

Introduction to Psychology

PSY 2301, Section 003

Spring 2016

M, W 1:00pm – 2:15pm, Green Hall 4.428

Instructor: Noah Sasson, Ph.D.

Phone: 972-883-2541

Office: GR 4.116

Office Hours: W 2:30 – 3:30pm

Or by appointment

Email: nsasson@utdallas.edu

TA: Jon Shasteen, B.S.

Office: JO 2.301

Office Hours: M 11:45am – 12:45pm

Or by appointment

Email: jon.shasteen@utdallas.edu

General Core Area 080 Social and Behavioral Sciences

Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

Objectives of Core Area

Critical Thinking (CT): to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information

Communication (COM): to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS): to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

Social Responsibility (SR): to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the major domains, theories, and methods within the field of psychology. Because no prior knowledge of psychology is required or assumed, the course is designed to serve both as a foundation for psychology majors and minors, as well as a one-stop sampling of the field for interested non-majors. This is a survey course, and thus will cover *a lot* of material. We will discuss a wide-range of areas within psychology, including the biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, cognition, language, and emotion. We will also cover highlights from several subdisciplines within the field, such as developmental, social, and clinical psychology. The approach to the course is one that uses multiple perspectives to examine different aspects of the human experience.

My goal is to facilitate a broad appreciation of the major aspects of psychology, and to provide you with a better understanding of yourself and other people. Along the way, I'm hopeful that you will discover certain areas within psychology that you would enjoy exploring in more depth in the future.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe and explain the nature of psychology as a scientific discipline (PLO 1.1)
2. Describe and analyze major theoretical perspectives and overarching themes (PLO 1.2)
3. Use critical thinking to evaluate popular media and scholarly literature (CT)
4. Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats (e.g., summaries, integrations, critiques, technical reports) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, teaching, explaining, defending, persuading, arguing) (COM)
5. Identify and explain different research methods used by psychologists (EQS)
6. Demonstrate how psychological principles can explain and inform clinical issues, social issues, organizational issues, and public policy (SR and PLO 3.1)

Required Text

Gleitman, H., Gross, J., & Reisberg, D. (2011). *Psychology* (8th Edition), New York: Norton & Company.

Evaluation

Evaluation of student performance will be based upon a combination of exams, class participation, and a brief writing assignment due at the end of the semester.

Exams: Any material covered in lectures and/or reading assignments are fair game for the exams. A total of five exams will be administered. Each exam will be a combination of multiple-choice, true-false, fill in the blank and short answer questions. The first four exams will each count as 100 points towards your final grade. *Your lowest grade from these four exams will be dropped.* The fifth exam will be a final exam that counts 100 points. Approximately 3/4s of the final exam will cover material since the previous exam. The remaining quarter will consist of concepts and terms from earlier in the semester that are deemed to be the most critical components of the course. Exams will not be returned.

Make-up exams will NOT be offered. Missing one of the first four exams for any reason (e.g., illness, personal/family problems, dog ate your notes, etc.) will result in a grade of zero that may serve as your one dropped grade. In *extremely* rare cases, a makeup exam may be given at the instructor's discretion if verified documentation for legitimate absence (e.g., school-sponsored activity or religious observance) is provided.

Class Participation: You are expected to attend every class and to have completed assigned readings prior to your arrival. Class attendance will be recorded on occasion and contribute to your participation grade. Additionally, because I do not post my lecture notes, and because exams may cover material presented in class that does not appear in the textbook, class attendance will almost certainly improve your exam performance. I will not review material from missed lectures with students without a legitimate excuse. Your participation grade may also be derived from a variety of factors heavily related to regular attendance: participation in class discussion and in-class visibility.

Writing Assignment:

This brief writing (1 page minimum; 2 page maximum) worth 50 points is designed for you to evaluate psychological topics in the mass media. Your job is to find and read a recent news story or editorial from a reputable news source, either printed (e.g., New York Times, Dallas Morning News, Time Magazine) or online (e.g., CNN.com), that focuses on a psychological study, concept, or theory that relates to content covered in class and/or the textbook. Your essay should 1) cite the news article title, source and date of publication, and answer these questions: 2) What is the article about? 3) What is the psychological topic it covers 4) How is this coverage consistent or inconsistent with what you've learned about in this class? 5) What questions do you have about the topic that the article did not answer? The essay is pass/fail (e.g., 50 points or 0 points). If all five points above are addressed and the page requirement is met, you will receive 50 points.

Grades

Possible Points		Letter Grades	
Letter	Points	Letter	Percentage
Exam 1	100	A	93-100
Exam 2	100	A-	90-92
Exam 3	100	B+	87-89
Exam 4	100	B	83-86
Final Exam	100	B-	80-82
Attendance	50	C+	77-79
Writing Assignment	50	C	73-76
Total	600	C-	70-72
Total after dropping lowest exam	500	D+	67-69
		D	63-66
		D-	60-62
		F	59 or lower

No extra credit assignments will be offered.

Research Exposure Credit Requirement (REC):

One requirement of all students enrolled in this class is completion of two research exposure credits. Details about this requirement can be found on a separate handout distributed on the first day of class, the BBS Information Center on eLearning or at <http://bbs.utdallas.edu/undergraduate/rec.html>. Research exposure credits must be completed by May 2nd or your course grade will be lowered. For each credit you fail to complete, your course grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., for 2 missing credits, a B+ will become a B-).

Course Schedule

Month	Day	Topic	Chapter
August	22	Introduction / What is Psychology?	Prologue
	24	Research Methods	1
	29	Research Methods, ctd; Ethics	1
	31	Genetics and Evolutionary Contributions	2
September	5	NO CLASS: Labor Day	
	7	The Central Nervous System	3
	12	Exam 1	
	14	Sensation and Perception	4, 5
	19	Face Perception	
	21	Consciousness	6
	28	Learning	7
October	3	Learning, ctd	7
	5	Exam 2	
	10	Memory	8
	12	Thinking	9
	17	Language	10
	19	Intelligence	11
	24	Intelligence, ctd	11
	26	Exam 3	
	31	Motivation and Emotion	12
November	2	Social Psychology	13
	7	Social Psychology, ctd	13
	9	Development	14
	14	Development, ctd	14
	16	Exam 4	
	21	NO CLASS: Fall Break	
	23	NO CLASS: Fall Break	
	28	Personality	15
	30	Personality, ctd	15
December	5	Psychopathology	16
	7	Autism (Writing Assignment DUE)	
	TBD	Final Exam	

The topics listed on the syllabus refer in general terms to what will comprise that day's lecture. I do, however, reserve the right to change lecture topics if more time is needed on a topic or based upon class interest. Additional required readings may also be added.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations, which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/8836391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the

academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22 PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.