

Syllabus

Classes meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10–10:50 AM in SCCT-3021

Contact information for Prof. Williams

Email: kewillia@hamilton.edu Office: SCCT-3038

Drop-in office hours: Wednesdays & Fridays 11:00am-12:00pm

By appointment: please email me

Teaching Assistant: McQueen Li

Email: yli9@hamilton.edu Location: SCCT-3060

Drop-in office hours: Tuesdays and Saturdays, 6:30-8:00pm

Course Materials

Gross, J., Schmader, T., Martin Hard, B. & Anderson, A. (2023). *Interactive Psychology: People in Perspective* (2nd edition). Note: other readings will be available electronically through Blackboard or provided in class.

Course Description

This course will provide a broad introduction to the field of psychology: the scientific study of mental processes and behavior. By the end of the semester, you will (1) have a general understanding of psychology as a scientific discipline; (2) have a foundation to address psychological questions with appropriate research methods; and (3) develop the ability to critically and constructively evaluate psychological findings reported in both scientific publications and the popular press.

The course is divided into units grouped around three major questions: **How do we think and learn?** (learning, cognitive development, memory), **How do we perceive the world around us?** (nervous system, perception, emotions, psychopathology), and **How do we interact with others?** (attachment, social cognition, social influence, personality).

The field of psychology is vast. This course will expose you to many subfields, theoretical perspectives, and methodologies. However, the material discussed will necessarily be selective. I hope that this course stimulates your intellectual curiosity and inspires you to pursue additional learning in the topics that best fit your specific interests.

Course Goals

This course is designed to meet **Hamilton's educational goals**, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) **Intellectual Curiosity and Flexibility.** As human beings, we have intuitions about why people think and behave the way they do. Often these intuitions are drawn from our own personal experiences. Yet, scientific evidence frequently contradicts these assumptions. This course will provide you with the tools to critically explore human behavior using the scientific method, and, in the process, may challenge your beliefs and expectations.
- 2) **Understanding Cultural Diversity.** In this course, you will learn about the myriad differences between people, as well as the great many commonalities among them. By

- learning how gender, culture, disability, and other memberships influence perception and behavior, you will increase your understanding of psychology and see its application to social issues and policies.
- 3) Ethical, Informed, and Engaged Citizenship. Psychology can help us understand why people think, feel, and act the way they do. If we want to address a societal problem, understanding the underlying psychology behind the behavior in question can help us to best design effective interventions and bring about the desired change.

Course Structure

Class will include a combination of discussions, demonstrations, and lectures. You are expected to be fully present (i.e., not texting, not on social media, etc.), and to participate by listening and engaging. My assumption is that you have read all the assigned reading before coming to the class for which it is assigned. Sometimes we will cover the assigned readings in class, other times we will not. Regardless, you will be responsible for all assigned readings in addition to all materials presented in class. You will be expected to go beyond simply *recalling* this information; instead, you will be asked to *understand, critique, and apply* this information. To reach this goal, you will need to read, re-read, and—most importantly—*think about* the information you are consuming. This course covers a considerable amount of material, so make sure that you keep up with the reading and assignments. If you find yourself struggling with any of the material or concepts, please seek help: email me, stop by my office hours, make an appointment, or meet with the Teaching Assistant.

Classroom Conduct

To minimize distraction to both users and fellow students, the use of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets) is not permitted in class. If you have a learning need that requires exemption from this rule, please email me.

You are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to actively and respectfully participate in every class. Sharing your comments, questions, ideas, and thoughts is highly encouraged. I may also call on you in class to ask a question about your opinion or about the material. I will not formally take attendance. There are legitimate reasons to miss class, and if you have one, I'd appreciate if you told me (beforehand if possible). Be aware that if you miss multiple classes, you will find it hard to keep up with course material and it will inevitably hurt your grade on exams.

Blackboard

You will be using the course Blackboard site to obtain assignment details and instructions, to access course materials (e.g., syllabus, lecture slides, readings), and to submit assignments. Your grades will also be posted on Blackboard. Announcements will be emailed through and posted on Blackboard. You are expected to check Blackboard and your email daily. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, please get help early - don't wait until a deadline to ask!

Course Requirements

Participation

Your active, focused, and respectful engagement in the learning experience will enhance your mastery of the subject and benefit our class as a whole. Your participation will be evaluated

based on your effort (e.g., attendance, punctuality, clear class preparation, attempts to contribute to class discussion) and the quality of your participation (e.g., insightfulness of comments made in class, demonstrated respect for your classmates' contributions). If you feel nervous about speaking in class, please come see me so that we can work together to increase your comfort level.

Quizzes

You will have a quiz nearly every week. Quizzes will be posted on Blackboard, and will be available from Thursday to Sunday night. The quizzes will be timed for 180 minutes, but should require no more than an hour to complete. The quizzes will be multiple choice, open book, and you must do them by yourself. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. The quizzes are aimed at bolstering your foundational understanding of the material, and target the building blocks you'll need to excel on the higher-level thinking questions found on your exams. *Lateness Policy: Because your lowest quiz grade is dropped, the quizzes are due by their posted deadline without exception.*

Exams

There will be two non-cumulative exams, each taken at the end of the corresponding unit. Exams may include fill-in-the-blank, matching, short answer, and essay questions, and will assess your understanding of the concepts, principles, theories, controversies, terms, and findings of the field, as well as your ability to apply your knowledge. In addition to recognizing and recalling course material, you will be expected to demonstrate a level of critical thinking in your responses, and may be asked to apply what you know to new information. *Lateness Policy: If an extreme circumstance (e.g., family or medical emergency, pre-approved university-sanctioned activity) prevents you from attending the exam, you must contact me via email or in-person (preferably prior to the exam date) to schedule an alternative time to take the exam. Written documentation will be required. When permission is granted, make-up exams must be completed within one week of the scheduled exam. Students who miss an exam without a documented excuse will receive a score of zero.*

Final Exam

The final exam is currently scheduled for **Tuesday, December 16th, from 7:00-10:00 PM**. It will be composed of two sections. The first section will be a non-cumulative exam covering the class and text material since the second exam. The second section will be cumulative and will require you to integrate material from the entire semester. More details about the final exam will be provided later in the semester. *Lateness Policy: Students who miss the final exam will receive a score of zero. No make-up finals will be offered, so please plan accordingly.*

Response Paper

To help you prepare for the cumulative portion of your final exam, you will complete a brief (2-page) paper in response to a prompt that will require you to integrate course material from across the semester. The paper is due via Blackboard on **Wednesday, December 3rd, by 11:59pm**. More information will be provided in class. *Lateness Policy for Response Paper: In the interest of fairness to students who complete their papers on time, any written assignment handed in more than five minutes past the start of class will be marked down by 10% of the potential points (i.e., a complete letter grade), with an additional 10% markdown every 24 hours. Assignments turned in more than three days late will receive a grade of zero.*

Please upload assignments early and verify that your submission was successful. If you have any questions about the assignment, contact me as soon as possible before the assignment is due. I am here to help you, but it is your responsibility to ask for help if you need it.

Debates

You will participate in a group debate project with other students in the class. The oral presentation of your debate will be on either **December 8th** or **December 10th** during our regularly scheduled class. *Lateness Policy for Debates:* *You must be present during your assigned presentation date or you will receive a zero on this assignment.*

Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit may be earned in three ways (described below). The extra credit points will be added to your final grade for the course. Five extra points will boost your grade by 1%; this is the maximum amount that you may earn. Extra credit may not be used to increase a final grade from an A to an A+, nor will it shift a failing grade to a passing grade. All extra credit must be completed by 5pm on Friday, December 12th.

- 1) Participating in Psychology Department-sponsored Research Studies. You may earn extra credit by participating in research studies conducted by faculty and students in the Psychology Department. For every ½ hour of participation, you will be awarded 1 extra credit point. Study participation is tracked using Hamilton's web-based experiment interface (<http://hamilton.sona-systems.com>). You are responsible for making sure your participation tally is accurate. If your tally is inaccurate or you are having difficulty accessing the web-based interface, please contact the Participant Pool Coordinator (sona@hamilton.edu). You may cancel a study appointment at any time without penalty. However, we ask that if you plan to cancel, please be considerate of the researchers' time and cancel as early as possible (24 hours recommended). There is no point penalty or deduction if you do not attend a session that you have signed up for. However, **failure to attend TWO study sessions without proper cancellation will result in removal from the Sona system** and you will not be able to earn any additional extra credit points for any course by participating in research studies for the remainder of the semester. I highly encourage you to participate in research to learn more about the empirical science of psychology.
- 2) Reading Journal Articles. You may earn one extra credit point by reading original psychological research in an area of interest to you and writing a summary of the article(s). To receive extra credit, you must turn in the first page of the article (with the abstract) along with a typed summary of the article that includes more information than what was presented in the abstract. Each write-up that demonstrates in-depth understanding of an article can earn up to one extra credit point. The article must come from a peer-reviewed psychology journal and not from popular media or web sites. If you are uncertain about a particular article, run it by me before writing the extra credit assignment.
- 3) Attending Departmental Lectures/Colloquia. You may earn extra credit by attending talks by visiting psychologists. These opportunities are not guaranteed to occur, but if available they will be announced during class. To earn an extra credit point, email me two paragraphs – the first summarizing the talk, and the second describing what you found most interesting about it. Each talk will boost your grade by 0.5%.

Grading

Your grade in this course is based on the percentage of total points you earn. This is an absolute scoring system and is not based on a curve. You are not in competition with each other. If you are not doing as well as you like, make use of scheduled office hours or make an appointment to see me. See me early in the semester for help. I am here to help you learn, so do make use of my office hours. If you have questions about grading or about your standing in the course, please come to my office. Please note: **introductory psychology is often more difficult than students expect it to be.**

The following grading system will apply:

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation	10
Quizzes	10
Exams 1 & 2 (20% each)	40
Final Exam	25
Response Paper	5
Debate	10
Total	100

Grade	% of points	Grade	% of points
*A+	97.5-100	C	73.5-77.4
A	93.5-97.4	C-	70.5-73.4
A-	90.5-93.4	D+	67.5-70.4
B+	87.5-90.4	D	63.5-67.4
B	83.5-87.4	D-	60.5-63.4
B-	80.5-83.4	F	≤60.4
C+	77.5-80.4		

*A+ cannot be earned via extra credit

Grade Disputes

If I mark an exam/quiz response as incorrect, but you feel it is correct, you may submit a request for grade reconsideration. Any such request will be accepted *only* if it is submitted to me in writing within 1 week of receiving the grade in question. Such requests do not guarantee a grade change; you must present a strong and convincing argument for why you believe you deserve the point(s). For example, your written request should specify (a) what you believe an alternative correct

answer could be, (b) the reason you think so, and (c) where you found supporting evidence for your view (e.g., exact page in reading or date of class notes).

Incompletes

Only students who are prevented from completing the course due to special circumstances beyond their control (e.g., illness, accident) are eligible for an incomplete. The Committee on Academic Standing must grant approval for an incomplete grade. The work must be completed within six weeks of the end of the course, or the grade will automatically be converted to an F. See the Hamilton College catalogue for details.

Maintaining Academic Honesty

The College takes the Honor Code very seriously, and I expect you to take it seriously as well. All students are expected to be familiar with and follow the Hamilton College Honor Code (<http://www.hamilton.edu/student-handbook/studentconduct/honor-code>). Although I encourage you to work in groups to study for exams and to discuss your assignments, you are responsible for doing all work independently. You are also responsible for appropriately citing sources on written assignments. I have included plagiarism guidelines on the Blackboard site (under Course Information) to assist you. Any instance of plagiarism, impermissible collaboration, or other form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will be referred to the Honor Court. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK ME!

Writing Center, Oral Communications Center, Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center

There are several additional resources on campus that can help support your learning in this course.

- 1) The Nesbitt-Johnston Writing Center is an excellent resource for students who wish to improve their writing, and I strongly suggest you take advantage of it. Whether you consider yourself a weak or strong writer, you can benefit from having a peer provide feedback on a written assignment. For details about services offered by the Writing Center and procedures for scheduling an appointment, see: <http://www.hamilton.edu/writing/about-the-writing-center>.
- 2) The Oral Communication Center may be useful to you as you prepare your debate. Your group can schedule an appointment to practice and receive feedback on your presentation before giving it to the rest of the class. See: <http://www.hamilton.edu/OralCommunication>.
- 3) The Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center can provide tutoring for the quantitative aspects of this course. You may find this resource helpful if you are struggling with (or would just like to review) how to interpret data in graphical or summary format (e.g., for the journal articles). See: <http://www.hamilton.edu/qsr>.

Important: Each of these centers gets very busy at peak times during the semester. To ensure an appointment, you should schedule it at least 7-10 days in advance. Your appointment will be most useful if it takes place early enough to give you time to make optimal use of the advice provided.

Mental Health Services

Sometimes depression and anxiety get the best of us all. Help is near: the Hamilton Counseling Center (www.hamilton.edu/offices/counselingcenter, 315-859-4340). If you need immediate assistance, phoning the Counseling Center and selecting option 2 will connect you with a counselor, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Students with Special Needs

I encourage anyone with a documented physical, visual, auditory, learning, or other disability to speak with me regarding any necessary arrangements. I am more than happy to accommodate you, but it may take a little planning, so be sure to talk to me during the first two weeks of the semester. All conversations will remain confidential. You should also contact Dean Allen Harrison (ext. 4021); he coordinates services for students with disabilities.

Notes Regarding Course Schedule

I have made every effort to make the schedule as comprehensive as possible. However, throughout the semester some minor adjustments to lecture topics, readings, and deadlines may be necessary. I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule (and will inform you of such changes with ample warning) should the need arise.

All readings designated solely by chapter number (e.g., "11.15") refer to the Gross et al. textbook. Additional readings listed can be accessed via Blackboard.

I look forward to working with all of you.

WELCOME TO PSYCH. 101!

Course Schedule

Date		Topic	Readings	Assignments
F	29-Aug	Introduction and Overview	The Syllabus	
M	1-Sep	Research Methods 1	2.1-2.19	
W	3-Sep	Research Methods 2	Stanovich (2004)	
F	9/5	Evolution, Behavior & Genetics	3.17-3.19; Buss (2021)	Online Quiz 1
Unit 1: How do we think and learn?				
M	9/8	Learning 1	6.1-6.7	
W	9/10	Learning 2	6.8-6.13	
F	9/12	Judgment & Decision-Making	8.4-8.9	Online Quiz 2
M	9/15	Development 1	11.1-11.2; 11.7-11.9	
W	9/17	Development 2	11.12-11.15; 8.16-8.19; 8.22	
F	9/19	Memory 1	7.1-7.9	Online Quiz 3
M	9/22	Lab 1	TBD	
W	9/24	Memory 2	7.12-7.18	
F	9/26	Memory 3	Sacks (1985): "The Lost Mariner"; Wells & Loftus (2013)	Online Quiz 4
M	9/29	Exam Review	N/A	
W	1-Oct	Exam 1	TBD	
Unit 2: How do we perceive the world around us?				
F	3-Oct	Nervous System 1	3.13-3.16	
M	6-Oct	Nervous System 2	3.1-3.8	
W	8-Oct	Nervous System 3	Sacks (1985): "The Disembodied Lady" and "Eyes Right!"	
F	10-Oct	Nervous System 4	Gazzaniga (2002)	Online Quiz 5
M	13-Oct	Sensation and Perception 1	4.1-4.4	
W	15-Oct	Sensation and Perception 2	4.13-4.20	
F	17-Oct	Fall Recess – No Class		
M	20-Oct	Sensation and Perception 3	4.6-4.12	

W	22-Oct	Emotions	9.14-9.18; 9.21; Dutton & Aron (1974)	
F	24-Oct	Stress and Health	10.3-10.6; 10.8-10.11; 10.15; 10.17; 10.20; 10.22; 10.24	Online Quiz 6
M	27-Oct	Psychopathology 1	13.1-13.4	
W	29-Oct	Psychopathology 2	13.6-13.23	
F	31-Oct	Therapies	14.1-14.15; 14.20-14.23	Online Quiz 7
M	3-Nov	Lab 2, pt 1	TBD	
W	5-Nov	Lab 2, pt 2	TBD	
F	7-Nov	Exam Review	N/A	
M	10-Nov	Exam 2	TBD	

Unit 3: How do we interact with others?

W	12-Nov	Attachment	11.10-11.11; 11.17; Harlow (1958)	
F	14-Nov	Personality	12.6-12.12	Online Quiz 8
M	17-Nov	Social Psychology 1	15.8-15.11; Milgram (1963)	
W	19-Nov	Social Psychology 2	15.6; 15.13-15.14	
F	21-Nov	Debate instruction	N/A	Online Quiz 9

Thanksgiving Recess (Nov. 24th – Nov. 30th) – No Class

M	1-Dec	Social Psychology 3	15.5; 15.15-15.17	
W	3-Dec	Social Psychology 4	15.18; 15.1-15.4	Response Paper due
F	5-Dec	Friendship	TBD	Online Quiz 10
M	8-Dec	Student Debates	N/A	
W	10-Dec	Student Debates	N /A	
F	12-Dec	Wrap-Up	N/A	
T	16-Dec	Final Exam 7:00-10:00pm		