

PSY 111: Introduction to Psychology

Fall Semester 2015

Credits: 3

Prerequisite: none

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“The real question is not whether machines think, but whether men do. The mystery which surrounds a thinking machine already surrounds a thinking man.”

---B. F. Skinner

“That’s two independent thought alarms in one day. Willie, the children are over-stimulated. Remove all the colored chalk from the classrooms immediately.”

---Principal Seymour Skinner

Course Description:

For the student, this class will be an introduction to the study of behavior and mental processes within human beings. Psychology is a field that attempts to scientifically (key word here) figure out what makes us do the things we do. A few of the basic questions those in the field try to answer are things such as: How does a person know what’s going on around him/her? Why do we see what we believe we see? How do we remember things from yesterday, or from ten years ago? How do we learn to interact with one another? What is intelligence? Can we quantitatively measure it? How is my brain different from five years ago? How does a person qualify as having a mental disorder? Can mental illness ever be cured, or just subdued?

To answer questions like these we have to learn the vocabulary and methods of psychology. More exactly, the way psychologists describe things, and the ways in which they dredge out answers. Psychology is a social science; therefore language is an important piece of the puzzle to our studies. This acceptance of terms, combined with scientific methods allows us to avoid the pitfalls and restraints of unfounded beliefs, opinions, and general anecdotal evidence. But, as you will soon learn for yourself, psychology as a field is growing and expanding daily. I sincerely hope within you this course raises just as many questions as it answers.

Course Objectives:

I realize that you have outside commitments, other classes, athletics, work, family, etc., but in order to successfully complete this course you will have to assign a high priority to it – that’s just the way it is. The course is intensive, challenging, and demanding, and thus requires you to exert a considerable degree of self-discipline and self-motivation. But, I am sure you will find all of the learning interesting and worthwhile and on completion of the course you’ll be viewing the world in a completely different manner.

The objectives of this course are basic. First, to introduce you to the world of psychology and the work of those “in the trenches”, and secondly, to contribute to the larger puzzle that is your college educational experience. If you develop a good grasp of the materials presented in this course you should be able to understand some of the basic components underlying behaviors and mental processes of the human organism and the scientific methods used to ascertain them. You will then be able to comprehend, with a new, more skeptical eye, activities going on around us (in the media and in private) that have to do with the reasons and tendencies of human behaviors and the functioning of the human mind. As a bonus, you should also come away with an improved general ability to research and think about college-level concepts.

Course Content:

Week 1 – Aug. 19/21

Introduction and Chapter 1, Psychological Science

Week 2 – Aug. 24/Aug 28

Chapter 2, Neuroscience and Behavior

Week 3 – Aug. 31/Sept. 4

Chapter 3, Nature, Nurture, and Human Diversity

Week 4 – Sept. 8/11

Chapter 5, Sensation

Week 5 – Sept. 14/18

Chapter 6, Perception

Exam #1

Week 6 – Sept. 21/25

Chapter 4, Developing Through the Life Span

Week 7 – Sept. 28/Oct. 2

Chapter 7, States of Consciousness

Week 8 – Oct. 5/9

Chapter 8, Learning

Week 9 – Oct. 12/16

Chapter 9, Memory

Week 10 – Oct. 19/23
Chapter 10, Thinking and Language

Week 11 – Oct. 26/Oct. 30
Chapter 11, Intelligence
Exam #2

Week 12 - Nov. 2/6
Chapter 12, Motivation and Work

Week 13 – Nov. 9-13
Chapter 13, Theories and Emotion

Week 14 – Nov. 16/20
Thanksgiving week, video: “The Modern Brain”
Assignment to follow

Week 15 – Nov. 23/Nov. 26
Chapter 15, Personality
Essay Due

Week 16 – Nov. 30/Dec. 4
Chapter 16, Psychological Disorders

Week 17 – Dec. 7/11
Time needed if we are behind at the end of the year.

Week 18 – Dec. 14/18
Final Exams
Date and time to be determined.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

The formula for grades is as follows.

90-100% - = A
80-90% - = B
70-80% - = C
60-70% - = D
<59% - = F

No Incompletes will be given.

Exams will be multiple choice, true and false, matching and short answer.

Deadlines: Reading the assigned text is your responsibility, when you do so is completely up to you. It should be noted though that it is in your best academic interest to read material *before* the week of lecture/discussion as to aid in your understanding. Any deadlines are final and your work is due on the day specified (3:20 PM).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary defines plagiarism as: "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work." There will be *zero* tolerance of any form of academic dishonesty. If any evidence appears of students not doing their own work and/or of plagiarism, I will investigate the matter. If I conclude that such dishonesty occurred, the student in question will receive an automatic "F" for the course. Furthermore, I will report the matter to the appropriate university office and participate in any proceedings against the guilty party. **DO NOT CHEAT, PLAGIARIZE, or ENGAGE IN ANY OTHER FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY!** In the big picture, its just a bad idea. Many times the effort expended to cheat or pass something off as your own is equal to, if not more work than actually doing things the right way. Don't put both of us through all of the hassle.