

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY – BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
PSY 1302 COURSE SYLLABUS – FALL 2026



Course Title:	General Psychology
Required Text:	Soomo Learning Jennifer Harper's <i>Psychology in the Real World</i>
Contact Information:	Kathleen Rivers – kathleen.rivers@sulross.edu
Student (LH 306) Hours:	Mondays (8:30am to 10:00am); Wednesdays (8:30am to 10:00am) Appointment: https://calendly.com/kathleen-rivers-sulross
Office Phone:	432-837-8019

DESCRIPTION

My name is Kathleen Rivers, and I am very excited to teach you my favorite subject – Psychology! Why? Psychology is the *scientific* study of behavior and mental processes. Science is important because psychologists use the same scientific method that biologists, chemists, agricultural scientists, physicists and geologists use. But there is a slight difference! Our ‘objects’ are human beings and not necessarily inanimate objects. Essentially human beings are our subjects, and we use the scientific method to observe, analyze, describe, and infer their behavior and mental processes. Now, studying behavior is clearer because you can actually observe how many times a human being may act, but mental processes become tricky. In order to observe, analyze, describe and infer/predict mental processes, we use more sophisticated methods like neuroscientific procedures and brain imaging. We also use transcendental methodologies. What is that? We also work with people who can connect (and communicate) with the spiritual or natural aspects of life. Woah! Really? Yes, and some of that material is covered in our other classes like *Psychology of Religion & Spirituality*.

In this class, we will focus solely on observable phenomena in psychology and understand why this is a scientific discipline. I have taught this course for more than 10 years and I am always enthusiastic about teaching it because I learn something new every time. And not only the content sparks my interest, but your comments, questions, and a-ha moments will make this course a lot more engaging for you, and everyone else! For the purposes of this course, we will track the development of psychology and its venture into examining personality, the body and brain, learning, perception and action, emotion, memory, and psychological disorders.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Throughout the course, these are the outcomes that we will aspire to gain:

1. Given the basic characteristics of the *science* of psychology, students can explain the nature of psychology as a discipline and the different divisions in the American Psychological Association (APA).
Method of Formative Assessment: Activities, Participation and Exams
2. Given the necessity for ethical behavior and social responsibility in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology, students can identify research ethics and the psychologists who abided by those ethics, and explain why ethics are important.
Method of Formative Assessment: Checklists, Activities, Participation and Exams
3. Given the connections between mind and body, students can label parts of the brain and body that impact psychological processes and describe the mechanisms and/or habits that enable those connections to be viable or not.
Method of Formative Assessment: Checklists, Activities, Participation and Exams
4. Given the significance of the scientific model and the importance of this model to the discipline of psychology, students can discuss basic research and statistical concepts in scientific psychology, including experimental and correlation methods.
Method of Formative Assessment: Checklists, Activities, Participation and Exams
5. Given sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences in a person's beliefs, values, and interactions, students can examine how psychology's main principles in learning, perception and action, and memory have demonstrated those differences.
Method of Formative Assessment: Checklists, Activities, Participation and Exams
6. Given how psychological states can negatively or positively affect personal development, students will evaluate themselves using theories from emotion, personality, and psychological states, to determine the validity/reliability of these theories. In addition, the knowledge gained will hopefully strengthen self-understanding and intercultural competence to effectively engage with others in local and global communities.
Method of Summative Assessment: Checklists, Activities, Participation, Exams and Portfolio

RECOGNIZING COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **The text MUST be obtained.**
2. Respect for students and lecturer must be maintained at all times when we meet online and in person. Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. We will do our best to embrace the difficulty of fruitfully discussing controversial and sensitive issues. Respect is a basic human characteristic that entitles each person to their own rights and identity. It also helps to nurture a healthy learning environment. If you recognize that respecting others may be a problem, please be courteous and alert me or more suitable personnel (e.g. Sul Ross State University psychologists, family members, lecturers, close friends) and or refer to the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).
3. During the course of this class, you may have strong emotional/psychological reactions to the course material and/or discussions. If you feel that you are having difficulty with the learning environment, please discuss this with me immediately before continuing the course. Counseling and Accessibility Services

(<https://www.sulross.edu/counseling-and-accessibility-services/>) can provide brief, short-term individual and group counseling or refer you to off-campus providers. You have already paid for these services through your Student Service Fee, whether you use them or not.

CORE CURRICULUM (2025-2026)

1. *Social Responsibility.* Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world; to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

SRSU DISABILITY AND COUNSELING SERVICES:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Ronnie Harris, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director, at 432-837-8203. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/sulross). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

LIBRARY SERVICES STATEMENT

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

HONORING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Other instances of academic misconduct are lying in connection with your academic work, cheating, misrepresenting facts and/or collusion and **using open AI** sources unless *permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall. All these are contrary to the purpose of any educational institution and will be dealt with **most severely** to the extent of the university's disciplinary policy and/or through legal action if indicated. An instructor who determines that a student has been dishonest academically can at a minimum issue no credit for the assignment/exam, and/or pursue more severe penalties, including but not limited to failing the course. Further information about *Academic Honesty* can be read in the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

In this course, every element of class assignments must be fully prepared by the student. *The use of generative AI tools for any part of your work will be treated as plagiarism.* If you have questions, please contact me.

OBSERVING CLASS GUIDELINES

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is a ONLINE course that requires **Class attendance IS REQUIRED**. Class participation will be worth **18%** of the final grade. The percentage is considerable so your presence will *help* your ability to complete all the assignments for this class.

Participation - You are expected to participate in ALL online activities in **Soomo Learning**. You should be actively involved. *Active involvement includes active listening, writing, participating via an online poll or quiz, engaging in online discussions, and taking exams by the deadline dates.* To be successful in this course, you need to check your **Sul Ross** email daily, and Soomo Learning announcements and deadlines, and keep up with and keep with Soomo Learning with Jennifer Harper's 'Psychology in the Real World' readings.

Attendance and Online Meetings (on Thursdays) – Class attendance is governed by the SRSU Undergraduate Academic Regulation's policy stated in the schedule of classes. If you are unable to participate online and in class frequently (every week), please discuss the reason with me and arrange to review the online notes, handouts or assignments you may have missed. I reserve the right to drop a student from the class with a failing grade by November if they do not attend class regularly within a three-week span. Excused absences entail established religious observance, or providing emergency, university-authorized, legal, or medical documentation. **Excessive unexcused absences (more than 2 weeks) will result in a failing grade for the course.** Most of the course curriculum is FULLY ONLINE with Soomo Learning, so we will meet Mondays and Wednesdays **online in Blackboard Collaborate** from 8:30am to 10:00am. You are expected to attend these meetings. I will elaborate further in these meetings on the with slides based on Jennifer Harper's 'Psychology in the Real World' readings and answer questions about the course.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. 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 web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

Regular communications with the professor: It is essential that you keep me current on your progress and any difficulties you may be having so that I can respond in real time to support your success. The most efficient way of contacting me is via email or phone. GENERAL QUESTIONS are to be posted in the Messages forum in Blackboard. For PERSONAL or PRIVATE ISSUES email me at my email above or leave a voice mail message (432-837-8019). I will strive to respond as soon as possible. If you do not receive a reply within 24 hours during the work week, please resend your email or text me.

Course Behaviors - Respect and Disruptions: Watch the VIDEO on NETTIQUETTE - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWMk_Zv7nB8 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80uRE972uQ0>.

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are

responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

You are encouraged and expected to openly engage in discussions, ask questions, share ideas, and express your thoughts in this web-based course in the same manner as in a face-to-face course. Please treat each other with dignity and respect and avoid disruptive behaviors. You are responsible for knowing what behaviors are acceptable versus unacceptable as referred to in the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

LATE ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS/CHECKLISTS

You are expected to meet assignment/checklist deadlines. Reflections and practice quizzes submitted after their due dates will be marked as zero. Late assignments or projects will be reduced by 5% for the first day of lateness and for every day for 7 days beyond that for unexcused absences. For excused absences (university-authorized, legal or medical issues), speak with me **before the absence** so arrangements can be made.

DISCUSSING EVALUATION

Chapter Readings – The sections in each of the eight (8) chapters will be assigned points. Once you complete these readings, you will gain these points.

Practice Quizzes – This is a 10-question chapter practice quiz given in your Soomo Learning text to ensure that you have read the chapters and understand the most pertinent concepts. These practice quizzes are available immediately after you completed the assigned chapter and are **due** before the following chapter is introduced. These are automatically graded, and you can review your answers immediately. Practice quizzes are only accessible for the time posted and they will not be reopened after their due dates. Make sure you do them as soon as they are available!

Assignments – These exercises will be assigned for each chapter in the *Soomo Learning platform for 'Psychology in the Real World' textbook*. When you access the platform through our Blackboard course, you will see that these assignments have due dates. The first half of the assignments must be completed by the midterm date – **Monday October 12 at 11:59pm** and the second half of the assignments must be completed by the end of the semester – **Sunday December 6 at 11:59pm**.

In-Class Reflections – These 'in-class' reflections will be assigned before each '*Psychology in the Real World*' chapter. These reflections will be completed as soon as you come to class on Tuesdays. You will need to be in class on Tuesdays to obtain these points. There are no make-up opportunities for in-class reflections.

Midterm and Final Exams - Two (2) exams will be given during the course of this term. They consist of 50 to 60 questions each. Some of the questions for these two exams will be derived from the quizzes. There will be a review before these two exams containing 20 to 30% of the questions that will be on the exam. The dates of the exams are planned for the dates listed below in the class schedule. Please note that there will be no make-up exams unless it is an excused absence with corresponding documentation.

Self-Introduction – Write two pages about yourself and your experience in this class. Use one psychology vocabulary word, and the name of a psychologist in your introduction that inspired you (120 points). The deadline for this paper due on the day after our last class day - **Wednesday December 2 11:59pm**.

EXTRA CREDIT ACTIVITY – These points may be received for participating in up to two of the following activities (5pts/activity; 10pt maximum):

1. Attendance at a public lecture or activity related to psychology, such as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, mental health awareness, a cultural event, an international event or religious activity different than your own, etc.

Submit a summary to me via email (kathleen.rivers@sulross.edu) or on Blackboard of your attendance at the activity and what you learned from it.

2. Participate as a research subject in a psychological experiment or other SRSU study.

GRADING

	total Percentage
Grading: 1000 points	
Syllabus Quiz 20 points	2%
Chapter Readings 90 (9 @ 10 point each)	9%
Practice Quizzes 90 (9 @ 10 points each)	9%
Chapter Assignments 270 (9 @ 30 points each)	27%
In-class reflections 50 (5 @ 10 points each)	5%
Attendance/Participation: 180 points total	18%
Midterm Exam: 110 points total	11%
Final Exam: 110 points	11%
Self-Introduction: 80 points	8%

COURSE OUTLINE

(This schedule and the topics listed below are subject to modification by the instructor.)

UNIT 1 – INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS & NEUROSCIENCE AND BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Day	Content
Week of August 24	START HERE Introductions – Who are you? What is Psychology? Learning <i>Soomo</i> platform...
Homework	Chapter 1 – <i>Introduction to Psychology</i>
Week of August 31 MODULE 1	Chapter 1 - <i>Introduction to Psychology</i>
Homework	Chapter 1 Assignments
Week of August 31 MODULE 1	Chapter 1 - <i>Introduction to Psychology</i>
Homework	Chapter 1 Assignments
Week of September 7 MODULE 2	Chapter 2 - <i>The Brain and the Nervous System</i>
Homework	Chapter 2 Assignments
Week of September 14 MODULE 2	Chapter 2 - <i>The Brain and the Nervous System</i>
Homework	Chapter 2 Assignments

UNIT II: EMOTION & MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTION & SENSATION

Day	Content
Week of September 21 MODULE 3	Chapter 3 – <i>Sensation and Perception</i>
Homework	Chapter 3 Assignments
Week of September 28 MODULE 4	Chapter 3 - <i>Sensation and Perception</i>
Homework	Chapter 4 Assignments
Week of October 5 MODULE 4	Chapter 4 - <i>Consciousness</i>
Homework	Chapter 4 Assignments & Study for Midterm Exam

 UNIT III: LEARNING, MEMORY, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS & TREATMENTS AND PERSONALITY

Day	Content
Week of October 12 MIDTERM EXAM	Midterm Review Last day for Assignment Monday October 12 <u>Midterm Exam – Wednesday October 14</u>
Homework	None
Week of October 19 MODULE 5	Chapter 5 – <i>Emotion</i>
Homework	Chapter 5 Assignments
Week of October 26 MODULE 6	Chapter 6 – <i>Motivation</i>
Homework	Chapter 6 Assignments
Week of November 2 MODULE 7	Chapter 7 – <i>Learning</i>
Homework	Chapter 7 Assignments
Week of November 9 MODULE 8	Chapter 8 - <i>Memory</i>
Homework	Chapter 8 Assignments
Week of November 16 MODULE 8	Chapter 9 – <i>Personality</i>
Homework	Chapter 8 Assignments

 UNIT IV: SELF-INTRODUCTION AND FINAL EXAM

Day	Content
Week of November 30	Work on Self-Introduction <i>Due Date for Self-Introduction: Wednesday December 2</i> <i>Last Day for Assignments: Sunday December 6</i>
Homework	Study for Final Exam
Wednesday December 7 (08:30am to 10:00am)	Final Exam