

PSY 0010: Introduction to Psychology

Fall 2020

Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:50 - 4:05 PM; Online through Canvas

Professor: Dr. Marc Coutanche

Pronounced: “ku-tawn-sh” (audio version: <https://www.name-coach.com/marc-coutanche>)

Pronouns: he/him/his

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Justin Ludwig

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants: Alexia Cardiges, Sasha Hofman, Grace Zales

Welcome to Intro Psych! We hope you will learn a lot and enjoy the journey as we explore the fascinating field of psychology. Your instructor and teaching assistants are here to help you, so please consider us a resource. Below is an outline of what you can expect from this class and your instructors, and your responsibilities as a student. **It is very important that you read and fully understand the course syllabus.**

Course description:

In this course, we will explore the field of psychology including the learning, perception, language, the brain, motivation, emotion, personality, social psychology, and more. We will cover relevant theories and research findings, as well as the principles of the scientific study of human behavior, cognition and emotion. Participating in out-of-class experiments or an equivalent research paper are part of the course.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe and understand theories and findings across the range of areas that we cover
- Understand the methods used in the scientific study of the mind, including strengths and weaknesses
- Understand the variety of careers that are available to people interested in psychology
- Apply these theories to your own personal and professional experiences

Course goals

- For students to succeed at the above learning objectives
- To experience psychological results through in-class (“in-class” this semester refers to virtually engaging with activities that I introduce through the posted lectures) demonstrations and participation in research
- To learn to recognize psychological phenomena in everyday life

Methods of instruction:

This class will be fully virtual/remote. It will include presentations by the instructor, discussions with classmates, in-class demonstrations, and participation in research studies or completion of a research paper. The course will be given synchronously (live) and asynchronously (by posting recorded lectures online).

Office hours:

Office hours are drop-in times for students to chat with the instructor about material in the class, to get advice on how to study, to ask about a career in the field, or anything else. There is no need to make an appointment – the instructor has put aside the time and is usually glad when someone comes by. Links will be provided on Canvas. In past courses, students who attended office hours have shown great improvement in their exam grades (up to two letter grades!) If you have another class at that time and would like to meet, please let us know and we can find a more convenient time.

Together, we have office hours distributed throughout the week:

Monday	12:30 – 1:30	Sasha
Tuesday	4:30 – 5:30	Alexia
Wednesday	5:00 – 6:00	Marc
Thursday	4:30 – 5:30	Justin
Friday	3:00 – 4:00	Gracie

Course site: <https://canvas.pitt.edu/>

This course has a Canvas page. This course will be listed under “Courses” if you are officially registered (please allow up to 24 hours after registration for the course to appear). Please check the course website regularly for announcements and other important information. Please ask for help if you have any problems accessing the site.

Required textbook: Psychology from openstax - <https://openstax.org/details/books/psychology>

For the first time, I will be using an open textbook, meaning it is free to you. The website link above includes an eBook, PDF download and various eReader links.

If you also would like a hard copy, this is available from amazon.com or the Pitt bookstore for approximately \$30.

Note: This course uses the 1st edition - students who use a different edition of the book will be held responsible for determining which material is different from this.

Attendance and other policies:

Attendance: Attendance is technically not mandatory, but being in class regularly will help you do well in this course – the class will not simply be a presentation of what is in your textbook (new material will be presented). Additionally, we will have extra-credit exercises that will help you apply your knowledge of psychology, and enhance your learning and exam performance (which will include application questions). In preparing for exams, you will be responsible for all material presented in class.

Videos of the lectures and class slides will be made available on Canvas. I will make every effort to ensure that you have adequate time to take notes during the class; please tell me if I move too quickly. Taking notes is important because the PowerPoint slides do not contain all information.

Questions: Asking relevant questions during class is *strongly* encouraged. Please use the chat function if you have a comment or question. I will restate questions so that all students hear it. For each person with a question, there are usually 10 others with a similar question – so please do not feel that you are interrupting my flow by asking.

This class will be virtual, which provides even more temptations than normal for disengaging from the material. Please keep in mind that research shows that going off task during class negatively affects your learning and understanding.

Contacting the instructor or teaching assistants:

With over 300 students, it is easy for instructors to become overwhelmed with emails. For this reason, we have set-up a Canvas discussion board for any course related questions. We will check the board regularly; so you will likely receive fast responses (but you should allow at least 24 - 48 hours for a response, especially prior to exams). Please use the discussion board for all correspondence, rather than individual email addresses. The exception is if you have a personal issue that you prefer to communicate exclusively to the instructor. In this case, please come to Marc’s office hour or e-mail him directly (marc.coutanche@pitt.edu).

Discussion board posting guidelines:

1. Please do not ask questions prior to the exam that would require us to fully explain some of the exam material. It *is* appropriate to ask something like "I am confused about the difference between the X model and the Y model. I think that the X model is the one with this, and the Y model is the one with that. Is this right?". However, it *is not* appropriate to ask something like "What is the X model?" because we cannot completely summarize material via email that was covered in the text or in class. In these types of communications, it is typically best to give us your understanding of the material so that we know where there may be a misunderstanding. Generally speaking, it is best to come to office hours to go over the material before the exam, rather than relying on email; email is best used for brief clarification questions.
2. Please read this syllabus and check the information on Canvas prior to contacting us with questions. Many of your questions can be answered in this way. If you ask a question that can be answered by checking either of these sources, we will respond to your email asking you to check them.

Earning your grade:

The purpose of grading is to evaluate students' understanding of material presented in classes, movies, demonstrations, and readings. In a large class such as this, the most practical way to assess this understanding is with objective, multiple-choice exams. To the extent possible, these exams are designed to assess understanding and the ability to apply concepts (rather than just memorization). There will also be in-class assignments, which can offer additional points (see below).

Exams:

There will be 4 multiple-choice exams; 3 during the semester and a 4th during the University-appointed final exam period. The lowest exam score is dropped (i.e., the top 3 exams contribute to your score). Each exam is worth 100 points. The final is optional. Taking the final cannot lower your grade.

The exams held during the semester will test the material since the last midterm (NOT cumulative). The final will cover all material from the course. Sample questions will be made available prior to each exam. The exams will be open book BUT the questions will be written so that truly understanding the material will be necessary to get the answer right. Do not rely on reading the book for the first time DURING the exam! Each exam will be timed but can be taken any time in a certain window (e.g., 1 hour exam that must be taken between 3pm and 7pm). The exam will lock down once the time window expires. Once you submit your exam, you cannot go back, even if you are still in the time window. Technical difficulties can always occur so for this reason, you are encouraged to start the exam as soon as possible in the time window. The exam will occur during the class time for this reason. You will be responsible for ensuring your exam is correctly submitted. Technical problems will not be accepted as an excuse for not taking an exam. Exams will cover:

- Class material (which might not always be in the book)
- Book material (which might not always be covered in class)

The class session prior to each exam will be an optional review session. In this session, I and your TAs will cover topics or answer questions that you have difficulty with. To benefit from this session, it is important that you consider topics and questions that you would like answered in advance of the session. Students will be encouraged to submit questions and/or topics through Canvas before the exam.

The last exam is an optional cumulative exam and will be held during the university-appointed final exam period (with an extended time window in case you are remote).

Adjustments of the final exam time will be given only for students with exam conflicts (more than three exams in the same day during finals week) as requested by university guidelines. In this case, the alternative exam will be different from the regular exam, and will be given no more than 24 hours from its scheduled time. No other changes to the final exam time can be made, because of university guidelines and fairness to all students.

Makeups: The course design (where you can drop one exam) is chosen to allow for illness or other events, so no make-up exams will be given in this course. Students who miss an exam should use the optional cumulative final exam to replace the missing grade. Even if you do not anticipate missing an exam, you should not schedule travel prior to the final exam because that is the only time that you may take it. If you have a university-excused absence (e.g., sporting event), please present a list of affected class dates to the Instructor at the start of the semester. You must get in touch at least one week before affected exams to arrange an alternative date and time.

Assignments:

Psychological studies have shown that people remember information better when they use it in some way. To promote learning through application and experience, we will have a variety of assignments related to the course material. These assignments will be completed in class. The more assignments you do, the better your grade will be! Assignments will be worth 10%. Because assignments are closely linked to in-class material, *they cannot be made up under any circumstances*. If you are watching the lecture asynchronously after, you will have 1 week to submit your response to the assignment. You will have 1 week after the posting of an assignment score to report any problems with your score (e.g., a missing score or a lower score than expected). After that time, no changes will be possible.

Course grades will be based on percentage scores:

As: 90-100 (A+: 97-100, A: 93-96, A-: 90-92); Bs: 80-89; Cs: 70-79; Ds: 60-69; F: 59 & below

You can calculate your final course grade by summing the following:

- i) The average percentage of your top 3 exams x 0.9
- ii) Your assignment score total (e.g., 90) x 0.1

Research Requirement:

What is research? Scientists—including those here at Pitt—learn about human thinking and behavior by conducting surveys on relationship satisfaction, testing which study strategies result in the best exam grades, and measuring brain activity as people learn words in a new language, among many others.

One goal of Introduction to Psychology is that, in addition to learning *what* scientists have discovered about psychology, you will also learn *how* psychologists conducted that research.

To see first-hand how psychologists perform research, all students in this course are required by the Department of Psychology to complete a research requirement worth 5% of your total grade.

You may complete this research requirement in several ways:

- Participate in approved research studies conducted by professors in the Department of Psychology. Each hour of participation counts as 1% towards the 5% requirement. This is the **preferred** option—you will get to see how researchers right here at Pitt are studying psychology, *and* contributing your participation will provide us with valuable scientific knowledge that enhances our understanding of psychology and the world we live in.
- Write brief reviews of published psychology research papers. Each paper counts as 1% towards the 5% requirement.
- You can combine research participation and papers to reach your 5% requirement.

If you already completed some or all of the research requirement as part of the Introduction to Psychology course at Pitt, and are retaking the class this term, e-mail the research coordinator at subjpool@pitt.edu no later than the 2nd week of classes to transfer your credits.

Many common questions are answered on the Research Participation Pool website:

⇒ <http://www.pitt.edu/~subjpool/>

If you still have questions or problems with research participation, please contact the research pool coordinator, Dr. Scott Fraundorf at subjpool@pitt.edu, **not your instructor**. Dr. Fraundorf coordinates the research pool across all sections of Introduction to Psychology.

To sign up for research studies:

To sign up for research studies, visit the Sona Systems website:

⇒ <http://pitt.sona-systems.com>

Please note this site uses a **different** login than your usual Pitt Passport account. Your username and password will be e-mailed to you **after the add/drop deadline**.

To participate in research studies, **you must be at least 18 years old**. If you are not 18 years old, you will have to complete the requirement by writing papers.

COVID-19 Update: The available research studies include both studies that are **in-person** and studies that are **online**. If you attend studies **in person**, you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements—just as the researchers will be doing for your safety. If you do not feel safe participating in research in-person, you can sign up for the many **online** research studies.

Other tips:

- The requirements for each research study are listed on the Sona Systems site. ***Please make certain that you meet the requirements of each study before signing up***—otherwise they can turn you away!
- ***Don't be a no-show!*** If you cannot make a scheduled appointment, you must cancel **at least 24 hours in advance**. Some studies require extensive preparation by the researchers. If you do not show up for two scheduled appointments without canceling, you will no longer be allowed to sign up for research studies and will have to earn the remaining points using the paper option.
- ***Don't do during them during the class time!*** If you cannot find another time that works for you, please contact the experimenter to see if you can find a mutually agreeable time that would not require you to miss class.
- ***Some research studies will not become available until later in the semester.*** Please be patient and check the web site often for research opportunities. If you are worried about finding enough studies in time, you may consider writing a paper instead.

To write papers:

Go to this web site for a list of readings and information on what should be included in the paper and how to submit it:

⇒ <http://www.pitt.edu/~subjpool/papers.html>.

You will submit your papers to Turnitin. Note that this software checks for plagiarism, so be certain that all of the information is written in your own words. If you are not sure what this entails, please see <http://plagiarism.org>. Papers are **due by 11:59 PM on Friday, Nov. 13th** so that there is time to grade them for your final grade. Given the volume of papers, exceptions to this deadline cannot be made.

Turnitin (antiplagiarism software):

Students agree that by taking this course, submitted papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on Turnitin.com.

Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Natural Science General Education Requirement (GER):

This course fulfills one Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Natural Science GER as described for the GERs starting Fall 2018 (term 2191). That GER reads as follows: *Three Courses in the Natural Sciences: These will be courses that introduce students to scientific principles and concepts rather than offering a simple codification of facts in a discipline or a history of a discipline. The courses may be interdisciplinary, and no more than two courses may have the same primary departmental sponsor.*

Research and teaching assistantships:

For information about the kinds of research that students are able to get involved in as research assistants (typically once they have completed 12 credits of Psychology courses), go to the Psychology advising website: <http://www.psychology.pitt.edu/undergraduate/experiential-learning/directed-research>. Similar assistantships are available to get teaching experience, like the undergraduate teaching assistants in class: <http://www.psychology.pitt.edu/undergraduate/experiential-learning/undergraduate-teaching-assistant-experience>.

Academic integrity:

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. It is cheating if you help another student with an exam. Plagiarism includes copying the work of another student and showing your work to another student. It is also considered cheating if you turn in an in-class assignment with another student's name on it, and both students will be subject to the penalties outlined above. In this course, a student who is found cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F for the course and will be reported to the Dean.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands-on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](#).

Disability services:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. **Where relevant, each exam must be arranged through the DRS office a minimum of one week before the in-class exam date.** Students with disabilities have the right, and are encouraged, to inform the instructor immediately regarding requested accommodations.

Health and Safety Statement:

In the midst of this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While in class, at a minimum this means that you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in you not being permitted to attend class in person and could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit coronavirus.pitt.edu and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

Accessibility:

The Canvas LMS platform was built using the most modern HTML and CSS technologies, and is committed to W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative and [Section 508](#) guidelines. Specific details regarding individual [feature compliance](#) are documented and updated regularly.

Diversity and Inclusion:

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, see:

<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/policies-procedures-and-practices>.

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be filed online: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report>. You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

Copyright Notice:

These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) and the [University Copyright Policy](#).

Statement on Classroom Recording:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Email Communication:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Gender Inclusive Language Statement (from [Pitt GSWS](#)):

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

Content Warning and Class Climate Statement (from [Pitt GSWS](#)):

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political and personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Statement on Scholarly Discourse (from a [California State University course: Race, Racism and Critical Thinking](#)):

In this course we will be discussing very complex issues of which all of us have strong feelings and, in most cases, unfounded attitudes. It is essential that we approach this endeavor with our minds open to evidence that may conflict with our presuppositions. Moreover, it is vital that we treat each other's opinions and comments with courtesy even when they diverge and conflict with our own. We must avoid personal attacks and the use of ad hominem arguments to invalidate each other's positions. Instead, we must develop a culture of civil argumentation, wherein all positions have the right to be defended and argued against in intellectually reasoned ways. It is this standard that everyone must accept in order to stay in this class; a standard that applies to all inquiry in the university, but whose observance is especially important in a course whose subject matter is so emotionally charged.

Take Care of Yourself:

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax. Despite what you might hear, using your time to take care of yourself will actually help you achieve your academic goals more than spending too much time studying. All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available at Pitt. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Take the time to learn about all that's available and take advantage of it. Ask for support sooner rather than later – this always helps. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or difficult feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for assistance connecting to the support that can help.

The University Counseling Center is here for you - call 412-648-7930 and visit their website. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, call someone immediately, day or night: University Counseling Center (UCC): 412 648-7930, Resolve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226 (888-7-YOU-CAN)

If the situation is life threatening, call the Police: On-campus: Pitt Police: 412-268-2121 Off-campus: 911

Student assistance and counseling:

Everyone feels overwhelmed by the challenges of being a student at times. We are here to help you. If you have any issues that you would like to discuss with the instructor or a TA in confidence, please schedule an appointment. Please note that we are not counselors but can direct you to a place where you can get help. If you need someone to talk to at any point, there are several on-campus resources:

- One option is the University Counseling Center (a free, confidential service). They can be reached at 412-648-7930, and are located at 334 William Pitt Union (after hours call 412-624-2121).
- Another option is the Psychology Department's Clinical Psychology Center (see <http://www.pitt.edu/~clinic/>). They can be reached at 412-624-8822.
- Sexual assault services are given at the Sexual Assault Services Center, which is located at 334 William Pitt Union (phone: 412-648-7930; after hours call: 412-648-7856).
- For emergency psychiatric care, please go to the nearest emergency room, or the Diagnostic Evaluation Center at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic at 3811 O'Hara St. They can be reached at 412-624-1000.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The class schedule is subject to change - updates will be announced during the semester in class and on Canvas. Please make every effort to complete the assigned reading prior to class. Research shows that students understand new information better when they have a framework for understanding. Reading the chapter will provide a good framework for understanding the information presented during class.

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading
Thurs Aug 20	Introduction to the course	Syllabus
Tues Aug 25	Introduction to Psychology	1
Thurs Aug 27	Psychological Research	2
Tues Sep 1	Biopsychology and the Brain (part 1)	3
Thurs Sep 3	Biopsychology and the Brain (part 2)	3
Tues Sep 8	Consciousness and Attention	4.1, 4.5, 4.6
Thurs Sep 10	Sensation and Perception	5
Tues Sep 15	Review for Exam 1	
Thurs Sep 17	EXAM 1	
Tues Sep 22	Learning	6
Thurs Sep 24	Memory	8
Tues Sep 29	Sleep	4.2-4.4
Thurs Oct 1	Thinking and Intelligence	7
Tues Oct 6	Development	9
Thurs Oct 8	Aging	9
Tues Oct 13	Emotion and Motivation	10
Thurs Oct 15	Review for Exam 2	
Tues Oct 20	EXAM 2	

Thurs Oct 22	Personality	11
Tues Oct 27	Social Psychology	10
Thurs Oct 29	Social Psychology	12
Tues Nov 3	Industrial-Organization Psychology	13
Thurs Nov 5	Stress, Lifestyle, and Health	14
Tues Nov 10	Psychological Disorders	15
Thurs Nov 12	Topic to be voted on by class	TBD
Tues Nov 17	Review for Exam 3	
Thurs Nov 19	EXAM 3	
TBD	FINAL EXAM Final is optional: see exam text above for details	