



Psychology 101: Introductory Psychology

Location Science Hall 208
Loras College T/TH 9:30-10:50

Psychology Program Fall 2017

Instructor: Jake Kurczek, PhD
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Office Hours: By appointment

Textbook: R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba Textbook Series: Psychology*.
Champaign, IL: DEF Publishers. DOI: nobaproject.com
Additional journal articles and materials will be assigned as needed and posted to the course website

Class Website: You will be able to find PDFs of the lectures and discussions posted to the course website

Course Goals and Overview

This course is an introduction to the science and practice of psychology as a discipline within liberal arts. All sections will include an overview of the science of psychology, basic research methods and statistics, and physiological psychology. Other topics may include: learning and/or cognition, perception, intelligence, personality psychology, and social psychology. Students should begin to appreciate the expansiveness of psychology. Unfortunately, time restrictions will prevent exploring all avenues that psychology has to offer and only allows us to discuss some concepts superficially. Thus, this course will attempt to lay the building blocks of your psychological knowledge.

Course Goals:

- To teach students the importance, applications, and implications of psychology.
- To make students educated consumers of psychology.
- To advance the critical thinking skills, not just in psychology, but for everyday situations. Thinking critically incorporates the ability to begin to think like a “scientist”. In other words, thinking critically is learning to evaluate and analyze the material and to integrate concepts.
- To teach students how psychology is a science.

Psychology
Introductory Psychology – Instructor: Jake Kurczek, Fall 2017

- To provide students with a solid understanding of psychology, thus preparing them to take it with them to future (more advanced) psychology courses.
- To make the concepts of psychology fun.

Overall Course Objectives:

Students will meet the following learning objectives in this course:

- Gain an elementary understanding of the research process including: basic statistics, research design, and ethics of research.
- Explore the physiological origins of psychology on the neural, cortical, and subcortical levels.
- Gain a basic understanding of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and social learning paradigms of learning.
- Study how individual behavior is affected by groups, including obedience, beliefs, conformity, and prejudice.
- Gain knowledge of various theories of personality and learn how personality is assessed.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Understand the key psychological theories and practices.
- Know how psychological research is conducted.
- Recognize when key psychological concepts are present in the real world.
- Apply learned theories to real situations.
- Interpret psychological findings based on science and skepticism.

Course Requirements, Policies and Assignments

Digital Storytelling	30
Presentation	5
News Update	3
Engagement	60
Reflection	2

Total	100
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Digital Storytelling. As a class, we will create a web-based resource for students and adults to learn about how psychology interfaces with life. My thinking is that this resource will help understand the applications and misapplications of psychology to our lives. Others who are eager to learn about psychology and science should have access to this material for teaching and learning alike. A digital storybook of the psychology topic of your choice should be designed for a general audience.

This digital storybook should include the following aspects

An introduction to the topic

Interesting/Analytic Components

Psychology
Introductory Psychology – Instructor: Jake Kurczek, Fall 2017

Interactive components that can teach you more about the topic (e.g. data visualization, games, demonstrations, other resources)

Digital Storytelling Presentation. Psychology conferences typically host symposium sessions, in which researchers construct talks to present their research findings from a recent study or studies. The last few days of class will consist of an academic symposium. During the session, each student will present their digital story that they have developed over the course of the semester. Each presentation should be 5 minutes with a minute for questions.

Reflection Paper. Students are asked to write a 3 page, double-spaced reflection paper reacting to the experience of researching a topic and what the process was like. Also, discuss why the topic is significant to people in general.

News Updates. Students will be asked to give a presentation of 2-4 minute each on topics of their choice across the semester. These presentations will give students an opportunity to summarize either a current event or research finding and discuss how it relates to psychology.

Engagement

Research Participation. You are required to complete 6 research credits for our Introduction to Psychology course. Research credit can be obtained by: (1) participating in a research study, (2) writing a 2-page response paper about a research study, or (3) attending a scholarly talk in psychology (must be approved by me).

Critical Thinking Journal. Over the course of the semester I will ask students to respond to questions in-class. You must be present in order to receive credit. If you will be absent any given day, make sure to send me an e-mail **before** class.

In-Class Participation/Activities/Discussion. I look forward to this being an active class where we discuss ideas and participate in a number of different activities. I will post questionnaires/surveys and other aids to facilitate in class experiments and inquiries, please do your best to fill them out on time.

Out of class engagement. In addition to learning, the college experience involves building relationships with peers and faculty. For many students, interactions with faculty take place only in the classroom. For students at small liberal arts colleges, though, students and faculty often meet serendipitously both on and off campus. Thus, by attending guest lectures, meetings and other campus community events you can contribute to our learning experience. Further you can contribute to your peers learning by bringing our attention to relevant new studies or information by posting on twitter or instagram and tagging me (@engagedbrain) or through our course webpage.

Comprehension Checks. There will be exams/quizzes in class. The exam questions may include the following question formats: multiple-choice; fill-in-the-blank; matching; true/false; and short-answer sections. Everything that is presented in lecture and in the article/chapter readings will be fair game. Note also, that some of

Psychology
Introductory Psychology – Instructor: Jake Kurczek, Fall 2017

the lecture material will be non-overlapping with the article/textbook, as lectures are designed to augment, or expand upon, the article/chapter readings. Your lowest 10% of scores will be dropped.

Important Dates

8/28 – First day of classes

9/4 – Labor Day

9/15 - Last day to drop classes without “W”

10/7 - Homecoming

10/16-10/17 – Fall Free Days

10/27 - Last day to drop without receiving an “F”

11/10 – Nick Wetjen Visit

11/22-11/24 – Thanksgiving

12/8 – Last Day of Class

12/11-12/14 – Final Exams

Schedule*

Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment
8/29	Welcome / Introduction		
8/31	Science of Psychology & Research	Why Science?	Syllabus Assignment
9/5	Research Methods	Research Designs Conducting Psychology Research in the Real World	
9/7	Psychology of Groups	Psychology of Groups	
9/12	Motivation	Motives and Goals	
9/14	Health and Well-Being	The Healthy Life	
9/19	Prejudice, Discrimination & Stereotyping	Prejudice, Discrimination & Stereotyping	
9/21	Learning	Conditioning & Learning	

Psychology
Introductory Psychology – Instructor: Jake Kurczek, Fall 2017

9/26	Learning	Factors Influencing Learning	
9/28	Happiness	Happiness: The science of subjective well-being	
10/3	Biology & Behavior	The Brain and Nervous System	
10/5	Biology & Behavior		
10/10	Nature/Nurture/Epigenetics	Nature-Nurture Question Evolutionary Theories in Psychology	
10/12	Consciousness / Attention / Unconscious	Consciousness Attention	
10/17	Fall Free Days No Class		
10/19	Memory	Memory	
10/24	Memory	Forgetting and Amnesia	
10/26	Sensation & Perception	Sensation & Perception	
10/31	Peer Review		
11/2	Categories / Concepts	Categories / Concepts	
11/7	Judgment / Decision Making	Judgment & Decision Making	
11/9	Theory of Mind	Theory of Mind	
11/14	Emotion: Functions & Intelligence	Functions of Emotions	
11/16	Affective Neuroscience & Culture	Culture & Emotion	

Psychology
Introductory Psychology – Instructor: Jake Kurczek, Fall 2017

11/21	Family Relationships and Well-Being	Family Relationships and Well-Being	
11/23	Thanksgiving No Class		
11/28	Personality: Traits	Personality Traits	
11/30	Personality: Stability and Change	Personality: Stability and Change	
12/5	Conformity & Obedience / Persuasion	Conformity & Obedience Persuasion	Digital Story Due
12/7	Social Cognition & Attitudes	Social Cognition & Attitudes	Presentations Due
12/11-12 /14	Finals		Presentations Reflection Paper