

PSYCH 100: INTRO TO PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2026 | Tue/Thur 3:00pm - 4:30pm











INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Tanushree Agrawal

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OFFICE HOURS: Held in Ikeda 402, by appointment using the following link: xxx

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychology is the  scientific  study of human behavior and mental processes, and it helps us understand ourselves, others, and all the activities that we engage in as part of everyday life. As such, the field of psychology is exceptionally broad and varied! This course is designed to introduce you to some of the major subfields of psychology and how they contribute to our understanding of why humans are the way they are. We will discuss basic concepts and theories for topics such as  perception,  memory,  learning,  child development,  social relationships,  emotions, and psychological disorders. You will be introduced to the research methods utilized by psychologists and will learn to  critically evaluate  psychological research.

Lecture slides will be posted to Brightspace on the morning of class each day. To be successful in this course, I recommend that you do the assigned reading before or after each class, come to class prepared to pay attention, take notes, actively participate, and ask questions. I want to help every student learn, but **I cannot know what's confusing to you unless you ask** – so please don't be shy to let me know when something doesn't make sense to you. 😊

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through your active and engaged participation in this course, you will:

- Gain foundational knowledge about the field of psychology (e.g., key concepts, guiding theories, etc.).
- Recognize that important variations in behaviors and mental processes exist across individuals and groups, including those based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, national origin, religion, disability status, language, and socioeconomic status.
- Develop an understanding of (and appreciation for!) the scientific nature of the field.
- Learn how to analyze and critically evaluate psychological research.
- Understand how various psychological concepts and principles apply to your daily life.

- Think about course material in the context of your broader education and training. Specifically, you will gain insights about how this class improves your “core competencies” (broadly applicable everyday skills) and learn to communicate them to others.

COURSE RESOURCES

BRIGHTSPACE WEBSITE: Brightspace will be the primary hub for all activities, submissions, and communication in this course.

TEXTBOOK: The following textbook will be helpful to understand the material I go over in class. Phelps, E. A, Berkman, E., & Gazzaniga, M. S. (2022). *Psychological Science* (7th ed).

PSYCHOLOGY TUTOR: Please take advantage of the Psychology Tutor, who is a dedicated resource for you to get study help on any challenging topics and exam preparation.

ASSIGNMENTS

QUIZZES (6 QUIZZES, EACH WORTH 2%)

At the end of a topic, you will have an **at-home, open book quiz** via Brightspace. Quizzes will draw on content covered both in class AND outside of class, including anything found within the relevant assigned materials (e.g., book chapters, articles, videos, etc.). There will be a window of at least 48 hours within which you will need to take the quiz. You will be allowed 2 attempts for each quiz, and the higher of the two scores will be counted for your grade. There will be a 1-hour time limit for each attempt.

LATE POLICY: The point of these is to give you systematic and regular practice with the material. As such, there are **no late quiz submissions** allowed.

“PSYCHOLOGY IN ACTION” LABS (6 WORKSHEETS, EACH 1%)

We will do 6 lab activities in class, designed to help you recognize how the course materials directly apply to daily life. Each lab has an associated worksheet that must be completed for credit and submitting individually. Generally, you will have until **11:59pm on the day of the lab** to submit it.

LATE POLICY: Late work eligible for ½ **credit** if received by 11:59pm on the last day of class.

MINI EXPERIMENT (6%)

Over the course of the semester, in groups of 2-3 students, you will get the chance to conduct your own mini experiment based on a psychology research question of your choice. You will get to design the experiment, collect data, and think about what the data tell you about your question. This exercise will give you a little glimpse into how experimental psychologists actually do research!

STUDY PLAN (2%): This worksheet will include your mini-experiment hypothesis and methods.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (4%): Then, you will run your survey, collect and analyze your data, summarize your final results, and share your findings with the class.

LATE POLICY: Late work eligible for ½ **credit** if received by 11:59pm on the last day of class.

RATE EXERCISES (4%)

You may not realize it, but most of the content and skills you learn in this class can be applied in real-life scenarios unrelated to class! Even though you will be learning “psychology”, you will also be gaining many transferrable skills that will benefit you in the future, irrespective of the career path you choose!

The tricky thing, though, is that these skills are not immediately apparent to people... For example, it isn't obvious to someone interviewing you for a job, that an A on your transcript in Intro Psych means that you not only understand psychology theories, but that you also understand ethical decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, etc. So, it is up to you to communicate that to them effectively, especially if you want to get the job ;)

In this class, we will actively practice making this mental jump from psychology-specific content to more general skills/competencies, and learn how to put these ideas into words. To do so, we will use the RATE framework: Reflect → Articulate → Translate → Evaluate.

You will complete a survey of your competencies (1% of final grade) at the start of the semester. Then, during the semester, we will focus on two specific competencies that you will get to think deeply about from your own perspective using RATE worksheets (2% for each of the two worksheets).

These are fun exercises, sort of like personality tests! There is no right or wrong answer for the questions. You can add 4% to your final grade simply by being an active participant and submitting thoughtful responses.

LATE POLICY: Late submissions will be eligible for ½ **credit** if they are received by the last day of class by 11:59pm.

ARTICLE CRITIQUES (FIRST 2 ARTICLES 2% EACH, FINAL ARTICLE 8%)

As part of this course, you will learn how to read academic journal articles. There will be three article critique at-home assignments and one final in-class article critique. For each one, you will read a designated journal article and then complete a brief worksheet. This worksheet is designed to give you step-by-step practice with summarizing psychological research and critically evaluating it.

LATE POLICY: Late submissions will be eligible for ½ **credit** if they are received by 11:59pm on the last day of class. However, late submissions will not receive feedback from me, and so will not have a chance to improve and excel in the 4th in-class assignment, which is worth 10% of your grade.

MIDTERMS (2 EXAMS, WORTH 15% EACH)

There will be two closed-book multiple-choice midterm exams in class. They will only test material covered during their respective unit (not cumulative). You will be responsible for knowing information covered in class AND found in any of the relevant assigned materials.

FINAL EXAM (30%)

There will be a **cumulative** final exam in class, consisting of multiple-choice questions, covering ALL material from the entire semester.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Quizzes:	12%	6 quizzes, each 2%
Lab Worksheets:	6%	6 worksheets, each 1%
Mini-Experiment	6%	brainstorm report 2%, final report 4%
RATE Exercises:	4%	2 exercises, 2% each
Article Critiques:	12%	3 critiques, first two 2% each, final <u>in-class</u> critique 8%
Midterm Exams:	30%	2 exams, 15% each
Final Exam:	30%	

Final letter grades in the course will be assigned according to the following percentage scale

A+	97.00+	B+	87.00-89.99	C+	77.00-79.99	D	60.00-69.99
A	93.00-96.99	B	83.00-86.99	C	73.00-76.99	F	0.00-59.99
A-	90.00-92.99	B-	80.00-82.99	C-	70.00-72.99		

Grades will be rounded to the nearest hundredth of a point and the stated letter grade cutoffs will be applied without exception. I reserve the right to adjust all students' grades up if deemed appropriate, but grades will not be adjusted down under any circumstances.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Day	Agenda	Important Deadlines
Feb 3	Tue	Introduction	
Feb 5	Thur	Psychology as a science (Ch 1)	
Feb 10	Tue	Research methods (Ch 2)	
Feb 12	Thur	MINI-EXPT WORKSHOP	Mini-Expt Study Plan due <i>Thur Feb 12 at 11:59pm</i> Quiz 1 due <i>8am Fri Feb 13 to 11:59pm Sun Feb 15</i>
Feb 17	Tue	Neuropsychology (Ch 3)	
Feb 19	Thur	Sensation & perception (Ch 5)	Article Critique 1 due <i>Sun Feb 22 at 11:59pm</i>
Feb 24	Tue	Sensation & perception (Ch 5)	
Feb 26	Thur	LAB ACTIVITY	Lab 1 due <i>Thur Feb 26 at 11:59pm</i> Quiz 2 due <i>8am Fri Feb 27 to 11:59pm Sun Mar 1</i>
Mar 3	Tue	Learning (Ch 6) LAB ACTIVITY	Lab 2 due <i>Tue Mar 3 at 11:59pm</i>
Mar 5	Thur	Memory (Ch 7)	Quiz 3 due <i>8am Fri Mar 6 to 11:59pm Sun Mar 8</i>
Mar 10	Tue	Memory (Ch 7) LAB ACTIVITY	Lab 3 due <i>Tue Oct 7 at 11:59pm</i>
Mar 12	Thur	MIDTERM #1	
Mar 17	Tue	 NO CLASS: Happy Spring Break! 	
Mar 19	Thur		
Mar 24	Tue	Thinking & language (Ch 8)	Lab 4 due <i>Tue Mar 24 at 11:59pm</i>
Mar 26	Thur	Development (Ch 9)	Article Critique 2 due <i>Sun Mar 29 at 11:59pm</i>
Mar 31	Tue	LAB ACTIVITY	Lab 5 & RATE 1 due <i>Tue Mar 31 at 11:59pm</i>
Apr 2	Thur	Development (Ch 9)	Quiz 4 due <i>8am Fri Apr 3 to 11:59pm Sun Apr 5</i>
Apr 7	Tue	Emotions & Stress (Ch 10, 11)	
Apr 9	Thur	Social Psychology (Ch 12) LAB ACTIVITY	Lab 6 & RATE 2 due <i>Thur Apr 9 at 11:59pm</i>
Apr 14	Tue	Social Psychology (Ch 12)	
Apr 16	Thur	Personality MINI-EXPT RESULTS	Mini-Expt Results due <i>12 pm on Thu Apr 16</i> Quiz 5 due <i>8am Fri Apr 17 to 11:59pm Sun Apr 19</i>
Apr 21	Tue	MIDTERM #2	
Apr 23	Thur	Psychological Disorders (Ch 14)	
Apr 28	Tue	Psychological Disorders (Ch 14)	
Apr 30	Thur	ARTICLE CRITIQUE #3	Quiz 6 due <i>8am Fri May 1 to 11:59pm Sun May 3</i>
May 5	Tue	REVIEW SESSION	
May 7	Thur	FINAL EXAM	

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS ETIQUETTE

ATTENDANCE: Please arrive on time for class. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive, especially in the intimate class settings at Soka. Although attendance is not mandatory, I strongly recommend that you attend class regularly and come to each session fully prepared (i.e., having read/watched/listened to all of the assigned materials). If you aren't there, you'll miss material not covered in your text or found on the lecture slides. If you do need to miss class for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered and for any course schedule changes made in your absence.

IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR: Every student in the classroom, regardless of personal history or identity, is a valued member of this group. Your experiences are important, and you should feel free to share them as they become relevant to our class. Please be courteous and respectful to others in class. A climate of mutual respect will allow us to ask difficult questions and to participate in honest discussions about important issues, even in the context of strong disagreement. Creating this kind of open, honest, and respectful climate is our mutual responsibility.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Cell phones, laptops, smartwatches, and “quiet conversations” are distracting and very noticeable throughout the classroom. Students must turn off cellular phones during class. Research has consistently shown that taking notes by hand is more conducive to the learning process than using an electronic device (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). As such, I strongly encourage you to take handwritten notes. You may also choose to do so on a tablet device.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

If you have a scheduling conflict or an emergency arises that affects your ability to complete any of the graded components of the course, please contact me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. You must provide documentation for a university-approved reason, such as hospitalization, family emergency, etc. Note that you must notify me AND obtain my permission to miss the exam PRIOR to its occurrence; otherwise, you will receive a zero for that exam grade. If you are not sure whether your reason for missing class counts as an approved reason, please ask me! I am often willing to excuse absences when I know about them in advance or you communicate with me in a timely manner.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to adhere to standards of academic integrity. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately to the Dean's office. It is disrespectful to your peers, the university, and to me. My advice to you is to always err on the side of caution. If you are unsure what might constitute a violation, consult me! I would much rather have a pleasant conversation with you before you submit an assignment than after you turn it in.

UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Can you not see or hear very well? Is English your second or third language? Do you have to miss class because of work, childcare, or parole appointments? Is money tight, and you can't afford books right now? Can you concentrate better if you stand or walk around in class? This course is intended for all students, including those with mental or physical disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that tends to affect one's equal access to education negatively. If you ever find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact me. I am committed to helping you succeed in this class. For services and resources on physical, mental and social well-being, contact our on-campus counselor or the Student Health Center. If you have a documented condition (physical or psychological) and experience educational barriers due to your condition, I encourage you to contact Disability Services as soon as possible to explore what accommodations may allow you to access your education fully. None of these resources will disclose your specific condition to your instructors without your permission.

RESOURCES FOR YOU

WRITING ASSISTANCE

If you find yourself struggling with any aspect of the reading/writing process or even just wanting a little extra feedback on your work, I highly encourage you to check out the Soka University Writing Center (<https://www.soka.edu/writing-center>).

TIME MANAGEMENT

For some helpful tips and tricks related to improving time management skills and creating good study habits, check out <https://www.soka.edu/writing-center/time-management> and <https://sites.rhodes.edu/time-management-tools/apps-managing-time-study>.

COUNSELING SERVICES

If you wish to speak to a counselor about any psychological and/or emotional distress that you are experiencing, you can get in touch with the Soka University Counseling Services (<https://www.soka.edu/student-life/living-sua/counseling-services>).

NATIONAL HOTLINES

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- National Eating Disorders Association Information and Referral Helpline: 1-800-931-2237
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673
- National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255