

PSYCH 120: Introduction to Psychology Fall, 2009

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Office Hours:	M & W 9 :45am – 11am ; 2pm – 2 :30pm Friday 10 :15am – 11am (or by appointment)		

Course Overview:

Psychology has assumed an increasingly crucial role in understanding ourselves and others as our society and our world become increasingly more complex. This course is designed to serve as an introduction to the field of psychology. Students should come to a thorough understanding of, and respect for psychology as the scientific study of human and animal behavior and mental processes (e.g., thoughts and emotions). With theory and research as the foundation, we will explore the topics of the course which shed light on the basic processes underlying our thoughts and actions. Consequently, it should provide a framework for students to begin thinking independently about such phenomena, and the implications of these basic processes for themselves and the world around them.

This particular introductory psychology course focuses upon the internal or micro-psychological dynamics (biological bases, sensation & perception, learning, memory, consciousness, etc.) as opposed to Psychology of Adjustment (PS105) which moves more toward more “macro” issues. However, as an introductory course I will try to optimize a balance between depth in exploring the core chapters outlined in the course schedule and breadth of the psychological discipline.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To become knowledgeable of theories, concepts, and principles pertaining to the relevant topics.
- 2) To develop greater critical thinking skills, and a greater ability to view and interpret phenomena from multiple theoretical perspectives.
- 3) To understand and appreciate the basic workings and essential role of rigorous scientific research, and its contribution to knowledge in psychology and in the social sciences in general.
- 4) To gain a life long interest in exploring, learning, and using psychological insight to better understand, cope, and thrive in our life.
- 5) To improve communication skills (writing, speaking, and listening) through various opportunities offered during the course.

Required text:

Meyers, D. (2007). *Psychology* (9th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
(referred to in syllabus as Modules)

Marcus, G. (Ed.) (2006). *The Norton psychology reader*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
(Referred to in syllabus as Norton)

Some assigned readings may also be distributed in class.

Course Structure & Policies:

1) **Make-up exams:** In order to avoid receiving a zero on a missed exam you must provide notification and verification. Notify me beforehand, or as soon as possible. Notification more than 2 days after the exam is not acceptable. If you miss an exam please provide the appropriate documentation (Drs.' note, court order, etc.). I expect this to be done without my requesting such documentation. Without this documentation you will be penalized by a reduction of 50% of your score. I reserve the right to use essay format for make-up exams. Exams will be re-scheduled on a weekday at 7:30AM.

2) **Cheating and plagiarism** will not be tolerated. ANY EVIDENCE OF CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A FAILURE IN THE COURSE (FINAL GRADE = F). Plagiarism is the intentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes such instances as quoting directly from a published work without giving the author credit (i.e. proper citation), inserting the author's words as your own, using or "borrowing" another student's work, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. The policy of the department and college is that the student must keep all note cards and rough drafts on a paper until given a grade for that course. The full college policy on this is in the Student Handbook. In the event of a suspected infraction – in fairness to your peers – it is my job to send the materials in question to the Dean's Office at which time you are given the chance to provide your perspective on the matter and challenge my judgment. In this case, you should continue coming to class and completing the work until a definitive judgment is made.

3) **Attendance** - Class attendance is expected. Class lectures and demonstrations will supplement the material in the text. In the event that you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from a fellow student and reviewing them before you see me about questions concerning that material. Excessive absences (more than three) will result in deduction of two points per missed class from your final grade. You do NOT need to contact me, nor e-mail me in the event that you must miss a class. I assume you are a mature adult and can handle the responsibility of missing a class as outlined above.

4) **Late Assignments** - Assignments and projects may be handed in up to two days late (points deducted from the grade each day late) ONLY IF when handing in an assignment late you indicate the amount of days late on the front cover along with your signature. Assignments may not be handed in after the third day late. Please, do not ask me to

deviate from this policy. If you must miss class drop off the assignment earlier, send it with a classmate, or fax it to me (861-1577). In other words, there should be no valid excuse for a late assignment. I encourage you not to procrastinate such that last minute emergencies (e.g. computer down, ribbon broke, etc.) interfere with getting assignments in on time. Also, be sure to back up your files using your space on the X drive!

5) Summary of Grading System:

SEMESTER EXAMS:	3 @ 18% each = 54%
FINAL EXAM:	20%
DISCUSSION & ASSIGNMENTS:	18%
PSYCH CONCEPT PAPER	8%

6) The following **grading scale** will be used in the course. Your final grade will be determined by the Overall Grade posted on Blackboard based on the point allocation above with any extra credit (see policy #7 below) factored in. When transferring your Overall Grade posted on Blackboard to the FINAL GRADE filed with the Registrar, your grade **MAY be adjusted for excessive absences** (see policy #3) **or incompleteness of Research Requirement** (see policy #7 below).

A : 93-100	C : 73 – 76.9
A-: 90-92.9	C-: 70 – 72.9
B+: 87-89.9	D+: 67 – 69.9
B : 83-86.9	D : 63 – 66.9
B-: 80-82.9	D-: 60 – 62.9
C+: 77-79.9	F : Below 60

7) Required Research Participation:

You will be required to participate in one IN-CLASS research experience (on F 9/4) and two ADDITIONAL research projects (totaling at least one hour of participation) being conducted by students in PS212, Research Methods (or by Honors/independent study students or faculty research projects). This experience allows you to view the research process first hand in various experimental contexts. All the research studies will have been reviewed and approved by a Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) Committee; however, if you have objections to participating in research, you may arrange to complete an alternative, written assignment, which will involve reading a psychological article. In order to do the alternative assignment, you must meet with your professor to arrange it **by Monday 10/26**. After that point, you may still have the opportunity to complete the research requirement by participating in experiment sessions, but you will not be able to do a written assignment. More information about research participation (e.g., how to sign up) will be provided later in the semester, when experiment opportunities start to become available. Failure to complete the required participation (or the alternative assignment) will result in a **reduction of your class grade by 1/3rd letter grade** (e.g., from a B to a B-). The entire required hour needs to be completed to avoid this deduction (i.e., completing ½ hour only will still result in the full deduction).

Extra Credit via Research Participation:

Students may earn up to four hours of ADDITIONAL EXTRA credit for participating in research beyond the requirements outlined above. Each hour of credit earned will increase your worst semester exam grade by 3 points (thus capped at 12 points).

8) Excuses and Communication

As articulated in Policy #3, I operate on the assumption that you are mature adults, and therefore, the decision to attend class or not is up to you. You need not e-mail me if you must miss class. Be sure to work with a classmate to get any materials you miss and feel free to make an appointment or come by during office hours to go over material after you get the notes from a classmate. I understand and respect life stressors you may be faced with; but keep in mind that grades reflect essential standards and cannot be adjusted based on extenuating circumstances. Valid obstacles/setbacks may understandably inhibit your performance, but they are not able to influence the course and college standards. I cannot pardon work nor substitute/supplement extra credit other than that which has been built into the course and offered to all. In the spirit of fairness to ALL students I must be consistent with the policies laid out in this syllabus and ask you to be familiar with and respectful of them. If you are thinking of asking for an exception to my policies; first ask yourself – “Am I willing to ask my classmates to support my exception to the rules of the course?”

9) Accommodations - Should you require special accommodations for a disability, please arrange an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Documentation of a disability will be required for special accommodations to be arranged in conjunction with the Learning Services Office. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities and/or ADHD, should contact Mrs. Laurie Roth, Director of Learning Services, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Students who wish to request accommodations for support of other disabilities, should contact Dr. Ron Kline, Director of the Counseling Center, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

Course Requirements:**SEMESTER EXAMS** (3 @ 18% each):

The format for the exams during the semester will be multiple choice and short answer. You can feel free to offer suggestions for the multiple choice section of exams by contributing items on the Blackboard Discussion thread labeled for each exam. Be sure to provide the correct answer. Contributing and reading these are a good study strategy. In addition, you should carefully note the make-up policy above.

FINAL EXAM (20%):

The final exam will consist of four components. It will be cumulative in three ways: 1) a take home portion will require you to complete some reflective questions, and 2) there will be questions drawn from the rest of the material covered during the semester as part of the in-class portion of the exam, as well as 3) an objective exam based on the student Psych Concept papers (discussed below). The fourth component of the final exam will be multiple choice and short answer questions on the new material covered since the last semester exam.

DISCUSSION AND ASSIGNMENTS (18%):

Beginning Friday, Sept. 25th, we will engage in a semi-formal discussion lab on MOST Fridays, other than exam days. Discussions will be based on modules assigned, lecture experiences, Norton readings, and any philosophical or personal connections to be made. At least once, possibly twice, each student will be part of a small team to lead discussions on class material and readings for that week. Students will work together to formulate discussion questions to be posted on Blackboard by noon on TH and stimulate, guide and promote discussion during the discussion periods on F. This will be further organized in class during the first two weeks.

Some assignments may be given to introduce students to a variety of learning experiences and self reflections that will deepen the understanding and relevance of the material. These may also help to stimulate class discussions.

Your grade for this component will be based on a) your ability to develop high quality discussion questions and lead a stimulating class discussion based on the course material, b) your active participation in the discussions in general, and c) your quality and completion of any assignments.

PSYCH CONCEPT PAPER (8%)

This is a two page assignment (do NOT exceed two pages, one inch margins, double spaced, title and name centered at the top of the first page, page number and running head in the right hand corner). You will use the library search literacy skills to find two recent empirical articles that explore one of the psychological concepts discussed and defined in bold within your text. Guidelines for the paper will be distributed separately and discussed in class. This paper will be worked on throughout the semester with multiple revisions. All student papers collectively will serve as a reading assignment and study guide for the final exam.

*NOTE: Any aspect of this syllabus and course sequencing / assignments is subject to change.

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS*
August		
31 Monday	Introductions, Organizations, and some Brief Notes	
September		
2 Wednesday	Principles of Research: How we advance KNOWLEDGE	Modules 2 & 3
4 Friday	Research In Action	
7 Monday:	Labor Day no classes held	
9 Wednesday	Psychology: Past & Present	Module 1 and Appendix A in Meyers
11 Friday	DISCUSSION: The schools, methods, and history of psychology	NORTON: Chpt. 2
14 Monday	Neural and Hormonal Systems & The Brain	Module 4 & 5
16 Wednesday	cont'd	
18 Friday	DISCUSSION (1): Bio-Psychology	NORTON: <i>Sacks</i> , p. 70 - 79
21 Monday	Behavior Genetics & Evolutionary Psychology // The Environment	Module 6 & 7
23 Wednesday	cont'd	NORTON: <i>Pinker</i> , p. 39 - 44
25 Friday	*****EXAM ONE*****	
28 Monday	Intro to Sensation & Perception // Vision	Modules 12 & 13
30 Wednesday	Perceptual Organization & Interpretation	Modules 16, 17 Module 55 (Obj. 55-1,2 only)
October		
Oct. 1st – 4 th	Try to attend the production of “Betty’s Summer Vacation” in the Arena Theatre of the HUB	
2 Friday	LIBRARY SESSION – <i>PsychInfo</i> – Critical tool for your Psych Concept Paper!!!	

5 Monday	Waking, Sleeping & Hypnosis	Modules 18 & 19
7 Wednesday	cont'd	
9 Friday	DISCUSSION (2): Sensation, Perception, and Consciousness	NORTON: <i>Hughes</i> , p. 91-95 <i>Granden</i> , p. 358-363
12 Monday:	Fall Recess	
14 Wednesday	Drugs & Consciousness	Module 20
	Classical & Operant Conditioning	Modules 21 & 22
16 Friday	DISCUSSION (3): Learning	NORTON: <i>Watson & Rayner</i> , p. 117-128
19 Monday	<i>Conditioning continued;</i> and Intro to Memory	Module 24
21 Wednesday	Encoding: Getting Memory In	Module 25
23 Friday	***** EXAM TWO *****	
26 Monday	Storage & Retrieval	Module 26 & 27
28 Wednesday	Forgetting & Memory	Modules 27 & 28
30 Friday	DISCUSSION (4): Memory	NORTON: <i>Schacter</i> , p. 165-176
November		
2 Monday	Motivation	Modules 34 - 37
4 Wednesday	cont'd	
6 Friday	DISCUSSION (5): Motivation	NORTON: <i>Csikszentmihalyi</i> , p. 210 – 222
9 Monday	Emotion, Stress and Health	Modules 38, 41-43
11 Wednesday	cont'd	
13 Friday	DISCUSSION (6): Stress & Health	NORTON: <i>Sapolsky</i> , p. 223 - 231
16 Monday	Types of Disorders, Anxiety Disorders	Modules 47 & 48
18 Wednesday	<i>11/16 topic continued;</i> and Introduction to Industrial / Organizational (I/O) Psychology	

20 Friday	EXAM THREE	
23 Monday	Social Psychology	Module 23 & 56
25 Wednesday: 27 Friday:	Thanksgiving Recess Thanksgiving Recess	
30 Monday	Disorders	Modules 49-51
December		
2 Wednesday	Therapies	Modules 52 & 53
4 Friday	DISCUSSION (7): Disorders & Therapy	NORTON: <i>Redfield Jamison</i> , p. 349-357 <i>Beck</i> , p. 380-385
7 Monday	Course Evaluations and Closing Remarks	
9 Wednesday	Final Exam Review	

Final Exam (1:30PM in our regular classroom):

DATE: 5th period: MON., 12/14 | 2nd period: TUES., 12/15

***NOTE: Any aspect of this syllabus and course schedule is subject to change.**