

Psychology 200: General Psychology (Spring 2012)

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Class Hours: MW 2:10-4:30 Office Hours: by appt Website: Moodle.rmc.edu

Course Description

This rigorous survey course introduces students to psychology and the process of scientific discovery. We discuss theory, methodology, research findings, and applications as we explore the fascinating field of behavior and mental processes. Topics include: neuroscience and the brain, learning, memory, consciousness, language, sensation, perception, intelligence, emotion, personality, motivation, development, psychological disorders and treatment, stress, and social psychology. Each member of the psychology department faculty makes a guest appearance to discuss his or her area of expertise. This course is required for all courses in the department above the 100 level. Partially satisfies the Area of Knowledge requirement in the Social Sciences. Four hours.

Course Objectives

- **HAVE FUN and STAY CURIOUS**

Knowledge:

- Abandon myths of pop psychology
- Gain an understanding of the breadth of the field of psychology
- Become familiar with terminology and current knowledge in the field
- Develop a clear understanding of the scientific method as it is used in psychological research

Skills

- Reading a science textbook
- Studying for a test
- Writing for a general scientific audience
- Improving critical thinking
- Applying psychological science to your own life

Every effort will be provided to make this class universally accessible. I want all students to be able to learn and enjoy my classes. Though "reasonable accommodation" is the legal right of people with disabilities, this course is designed to be universally accessible for students regardless of disability or any other individual categorization. If you feel that some characteristic (really anything) of yours will interfere with or complicate your learning in this class, please let me know as soon as possible, and we can consider together how to solve this problem.

Choice and Exploration

I designed this course to encourage student exploration as well as maximize student choice. The hope is that if you are allowed to develop and follow your curiosity, work on independent projects and shape your own education, you will learn more, and value the experience more. But I know that you don't want total free choice; you want some guidance from me. You may be curious about psychology but you might not know enough to know exactly what you are interested in. Let's say that you need to buy a new car, but you don't



know much about cars. You could go to a huge car lot, with every car imaginable, but without any advice on what you would like. Or you could go to an expert dealer, who just selects the right car for you without presenting any choice. Most

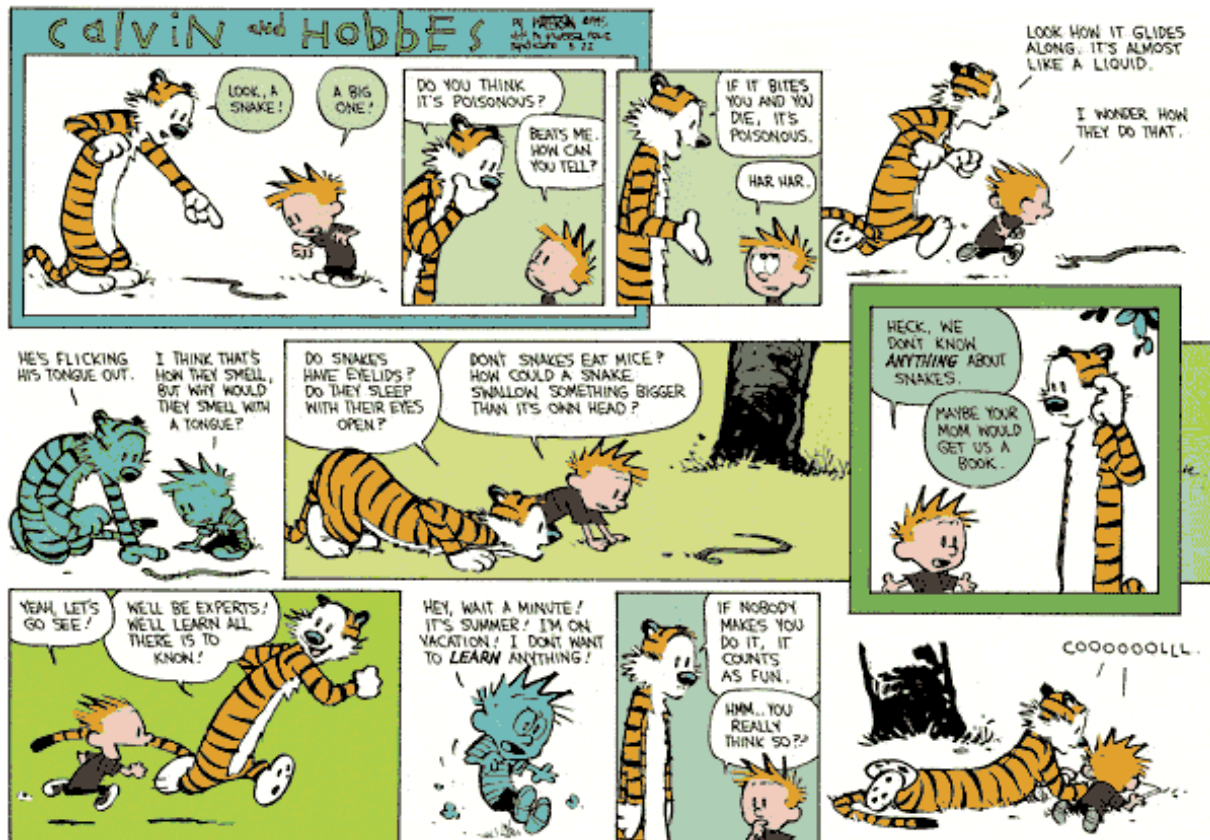


classes you have taken so far are probably closer to the second model, where the teacher structures the experience for you. This is going to try to be a bit more like the first. But, if you are like me, you want to go to a store that still has an expert who can offer advice, and who has selected a few some high quality items for you to choose from.

This class tries to give you plenty of choice, but I have selected, from the thousands of textbooks, videos, papers, books, and podcasts, a few that I think are excellent. From within those, you will have a fair amount of choice. **So, a word of warning: If you want to sit back, passive, and be guiding through a set of lectures, required projects, assignments and tests, you will find this class uncomfortable.** The sooner you start applying your curiosity and initiative, the better your experience will be. Even if this starts out uncomfortable, I think that this will serve you well in college, because you do have to shift from taking what is expected, to finding what you are interested in.

Mastery Goals vs. Performance Goals

Students are often concerned with demonstrating their *ability*. They see studying hard as producing the reward of better performance, compared to one's classmates. A student in this mindset has performance goals. Your goal is to *perform* well on exams and assignments compared to your classmates. A different kind of goal is when you want to improve, relative to your current state. With this goal, hard work leads to self-improvement, compared to one's own past. The ultimate goal is not a demonstration of performance, but mastery of a task. These are called mastery goals. Research in psychology has shown that having mastery goals can make learning better and more enjoyable as well as foster cooperation in the classroom.



I have designed this class to encourage mastery goals. Most of the grading is pass/fail. Rather than demonstrating ability or performance, for each assignment you must satisfy a set of criteria (a checklist) by devoting focused effort. I want to reward hard work, not ability or performance. If you have not completed the checklist, rather than grading your performance, I will tell you how to improve and allow you to hand it back in. In addition, mastery goals in group projects lead to more cooperation which should lead to better group projects.

This Class is Not a Game, but It Does Have Points!

While I don't think everything has to be like a good video game, some video games show how incentives can be applied to make a game fun, and keep us playing it. So, I am adopting a point system, similar to some games. You will get points for many different things in this class.

SUMMARY OF COURSE POINTS			
	points	possible	total possible
register for moodle	10	1	10
put up a picture in moodle	10	1	10
Syllabus quiz	10	1	10
do personal questionnaire	10	1	10
at home chapter quizzes	15	15	225
article summaries	30	10	300
radiolabs	25	20	500
ted talks	20	20	400
book reports	60	3	180
50 myths	25	3	75
<u>group activities</u>			
experiment movie	30	2	60
experiment re-enactment	30	2	60
in class quiz	10	10	100
in class discussion question	10	15	150
midterm	100	1	100
final	100	1	100
		total	2290

A few things to notice:

- 1) There is no curve. If you get 1000 points, you get an A. That is it. If everyone gets 1000 points, everyone gets an A. I would be very pleased if that happens.
- 2) There is no "percentage of your grade." That is because this is flexible. If you come to every class, do every single quiz, complete 5 papers, and 3 myth presentations, you can afford to score very low on the exams. **School policy requires that you attend the final exam**, but does not demand how much I weigh it in figuring your final grade.

- 3) Attendance policy: You “lose” points for missing class, **for whatever reason**. However, you can make that up by completing another assignment. Again, **I accept no excuses for missing class**. On the other hand, I offer everyone the opportunity to make up the points.
- 4) In order to help you keep pace, and to make it possible for me to grade everything turned in, there is a limit on how many assignments you can turn in per week. You will be limited to 90 points of individual non-quiz assignments per week (TED, radiolab, article summaries, book reports)
- 5) The final day to turn in assignments will be **Monday May 7th**. No assignments will be accepted beyond this date. Please plan accordingly. Further, if assignments turned in on this date do not pass, they will not be allowed to be turned in again.

6) Here is the grade range. The number listed is the lowest score needed for that grade.

A+	900
A	830
A-	800
B+	770
B	730
B-	700
C+	670
C	630
C-	600
D+	570
D	530
D-	500

7) Guest Experts

The field of psychology is broad, wide-ranging, and rapidly changing as new research leads to new discoveries. You will notice this breadth as we discuss neuronal communication one day, children's eyewitness recall the next, and symptoms of schizophrenia on the following day. There are entire graduate programs devoted to each subfield of psychology (e.g., each chapter of your text), and the faculty members in the Department of Psychology each have Ph.D.s in a different subfield. So that you can be taught by the experts in each field, those faculty members will guest lecture in our class when we cover their area of specialty. This has the added bonus of given you "six for the price of one" as you "shop" for an academic advisor and possibly a research collaborator if you decide to go on and major in psychology.

Readings

- Schacter, D.L., Gilbert, D.T., & Wegner, D.M. (2009). *Psychology*. New York: Worth.
- Lilienfeld, S.O., Lynn, S.J., Ruscio, J., & Beyerstein, B.L. (2009) *50 great myths of popular psychology*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings
Monday, February 6	Introduction	
Wednesday, February 8	Defining and Describing Psychology	Chapter 1
Monday, February 13	The Methods of Psychology (last day to add)	Chapter 2
Wednesday, February 15	Neuroscience and Behavior <i>Guest Expert: Dr. Kelly Lambert</i>	
Monday, February 20	Neuroscience and Behavior, Continued	Chapter 3
Wednesday, February 22	Time management and Writing	
Monday, February 27	Sensation and Perception	Chapter 4
Wednesday, February 29	Consciousness	Chapter 5
Monday, March 5	Memory <i>Guest Expert: Dr. Alva Hughes</i>	Chapter 6
Wednesday, March 7	Memory	

Monday, March 12	Learning	Chapter 7
Wednesday, March 14	Midterm Exam	
March 19- March 25	SPRING BREAK	
Monday, March 26	Emotion and Motivation	Chapter 8
Wednesday, March 28		
Monday, April 2	Catch-Up	
Wednesday, April 4	Language and Thought	Chapter 9
Monday, April 9	Intelligence	Chapter 10
Wednesday, April 11	Development <i>Guest Expert: Dr. Susan Parker</i>	Chapter 11
Monday, April 16	Development	Chapter 11
Wednesday, April 18	Personality	Chapter 12
Monday, April 23	Social Psychology <i>Guest Expert: Dr. Kristen Klaaren</i>	Chapter 13
Wednesday, April 25	Treatment of Psychological Disorders <i>Guest Expert: Dr. Bob Resnick</i>	Chapter 14
Monday, April 30	Disorders and Treatment	Chapter 15
Wednesday, May 2	Stress and Health	Chapter 16
Monday, May 7	Conclusion	Last assignments due
Wednesday, May 9	Review for Final Exam	
Tuesday May 15 2:00 to 5:00 pm	**** FINAL EXAM ****	

Class structure (and suggested study habits)

Plan for a single class period

Each class will be split into 4 half hour periods. In between each period there will be a 3-5 minute attention recovery period (rest break). During this time you will be free to text, chat, or close your eyes and zone out. **Given that you have this time, please do not text during the rest of the class.** Here is a rough schedule of each class:

1st period: Small group discussion. You will start each day will start out by discussing the question(s) for the chapter.

2nd period: lecture/demonstration

3rd period: lecture/ demonstration/ activity

4th period: presentations (group or single)

Mythbusters! Presentation Assignment

Present a myth of popular psychology

Take one of the 50 great myths of popular psychology, and expand it into a 5 minute presentation with accompanying presentation (5-7 slides ONLY).

First, state the myth in clear plain language, and perhaps paraphrase if this myth occurs in alternate ways.

Second, state the evidence for the prevalence of this myth (how many people believe this?). Here, a video, image or story might be appropriate to show how popular the myth is.

Third, present the evidence for this myth (if it is mere observation, or intuition, then state that)

Fourth, present an alternative hypothesis for the evidence.

Fifth, present the evidence against the myth, expanding on their treatment in the book. This should require you to find at least two of the articles cited in the book (look in the back of the book for the full citations)

Finally, present a simple, one or two sentence summary, including the myth and the fact that should replace it.

You will also be required to hand out in class a brief outline (patterned after the template below) summarizing the main points.

Grading checklist:

- 1) Was the myth stated in clear language
- 2) Was there evidence presented for the prevalence of the myth? (do a lot of people believe this myth? How do we know that?)
- 3) Is there any evidence for this myth? Why do people believe it?
- 4) What could be an alternative explanation for this evidence?
- 5) What is the evidence supporting this alternative view?
- 6) Does the presenter summarize with 1-2 sentences with a take-home message?
- 7) Are the slides easy to read? Not more than 20 words per slide? Is there at least 1 picture or video?
- 9) Can the class hear the presenter?

Sample Outline Template for Mythbusters Presentation

Myth #41:

- 1) There's recently been a massive epidemic of infantile autism
- 2) Evidence for prevalence of belief:
 - a. 48% of undergraduates believe that autism is caused by immunization shots
 - b. CBS informal poll: 70% of respondents believe there is an epidemic of autism
- 3) Alternative hypothesis: Rates of people who have autism have not increased, but its diagnosis and reporting has increased.
- 4) Evidence:
 - a. Looser criteria:
 - i. 1980 version of DSM – Need to get all 6 criteria to get diagnosed
 - ii. 1994 version: any 8 of 16 criteria
 - b. Increase in reporting
 - i. Schools required to provide precise counts
 - ii. Rain Man Effect : more popular media for autism, more public detection – detection bias
 - c. Study: Track prevalence using same diagnostic criteria (1994 -1998)
 - i. No increase, but diagnostic substitution
 - d. Vaccines and autism
 - i. Vaccination rates change, autism rates still go up
 - ii. Vaccines remove thimerosal, autism still goes up
- 5) Autism diagnosis is on the rise, but the actual incidence of the disorder is not. Despite many studies, and many changes in vaccines, there is no evidence that vaccines cause autism.

Psych 200: TED talk Summary Checklist

Problem

What is the problem that the speaker addresses?

Central claim

Is the speaker's central claim stated clearly and directly in the first two or three sentences?

Methods

The TED talks may not always describe an experiment, but the speakers do give evidence for their claim, is the evidence a personal story? A case study? An experiment? Describe what the evidence is and how it was gathered here

What did they measure and how did they measure it?

What did they manipulate or compare (how did their groups or variables differ?)

Evidence/results

What were the results of the study? (If there was a study described) If there was more than one, you are free to say "for example..."

Describe these in plain English like this: *People who studied did better on the test than people who did not study.* Rather than: *Group A was significantly different from group B in test performance.*

Conclusions

What does the speaker conclude and recommend for the future?

Is the talk cited in APA style, both in the text itself as well as at the end of your paper?

Organization

Is the paper organized into paragraphs?

Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?

Style

Is the paper have limited (0, 1 or 2) grammatical or spelling errors?

Does the paper limit the use of passive voice?

Does the paper have no direct quotes?

Does the paper improve on the style of grammar from last time?

Psych 200: Radiolab Summary Checklist

Central Claim

What is the topic of the episode?

Is the episode cited in APA style, both in the text itself as well as at the end of your paper?

Methods

Describe the details of an experiment or study featured in the episode (include the name(s) of the scientists who performed it, who was it conducted on, what were the methods, what were the results)

What did they measure and how did they measure it?

What did they manipulate or compare (how did their groups or variables differ?)

Describe one personal story featured in the episode. How does it relate to the science of the mind and brain described in the episode?

Relate to your life

Relate this episode to your own life in any way you see fit. You can tell me a brief story of yours that relates, or give a detail of the episode that you found particularly interesting and tell me why.

Organization

Is the paper organized into paragraphs?

Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?

Style

Is the paper have limited (0, 1 or 2) grammatical or spelling errors?

Does the paper limit the use of passive voice?

Does the paper have no direct quotes?

Does the paper improve on the style of grammar from last time?

Psych 200: Article Summary Checklist

Central claim

Is the author's central claim stated clearly and directly in the first two or three sentences?

Methods

What did they measure and how did they measure it?

What did they manipulate or compare (how did their groups or variables differ?)

Evidence/results

What were the results of the study?

Describe these in plain English like this: *People who studied did better on the test than people who did not study.* Rather than: *Group A was significantly different from group B in test performance.*

Conclusions

What do the authors conclude and recommend for the future?

Does their study have any limitations?

Do they leave any questions unanswered?

Is the paper cited in APA style, both in the text itself as well as at the end of your paper?

Organization

Is the paper organized into paragraphs?

Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?

Style

Is the paper have limited (0, 1 or 2) grammatical or spelling errors?

Does the paper limit the use of passive voice?

Does the paper have no direct quotes?

Does the paper improve on the style of grammar from last time?

Experiment Re-enactment or Movie Assignment

For this assignment, you and your group will re-enact an experiment. You will decide early on in the process how to divide up the tasks for this project. This can be done collaboratively, but you must turn in what each person will be doing.

You will need

Research: The experimental report itself, movies or documentaries describing the experiment, 3-4 articles which cite the experiment.

Script: You should write a script for exactly how a participant experienced the study or experiment. You will have 5-10 minutes to re-enact the study. You should begin with a little introduction, but then have different actors (your classmates) play different parts in the study. You can give them notecards to read, but try to draw their words and actions directly from the experiment itself. Sometimes it may be necessary to run the experiment twice, or in parallel, showing the difference between two (or more) groups. You may find it necessary to narrate some of the portion of the experiment, especially if non-human animals are involved. You should end with a summary of the results and conclusions and a brief discussion of how the experiment has been influential.

You will turn in to me (when you re-enact the experiment)

A plan. Breakdown into tasks, as well as which group member is responsible.

Example for Stanford Prison Experiment:

Joe: Prison Uniforms, white lab coats, find supporting documents, write introduction and discussion for script

Jane: prison bars, recruit actors, write methods section, find follow-up articles

A draft of the script and a list of the references you used. The script should be very detailed, and the reference list should be APA style.

Book Reports

Check with Dr. Riener for book recommendations:

As you read it, take notes.

You will be turning in:

2 pages of **hand-written** notes

3 page (typed) summary of the entire book (1000-1200 words)

2 page (typed) detailed summary of a single chapter (800-1000 words)

½ page reflection of some detail you found interesting (400 -500 words)

Academic Integrity Policies

You are expected to know and abide by the Code of Academic Integrity, found in the student handbook (Fish Tales). Note the violations listed below. Violations will be prosecuted according to the procedures laid out in the Code. In order to verify your compliance with the academic integrity code, be prepared to give me an electronic version of any work you submit in this class (e.g., papers and assignments) as well as the actual books and articles you cite in your work (or the complete internet address information if consulted online). Please do not hesitate to ask me for clarification if you have any doubts about the appropriate way to abide by these rules and standards as they apply in this particular course.

The following acts will be considered violation of this Code:

1. Committing plagiarism, which includes, in addition to the traditional definition - "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's original work," [the act of turning in, as one's own, work done wholly or in part by another person, The Random House College Dictionary, 1975, p. 1014].
2. Knowingly doing work for another person to turn in as his or her own, or knowingly permitting one's work to be used in this manner.
3. Copying another student's paper on an examination, test quiz, or in-class exercise, or reading another student's paper during such an exercise.
4. Knowingly permitting another student to copy another student's paper on an examination, test quiz, or in-class exercise, or to read another student's paper during such an exercise.
5. Using any unauthorized books, notes, or devices while taking an examination, test quiz, or in-class exercise.
6. Bringing unauthorized materials into the examination room contrary to the expressed directions of the instructor.
7. Violating any clearly expressed stipulation applied to homework, take-home tests, or similar exercise.
8. Gaining unauthorized access to examination or test papers before or after an examination or test. This includes those administered in previous terms if such access is specifically prohibited by the instructor.
9. Falsely reporting laboratory or field work as having been done, or deliberately falsifying the results.
10. Knowingly making a false statement to any faculty member or academic official of the College, in regard to an academic matter.
11. Deliberately defacing, mutilating, or damaging library, classroom, or laboratory materials or equipment, or the removing, or attempting to remove, the same from general use without authorization (e.g. hiding or misfiling).
12. Illicitly or maliciously accessing, altering, copying, using, or damaging computer software or files.
13. Illicitly or maliciously accessing, altering, copying, using, or damaging confidential academic records or materials.
14. Violating any other stated restriction placed by an instructor on the performance of academic work.