

Course Syllabus for PSCH 3308: Applied Psychology

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Contacting the Professor

The most effective way to contact the instructor is by email at tculver@sulross.edu. On weekdays, replies to serious emails will usually be within 24 hours. Emails sent over a weekend will usually be responded to on the following Monday. To protect your privacy, please send from your Sul Ross or Blackboard-registered email account.

Email etiquette requires that you sign your name in *every* email you send and that you specify the particular course or issue to which you are referring. Do not open an email by saying "Hey." Do not expect to get a response unless you extend this courtesy.

I do not use text messaging at all, so text messages will not be received.

Contacting Technical Support

If you have a problem with technical issues such as downloading a file or taking an exam, contact an Office of Information Technology (OIT) staffer for assistance or call the OIT Helpdesk. The Helpdesk is available seven days of the week.

- From on-campus, call 8765.
- From off-campus, call (888) 691-5071.

Most technical problems that students experience using Blackboard can be avoided by using *Firefox* as your web browser rather than *Internet Explorer*. Firefox may be downloaded for free at www.mozilla.com/firefox. If you are downloading syllabi and other documents, you should update your computer for compatibility with Microsoft Office 2007. The free update is available at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941B3470-3AE9-4AEE-8F43-C6BB74CD1466&displaylang=en>

Required Texts

- *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 21st Century (9th Edition)*, by Wayne Weiten, et al. (ISBN: 978-0495553397)
- *APA manual, 6th ed.*
- *Choose ONE self-help book*

Bargains on textbooks are often found on the websites of Internet booksellers. Amazon.com and other major online vendors accept major credit cards, checks, and money orders. Due to our time constraints, if the Weiten & Lloyd text is ordered online, it should be purchased only from a major vendor and delivered overnight or two-day express. No special consideration will be given to students who texts have not arrived in time for the first exam.

Illegal copies of textbooks are not allowed at any time in class or the testing labs.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

The graduating student will demonstrate the capacity to:

1. Recognize the central concepts, theories, and empirical findings in the department's main areas of focus: abnormal psychology; social & personality psychology, and developmental psychology.
2. Recognize and apply basic psychological research methods, including: the experiment; the case study; the survey; and correlation.
3. Communicate effectively in written assignments and oral presentations.
4. Demonstrate insight into the behavior and psychological processes of oneself and others.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are to:

- Achieve an understanding of the important topic areas of inquiry in applied psychology.
- Survey important topics in applied psychology in such a way as to enhance the utility of this psychological knowledge in daily life.
- Demonstrate the mastery of material covered in the course through successful completion of the weekly exams, final exam, and other assignments.
- Utilize the Internet as a tool in academic research and collaboration.

Assessment Mechanisms

I. Chapter Exams

There will be four chapter exams given in this course. The exams will consist of 30 multiple choice items. All exams must be taken. Students who miss three weekly exams will be dropped from the course with an automatic F.

You MUST use Firefox and do NOT save your answers as you take the exam. Just click on "submit" at the end of the exam.

You will have 45 minutes to complete the exams. If you go over the 45 minutes, you will have points deducted from your score. For each minute you go over the allotted time, you will have 3.3 points deducted (or 1 test

question missed). Any student who goes who goes over 5 minutes past the allotted time will receive a “0” on the exam.

There will be no “resets” on the exams. However, there will be one test grade dropped in the course. Therefore, if you have a bboard issue you will use the drop grade for this exam. Do NOT assume you will not have a bboard issue and just pick a test to skip!!! In other words, pretend there is no drop grade and do your best on all the exams.

II. Paper: “Inside Investigations”

You are hired by a book editor to investigate an author(s) of a newly published self help book. This editor does NOT want to ruin his/her reputation by publishing a book written by an incompetent source.

Read pages 5-9 in your textbook. Locate a self-help book at the library or at your closest bookstore. You are responsible for reading this book. Identify the author(s) and google information regarding their education and their experiences surrounding the focus of the book. For example, if your self help book is about “co-dependent relationships” does your author(s) have a license to be a counselor? Was he/she ever a counselor? If so, what kind of counselor was he/she? Do your homework. Find out if these authors should even be writing this book. After you have completed your “background check,” write a two page paper persuading your reader that the author(s) are either credible or not so credible. Be sure and use the characteristics outlined in your textbook to determine your opinion. Also, talk about ideas from the book that are supported by our Applied Psychology textbook. You must include at least two ideas. In the paper, you should also discuss if the book helped you or not and why.

Papers will need to be at least two pages, not counting the title page and reference page. Your paper will be typed and in APA format, 6th edition. You will need to include in text citations. Significant deductions will result if the paper has APA errors or grammatical errors. The highest grade you can expect if these errors are present will be a 65 (this is if the content is perfect). You have several resources available to you for help with writing and APA. The writing center is located at all campuses. Visit the writing center! You may also bring your paper for me to review, if it has already been checked by the writing center. Please do not expect me to review your paper the day or night before the paper is due.

III. Psuedo Psychology

Look up Dr. Phil’s or Dr. Laura’s education. Also, look up their work experience. Then watch a tv episode of Dr. Phil or listen to an audio of Dr. Laura. Make notes of their suggestions. Write a paper analyzing whether or not their credentials (education and work experience) make them credible advisors to millions? Think about the suggestions they gave on their program. Does research support their ideas? Does it contradict their ideas? Find 3 ideas/comments made by Dr. Phil or Dr. Laura and use real research (**look in your old textbooks, use psychINFO**) to either support or contradict their work? This paper should be at least 2 pages long. Should we place confidence in Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura’s suggestions? Why or why not?

IV. The Final Exam

The final exam will cover all of the material in the course and will consist of 30 multiple choice items. Taking the final exam will be allowed only during the period assigned, and the final exam is mandatory.

Assessment

Grades for each assignment, and for the course itself, are calculated as follows:

- A: 90% or above
- B: 80% - 89%
- C: 70% - 79%
- D: 60% - 69%
- F: 0% - 59%

The times and dates when assignments are due and when evaluations are given will not be altered to fit your schedule. You will be expected to alter your schedule to fit class responsibilities. There are no exceptions to this policy.

- Psuedo PSY Paper: 100 points
- Inside Invest Paper: 100 points
- Exam 1: 100 points
- Exam 2: 100 points
- Exam 3: 100 points
- Exam 4: 100 points
- Final Exam: 100 points

Total: 600 points (after dropping one test grade worth 100 points)

<u>Schedule</u>	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Exam 1 (ch. 1, 2, 3)	Sept. 9
Inside Invest Paper Due	Sept 21
Exam 2 (ch. 4, 5, 6)	Oct 6
Exam 3 (ch. 7, 8, 9)	Oct 21
Psuedo Psy Paper Due	Nov 8
Exam 4 (ch. 10, 11, 12)	Nov 30
Final Exam	Dec 7

Course Policies

Textbook Reading

You will notice that on your course calendar there are assigned readings. In order to pass this course, reading assignments must be completed. Please keep up with your assigned readings (according to the course calendar).

Policy Concerning Problems with Blackboard during Exams

Blackboard is seldom to blame for problems during exams. When genuine problems occur with Blackboard technology, the problem affects multiple people at the same time. Yet some students frequently report that Blackboard has “locked up” or will not let them on. So far I have identified

1. Students will not use the Google Chrome search engine.
2. Students try to go back and change the answers to test items that they have already answered. You cannot do this. Trying to do so by hitting the back button on your browser, or by other methods, will void your quiz.
3. Students misinterpret the following statement that appears at the start of each quiz: “This Test can be saved and resumed later.” Yes, if later means in five minutes. But you will have only twenty-five minutes from the time you log on to the time you log out. Taking longer than that will result in a zero for the quiz.
4. Students try to cheat by first previewing a quiz, then logging out and claiming that they were frozen out of the quiz. They do this in the hope of getting the chance to then retake the quiz and earning a higher score. That will not happen.

5. Students “save” answers as they take the exam. You should not save as you take the exam. Just press “submit” at the end of the exam.

Final grades

All final course grades will be posted on the Web for Students. Please do not contact me concerning grades during the final exams period. Finals time is hectic for everyone, so please respect the privacy of all your professors during that period. Access to your assignment grades and other course content will also be available on Blackboard.

Grades in this course are based on performance alone. They will not be rounded upwards. It is important for every student to understand that evaluation is not based ultimately on how hard someone has studied to get the grade desired, or whether someone needs this course to graduate. Nor are grades based on personal & family needs, or on personal conceptions about what seems to be fair. All grades, including your final course grade, will be based *solely* on your academic work in this course, according to the criteria described in this syllabus.

Academic Dishonesty and the Honor Code

Academic dishonesty and the penalties pertaining to it are described in the SRSU student handbook. In this course, all communication among students while taking exams is prohibited. Communicating material included on an exam with or in the presence of someone who has not yet taken that exam is also prohibited.

No student may print, photograph, or copy any material from any exam. Failure to follow these instructions will, at a minimum, result in a zero for the exam.

Students may not share books, notes, or any other form of communication during exams. Do NOT sit next to another student who is taking the same test in the lab unless no other seats are available.

Plagiarism, as every student should know, involves taking the work of others and claiming it as your own. It will not be tolerated. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, excellent guidelines can be found online at www.plagiarism.org.

Using an illegal copy of a textbook constitutes academic dishonesty. If a student is found to be using an illegally copied text during an open-book exam, the penalty will be failure of the exam. In addition, the student will have the choice of immediately surrendering the illegal copy to SRSU faculty/staff or receiving a failing grade for the course.

You and you alone are responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty in all your work. The penalty for serious academic dishonesty is severe: a student who turns in a plagiarized paper or cheats on an exam may receive an F for the entire course. A plagiarized paper will be given a failing grade on academic grounds alone, yet the student may face the additional disciplinary penalties for academic dishonesty.

As members of the academic community, no student should tolerate cheating. It is the responsibility of each and every student to report suspected cheating. The confidentiality and anonymity of students who report suspected cheating will be respected.

Intellectual Tolerance and Academic Freedom

Psychology is a field of inquiry that touches upon many controversial issues, including sexuality, evolution, gender, race, ethnicity, individual differences, parenting, divorce, crime and public policy, drug use, religion, and multicultural issues, among others. Professors and students often have strong opinions and make forceful arguments concerning these phenomena. It is often educationally productive to address and debate these matters in the context of classroom instruction and course assignments. Social taboos discouraging open discussion are inappropriate in this context and must be laid aside in the interest of intellectual inquiry.

Your grade will not be influenced in any way by expressing points of view that are in disagreement with the professor's. If time permits, students are encouraged to express their opinions and arguments whenever relevant to the subject material. The professor is free to do likewise.

Students who experience excessive anxiety or discomfort during the discussion of a sensitive topic (e.g., domestic abuse) should not hesitate to leave the classroom for a time if necessary and should never feel embarrassed for doing so. This can be an adaptive response to an emotionally difficult situation.

In contrast, other individuals are offended in principle by the mere exposure to concepts, opinions and arguments with which they disagree. The response of such persons is sometimes to try and close off discussion or to become hostile or vindictive toward others. Such persons are not encouraged to take psychology courses at Rio Grande College until they have resolved the personal issues preventing them from engaging in serious intellectual discourse.

Teaching Philosophy

A college degree signifies accomplishment; it will increase a person's prestige and can help its holder acquire a job. However, once the job is taken, success depends on what has been learned—a college degree by itself is merely a sheet of paper. If a student takes full advantage of the opportunity of education, the sheet of paper signifies skills and knowledge that will improve one's value as a worker and as a member of the community. If not, the student might find himself or herself with a sheet of paper only, without additional skills, useful knowledge, or value to employers. RGC psychology courses are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills that will help them in their careers, in their relationships, and in their capacity to be responsible members of a community.