

The Science of Psychology
PSYC SW1001, section 002
Summer 2015

Course Information

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs
6:15 – 8:20 PM
614 Schermerhorn

Instructor Information

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Office: 356 Schermerhorn
Office Hours:
Thursday 5:00 – 6:00 PM

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the major concepts, issues, and research relevant to the field of psychology. The topics covered will include an overview of many of the fascinating research within the field of psychology, across levels of analysis from the biological to the cognitive to the social perspectives.

Course Overview

Why do human beings think, feel, and behave the way they do? This course provides an overview of the underpinnings of psychology and behavior. Past and current research will be presented within these major areas: physiological psychology (neuroscience), learning and motivation, sensation and perception, cognition, emotion, development, social psychology, personality, and abnormal and clinical psychology. Students will gain an understanding of major issues addressed currently within the field of psychological research such as the complex interactions between nature and nurture, of intelligence, and of the neural and social bases of human behaviors.

Course Objectives

The objectives for each student taking this course will be a bit different depending on your circumstances. If you are taking this course because you are interested in the fields of psychology, this course will provide you with a basic understanding of the concepts and research within the field. This course lays the foundation for those majoring in, or those with concentrations in psychology, along with those majoring in neuroscience and behavior.

Others may be taking this course to fulfill a science requirement. You may find that quite a bit of the science of psychology applies to other fields, including those that you are interested in and/or pursuing.

Finally, many of you may be involved in a pre-health track towards a future in medicine. As you may well know, questions pertaining to psychology have been newly added to the MCAT. These additions to the MCAT are new this year, but I will do our best to address related topics, although it is my hope that you will find the course in its entirety (even in its non-health related aspects) to be an engaging and enriching experience.

Grading

Exam 1:	20%
Non-Cumulative Exam 2:	25%
Non-Cumulative Exam 3:	35%
Paper:	15%
Attendance:	5%

The letter grade equivalent for your final grade for the course will be assigned according to the following scale:

97 – 100:	A+	89.9 – 87.0:	B+	79.9 – 77.0:	C+	69.9 – 60.0:	D
96.9 – 93.0:	A	86.9 – 83.0:	B	76.9 – 73.0:	C	59.9 & below:	F
92.9 – 90.0:	A-	82.9 – 80.0:	B-	72.9 – 70.0:	C-		

Exams

The exams will be your opportunity to demonstrate how well you have learned the material covered in the course. There will be three **non-cumulative** exams given during this course. The exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. As part of the exams, you will be responsible for both the material covered in lectures **and** the assigned readings of the textbook.

Paper

There will be one paper you will need to submit for this course. This paper should be two-pages and double-spaced, and will be due on the day of Exam #3 (see tentative schedule below). More information about this paper will be provided towards the latter part of the course, but you will be expected to understand and synthesize the information you have learned throughout the course so that I can see that you have a fundamental understanding of hypothesis driven research.

Course Policies

Absences

I will not be taking attendance. However, the faculty guidelines of Columbia University states that “Students are expected to attend every class meeting. Also, the six-week terms are so short that a student with three absences has missed one-quarter of the course”. Again, I will not be taking attendance, however, given the small size of the class, I will be able to assess who has not been attending class, and this will be reflected in your grade (see above for grading proportions). Also be aware that some of the material covered in lectures will NOT be contained in the textbook, and also note that the material on which I lecture will constitute the greater portion of the exams.

Lateness for Paper

Grades for late papers will generally be reduced by 10% for each day they are late. For the paper, if you contact me **prior** to the deadline, I may be willing to discuss the possibility of an extension. I generally prefer that you write high-quality papers rather than have you submit something rushed. There are very few reasons your papers may be submitted late, these reasons are unanticipated illness or family emergencies. If any of this is the case, please provide a note from your doctor, or your advising dean, explaining why you were unable to complete the assignment on time.

Class Etiquette

Cell phones are not permitted. Laptops may be used. However, please be considerate to those around you if you do use a laptop. I understand that there are many people who think they are gifted and capable of multi-tasking between in-depth understanding of the foundations of human thought and behavior, while checking 140-character status updates on Facebook or Twitter. If you believe that you are one of these gifted individuals, please be considerate of the fact that checking non-course-related materials on your laptop can be distracting to those around you.

Exam Scheduling

If you are unable to attend either of the exams, please contact me **as soon as possible**. For the most part, the only acceptable reason for missing an exam is due to serious illness/emergency. If such a situation should arise, make-up exams may be administered after receiving permission from your dean and myself. Please plan ahead: having multiple exams on a single day, or vacation plans, are NOT acceptable reasons for needing a make-up exam.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means presenting only your own work in your assignments. Taking credit for the work of others is a serious violation of the academic community, and anyone found to be guilty of cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero for that assignment and will be reported to the University. Information on what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in Columbia's Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity (<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>).

That said, if you have any questions about how to appropriately cite another's work or build upon someone else's ideas, please feel free to contact me.

Required textbook

Carson, N. R., Miller, H., Heth, C. D., Donahoe, J. W., & Martin, G. N. (2010). *Psychology: The Science of Behavior (Seventh Edition)*. Boston, MA: Pearson. ISBN: 9780205547869

Tentative Schedule

Below you will an overview of the topics to be covered, the respective dates for when these topics will be covered and the required readings. You are required to complete the assigned readings before each lecture. Please note that the lecture topics and assigned readings below are subject to revision.

<i>Class</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topics</i>	<i>Assigned Readings</i>
1	7/06	Introduction to the course	
2	7/07	Introduction to psychology	Chapters 1 & 2
3	7/08	The biology of behaviors	Chapter 3
4	7/09	Brain and its components: neuroanatomy	Chapter 4
5	7/13	Brain and its components: mechanisms of action	
6	7/14	Learning: associations	Chapter 5
7	7/15	Learning: biological basis of learning	
8	7/16	Exam #1 Memory: stage model of memory	Chapter 8
9	7/20	Memory: stage model of memory	
10	7/21	Memory: biological basis of memory	
11	7/22	Sensation: mechanisms of sensory transduction I	Chapter 6
12	7/23	Sensation: mechanisms of sensory transduction II	
13	7/27	Perception Perception/Consciousness	Chapter 7
14	7/28	Consciousness: attention and circadian rhythm	Chapter 9
15	7/29	Language: speaking, reading, and acquisition	Chapter 10
16	7/30	Non-Cumulative Exam #2 Language: speaking, reading, and acquisition	
17	8/03	Understanding and assessing intelligence	Chapter 11
18	8/04	Understanding and assessing intelligence Lifespan development	
19	8/05	Lifespan development	Chapter 12
20	8/06	Motivations, emotions	Chapter 13
21	8/10	Personality/Social Psychology	Chapters 14,15
22	8/11	Psychological Disorders	Chapter 16
23	8/12	Psychological Disorders	Chapter 17
24	8/13	Paper due Non-Cumulative Exam #3	

Syllabus is subject to revision. Updates will be posted on CourseWorks.