

Introduction to Psychology PSYC 107-202

Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:45-2:40, Psychology 422
Instructor: Dr. Heather C. Lench
Office: Psychology Building 287
Phone: 845-0377
email: hlench@tamu.edu (usually the best way to reach me)
Office Hr.: Tuesday & Thursday 10-11, or by appointment
Website: Grades will be available via the blackboard system for this course
Class files (including powerpoint notes) will be available via
www.heatherlench.com, under "courses"

Required Text: Baird, A. A., Tugade, M. M., & Veague, H. B. (2009). *Current Directions in Introductory Psychology* (2nd edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Optional Text (can help if you have difficulty with any of lecture material or want a backup for lecture): King, L. (2009). *Experience Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Contacting Me: You can call or email with questions (email is best). Allow 72 hours for a response.

Goals of the Course: This course will introduce you to the science of psychology. We constantly explore the world around and within us, but this exploration can lead to erroneous conclusions. Psychology has developed scientific methods to explore questions about humanity and this course will introduce you to those methods and many basic findings. We will discuss a broad range of topics, including the relationship of the brain to the mind, stability and change across the lifespan, social behavior, and motivation and emotion. The goal is to provide you with a framework to think critically about psychological topics and understand current debates and discoveries.

Course Website: The website will be a useful supplement. Over the semester, relevant links will also be posted that will help you expand your knowledge on various topics.

Lecture and Reading Policy: Attendance and reading are both required to be successful in this course. Test questions will come from lecture, discussions, and reading.

Exams (200 points): There will be four exams during the term. They will have multiple choice answers. Each exam is worth 50 points and will have about 50 questions. They are not cumulative. You are responsible for providing your own pencil(s) and Scantron form. Make up tests will only be considered in **rare** and **extraordinary** circumstances, and only if you contacted me **before** the scheduled test. There are no make ups for students who did not contact me beforehand unless you have documentation proving **extreme** circumstances that incapacitated you to the point that you could not contact me before the test. Make ups are not automatically granted even if you contact me before the test and whether a make up is permitted will depend on your circumstance, your ability to document your circumstance, and whether a make up is scheduled in a timely fashion

(i.e., immediately after the end of your circumstance). If a make up is allowed, points may be deducted depending on the documentation and the timeliness of scheduling a make up. If you have a religious or other conflict with a class date or an exam date, it is your responsibility to tell me within the first week of class.

Course papers (150 points): Three short papers on the topics covered in this class will be required. Each paper must be a full 3 pages. A more thorough description is below. Papers are due at the beginning of class and late papers will be deducted 5 points per day unless you have documentation proving extreme circumstances (evidence of a doctor appointment is not sufficient).

Grading: Grades will be based on the total number of points obtained on the exams and course papers. Grades will be curved at the end of the semester if warranted.

Total Points: 350

Scores required for each letter designation in the grading system:

A: 315-350 points

B: 280-314 points

C: 245-279 points

D: 210-244 points

F: any score below 210 points

Research Participation (REQUIRED): You will need to earn 14 credits to complete this course. You have two options for earning these credits.

- 1) Be a research participant. To take part in experiments, see the attached sheet. Each hour counts for two points of course credit.
- 2) Type a two-page report analyzing an original psychology research article published in a journal. The write up should include your analysis of the introduction, methods, results, and discussion. A copy of the article or a link to the article must be attached. Each paper counts for two points of course credit – credit depends on how well you are able to describe the study and apply critical judgment.

Extra Credit: You can earn up to four points of extra credit in this course. Each point of extra credit can be earned by completing a one-page report describing the research studies in which you participated. Your description should include the major variables in the study and how those were measured (e.g., “they were measuring aggression by counting how often I yelled”). Alternatively, you can complete extra reports as described in option #2 above to earn one point of extra credit.

ADA Policy Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for a reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department

of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

Texas A&M University Philosophy of Academic Integrity: Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal nor do they tolerate those who do.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
T 8/30	Introduction, Overview of Psychology	-
R 9/1	The Science of Psychology	(Ch. 1)
T 9/6	The Science of Psychology continued	HO
R 9/8	The Brain and Behavior	p. 47-55 (Ch. 2)
T 9/13	Sensation and Perception	(Ch. 3)
R 9/15	Sensation and Perception	HO
T 9/20	Exam 1	-
R 9/22	States of Consciousness	(Ch. 4)
	Short Paper 1 Due	
T 9/27	Learning	HO (Ch. 5)
R 9/29	Memory	(Ch. 6)
T 10/4	Memory continued	p. 81-88
R 10/6	Personality	p. 177-185 (Ch. 10)
T 10/11	Exam 2	-
R 10/13	Human Development	(Ch. 8)
T 10/18	Development continued	p. 13-20
R 10/20	Nature and Nurture	p. 29-34
T 10/25	Nature and Nurture continued	-
R 10/27	Social Psychology	(Ch. 11)
T 11/1	Social Psychology continued	p. 237-244
	Short Paper 2 Due	
R 11/3	Exam 3	-
T 11/8	Psychological Disorders	(Ch. 12)
R 11/10	Psychological Disorders continued	p. 129-135
T 11/15	Therapies	(Ch. 13)
R 11/17	Therapies continued	p. 143-149
T 11/22	Motivation and Emotion	(Ch. 9)
T 11/29	Motivation and Emotion continued	p. 117-124
R 12/1	Exam 4 & Short Paper 3 Due	-

***page numbers represent pages in the main course text

***chapters in parentheses represent chapters in the optional King text

***HO indicates a hand out that is available as a pdf on the course website

Papers: (50 points each)

You will have three short papers to complete over the semester. These are intended to develop your writing skills, your understanding of psychological topics, and your ability to think critically and logically about psychological science.

The papers should be exactly three pages (no longer and no more than a quarter of a page shorter; double spaced; 1" margins; 12-point font). If a statement is not your original idea, you need to cite (e.g., *lecture*: Lecture, March 29, 2008, *book*: King, 2007, p. 13). You must cite for all papers. Papers should be stapled (not in binders or folders) with your name and page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Up to five points will be deducted if the paper does not meet these requirements. You should strive to write logically and clearly and the bulk of papers should be your analysis. Humor is always encouraged, but not necessary.

You should not unduly invade the privacy of or impose stress on any person. Nor can you bring harm or potential harm in any way to any one (including yourself). Violations will result in receiving a zero on the paper. If you have any doubts, check with me.

Paper 1:

Scientists have to make decisions about the best ways to examine a particular problem. The problem that you will address in this paper is the effect that multi-tasking has on cognitive performance. Your assignment is to design a study that will address this question. Although no study is perfect, you must articulate the reasoning behind each of your decisions. You should describe your choice of variables, participants, selection method, and experimental procedures. You should also include an analysis of what you will be able to reasonably conclude at the end of the study.

Paper 2:

We will discuss multiple psychological theories about the human mind and behavior. For paper 2, you must demonstrate that you understand at least two theories from psychology and that you can apply them reasonably. Theory is defined broadly here and can include major theories or specific effects (but not specific studies, although these can be used to illustrate a point). You will observe a public behavior of an individual or group and construct an explanation based on theories from psychology. You should briefly describe the event but the bulk of your paper should be applying the theories to the event.

Paper 3:

People often write advice columns or opinion articles without the benefit of psychological research. Their goal is to help others navigate complicated lives, but often their advice relies on common sense and not research. To address this problem, your assignment is to find an advice column or opinion article (these are short articles that do not talk about research, but try to give advice about current topics of concern). Write a response to one of these articles, using the knowledge you have learned in this course. You can write in the form of a letter or counter article. Use good judgment to pick an article – it must be relevant to the material discussed in this course. Attach a copy of the article.