General Psychology
MW 2:30 – 3:45
Robert T McKibben Education 351

Professor: Steven Estrada, PhD
Office: ED 215 F
Email: estradasm@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936-468-1415, leave message
Office Hours: MW – 10:00 – 12:00, 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Final Exam: Friday May 13th, 10:30 AM – 12:20 PM


Graduate Assistant (GA): Kyle Ripley
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Office hours: TBA

Student Instructor (SI): Stephen Ratliff
Email: ratliffsr@TITAN.SFASU.EDU
Office hours: TBA

Course Description:
Survey of fundamental principles of behavior, including physiological, perceptual, developmental, learning, motivational, cognitive, social, historical and methodological perspectives.

This course is designed to introduce students to the SCIENTIFIC study of human behavior. Topics covered will include the historical roots of studying human behavior and examine the major scientists and thinkers in the study of human behavior. In addition, major movements and schools of thought in studying human behavior will be explored including; cognitive, social, abnormal, comparative, and behaviorist approaches to psychology. Specific topics will include motivation and emotion, perception, learning and memory, decision-making, intelligence, personality, human development and the physiological bases of human behavior among others.

One goal of this course is to engage students with the material through class debate and discussion. Concepts such as Intelligence, Memory, Culture, Evolution of Behavior, Love, Parenting, Identity, Attraction, Prejudices, Attitudes, Learning and many more fundamentally address who you are as a person and where each of us fit in the world.

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:**

**Critical Thinking Skills** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

**Communication Skills** - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

**Empirical and Quantitative Skills** - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

**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 at 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 defendable conclusion.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills when addressing scientific problems, developing testable hypotheses, operationally defining variables and developing sound research methods, evaluating, results, synthesizing the findings, and drawing valid conclusions from those findings.
- Utilize a basic knowledge of quantitative analysis to interpret compiled 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 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.

Performance Evaluation:

Attendance: Attendance will not be taken, but you are responsible for all material covered in class and in the book. It will be extremely tough to write an effective reflection paper without participation in class.

Quizzes: Each student will receive a review packet covering the required content from the book. There will be 3 quizzes during the semester covering material from the assigned book chapters. Each quiz will be administered through D2L and cover the specified chapters. Each quiz will be active for a short period of time, so BE SURE TO BE AWARE OF THE TIME. The first two quizzes are worth 50 points, while the last quiz will be worth 75 points.

Research Participation (30 points): Each student will be required to participate in a minimum of 15 research credits, worth 2 points each. Research studies will vary in terms of the number of R-points given based on the time it takes to complete your participation One R-point is earned for each 30 minutes of participation. Studies can be in person or online. Participating in an in-person study will earn you a bonus point. **Whether participate online or in person, it is required that you behave ethically; this means that you take the instructions seriously and take your time to read and answer questions honestly and completely.**

Students can sign up for research through the Sona System (http://sfasu.sona-systems.com). **If you sign up for a research session and do not show up you will be penalized (you will lost an R-point) and will then have to complete additional research sessions to make up for the missed sessions.**

Participant Sign-Up Instructions
1. Go to the experiment management system website (http://sfasu.sona-systems.com).
2. Register as a student, by clicking on the link in the bottom left-hand corner that says: "Request an account here." Please make sure you select your course: Dr. Estrada - PSY 133.012 (2:30-3:45 MW). If you do not register for the right course I will not receive your research participation report, which can result in you not receiving your points. Once you are registered you can immediately log in.
3. Once logged in, you can browse studies that are available and in which you may participate (under "Study Sign-Up").
   By clicking on the name of a study, you can see information about the study, including an abstract, duration of the study, credits available, and the researcher's name.
   When you click on "View Timeslots for this Study," any available times will be shown. If you wish to sign up for one of the times, there is a pull-down menu for "Course for Credit." Click on the arrow beside that box and all courses in the department will be listed. Choose your course from the list. Click the "Sign Up" button, and you are done. Be sure to write down the information about the study from the screen that appears stating you successfully signed up.
Also, under "My Schedule & Credits," you can view studies for which you've signed up, cancel participation in studies for which you signed up, view studies in which you already participated to see if credit was granted yet, and view other credits you may have earned. Finally, under "My Profile," you can change your password, modify your contact information, or change your email address.

4. The day before any study for which you have signed up, you will receive an email reminder from the system. **IF YOU SIGN UP, BE SURE TO SHOW UP!** If you fail to show up for an experiment, then you will have to make up that credit with an additional credit. **Should something arise, you can log into your account, find the research you are signed up for and cancel your participation.** This is your responsibility. Realize that when you sign up for an experiment, someone is waiting for you – if you don’t show up, you are wasting the researcher’s time and also taking away a time slot away from another student who may want to participate. Be advised that at the end of the semester, I will get a list of all the research that you completed and any “no-shows” that you have. Again, “no-shows” will have to be made up. For example, if you have 2 no-shows, then you must complete 17 research credits rather than 15.

**If you cannot or do not want to participate in research please see me ASAP for an alternative assignment.**

**Assignments:**

Participation, Article Posting, Reflection/Reaction Papers: There will be 3 general questions discussed/debated throughout the semester; Who are we? Why do we do what we do? What makes life meaningful? For each general question, sub-topic questions will be introduced and discussed/debated.

Article Posting: After the initial discussion, each student is expected to research and find an article (popular press, research article, book chapter, blog, website, any substantial work to develop our ideas) and post the finding on the corresponding D2L section. Each student is expected to write a brief summary along with the posting. The summary should provide the main point of the posting and how it informs our discussion. The posting is intended to facilitate discussion/debate on the same topic the following week. Four points are awarded for each article posting and summary.

Class Participation: For the discussion/debate, points will be given for impressive contributions to class debate/discussion. The points will range from 2-4 in value and given at the instructor’s discretion.

**Grading for article posting and class participation:** Each student must earn 40 points combined for article posting and class participation. Students can earn up to 12 extra credit points for continued posting and contributions to class discussion.

Reflection/Reaction Papers: Upon completion of each general question section, each student will write a reflection/reaction paper addressing their thoughts, reflections, reactions,
and research concerning class discussions and posted material for the general question. Each paper is expected to have and develop a theme concerning the general question. Each paper should be 3-5 pages double-spaced and in APA format. You should take notes during class discussions to help facilitate your ideas in your paper. Papers will be graded according to theme development, grammar, spelling, and incorporation of class research and/or class discussion.

**Class debates:** There will be two debates to be graded throughout the semester. One debate will be me versus the class moderated by the GA and SI for the course. The grade for this debate is as follows: All points for all students if the class wins (20 points), 15 points if declared a draw, 10 points if I win but a good showing, and 0 if I trounce the class. The second debate will be student team vs. student team. Teams will be decided based on enrollment and topic will be developed throughout the semester. Grading rubrics for the team debates will be provided during the semester.

**Extra Credit:** extra credit points may be earned throughout the semester. These will be assigned or given in class at the discretion of the instructor.

**Penalty:** Assignments will be due at the beginning of class. Announcements are made at the beginning of class if due dates change. You are responsible for knowing of any change. Due dates are explicitly stated in the syllabus or through an in class announcement and late assignments will incur a penalty decided by ME, the instructor. This can range from a point or two to NOT ACCEPTING THE ASSIGNMENT.

### Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 Quizzes</td>
<td>50/50/75 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Reflection Assignments</td>
<td>50/50/75 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>RU Participation</td>
<td>30 pts</td>
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<td>Debate: Me vs. the class</td>
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<td>Participation and Posting</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
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<td>FINAL Debate</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**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](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.

**Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy 10.4). Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on coursework may be referred to the iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices of any kind will be allowed during exams (media players, headsets, cell phones, palm pilots, language translators, etc.). Laptops and cell phones may not be used during class time. Students wishing to send text messages must exit the classroom. If you have special needs regarding language assistance, please speak with me to make arrangements.

**Important Dates**

The academic calendar can be found at [http://www.sfasu.edu/297.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/297.asp). It contains important dates of which you need be aware.

**Student Contacts**

Your peers may be able to provide additional support (i.e., help with homework, lecture notes) when you need it most. Introduce yourself to at least two individuals in this class and share your contact information with them. Be friendly and smile! :0)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-Jan</td>
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<td>22-Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are We?</td>
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<td>14-Mar</td>
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<td>28-Mar</td>
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<td>4-Apr</td>
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<td>Why do we do what we do?</td>
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<td>2-May</td>
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<td>4-May</td>
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<td>What makes Life Meaningful?</td>
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<tr>
<th>TOPICS TO BE COVERED (Subject to Change)</th>
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<td>Section 1: Science and Human Behavior</td>
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**Possible Debate/Discussion Topics**

- Consciousness and Free Will: What does it mean to grow up? What is Evil? What does it mean to be American?
- What motivates people?: How do we study Human Behavior? What is a Mental Disease? Does the color of our skin matter?
- What is Pretty?: Are we unique from other animals? What is the Self? Psychology and the Law
- Is Behavior just Brains: What is intelligence? What is Happiness? Has behavior evolved?