

Science of Psychology

PSYC W1001

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Kathleen M. Taylor, Ph.D.
e-mail: kt200@columbia.edu

Office: 356 Schermerhorn Extension
Office Hours: Posted on Courseworks

Welcome to Psychology!! Why do people act the way they do, feel the way they do, think the way they do? We will explore different answers to this question ranging from the biological theories (it's all in the brain) to the social theories (it's all about the influences around us), and examining successes (learning, memory, intelligence, consciousness) failures (psychopathologies) and treatments (biomedical and psychotherapies). Emphasis is placed on scientific analysis of behavior, understanding theories, and interpreting research findings, with the ultimate goal of understanding more about human behavior from a scientific perspective.

Text: *Psychology* by Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner, 2nd Edition. The text is available at both the Columbia Bookstore and at BookCulture. You can also purchase access to an online version from CourseSmart.com at a significantly reduced price relative to a new text. There are copies of the text available on reserve in the Science Library located in the NWC Building (the new building at 120th and B'way). Supplemental readings will be posted on Courseworks.

Exams and Grading: There are 4 exams for this course, 3 semester exams and a cumulative final. Semester exams cover lecture, text and supplemental reading material, results of class demonstrations, and any material presented through additional media sources (videos, demonstrations, etc.). Each exam will cover the material since the previous exam. The cumulative final exam will be a multiple choice exam and will cover all the material from the class. The lowest test grade from the 4 exams (3 semester exams and the cumulative final) will be dropped, and your course grade will be calculated from the scores on the remaining 3 exams. Course grades are calculated as follows:

Exams = 30% each Written Assignment = 5% Experimental Participation = 5%

The method used for determining letter grades is described in detail in the Grading Policies file posted on Courseworks.

Exams must be taken at the scheduled time unless you have been granted an excused absence by Prof. Taylor *prior to* the scheduled exam. Excused absences are only granted for extreme reasons such as hospitalization, or unavoidable conflict. Minor illness (colds, flu) are annoying, but insufficient cause to miss an exam, as are travel conflicts. Unexcused absence from an exam will result in your being asked to withdraw from the class or receive a failing grade. *There is no option to make up a missed exam for any reason.* If you have an excused absence, that exam will have a score of 0 and will be factored in to your course grade as your lowest exam score. An excused absence from a semester exam means that you are required to take the cumulative final exam at the scheduled time. You cannot pass this course if you miss two semester exams. If you are satisfied with your course grade based on the 3 semester exams, you may choose not to take the final exam; the final exam will then count as your lowest exam score.

Please see the Exam Policies document posted in Courseworks for a complete description of all exam policies for this course.

Final Exam Scheduling: The projected final exam date is Wednesday, December 19 from 9a-12p. There is no option to take the final at an alternate time or on an alternate date. Please check the Registrar website to confirm the final exam date and time.

Short Answer Quiz: In the Test & Quiz section of Courseworks a typical exam short answer question will be available from 5 pm on Wednesday, September 19 until noon on Sunday, September 23. You must log in and answer this question during this time. Your grade on this question will be part of your grade on the first semester exam. Comments on your answer and a complete answer to the question will be posted on Courseworks prior to the first semester exam.

Written Assignment: Find a popular press account of a psychological finding from this year. Read the original report, and provide a critique of the secondary (popular) report. Specific details on the written assignment are posted in Courseworks, along with directions for submitting the assignments electronically. Written assignments are due on Friday, Nov. 16th by 5pm. Late assignments must be submitted by Friday, Nov. 23rd and will only receive half credit.

Research Participation: This semester you will have the opportunity to experience first-hand what happens in a psychology research project by participating in experiments currently being conducted by faculty members and graduate students in the Psychology Department. A representative from the Psychology Department will stop by our class early in the semester to describe this requirement. A summary of this information will be posted on Courseworks. If you are under 18 years old, and will not turn 18 before the end of the term, or if you have ethical objections to the experimental research requirement, please see Prof. Taylor by Sept. 30th to arrange an alternate assignment. If you have any questions about the requirement or getting credit for your experiments please contact the department research representative.

General Tips and Advice: Course attendance, and on-time arrival, is most strongly recommended. Please be considerate of your classmates by not arriving late or departing early. If you are late please do not disrupt other students - sit in the back or on the edge of the classroom. PowerPoint slides from each lecture will be posted on Courseworks, but these outlines are brief and are not meant to substitute for attendance. You are responsible for all material covered in the course. If you miss a lecture, please find a classmate willing to share course notes.

501 Schermerhorn is an e-classroom with wireless internet access. Please be considerate and resist the temptation to play games, surf the web, or conduct other non-class related activities during the lecture. All cell phones must be turned to silent mode at the beginning of class.

Keep up with the reading in the text. The book has a great deal of information and it will probably take longer than you think to read and study each chapter. Use the lecture slides and the study questions from each lecture to prepare for the exams. Some study questions will cover material not covered in lecture. The study questions at the end of each lecture will include all possible exam topics – if you thoroughly understand and can answer these questions you should do quite well in the course. Your text is a resource, not something to memorize. Refer to the Study Tips file posted on Courseworks for more hints on how to effectively prepare for exams.

Disability Services: If you require accommodation for a disability, please notify the Office for Disability Services and your instructor at least 2 weeks prior to the first exam. If you believe you are eligible for testing accommodations you must register with ODS as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

Sep. 5	Course Introduction, Research Methodology in Psychology (Chs. 1 and 2)
Sep. 10, 12	Neuroscience and Behavior (Ch. 3)
Sep. 17, 19	Sensation and Perception (Ch. 4) Short Answer Question Open Sept. 19 through Sept. 23rd
Sep. 24, 26	Consciousness (Ch. 5) Memory (Ch. 6)
Oct. 1, 3	Memory (Ch. 6) Exam #1 (Chapters 1 through 6)
Oct. 8, 10	Learning (Ch. 7)
Oct. 15, 17	Emotion and Motivation (Ch. 8)
Oct. 22, 24	Language and Thought (Ch. 9)
Oct. 29, 31	Intelligence (Ch. 10) Development (Ch. 11)
Nov. 5, 7	University Holiday– <i>No Lecture</i> Exam #2 (Chapters 7 through 11)
Nov. 12, 14	Personality (Ch. 12) Social Psychology (Ch. 13) <i>Written Assignment is due by Friday, Nov. 16 at 5pm</i>
Nov. 19, 21	Social Psychology (Ch. 13) Psychological Disorders (Ch. 14) <i>Late Written Assignments must be submitted by Friday, Nov. 23 at 5pm.</i>
Nov. 26, 28	Psychological Disorders (Ch. 14)
Dec. 3, 5	Treatment of Psychological Disorders (Ch. 15) Stress and Health (Ch. 16)
Dec. 10	Midterm #3 (Chapters 12 through 16)
Dec. 19	<i>Projected Date for Final Exam (9a – 12p)</i>

** Any changes to this schedule will be announced in lecture.*