



**INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY 101-501 (ONLINE)
Spring 2012 (crn 30141)**

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Welcome to the on-line Introduction to Psychology course! This syllabus will give you some information on how the course is structured, what you can expect from an online course, and what is expected from you. Our course will make use of a course management system called Web Vista. If you haven't done so already, you might want to try the tutorial that is posted on the main web page for the on-line courses. You'll find it is really helpful for understanding how the system works and some of the features we'll be using.

IMPORTANT: Please note that this class begins on the 1st day of the semester at Westfield State University, which is Monday, January 23rd. The material will be released (available to you), beginning at 8:00 a.m. on January 23rd. There is not an option of beginning the coursework before January 23rd. You will have flexibility within each block as to when you sign on and complete necessary requirements.

If you have a personal question, you may send me a message through the PLATO site or call my office at 413-572-5380 to leave a message. I will begin checking and responding to messages daily beginning on January 22nd, and will check them only occasionally before January 22nd.

Text & Materials

Required Text: Feldman, R. S. (2011). Understanding Psychology (10th Edition). New York, McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 97800773800779

The text above is the only required book for the course. All other materials for the course will be found on-line and can be accessed through the course web page. The book is available in the WSU Bookstore for purchase or rent, or you can purchase it on-line through most bookstore sites, or you can purchase the text as an e-book. Information under “Getting Started” on the course page will assist you with these options. You’ll find that every other reading is going to be linked for you, so when you see something assigned to be read, you’ll be able to click on the title and you’ll be taken to a copy of the reading.

Course Description

PSYC 101, *Introduction to Psychology*, is a survey course, an overview of the basic theories and facts of human behavior and mental life. Topics include the scientific method, the physiological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, learning and memory, development, personality, social psychology, and abnormal behavior. Psychological knowledge is related to daily problems and everyday life. This course is a prerequisite to all other psychology courses.

Learning Objectives

This course is aligned with Westfield State Universities Common Core, with specific learning objectives. Below, **Common Core Student Learning Objectives** are aligned with Course-Specific Learning Objectives:

Learn the vocabulary, concepts, theories and methodologies relevant to an area of social inquiry:

Identify major specialties in the field of Psychology;
Identify basic elements associated with the scientific methods in psychology;
Describe the biological bases of the neuron and delineate functions of the human nervous system;
Differentiate states of consciousness and, specifically, stages of dreaming;
Explain possible elements involved with memory failure;
Identify key factors associated with physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development in childhood;
Describe several major psychological disorders; and
Understand numerous approaches to the treatment of psychological disorders.

Understand how selected factors influence individual and group behavior and/or to understand why people form societies and/or the role of institutions in society:

Explain classical conditioning and operant conditioning as it relates to learning processes;
Explain cognitive approaches to learning;
Explain several factors which affect social cognition and resulting behavior; and
Explain several factors which affect group behavior.

Become knowledgeable about contemporary social issues and possible solutions:

Explain environmental influences on the concepts of gender roles and sexism; and
Discuss how attitudes and social cognition are affected by environment.

Become aware of differing viewpoints regarding current historical issues within an area of social inquiry:

Articulate major approaches in contemporary psychology;
Understand the different definitions and conceptions of intelligence;
Describe theories of motivation and how they prescribe behavior; and
Differentiate numerous psychological theories of personality development.

What You Can Expect & What Is Expected Of You

You can expect that I will be available to you many times throughout the defined session, which is Jan 23-May 7, 2012, however not 24/7. There are a number of ways to be in touch with me. Online office hours are listed above. For online office hours, you can contact me through the email link on the course page in PLATO. I am also available to schedule an electronic, phone, or in-person conversation with you that meets the needs of both our schedules. If you email me, I will typically get a response to you within 24 hours, but always within 48 hours. If you have a question related to the course, one in which the response would benefit the entire class, I ask that you pose the question in the “Ask Dr. B” link of the main course page. All class members will then have access to the dialogue. Of course, if you have a more private matter you may contact me by one of the means above.

You can expect that you will have the freedom to structure your own time with considerable control over when you do the course work. In this course, you will be working with a set a material (A MODULE) presented to you for a period or block of time. While that block is open and available to you, you can structure the work required around your own schedule. You can do the work at your own pace – spread it out over the block, do it all at once – it’s up to you. Please keep in mind that while you have significant flexibility in scheduling your work and participation, you must complete the module by the closing dates posted in the schedule below (also found on the calendar on the course page). Graded assignments and work within the module will not be accepted after the closing date.

You can expect that you will need to be proactive in your participation as a student. You will be joining in discussions, posting information, and finding many different ways to be a part of the class. You can expect that some discussions may extend over numerous days, as your student colleagues also engage in each module.

Feedback from you throughout the course is a necessity. As you have enrolled in an on-line course, I won’t know if you are having a problem with material or with this learning format unless you tell me. If you have technical difficulties, there are supports that can address them right away. If you are having difficulty grasping some material, additional support from me or tutoring can also be arranged. Please let me know immediately if there is a problem with which I can help – the sooner you tell me, the sooner I can help you fix the problem.

You will need to visit the course web page frequently. I'd recommend at least once a day, to at least check to see if there are messages or updates from me.

You can expect that content will be presented to you in a variety of forms. These include lectures, discussions both online and asynchronous, film, podcasts, etc. It is important to note that this is not a correspondence course where you will only be sending me written material for a grade. You will be required to engage all formats provided within a block of material, as well as engage in discussion with your online classmates.

Policies

Class Participation:

Participation is necessary for learning. Material presented will include additional material to the text book (all linked and available to you when you need it). This additional material will be on exams. Personal emergencies (e.g., death in the family, sickness) are recognized as valid reasons for being absent for an extended period of time, however it is **your responsibility** to let me know if your personal circumstances are keeping you away from this online course in a manner to which you cannot make the closing dates of any block. Participation includes reading, listening, interacting in discussions, offering your own viewpoints and feedback, and taking part in group exercises, if applicable. Your participation is tracked electronically by me, and I have access to read and “drop in” on any and all forums built within this class structure.

Late Work and Make-up Exams:

Without exception, late work will be graded one grade lower if received up to 1 week past the closing date and time of the applicable block, 2 grades lower if received 2 weeks past the closing date and time of the applicable block, etc. Make-up exams may be given **ONLY** in the case of family death or documented contagion. If you believe you have an acceptable reason why you cannot take an examination as scheduled, you **MUST** contact me **before** the scheduled examination period closes for approval. Documentation will be necessary to schedule a make-up exam. All make-up examinations are essay.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate their own aptitudes when completing class assignments and examinations. Any student suspected of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with as outlined under WSU guidelines.

<http://www.wsc.ma.edu/prospective-students/campus-life/student-handbook/academic-life/academic-honesty-policy/>

These policies are subject to change. In the event that policies are changed, you will be notified in advance.

Class Structure

The course makes use of a set of subunits called “blocks.” Each block will have a period of time associated with its release (opening, availability to you) and its closing. Blocks and associated dates are listed in the scheduling grid below. A block will always begin at 8:00 a.m. on dates assigned and close at 11:59 p.m. on dates assigned. Again, a schedule of the blocks appears

below.

All the work for a particular block must be completed during the time with which it is “open” to you. The late policy applies to any assignments which you submit to me after a block has closed. If discussions, forums, group projects, etc. are part of a particular block’s grade, there is no option for completing that work after a block has closed.

Within the assigned period of a block, however, you can do the work at your own pace: you can do it all at once, finishing the block work quickly and having the rest of the block period free to work on your other classes, or you can do it at a slower pace. How you use that two week time is entirely up to you, so long as all the work is done for that block at the end of the two weeks.

Because it is important that all enrolled students are engaging the same material at approximately the same time, a new block won’t be made available until the old block is done. If you are a person who likes to work several weeks ahead in your classes, I’d suggest planning to do more of that in your other courses; here you’ll only be able to work on one block at a time.

What Will I Find In Each Block?

Each block will have a clearly numbered set of activities so you’ll know what to do first, second, third, etc. The blocks will vary in content, but you can expect each of them to typically include:

Instructor Guidance. I will introduce you to each block and provide some guidance very early. You will likely have some kind of multimedia presentation from me, usually in the form of a narrated PowerPoint presentation, or it may be a podcast, a film, or some other form (e.g., Jing).

Reading. Reading from the text book will be required for each class block. Additionally, online sources will likely be given for you to read in each block. You will find the appropriate links to this additional material in each block.

Participation. You will have occasional exercises to which you will contribute comment, analysis, and discussion in online, asynchronous (we are not all online at the same time) discussion forums. You will be asked to post a message to the rest of the class about your comment on a question I will ask you all to react to, or to something someone else posted. A significant portion (14%) of your final grade will be based on your class participation, as evidenced through your contributions to the course in on-line discussions, posting to the discussion boards, or other contributions in class. **Class participation** defined as one or both of the following:

Active, substantive participation on the class web page through discussion. By "active" I mean you regularly contribute to the course through the class discussions that will be offered with each block. By "substantive" I mean you do all these things based on the reading and other block materials.

Active, substantive contributions to class participation by making contributions.

Recommending a link to everyone to a newspaper article relating to class discussions, recommending something you've found on television or the web that is interesting, showing an example from experiences (general life experience, observations of behavior, through a job, internship, volunteer work, and so on) relating to our work all count as class participation as well.

Please note: Your grade for class participation will be assigned by me, based on my evaluation of your contribution through the criteria mentioned above. I'll be happy to give you feedback at any time on this part of your grade. By remaining in the course, you are giving your consent to that evaluation.

“A” level participation means you are both active and substantial in each block (12-14 points);
“B” level participation means you are active, but do so without substance from the material (8-11 points);
“C” level participation means you do the same as “B” but with less regularity (4-7 points);
“D” level participation will be the result of contributing even less (1-3 points).
Extremely low or non-participation will result in 0 points.

Projects & Assignments. Each block will include at least one project or assignments associated with the material presented. These may be a more formal written assignment, an essay, an opportunity for you to gather research data/information, or some project. All of the projects and assignments associated with a block are something you can complete within the period allowed for that particular block.

Extra Credit Opportunities will be posted to the class at random. These will typically be an open-book quiz that you can complete for the extra credit. You will not know when these opportunities will be posted, however, you must provide the completed response within 5 days of the posting if you are electing to earn extra credit. Without exception, no extra credit will be given for a posted opportunity after the 5-day period expires. So, I encourage you to log into the class often and check your mail. I expect to offer about 6-8 of these opportunities throughout the course and extra credit could raise your final grade as much as 3 points (EX: It could boost an A- “to an “A”).

Will There Be Examinations?

Examinations. Yes. Exams may be multiple choice, matching, short answer, essay, or a combination of these formats. Exams will cover readings *and additional material presented in class*. You will have 4 exams. Each examination may be completed “open book”, i.e., you may use your text and all material available to you. However, you must not communicate with each other during the examination block (honor system). As the exams are open-book, they are not weighted as much as other projects and assignments assigned in your learning blocks. You will have 2 days to complete an examination. Late exams will not be accepted, therefore please plan accordingly with the schedule presented below.

There is no final, comprehensive, exam in this course.

Grading

Open-Book Examinations	16%
<i>Exam 1</i>	4%
<i>Exam 2</i>	4%
<i>Exam 3</i>	4%
<i>Exam 4</i>	4%
Projects and Assignments	70%
<i>Block 1 (2 days)</i>	5%
<i>Block 2 (2 days)</i>	10%
<i>Block 3 (3 days)</i>	15%
<i>Block 4 (2 days)</i>	10%
<i>Block 5 (2 days)</i>	10%
<i>Block 6 (3 days)</i>	15%
<i>Block 7 (1 day)</i>	5%
Class Participation	14%

Block Schedule

Here is a schedule of the blocks, including the day/time they begin and end, the reading from the text book that will be included in the block materials*, and an idea of approximately when you will be required to take examinations:

*Note: Additional readings, projects, and requirements will be contained in each block

Block	Topics	Pages in Feldman	Begins	Ends	% Final Grade
1 Introduction; Research Methods in Psychology	Module 1: Psychologists at Work	5-14	Monday, January 23rd, 8:00 a.m.	Wednesday, February 1st, 11:59 p.m.	5%
	Module 2: A Science Evolves	15-22			
	Module 3: Key Issues and Controversies	23-29			
	Module 4: Scientific Method	33-36			
	Module 5: Conducting Psychological Research	37-48			
2 Physiological	Module 7: Neurons	61-69	Monday, January 30th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, February 12th, 11:59 p.m.	10%
	Module 8: Nervous System	70-78			
	Module 9: The Brain	79-95			
EXAMINATION I – Covers material in Blocks 1 & 2			Friday, February 10th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, February 12th, 11:59 p.m.	4%
3 Sensation & Perception; Learning; Memory	Module 10: Sensing the World Around Us	99-103	Monday, February 13th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, March 4th, 11:59 p.m.	15%
	Module 13: Perceptual Organization	136-147			
	Module 17: Classical Conditioning	175-182			
	Module 18: Operant Conditioning	183-197			

	Module 19: Cognitive Approaches to Learning	198-205			
	Module 20: Foundations of Memory	209-221			
	Module 21: Recalling Long-Term Memories	222-231			
	Module 22: Forgetting	232-239			
EXAMINATION II – Covers material in Block 3			Friday, March 2nd, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, March 4th, 11:59 p.m.	4%
4 Intelligence; Motivation	Module 26: Intelligence	279-294	Monday, March 5th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, March 25th, 11:59 p.m.	10%
	Module 27: Variations in Intellectual Ability	295-299			
	Module 28: Group Differences in Intelligence	300-305			
	Module 29: Explaining Motivation	309-316			
	Module 30: Human Needs and Motivation	317-327			
5 Gender & Sexuality; Development	Module 32: Gender and Sex	343-355	Monday, March 26th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, April 8th, 11:59 p.m.	10%
	Module 34: Diversity in Sexual Behavior	362-377			
	Module 35: Nature and Nurture	381-385			
	Module 36: Prenatal Development	385-392			
	Module 37: Infancy and Childhood	393-411			
EXAMINATION III – Covers Blocks 4 & 5			Friday, April 6th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, April 8th, 11:59 p.m.	4%
6 Personality; Abnormal	Module 40: Psychodynamic Approaches/Personality	439-447	Monday, April 9th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, April 29th, 11:59 p.m.	15 %
	Module 41: Other Approaches/Personality	448-460			
	Module 46: Normal vs. Abnormal	503-512			
	Module 47: Major Psychological Disorders	513-533			
	Module 49: Treatment	545-555			
	Module 50: Treatment (continued)	556-563			
	Module 51: Treatment (continued)	564-575			
7 Social	Module 52: Attitudes and Social Cognition	579-589	Monday, April 30th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, April 6th, 11:59 p.m.	5%
	Module 53: Social Influence and groups	590-597			
	Module 54: Prejudice and	598-603			

	Discrimination				
EXAMINATION IV – Covers Blocks 6 & 7			Friday, April 4th, 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, April 6th, 11:59 p.m.	4%