PSY3304 – Cognition

Week 1, part 1:

Cognition: the study of mental processes, focussed on how we form, maintain and act upon internal and external mental representations of the world.

Mental representation: umbrella term describing our conceptual understanding of how our world is a unique construction of reality based on our current and past experience and knowledge.

Mental concepts: attributes are assessed in a flexible manner, fuzzy boundaries allow flexibility in assigning attributes i.e. different types of cats.

Family resemblance: no specific set of attributes that all members possess, yet they are part of the same family i.e. domestic cats, wild cats.

Prototype: a category example that best fits the attributes assigned to that concept i.e. cat with fur, ears, tail etc.

Stereotype: a hypothetical idealisation which consists of the core attributes assigned to that concept.

Mental concepts: how we organise events/objects, can depend on our mood, prior knowledge, perspective and interactions.

Schemas: integrate interrelated concepts into higher order concepts i.e. what we expect of a lecture; how to behave, act etc.

Mental scripts: organised procedural actions that we perform. Includes sub-scripts i.e. grocery shopping. Get in car > go to shop > gather items > pay.

Week 1, part 2: explicit and implicit processing.

Duality of being: opposite forces i.e. implicit/explicit, yin/yang, heaven/hell.

Explicit processing: conscious and controlled i.e. conscious thought - (intentional, slow, limited capacity, serial, rule based)

Implicit processing: unconscious and automatic i.e. bodily functions – unintentional, fast, high capacity, parallel, associative).

Examples of conflicting:	Explicit	Implicit
Attitudes: desires/thoughts	I'm over this break-up	I am still in love with them
Motivation	I want to cut down on my drinking	I don't want to say no to my friends
Reasoning: implicit motivation/justification	I am happy to help my friend move	If I help, they can help me next week…
Decision making	This car is very economical	But this car goes faster…