

Psychology 133.00X: General Psychology

Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Psychology

Semester:

Class Time and Day:

Location:

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Office:

Office Telephone:

E-Mail:

Course Description:

Psychology 133: Survey of fundamental principles of behavior, including physiological, perceptual, developmental, learning, motivational, cognitive, social, historical, and methodological perspectives (<http://www2.sfasu.edu/sfapsych/UGRAD/COURSES.html>).

Program Learning Outcomes

General Psychology is a required course for all psychology majors and minors. It supports the following program learning outcomes.

1. Student will learn the steps of the scientific method, including answering research questions, developing hypotheses, testing hypotheses, collecting data, analyzing data using quantitative methods, and evaluating the results to draw valid conclusions.
2. Students will improve their quantitative skills, particularly focusing on the scales of measurement, central tendency, variability, and interpreting graphs. Students will learn the meaning of correlational findings, ensuring the understanding that correlation assesses the relationship between measures rather than assessing causation.
3. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of quantitative analysis throughout the course, particularly with regard to evaluating the findings of other scholars and ascertaining the validity of the conclusions given.
4. Students will be familiar with and able to recognize different research methods and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each. These methods will include case studies, naturalistic observation, surveys, correlational research and experiments.
5. Students will be able to utilize their knowledge of difference psychological theories to recognize psychological explanations for problems in everyday life.
6. Students will develop an appreciation for the differences and similarities in behavior and experience as it relates to culture.

Core Assessment in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: General Psychology (PSY 133) is a core curriculum course in the *Social and Behavioral Sciences* - courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

PSY 133 satisfies the core curriculum for three semester hours in the social and behavior sciences. It supports four core curriculum learning objectives.

Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:

1. **1. Critical Thinking Skills** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
1. **2. Communication Skills** - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills** - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
3. **4. Social Responsibility** - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to do the following things as a basic level:

- Identify, compare, and contrast the application of historic and modern theories in psychology.
- Apply psychological knowledge in a variety of settings.
- Utilize critical thinking skills to determine valid methods of scientific investigation to examine psychological concerns focused at the individual, group, cultural, and global levels of analysis.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills to evaluate research to determine methodological strengths and weaknesses that may affect internal and external validity.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through scientific inquiry, analysis of the strengths and weakness of consistent and inconsistent findings within the scientific literature, and the synthesis of a defensible conclusion.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills when addressing scientific problems, developing testable hypotheses, operationally defining variables and developing sound research methods, evaluating results, synthesizing the finding, and drawing valid conclusions from those findings.
- Utilize a basic knowledge of quantitative analysis to interpret compile data and analyze graphs and present the conclusions using effective communication skills.
- Demonstrate communication skills including effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through effective written communication and effective interpretation of oral and visual communication.
- Identify, compare, and contrast influences on the behaviors and experiences of individuals, groups, cultures, global communities.
- Demonstrate social responsibility through awareness of cultural and behavioral differences across global communities.

Required Text:

Ciccarelli, S. K. & White, J. N. (2012). *Psychology: An Exploration* 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Writing Assignment: There will be a paper of approximately 1500 words due during the second half of the semester. It will directly assess each student's level of mastery of the core elements: critical thinking, written communication, quantitative reasoning, and social responsibility.

For each paper, students will be directed to an area of scientific inquiry within the field of psychology. The paper will be composed of two sections. In the first section, there will be an extended abstract along with visual and numeric quantitative findings (e.g., graphical depictions, means, and standard deviations). Using the information provided, students must first (1) clearly state the research problem, (2) identify and operationally define the independent and dependent variables in the research presented, (3) determine the researchers' hypotheses, (4) describe the research methods employed, (5) based on the quantitative information provided, determine what valid conclusions can be drawn, (6) identify any short-comings or limitations of the research described.

In the second portion of the exercise, students expound upon the research problem presented and present an alternative empirical design, thus students will have the flexibility to propose any empirical research that is related to the topic at hand. Since the prior research will have limitations, students will utilize their critical thinking skills and can more broadly identify the research problem (to include related areas in psychology). Additionally, students will be directed to select journal articles on the topic. Students will be required to (1) clearly communicate in writing the research problem as students define it, (2) identify and operationally define their proposed independent and dependent variables, (3) determine their own research hypothesis(es), (4) clearly articulate what research methods would be employed (enough detail to theoretically conduct and replicate), and (5) based on the quantitative information provided in related literature and the initial experiment, students will conceptually analyze what their expected findings would be. Finally, (6) students would be required to not only identify any limitations of their research, but also explicitly state how the findings in the proposed sample would vary across different geographic regions, cultures, and other global communities. Students will need to clearly communicate differences in potential findings and even participation in varying cultures.

The aforementioned assignment requires a demonstration of the mastery of critical thinking, effective communication, quantitative reasoning, and social responsibility. For example, critical thinking will be required to analyze the extended abstract and distill relevant information; critical thinking is also essential when designing an empirically sound research design. The assignment will require students to demonstrate their mastery of written communication; attention will be given to sufficiently addressing the problem, the organization between parts and as a whole, and to the correct use of grammar and syntax. Quantitative reasoning will be demonstrated in the interpretation of existing data and graphical depictions as well as conjecture about future quantitative findings. Finally, social responsibility will be demonstrated with an understanding of intercultural differences and the ability to recognize and appreciate these individual differences.

Instruction on critical thinking, written communication, quantitative reasoning, and social responsibility will be provided in class with additional resources available through the AARC.

Exams: (variations are permitted with approval of department chair)

There will be three exams for the course. Exams will contain multiple choice, true / false, and short answer questions. The exams are not cumulative. Each exam will cover the classroom material and readings since the previous exam.

Attendance and Participation: (variations are permitted with approval of department chair)

Attending all classes is vital to your understanding of the elements of the course. Beyond your attendance, you will be expected to come prepared to class, participate in class discussions and

exercises, respond to questions, and make constructive comments.

Research Requirement: Each student will be required to participate in a minimum of 2 hours of psychology research (earn four research credits). This assignment is a pass/fail requirement, meaning that the grade a student earns on the exams will only be given if the student completes his/her 2 hour research participation requirement. There will be ample opportunities for students to complete this portion of the course. An alternative assignment is available for those who do not wish to participate in the research experiment.

Grading Policy: (variations permitted with the approval of the department chair)
The final grade of the course is based on the exam grades (75%) and one paper grade (25%). Instructors will use the following grading scheme.

Final Average:

A = 89.5% and above, B = 79.5-89.4%, C = 69.5-79.4%, D= 59.5-69.4%, F= less than 59.5%

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

Class Schedule (variations are permitted with approval of department chair)

Topics	% of Course Time
Foundations of Psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Psychology • <input type="checkbox"/> The History of Psychology • <input type="checkbox"/> The Science and Theories of Psychology • <input type="checkbox"/> The Scientific Method 	20%
The Brain and Mental Processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> The Biological Perspective • <input type="checkbox"/> Sensation & Perception • <input type="checkbox"/> Memory and Cognition 	20%
Behaviors and Behavioral Influences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Conditioning • <input type="checkbox"/> Development • <input type="checkbox"/> Social Psychology 	20%
Abnormal Psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Defining Abnormality • <input type="checkbox"/> Cross cultural differences • <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological Disorders • <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment of Psychological Disorders 	20%
Explicit Instruction in critical thinking, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> This is an addition to instruction on these topics as it naturally occurs in discussion of the foundations of psychology, understanding the scientific method as it applies to psychology, examining mental processes and behaviors, as well as understanding variations in behavioral norms (i.e., abnormal behavior). • <input type="checkbox"/> This includes explanation of expectations for the written assignments and ungraded in-class activities to enhance learning outcomes 	15%
In-class Exams	5%