

# PSCH 4330: Research in Psychology

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[January 18, 2023 – Version 1.0 - Subject to Revision]

## **I. Basic Course Information**

### I-A. Course Description

This course introduces students to research methods and design in psychology. Students will learn how to design, execute, and report original research.

### I-B. Course Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course include learning to:

- Describe the basics of research methodology.
- Engage in the development of hypothesis formation.
- Apply the essentials of APA style to written assignments.
- Execute the process of reporting research.
- Understand ethical principles applicable to psychological research.

### I-C. Meeting Time and Location

This is an online course. Regular assignments (weekly exams and discussions) will be available from 12 noon on Wednesday to 11:59 pm on Thursday each week of the semester, except holidays.

### I-D. Instructor

The instructor for this course is Dr. Wesley Wynne.

Email: [wwynne@sulross.edu](mailto:wwynne@sulross.edu)

Office: Uvalde A105.

Phone: 830-279-3044.

General Student Availability Hours:

Anytime. Since we live and work in many different communities, just email me to convey your concerns or to set up a visit by phone or in person. The most effective method of contact is by email at [wwynne@sulross.edu](mailto:wwynne@sulross.edu). To protect student privacy, send from your Sul Ross email account. Email etiquette (and common sense) requires that you state your name in every email you send. Also, please specify the course you are referring to and state clearly the precise concern you have.

## I-E. Course Materials

### Required Texts

- *The Process of Research in Psychology (4th Ed.)*, by McBride. ISBN: 978-1544323497.
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)*, by APA. ISBN: 978-1433832161.
- *Writing: Grammar, Usage, and Style, (3rd edition)*, by Reinhardt & Eggenchwiler. ISBN: 9780470880784.

By law, this university is required to inform you of the following in accordance with Section 51.9705 of the Texas Education Code: "A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer." In fact, bargains on textbooks are often found on the websites of many Internet booksellers. Major online vendors typically accept major credit cards, checks, and money orders.

🚫 Illegal copies of textbooks are prohibited at all times in classrooms and labs.

## **II. Assignments**

### II-A. Regular Online Participation (25%)

Each student should contribute to all online discussions. Discussions will be posted and available from 12 noon on Wednesday to 11:59 pm on Thursday each week of the semester, except holidays.

Regular participation in the online discussions is not required to pass the course but is highly recommended, since it does count for a significant percentage of the course grade.

All postings should be thoughtful and literate. The use of proper English is not optional here, so refer to *Writing: Grammar, Usage, and Style* if you are unsure of your writing.

Thoughtful contributions will receive credit; insubstantial contributions will not. Below is an example of a credited versus an un-credited contribution on the topic of "Love and Friendship" in a course on human sexuality:

#### Example of a Thoughtful Contribution - Credited:

I really enjoyed this chapter because it made a lot of my own "theories" make sense. One topic that really interested me was people marrying for money instead of love. My sister is the type of person that would marry for money instead of love and that is something that I never understood. She recently moved to California and has totally adopted a typical California attitude. Along with this, she has surprised the entire family. She is a very pretty girl, 20 years old and dating a man who is 32, very rich, but very unattractive. He is controlling and manipulative and is constantly making her change her ways of life. But he takes her to very expensive restaurants and buys her very expensive things and she thinks that makes it all better. She thinks he is so "cool" because he drives a \$70,000 car. She even admits that she is only with him for his money. I have never understood how someone could live so unhappily just because they want to be rich. What upsets me the most is that we weren't brought up that way, and I don't understand where she got it.

Example of a Poor Contribution – No Credit Awarded:

I don't know. I don't think I believe in love because people just want to take advantage of you and stuff. I get tired of it.

#### II-B. Chapter Exams and Other Assignments (35%)

Weekly exams will cover material from the main textbook chapters. Exams will be posted and available from 12 noon on Wednesday to 11:59 pm on Thursday each week of the semester, except holidays. Every student enrolled in this course is expected to attempt each exam that is given. However, absences from *any three* weekly exams will be allowed without penalty, no excuses necessary. *Some exams may have a time limit of one hour or less; essay or written summary exams will have an extended time limit that may extend as far as Saturdays at 11:59 pm.*

Power outages, Internet disruptions, or other problems that might occur at your home, but these problems will not be accepted as excuses for missing an exam.

- ☛ Students who miss more than three exams may be dropped from the course with an automatic F for non-participation.

#### II-C. Analysis of Research (10%)

This exercise will be used to evaluate an analysis of reported research. The exercise will focus on critical reading and interpretation of research done by others.

#### II-D. Institutional Review Board Proposal (10%)

Students will complete an Institutional Review Board application based on their own individual research proposal.

#### II-E. The Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will cover all the material in the course. The final exam will be given on Friday, May 12 at 6 pm and *should be started by all students promptly at 6 pm sharp*. If this date and time conflicts with other non-academic responsibilities, appointments, travel arrangements, etc., then you should take steps to eliminate the conflict from the other end, contact the professor immediately, or, if necessary, withdraw from this course. And if the date and time conflict with another final exam, contact one of your professors as soon as possible so that a solution can be developed far in advance of the exam date.

II-F. Assignment Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment and Topics</u>
January 18	Introduction to the Course; Read Ch. 1
January 25	Ch. 1 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 2
February 1	Ch. 2 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 3
February 8	Ch. 3 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 4
February 15	Ch. 4 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 5
February 22	Ch. 5 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 6
March 1	Ch. 6 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 7
March 8	Ch. 7 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 8
<i>March 15</i>	<i>***Spring Break – No Classes***</i>
March 22	Ch. 8 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 9
March 29	Ch. 9 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 10
April 5	Ch. 10 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 11
April 12	Ch. 11 Exam & Discussion; Read Ch. 12
<i>April 14</i>	<i>Last possible day to drop this class with a W</i>
April 19	Ch. 12 Exam & Discussion
April 26	Analysis of Research
May 3	Institutional Review Board Proposal
May 12	<u>Friday, May 12 – Final Exam at 6 PM sharp</u>

Notice: The schedule of topics above is subject to change for pedagogical reasons at the discretion of the instructor.

☛ Other than any exceptions described herein, all major assignments in this course *must be completed and submitted to pass this course*, regardless of your overall grades on other assignments. Students who do not complete all major written assignments will receive an F as a final grade for this course.

☛ Written assignments must be submitted through Blackboard unless otherwise authorized. Assignments that are emailed without prior authorization will not be accepted or considered submitted under any circumstances.

Exam dates will not be changed except in exceptional circumstances. Due dates for other assignments, such as papers and presentations, may in certain circumstances be postponed to a later date, but not advanced to an earlier date. (In other words, students may in some instances be granted additional time to submit assignments.)

If it is not possible to administer a final exam (for example, due to an internet outage, power outage, emergency school closure, or other extraordinary circumstances), final grades for this course will be calculated solely from the assignments submitted prior to the final exam.

Exams may contain experimental test questions that will not be included in grading.

### **III. Grading**

#### III-A. The Calculation of Grades

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%.

On assignments with curved grades, the top score will be converted to a 100. All other grades on the assignment will be expressed as a percentage of the top score. For example, if the top score on an exam is a 20 out of 25 items available, the 20 will be converted to a 100. If you get 15 of the 25 questions correct, your grade will be a 15/20, which is equal to a 75 (in other words, a C).

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.

In the interest of more thorough coverage of certain topics, the professor may decide to omit some of the assigned material from coverage on any particular exam. You are responsible to learn of any announced omissions.

#### III-B. The Basis of Final Grades

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 worked to earn a particular grade, 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.

#### III-C. The Reporting of Final Grades

For non-graduating students, final course grades will be posted on Banner at noon on the Monday after commencement (and for graduating seniors, at noon on the Friday before commencement). Final exam week is a hectic time for students and the faculty alike, so please respect the privacy of all your professors during and after this period. Please do not inquire concerning grades between the start of the final exams period and when grades are reported. If the professor needs information from you during this time, he will be the one to initiate contact.

Unsolicited voicemails and emails from any non-graduating student during the final exams period are liable to be ignored. This policy is based on years of experience: most communications from students during final exams and the grading period are based on anxiety rather than necessity. Please understand that any issues of grading that truly must be resolved may still be resolved *after* final grades are reported. Access to assignment grades and other course content will also be available to you on Blackboard until the week after commencement.

### **IV. Student Confidentiality**

Because of privacy laws, all school-related issues — academic, disciplinary, and personal — must be handled between the university and the student directly. A student's parent, spouse, boyfriend, best friend, case worker, parole officer, et cetera has absolutely no standing to intervene for a student or inquire concerning grades, disciplinary matters, or any other issues. Do not ask such persons to contact university faculty and staff to serve as a liaison, make inquiries, or settle disputes on your behalf.

## **V. Academic Integrity**

### V-A. The Honor Code

As members of the academic community, no student should tolerate cheating. According to the honor code, it is the responsibility of every student to report obvious cheating or any suspicious behavior that may compromise the integrity of the grading process. The confidentiality and anonymity of students who report such incidents will be respected.

☞ *To report cheating, call 210-288-1393. If there is no answer, leave a detailed description of what you witnessed.*

### V-B. Policy on Academic Dishonesty

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, copy, or in any other way reproduce material from any exam. The consequence of violating this directive will be severe, up to and including dismissal from the course with a grade of F.

☞ Except in online courses, unless specifically authorized, no student shall take an exam at any computer outside of the designated testing facility.

☞ Students may not share books, notes, phone calls, texts, 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. No student taking an exam should have open any website other than the Blackboard site. Close all other windows. Failure to follow these instructions may, at a minimum, result in a zero for the exam and might result in an F for the course.

☞ The possession of any course-related material in an exam room during an exam period in which the material in question is forbidden is *ipso facto* evidence of scholastic dishonesty. In plain language, if you bring material, such as a textbook, into a testing situation where you are not supposed to have that material with you, you are thereby committing a violation, even if you were not referring to the material or intending to use the material to cheat.

☞ Unless otherwise specified, the possession and use of cell phones, tablet devices, online aids, e-books, and any other electronic device is not permitted during testing and may result in the forfeiture of the test grade and other penalties.

☞ No electronic device other than the computer on which an exam is being taken may be used by a student while taking an exam.

☞ No website other than the Blackboard website is to be opened or viewed by a student while taking an exam.

☞ Plagiarism, as every student should know, involves taking the work of others and claiming it as your own. It will not be tolerated and will result in a zero for the assignment on academic grounds alone, as well as disciplinary penalties. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, find out online at [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org).

Using an illegal copy of textbook materials constitutes academic dishonesty. If a student is found to be using illegally copied textbook material 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.

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 zero on academic grounds alone, yet the student may face the additional disciplinary penalties for academic dishonesty. You and you alone are responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty in all your work.

## **VI. Student Classroom Behavior**

### **VI-A. Student Behavior in Traditional and Teleconference Courses**

Please remember to follow all the conventional classroom rules, such as: Show up to class on time. Do not leave class early. (If you must leave early or show up late in special circumstances, notify the professor *in person* ahead of time.) And absolutely do not get up and leave the classroom during lecture to go get food, take calls or for other trivial reasons.

Students in VMR classes must log in with a working camera and microphone on their device. The camera must be turned on and the student must appear in the frame at almost all times, with few exceptions. Students whose cameras are turned off or whose image is not in frame may be removed from VMR class sessions and not allowed back in for the remainder of a class session.

Please remember that Sul Ross has a policy on appropriate campus attire. The policy refers to "the responsibility to dress in a manner which will not detract from the academic atmosphere of the library, classrooms, and other facilities." Students whose attire detracts from the academic atmosphere of the classroom to an extent that becomes disruptive will be notified of the problem by the professor and thereafter expected to dress more appropriately.

Attendance will sometimes be taken, usually but not always at the beginning of class. Students who are not present for roll call will be counted absent. Sul Ross policy allows that students may be automatically dropped with an F from courses if they have excessive absences, defined as nine hours of absence from a course (this translates to 3 absences from an evening course, 6 absences from a daytime course, and 3 absences from a summer course). The professor will enforce this policy when a pattern of negligent behavior is observed. Students who without authorization arrive late or leave class early for any reason without approval may be counted absent for the entire session.

## **VII. Statement on 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 disagree 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 shut down 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.

### **VIII. 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. Sul Ross 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.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American writer Albert Jay Nock had this to say about his college experience:

We were made to understand that the burden of education was on us and no one else, least of all our instructors; they were not there to help us carry it or to praise our efforts, but to see that we shouldered it in proper style and got on with it.

I believe that through encouragement and deserved praise, college professors can and should ease the burden of education for their students. Yet students who enroll at Sul Ross must remember they are expected to perform upper-division college-level work. No course in the psychology curriculum is remedial. As Albert Jay Nock understood, a professor's responsibility is to lead students to knowledge; it is, however, each student's responsibility to learn.

Almost no students who major in psychology at Sul Ross express an interest in pursuing a career in academic psychology. Yet the typical American psychology undergraduate curriculum and textbook are seemingly designed around this notion. I believe that while exposure to research methods and technical esoterica does have a rightful place in the degree program, Sul Ross students are much better served by a phenomenological educational orientation that places real-life applications of psychological theories and findings higher than the focus on technical training. Therefore, I strongly encourage students to relate and apply what is taught in my psychology classes to their own emotional lives, family lives, workplaces, and communities.



## **IX. SRSU Disability Services**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. RGC students seeking accessibility services should contact Paulette Harris, Executive Assistant to the Vice President and Dean, at 830-279-3023 or email pharris@sulross.edu. Ms. Harris's office is at 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801 (this is the mailing address, too).

## **X. Distance Education Statement**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. [If the course requires students to take proctored exams or to purchase additional software or equipment, those requirements are described herein above.] The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in online courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

## **XI. Program Learning Objectives and Skills**

### **XI-A. Student Learning Objectives for the Psychology Program**

This course is an element of the Sul Ross psychology program. It is expected that the graduating student in this program will demonstrate the capacity to:

- Recognize the central concepts in the department's main areas of focus: abnormal psychology; social & personality psychology, and developmental psychology.
- Recognize and apply basic psychological research methods.
- Communicate effectively in written assignments and oral presentations concerning psychological subject matter.

### **XI-B. Marketable Skills for the Psychology Program**

1. Students will demonstrate competency in public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences. (speaking effectively)
2. Students will demonstrate empathic or active listening and conversational skills, and/or write clearly about their affective stance, respectfully attuned to the needs of their audiences. (describing feelings)
3. Students will demonstrate the aptitude to locate, organize and evaluate the credibility of information from multiple sources. (identifying resources)
4. Students will demonstrate ability to examine the underlying issues of scientific problems, attending to the pertinent details and creating action plans, recognizing ambiguity and complexity as essential components. (Analyzing)

**XII. Miscellaneous**

This syllabus was written as accurately as possible at the time of its publication. It is possible, however, that errors or unforeseen circumstances will necessitate further changes in the best interest of the class. If further changes are made, they will be implemented in a way to minimize any inconvenience or difficulty for all parties affected.

If you have a problem that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, contact the professor immediately once you decide that you cannot resolve the problem and complete/submit the assignment as instructed. Waiting until after the deadline to contact the professor may result in forfeiture of the grade for the assignment.

**Appendix 1: Assessment Rubrics for Assignments in Psychology**

Assessment rubrics are helpful to plan and evaluate professional writing and oral presentations. Students should refer to these rubrics at appropriate points in the development of assignments.

<b>RUBRIC FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS</b>					
<b>DIMENSION OF ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Fail 0</b>	<b>Poor 1</b>	<b>Average 2</b>	<b>Good 3</b>	<b>Top 4</b>
<b>Topic and Focus</b> follow the instructions provided for the assignment.					
<b>Structure</b> is logical in its organization & fully developed, with a distinct introduction & conclusion.					
<b>Audio-Visual Aids</b> are effectively utilized and appropriate for professional presentations.					
<b>Verbal Communication</b> is clear, fluent, well-paced, properly intoned, and not over-reliant on notes or slides.					
<b>Non-verbal Communication</b> clarifies and enhances the message with appropriate eye contact, gestures, and posture.					
<b>Grammar, Spelling, &amp; Punctuation</b> meet levels expected for formal professional presentations.					
<b>Documentation</b> fully conforms to accepted professional standards.					

<b>RUBRIC FOR PROFESSIONAL WRITING</b>					
<b>DIMENSION OF ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Fail 0</b>	<b>Poor 1</b>	<b>Average 2</b>	<b>Good 3</b>	<b>Top 4</b>
<b>Psychological Analysis</b> of the subject matter is relevant, accurate, and thoroughly utilizes assigned sources.					
<b>Clarity of Expression</b> is appropriate for professional-level communication.					
<b>Grammar, Spelling, &amp; Punctuation</b> meet levels expected for formal professional writing.					
<b>Documentation</b> fully conforms to accepted professional standards.					

## Appendix 2: General Guidelines for Written Assignments in Psychology

Follow these specifications, unless you are instructed otherwise:

1. Refer to pp. 61-67 of your *APA Publication Manual (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.)* to format your paper.
2. Double space everything and use 12-point Times New Roman. It looks like this and is very easy to read when printed out and double-spaced.
3. Use one-inch margins all around on every page.
4. Number all your pages in the upper right-hand corner.
5. Always include a cover page. The cover page should be centered and should include (listed on separate lines): your paper's title; your name; your program and school (Psychology Program, Sul Ross State University); the name of your course; your professor's name, and the due date for the assignment.
6. Create a title that is original and descriptive, not something bland and thoughtless like "Psychology Reflection Paper."
7. Do not include an abstract in your paper.
8. Include a references page; all your references should be formatted correctly in APA style (not in MLA style or some other style).
9. Grammar-check and spell-check your paper before submitting it.
10. Keep both hard-copy and electronic-copy back-ups of your paper.
11. Remember that your cover page and your references page do not count toward the page count of the paper. For example, a five-page reflection paper should have a title page, five *full* pages of text, and a references page.
12. Do not plagiarize at all. Plagiarizing (copying someone else's work and passing it off without credit as your own) will not be tolerated. You will fail for it.