

Writing Assignments



As part of the requirements of this course, you must complete four writing assignments. Enclosed in this packet are the guidelines, instructions, and due dates for the assignments. Please keep the following expectations in mind:

1. Each assignment is worth 25 points.
2. **Read instructions carefully** and be sure to complete all aspects of the assignments.
3. **Be thorough and complete** in your work. Simple “yes/no” answers or “I agree” comments are not sufficient.
4. The assignments were developed to correspond to topics we will be studying throughout the term. You will get the most out of the assignments if they are done while – or shortly after – we study a particular topic. Therefore, you will need to turn in your work by the deadlines designated in your syllabus and on the assignment sheet. **No late assignments will be accepted.**
5. All written assignments must be **typed and double-spaced**. **Electronic copies will not be accepted.**

HOW WILL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS BE GRADED

Each of your assignments is worth 25 points and will generally be graded by the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of critical thinking, scholarship, and ability to connect and apply the material
2. Comprehensiveness and completeness of your responses
3. Adherence to the written instructions
4. Spelling and grammar

25 - 23 points – A:

Exceptional work -- You have not only met the expectations of the assignment, but your work would be difficult to improve upon. Compared to your classmates, you've demonstrated an exceptional understanding of key concepts and the ability to apply them. You have followed all of the instructions and guidelines; written the ideas in your own words; cited any sources (including your textbook) you may have used; and have a negligible number of grammar/spelling errors.

22 - 20 points – B:

Good work – Compared to your classmates, you have demonstrated a good understanding of the material and can apply it to your work. You have followed all of the instructions and guidelines; written the ideas in your own words; cited any sources you may have used (including your textbook), and have a minimal number of grammar/spelling errors.

19 - 17 points - C:

Meets basic expectations – Compared to your classmates, you have demonstrated learning and general understanding of the material, but have missed some opportunities to apply key concepts. Wording is your own, and you have cited any sources that you have used (including your textbook). There may be some formatting and instructional errors, and/or there are several spelling/grammar errors.

16 - 14 points – D:

Needs Improvement – Compared to your classmates, your work is not complete and/or you have missed several opportunities to demonstrate your understanding of the material and ability to apply key concepts. You neglected to follow two or more instructions or formatting guidelines. Spelling and grammatical errors are numerous and distracting. There are some errors in providing proper citations.

0 points – F

Your wording is not your own and you have neglected to provide proper citation and credit for your sources. You have neglected to answer a number of questions. It appears that you put in very little time or effort toward this assignment. You failed to turn your assignment in on time.

Assignment 1: Experimental Design
Due Date: Thursday, September 8th

One of the most important (and also the hardest) skills in the study of psychology is being able to design well-controlled experiments. For this assignment, choose one of the research questions listed below, and design an experiment that will test it.

Consider:

1. What is your independent variable (i.e., what are you manipulating), and what is your dependent variable (i.e., what are you measuring)
2. Operationalization of the variables
3. Controlling for extraneous variables
4. Participant criteria/selection
5. Materials you will need
6. Procedure that participants will go through
7. What is the predicted result, and why (or for bonus points: If you can make multiple different predictions, state why each of the different outcomes may arise and what each would mean)?
8. What would be your conclusion, if the predicted result(s) were true

Be creative! You are not limited by time or money, but try to design an experiment that could realistically be conducted.

Research Question Options (pick one)

1. Do we learn while we sleep?
2. Does stress affect performance? (You can design an experiment based on either animals or humans)
3. Do our emotions affect how easily different types of memories (e.g. happy or sad memories) are retrieved?
4. Does stress increase the likelihood of illness?
5. Basic emotions, such as anger, happiness, and sadness, are expressed and perceived in the same way across all cultures.
6. The smell of fresh cookies makes people more willing to buy a house.

7. Time goes by more slowly when we are bored.
8. Brain training games (e.g. Luminosity) increases users' intelligence.

Assignment Format:

1. A paper about 2 pages long
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors

Assignment 2: Secrets of the Mind
Due Date: Thursday, September 15th
(Access video [here](#))

For this assignment, you will watch a 55 minute video (linked above) and answer the following questions:

1. What is phantom limb syndrome?
2. Why would Derrick feel the phantom left hand being touched when his face is touched, according to Dr. Ramachandran?
3. People used to believe that our brain connections were formed while we were still a fetus in the womb. However, what do neuroscientists believe today?
4. How did the mirror box help James Peacock with his excruciating pain since he lost his arm?
5. What does Dr. Ramachandran mean when he says that “pain is a construct of the human mind”?
6. Describe the unusual phenomenon of “blindsight”?
7. The main visual centers take up approximately how much of our brain?
8. How does blindsight help people without visual impairment navigate through the world? (Clue: Look for the conversation between Dr. Ramachandran and the camera person.)
9. Peggy suffers from a problem called visual neglect. What is the result of this problem?
10. Distinguish between the ‘how’ and ‘what’ pathways of the brain.
11. What is Capgras syndrome?
12. Why does David not believe his parents are real in person, when he visually perceives them, versus when he hears their voices on the telephone and can readily accept them as real?
13. What did John's temporal lobe epileptic seizures reveal to him?
14. What is the scientific explanation offered by Dr. Ramachandran for these intense religious experiences?
15. What is Dr. Ramachandran's theory regarding religious belief and the human brain?
16. After viewing the film, write two questions you still have about the human brain.

Assignment Format:

1. A paper about 2-3 pages long
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors

Assignment 3: Learning How to Learn
Due Date: Tuesday, October 25th

How to Succeed in College:

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/0301/prescol.html>

Forget What You Know About Good Study Habits

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/07/health/views/07mind.html?_r=3&ref=health&

Stephen Chow, Samford University

Part 1: Beliefs That Make You Fail or Succeed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH95h36NChI>

Part 2: What Students Should Understand About How People Learn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O7y7XEC66M>

Part 3: Cognitive Principles for Optimizing Learning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xeHh5DnClw>

Part 4: Putting Principles for Learning Into Practice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9GrOxhYZdQ>

Part 5: I Blew the Exam, Now What?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QVRiMkdRsU>

Stephen Chow, Samford University

Each of the websites linked above offer advice regarding the best and most effective study strategies and mnemonic techniques from renowned cognitive psychologists and experts on human memory. Please review each of the websites and/or videos carefully and write a 3 page summary on what you've learned. In your summary, be sure to (a) identify and describe at least 3 mnemonic techniques and/or study strategies and why they are beneficial and (b) indicate how you plan to put these strategies into practice before the next exam.

Assignment Format:

1. A paper about 3-5 pages long
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors

Assignment 4: Psychological Disorders in Film
Due Date: Thursday, December 8th

PROCEDURE: Watch one of the movies listed below and discuss the main characters and/or plot line in terms of psychological disorders and/or treatment. (Some of the movies portray several characters struggling with a disorder; you need to focus only on the one or two that most interests you.) Address the following questions:

1. What psychological disorder was illustrated in this film? Did the person meet the criteria for “abnormal” in this portrayal?
2. What are the primary symptoms of this disorder? What symptoms of mental illness did you see in the movie? After considering typical symptoms and behaviors for this disorder, determine the extent to which you believe this was a realistic portrayal of this disorder.
3. Generally, how is this disorder diagnosed and treated? Were any causal factors for the character’s disorder suggested in the film? If so, which ones?
4. What types of treatment, if any, did the person in the film receive? Provide specific examples. Based on what you’ve learned, is this form of treatment typical for individuals with this disorder? Why or why not?
5. What impact did the person’s disorder have on others in his/her life? Do you think the impact was realistically portrayed? Why or why not?
6. After viewing the movie, what do you think it would be like to live with this mental illness? What societal and/or interpersonal challenges do people with this disorder face?
7. What was your overall reaction to the movie and how mental illness was portrayed?

Movie Options: (These movies have been previewed and pre-selected for their content and relevance; please do not make your own substitutions without prior approval; **failure to do so will result in a zero score.**)

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper at least 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors

4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

- * ***A Beautiful Mind*** (Psychosis)
- * ***Girl Interrupted*** (Variety of Disorders)
- * ***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*** (Variety of Disorders)
- * ***Sybil*** (Dissociative Identity Disorder)
- * ***Three Faces of Eve*** (Dissociative Identity Disorder)
- * ***Twenty-eight Days w/ Sandra Bullock*** (Substance Related Disorders)
- * ***Silver Linings Playbook*** (Bipolar Disorder)
- * ***As Good As it Gets*** (Anxiety Disorder)
- * ***The Aviator*** (Anxiety Disorder)
- * ***Thin*** (Eating Disorders)