

# Psychology 115: Introduction to Psychology

## Syllabus for Fall 2009

### Ritsche Auditorium 11:00 – 11:50am MWF

#### Instructors

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Office Hours

Mondays 9:00-11:00am  
Wednesdays 9:00-11:00am  
Fridays 9:00-11:00am

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Office Hours

Mondays 2:00-5:00pm  
Wednesdays 2:00-5:00pm  
Fridays 2:00-5:00pm

#### Course overview

This course provides an overview of the major disciplines and topics that comprise the science of psychology. It focuses on the fundamental concepts and facts of psychology as a science within a framework that emphasizes the functions of psychological mechanisms and how psychologists have gone about discovering and understanding them. Grades will be based on points earned from a pretest (7.5%), 12 quizzes (42%), three writing/critiquing (peer review) assignments (32%), attendance (11%) and a cumulative final exam (7.5%).

#### Required Materials

You will need two items for this class.

(1) The **text** for this course is:

Weiten, Wayne (2008). Psychology: Themes and Variations (Briefer Version, 7E, Loose Leaf Version). Wadsworth/Thomson Learning: Belmont, CA. ISBN: 9780495663775.

The text is available at the bookstores. The textbook is bundled with Thomson Now, which is a modular online learning and student study program that will supplement the textbook readings.

(2) We will be using the audience response system in Ritsche, therefore, you will need to purchase a **Response Pad (“clicker”)** for quizzing and attendance purposes. At the bookstore, you can purchase your clicker for \$24.00. You will also need to purchase an “activation card” (\$20). Using the information on the activation card, you will be able to activate your clicker via the Internet.

Our “Class Key” for CPS is: [L51571J887](#).

When you register your Clicker you will NEED TO ADD YOUR STUDENT ID – the system will not prompt you to do this, but it is imperative that you do, so that your scores on quizzes and attendance can transfer into D2L!!

## **Goals of the Course**

### **Goal 1. Theory and Content of Psychology**

Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology. Students will be able to:

- 1.1 *Describe the nature of psychology as a discipline*
  - a. Explain how and why psychology uses science to study human behavior.
  - b. Identify the primary goals of psychology as a discipline: describe, understand, predict, and control human behaviors, attitudes, and affective responses.
- 1.2 *Use the concepts, language, and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomenon*
  - a. Identify antecedents, process variables, and outcomes of human behavior and thought processes
  - b. Describe behavior and thought processes of human beings using empirical support.
- 1.3 *Explain major perspectives of psychology (e.g., behavioral, biological, cognitive, evolutionary, humanistic, psychodynamic, and sociocultural)*
  - a. Compare and contrast the major theoretical perspectives of psychology: Psychodynamic, Behavioral, Biological, Cognitive, Humanistic, Evolutionary, and Cross-cultural.
  - b. Explain examples of human behavior using multiple perspectives of psychology
- 1.4 *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology*
  - a. Demonstrate understanding of theory and research related to the following content areas of psychology:
    1. Biological bases of behavior
    2. Sensation and perception
    3. Learning and memory
    4. Cognition and Intelligence
    5. Personality
    6. Psychological disorders, treatments of disorders, and stress
    7. Social behavior and applied psychology
  - b. Explain and describe different research methods for studying psychological phenomenon
  - c. Identify unifying themes within the discipline of psychology
    1. Psychology is empirical
    2. Psychology is theoretically diverse
    3. Psychology evolves in a sociohistorical context
    4. Behavior is determined by multiple causes
    5. Behavior is shaped by culture
    6. Heredity and environment jointly influence behavior
    7. Human experience of the world is highly subjective
  - d. Explain ethical considerations in studying human behavior

### **Goal 2. Research Methods in psychology**

Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation. Students will be able to:

- 2.1 *Describe the basic characteristics of the science of psychology*
  - a. identify steps involved in using the scientific method
- 2.2 *Explain different research methods used by psychologists*
  - a. Compare and contrast research designs in terms of controllability and causation

## **Goal 4. Application of Psychology**

Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues. Students will be able to:

- 4.1 *Describe the major applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling, industrial/organizational, school, and health)*
  - a. Compare and contrast clinical vs. counseling psychology
  - b. Identify how psychological principles are applied to organizations.
- 4.2 *Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems, such as:*
  - a. Using coping strategies in varying stressful situations.
  - b. Identify symptoms and treatment of psychological disorders.
  - c. Understanding how expectations, heuristics, and mental sets help/hinder problem solving
  - d. Identify barriers to solving problems
  - e. Understand methods of testing and measuring psychological constructs
- 4.4 *Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as they relate to everyday life.*
  - a. Explain how a chosen topic of psychology impacts student's individual behavior
  - b. Explain how a topic learned in the course can be utilized to decrease, modify or improve a chosen behavior/attitude of the student

## **Goal 7. Communication Skills**

Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

*7.1 Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats (e.g. essays, correspondence, technical papers, note taking) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, defending, persuading, arguing, teaching).*

- a. Demonstrate effective writing and evaluation skills using Calibrated Peer Review essay assignments.

The list below presents content learning goals of the course. These represent the major concepts that we want you to retain years after you take this class. They will guide our teaching and testing.

1. Appreciate the weaknesses (and strengths) of intuition and casual observation that lead to the need for social science.
2. Understand basic social science research methodology including:
  - a. the three causal explanations for a correlation
  - b. the main components of true experiments
  - c. the importance of experiments in determining causality
3. Explain the fundamentals of neuronal transmission and describe the functions of major parts of the brain.
4. Explain how addictions are created in the brain.
5. Explain how nature and nurture work together in creating almost all psychological characteristics.
6. Understand that sensory/perceptual processes are influenced in ways that make experience less than an accurate representation of reality.
7. Understand the reciprocal relationship between the brain and behavior
8. Explain the fundamentals of classical and operant conditioning.
9. Describe the information processing model of memory.
10. Understand that memories are constructed, and subject to various sources of error.
11. Explain the elements of major personality theories, such as psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic perspectives.
12. Understand the power of the situation to influence behavior.

**Communication** There are several resources available to you for help with this class.

**Questions about grades?**

We have set up a course email address: [psychta@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:psychta@stcloudstate.edu). This email address will be maintained by graduate teaching assistants who are responsible for the following:

1. **maintaining the grades** for the class
2. dealing with **testing problems/questions**
3. posting **extra credit points** on D2L.
4. answering **basic questions about CPR** (e.g., login problems)

If you have a test-related problem or other basic grade question (such as a missing test score, etc.), please send an email to this course email address.

**Would you like to review the answers to a particular quiz and/or learn about effective study strategies?**

There are several Teaching Assistants who will be helping us this semester. These TAs will have several duties, including meeting with students. They can be consulted for help with the following:

1. reviewing questions and answers on any given quiz
2. identifying effective study strategies
3. general questions about lecture, CPR (see below)

**If you're sick and need to miss a class or a quiz?**

We recognize that there are several reasons why you may be unable to attend class on a given day. To accommodate this, we have built what we call a **“no excuses needed”** class. This means that the schedule allows you to be absent for several days throughout the semester **without any sort of penalty**. So, if you are sick and need to miss a class, there is no need to contact us to let us know. Here's how this will work:

1. **QUIZZES**: there are 14 scheduled – but only 12 of them will count towards your grade
2. **ATTENDANCE**: there are **27** non-quiz, lecture days (NOT including the 3 introduction days) attendance on **20** of these days will count towards your grade

The writing assignments and final exam, however are **mandatory**, meaning that you must complete these tasks with the rest of the class in order to earn those points (see details below).

**Questions about what you learned in lecture?**

Please email your question to the Professor who delivered that lecture. To help us stay organized, **please include the text, “intro”, in the subject line of your email**. Please use **only your huskynet email account** when sending us email (see note below about SCSU official email policy).

**Other concerns?**

Please email one of the Professors. To help us stay organized, **please include the text, “intro”, in the subject line of your email**. Please use **only your huskynet email account** when sending us email (see note below about SCSU official email policy).

**“Pager” feature in D2L – DO NOT USE!!!**

Please, do **NOT** use the PAGER function within D2L (the little black box in the upper right hand corner of the screen) to contact us. We do not believe that this is a useful communication tool, and pager messages will not be checked by the instructors during the semester.

**Course Requirements**

Your grade for this class will be based on a possible total of **936 points** in the following categories:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>How Many?</b>	<b>Each worth how many points?</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Pretest	1	70	70
Attendance	20	5	100
Quizzes	12	36	432
Writing Assignments	3	100	300
Final Exam	1	70	70
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR COURSE</b>			<b>972</b>

**Quizzes**

You will have the opportunity to take **14 quizzes** this semester. Each quiz covers one chapter and will have 12 questions (each worth 3 points). Approximately half of the questions will come from lectures; the other half will be from the text. Aside from quiz #1(which is on Friday, Sept 4<sup>th</sup>), you will take the quizzes in class **each Monday** at the beginning of class, using SCSU’s classroom response system. There will be an 18-minute time limit on each quiz (one and a half minutes per question).

**THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE QUIZZES!**

However, we will drop your two lowest quiz scores at the end of the term. Thus, you can miss any two (2) quizzes for any reason without penalty or need to make it up. For this reason, we will **not** grant requests to make up quizzes.

**If you forget your clicker, you will not be able to take the quiz, and will have a zero for that quiz!**

You will NOT be allowed to refer to your textbook OR your notes during the time that you are taking the quiz.

## Writing Assignments

In addition to the quizzes, you will participate in a unique Web-based writing and critical thinking activity called **Calibrated Peer Review** (CPR). There will be three (3) CPR assignments worth 100 points each. For the first CPR Assignment, you will receive a minimum of 75 points JUST FOR COMPLETING the assignment. **The CPR assignments have strict deadlines.**

**If you miss the text-entry deadline, you will not be able to complete the assignment!**

For each assignment, you will:

1. Use specific guidelines to write a short essay
2. Learn how to review other students' essays using fairly objective criteria
3. Have your essay reviewed (anonymously) by 3 randomly selected classmates
4. Review and grade 3 of your classmates' essays
5. Review and grade your own essay in light of your reviewing experience

You must complete *all* of these steps in order to get full credit.

## Attendance

At some point during each lecture, the professor will take attendance using the audience response system. **Thus, you should bring your clicker with you every time you come to class!** There are a total of 27 non-quiz, lecture days. For each lecture you attend, you will earn 5 points, with a maximum of 100 possible points.

**IF YOU DO NOT BRING YOUR CLICKER TO CLASS, YOU CANNOT EARN ATTENDANCE FOR THAT DAY!!!**

## Pre-test

The pre-test is worth 70 points. We will use results from the pre-test and the final exam to evaluate your learning of the concepts covered in the class. The pre-test will be available for you to take at specified times on Desire2Learn (see course schedule for these times). This test is mandatory. You may not skip it without losing points.

We expect that you will find the pre-test difficult and your score will be low. Therefore, at the end of the semester, you will receive a bonus added for the degree of improvement between pre-test and the final exam. The bonus equals 1.5 times the size of the improvement score. The bonus system ensures that even if you do poorly on the pretest, you can still earn back all the points by doing well on the final exam.

## Final Exam

On **Monday, December 14th at 10:15am in Ritsche Auditorium** (the finals period for this class), we will administer both the final quiz along with the final exam for the class. The exam will be cumulative, meaning that **it will cover the all of the material** that we covered during the semester. You will NOT be allowed to refer to your text OR your notes while taking this exam. The exam will consist of 70 questions. All of the questions will come from the previous 14 quizzes.

## **Grading**

Final grades for this class will be awarded according to the following cutoffs:

greater than 876	A
779 - 875	B
681 - 778	C
584 - 680	D
Less than or equal to 583	F

Please check your grades and extra credit points periodically via the [D2L gradebook](#). You have **two (2) weeks** from the date of a quiz or assignment to notify us of any error. Beyond two weeks, we reserve the right to make changes only for incorrect calculations or entry errors.

## **Extra Credit Opportunities (a maximum of 60 points)**

You may earn up to 60 extra credit points by participating in some combination of activities, described below. To take advantage of most of them, you need to regularly check the "Extra Credit Opportunities" link on the D2L announcements page to know when they are available.

- **Participate in psychology experiments** (15 points per hour, accrued on a half-hour basis). These opportunities will be announced in class and/or posted on the "Sona-Systems" website. The link for the web page is: <http://stcloudstate.sona-systems.com>. The system (Sona-Systems) **automatically tracks your participation**. You do not need to collect receipts for your participation or turn in any paperwork to get your points; participate in an experiment, monitor your points on the Sona-Systems website, and check that your points get posted on D2L **at the end of the semester**.
- **Write a short report on any APPROVED activity on campus (e.g., attend lectures, movies, panel discussions, or presentations)** (15 points per event, unless otherwise noted). These opportunities will be posted on the course Web site. Although we may announce opportunities in class, in general, it is your responsibility to check the Web site regularly for unannounced opportunities. **To get the points:** Check the link for events on the 115 web page, follow the instructions on what to report (from the EC link on the 115 webpage), and submit your completed report to the "Extra Credit" Dropbox in D2L. If your grade for an extra credit assignment has not been posted within **two weeks of submitting the assignment**, please send a note to the course email: [psychta@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:psychta@stcloudstate.edu).
- **Attend TA activity sessions** (15 pts per session). These enrichment sessions always include an interactive or participatory activity related to the current topic. They will be scheduled at various days and times during the week. There will be two sessions each week. You may only attend one during any given week. The TA will take attendance.

### **SCSU E-mail Policy**

It is now official SCSU policy that e-mail communications between HuskyNet e-mail accounts constitute an official record of communication between students and professors and staff (see [http://huskynet.stcloudstate.edu/policies/stu\\_email\\_official.asp](http://huskynet.stcloudstate.edu/policies/stu_email_official.asp)). This policy was adopted because HuskyNet provides a highly reliable back-up record of all e-mail sent and received and because all accounts are Web-accessible from anywhere. We will only send e-mail from and to HuskyNet accounts and strongly suggest that you do the same. Therefore, it is imperative that you check your HuskyNet e-mail appropriately often for this and all your classes. If you do write from another account, we will reply only to your HuskyNet account! It is advisable to use your HuskyNet account for all school-related communication and to use other accounts for personal matters. Finally, PLEASE always sign your name to e-mails.