

Q301            Fall 2002            Cognitive Neuroscience In the Media  
Due by October 31, but do it before then.  
Individual Project

Cognitive Neuroscience has captivated the public's attention, in part because of the progress we are making on the brain and the mind. Elements of the science have been portrayed in popular media sources such as Memento, A Beautiful Mind, and The Matrix. Books such as Interface and Snow Crash are among the fiction books that have extended the reach of the science into close-reality science fiction.

These portrayals are not always accurate, and may do a disservice to individuals who may suffer from these disorders. In this assignment, view a movie or read a book that has elements of cognitive neuroscience in it, and then write a 1-2 page review of the work.

Your review should take the format of other types of movie or book reviews, but should address the following issues:

- 1) What are the elements of the book or movie that deal with cognitive neuroscience and the brain?
- 2) How accurately are they portrayed in the work?
- 3) Most importantly, what do they tell us about how the brain works?

You should use this assignment as an opportunity to open up a discussion with the public about issues in cognitive neuroscience. Raise some issues that merit discussion that ask thought-provoking questions that are designed to educate the public about what we do and get them to think about the issues introduced by the work.

You can consider any movie or book that deals with cognitive neuroscience issues. However, it should not be an academic text; it should be for mass consumption and produced for a lay audience. It should be a work of fiction, or a work based on a biography but not simply an autobiography.

There are existing reviews of these works (most notably a review of Memento in Science) but you should avoid these in order to avoid plagiarism issues.

Some suggested movies (you can also pick your own, but clear it with Tom)

Memento

A Beautiful Mind (showing September 24 at 7:00 in the Psychology Conference Room)

The Matrix

AI

Books:

Interface

Snow Crash

**Evaluation Criteria- Cognitive Neuroscience in the Media**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Not all works fit in to the rubric below, since they may deal with issues that are not related to human behavior.

Section	Possible points	Your points
<b>Introduction/Movie Summary</b> Is your work an appropriate piece for this assignment? Do you provide an adequate summary of the work to enable someone who has not seen the work to appreciate your review?	+/- 2	
<b>Relation to Cognitive Neuroscience</b> Do you describe how the work relates to cognitive neuroscience?	+/- 2	
<b>Description of Accuracy of Portrayal of Human Behavior.</b> Do you describe how accurately the work presents human behavior?	+/- 1	
<b>Summary of Work.</b> What general conclusions can you draw from the work? Would you recommend this to those interested in cognitive neuroscience? What about the work makes it interesting?	+/- 1	
<b>Readability/Professionalism.</b> Is your writing clear and do you provide a compelling review of the work?	+/- 1	

Total: 33 + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: