluation of your work was not fair or you noticed some scoring mistakes in your grade, you should bring these issues to me immediately. In this case you should write a statement arguing your position. Your argument should include citation from the book (page numbers, dates) or other reasonable sources. If your demands are reasonable, the grade will be reconsidered.

As your final exams ended and exams and papers are being graded, please be reminded that grade negotiations are not acceptable at AUCA. You may contact me one time and receive feedback for why you received the grade so that you can perform better in the future. However, you should have no expectation that the grade will be changed. Repeatedly contacting professors with a request of grade change may be considered as grounds for sanction under the anti harassment policies.

I carefully evaluate your work based on your performance throughout the semester, and my evaluations should be respected. If you think there are objective reasons to disagree with your grade you may follow the rules of the formal grade appeal process after the grades are posted.

A grade of **Incomplete** is reserved for only those special cases when a student has missed a significant portion of the semester's work because of health issues or other unavoidable circumstances. If you have any questions, please contact the instructor.

**All** assigned work must be submitted according to the due date in the e-course. No late assignments will be accepted.

**For additional information please follow the links below:**

* AUCA Student Code of Conduct (<https://auca.kg/uploads/Students_life/Docs/Code%20of%20Students%202019.pdf>)
* AUCA Bylaws of the Academic Appeals Committee -<https://auca.kg/uploads/Faculty%20Senate/Academic%20Appeals%20Committee%20Bylaws.pdf>
* Library Help, eReserves and research tools:<https://library.auca.kg/>
* Writing Center: <https://warc.auca.kg/>
* Academic Advising Office:<https://auca.kg/en/academic_advising/>
* Psychological Counseling Services:<https://auca.kg/en/psycons/>

**Class schedule**

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| **Day** | **Topic** |
| Day 1 | Course introduction. What is learning? What kind of learner am I? (self-exploration). Career goals.  **Quiz 1.** |
| Day 2 | Learning as a life style. Overall goals, motivation, good ground. Exercise: Ideal Learner. Neurophysiology of learning: neuroplasticity. |
| Day 3 | Two types of thinking. Focused and Diffuse Modes. Two types of intelligence. |
| Day 4 | Procrastination. Particular techniques: note-taking and active reading. |
| Day 5 | Attention and sleep. Particular techniques: metaphor and analogy. |
| Day 6 | Memory. Self-exploration: do I have a good memory? How to improve my memory?  **Quiz 2.** |
| Day 7 | Chunking. What is chunk. How to build a chunk. //Drama: How do I stop to procrastinate. |
| Day 8 | Illusion of competence. |
| Day 9 | Chemistry of motivation. Overlearning. |
| Day 10 | Create metaphor. |
| Day 11 | Tackling Procrastination |
| Day 12 | Environment and self-organizing. Practice: Mapping. Which places in campus fit well for learning? Mini-project: What am I going to change in my own working environment? |
| Day 13 | Modern education as self-education. Lurk more. Modern learning as learning from peers. The social facilitation phenomenon. Practice: how to write a good question. |
| Day 14 | General discussion on topic of choice. Staying healthy mentally and physically. Exercises and learning. Chemicals and brain. Bright and dark sides of biohacking. Sleeping. Why do we sleep? Sleeping and memory. Anxiety, depression and PTCD: Barriers to learning. Is anxiety our enemy or a friend?  Assignment: **Quiz 3.**  Peer-graded Assignment: Reflective Essay about a Learning Challenge |
| Day 15 | **Final Group Project Presentation**  Poll: What was most interesting for you? |