



Information in this syllabus is subject to change. This is Version 1; publication date, 29 June 2008. Some course information is only available in Blackboard

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Course website: https://bb.uvm.edu/ . Most of the course is conducted via Blackboard. Online lectures are at this URL: http://www.uvm.edu/~psych1/lectures.html .	
Your Blackboard ID and password are the same as your e-mail account. If you are not on the Blackboard student list, e-mail the instructor at psych1@uvm.edu .	
Contact Email: psych1@uvm.edu . In most cases, you will get a reply within 1 business day as e-mail is checked regularly.	
Textbook: Joffe, J.M. & J. Krulewitz (2007) <i>Investigating the mind, brain, and behavior: An introduction to psychology</i> (3rd Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson. ISBN 0-536-32862-5	

Psyc 001: The gist

Daily routine (note that time estimates are VERY approximate and will vary)

The course covers the same material as the on-campus version of Psyc 001, in a format that's tailored for the online environment. It's also designed to take *about* as much time as the in-person version, although the time is spent doing somewhat different things. Compared to the on-campus version, what you write – and how – is a bigger determinant of your grade than your performance on standardized (multiple-choice) exams.

In general, you will have work that is due each day, Monday through Thursday over the five-week term. These are considered *class days*. There are 19, as indicated on the first column of the schedule (last page).

Each unit of material is covered using this three-step process.

1. Most class days, you can expect to spend about 1.5 hours reading from the text. Then, you will spend about another hour writing about it – the Writing Assignment (WA). WAs get submitted by **8:00 p.m.** on their **due date**.
2. Next, you'll review some online material that may include video or other media and then respond to it in an online discussion forum. This takes a total of about 45 minutes per assignment, though there are 2 such assignments on most class days. Complete them on the assignment's **discussion day** – by **8:00 p.m.**, which is typically **the day after the WA is due** (but you may choose to complete them right after working on the WA).
3. The following day, you'll get details on the next step: the assignment's **reflection**. Usually you will read what some of your colleagues wrote, and reply to it. This should be about 1 hour of work. Complete that by **8:00 p.m.** on the following day. The schedule's a bit different around exams, and there are a couple of other exceptions.

You'll also spend time preparing for and taking multiple-choice exams. They're online and open-book (but timed).

As a result of the schedule, the course is not self-paced. You may complete some of your work a bit ahead of the deadlines. But the discussion, reflection, and exam components are to be done during specified periods of time and within deadlines. That's the gist!

Course Objective

PSYC 001 introduces students to the ways psychologists try to understand behavior scientifically. It does this through intensive examination of representative research rather than by attempting a general survey of the entire field. The emphasis is on how questions are framed and evidence obtained to answer them, and how theories are developed and evaluated. By the end of the course, students should be able to think like psychologists and have the skills to be critical analysts of claims made about what we know and about the efficacy of solutions we offer. These skills should serve students well if they continue to work in the field, and make them better-informed consumers of psychological services whether they work in the field or not.

This course involves reading, writing, and *conference*. The learning process is summed up in this adapted quote from Francis Bacon (1561-1626): “**Reading maketh a full person, writing an exact person, and conference a ready person.**” (*Of Studies.*)

Reading

Investigating the mind, brain, and behavior. The textbook has six sections. Each has an introductory chapter surveying the area, followed by two to five chapters summarizing specific research studies in that area. As indicated on the Schedule, along with the chapter assigned for online discussion (specific studies), read the introductory chapter for the section. This will increase your understanding of the research chapters and provide information of use in online discussion.

Writing about the textbook

A writing assignment is due electronically as noted on the schedule. Early in the semester, as you're familiarizing yourself with the system, allow plenty of time to complete the assignment before the deadline. Note also that, on most class days, there are 2 assignments.

Format and criteria. Details are provided in Blackboard.

Grading. Assignments are checked for completeness and quality. You will get feedback on some assignments. Full credit is awarded if they meet the criteria indicated.

Points. The number of points awarded for each Writing Assignment varies from 1 (early in the semester) to 10 points (at the semester's end). The more you do, the more each is potentially worth. If at least 18 (of the possible 20) assignments receive full credit you will get the full points available. That is, you can submit late, or skip entirely, *two* of the assignments without penalty.

Missed and late writing assignments. These are preparation for online discussion, so students cannot "make-up" missed assignments by doing them after they are due. Late submissions receive credit only in exceptional circumstances.

Plagiarism. Use your own words to answer questions, not the textbook-authors' words. Using or paraphrasing other people's words without acknowledgement is *plagiarism*, as is copying all or parts of work written by other Psyc 001 students, past or present, and submitting it as your own work.

Besides robbing you of the benefit of learning through your own writing, plagiarism is a serious offense against academic honesty. We expect students to be familiar with UVM's policy on Academic Integrity. This can be found at <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>. It includes the following definition:

All ideas, arguments, and phrases, submitted without attribution to other sources, must be the creative product of the student. Thus, all text passages taken from the works of other authors must be properly cited. The same applies to paraphrased text, opinions, data, examples, illustrations, and all other creative work. Violations of this standard constitute *plagiarism*.

[(<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>, page 1) Policy V. 3.4.3.2, Effective Date: June 28, 2007]

Before a student is sent a warning, we deduct 5 points each time part or all of a writing assignment is plagiarized (thus you receive -5 instead of that assignment's points). In addition, the assignment is considered missing. **After a warning is sent, we deduct 50 points each time part or all of a writing assignment is plagiarized.** Students have the right to have the matter, including our allegation of plagiarism and the action we take, investigated by the Center for Student Ethics and Standards. There are also penalties for *fabrication, collusion, and cheating*, all of which are defined in the Code of Academic Integrity.

Practical advice to eliminate unintentional plagiarism

1. **Don't share your work in any form with another student until after the deadline.** You will receive the same penalty regardless of which student copied the work and which allowed it to be copied.
2. **When writing, close the book.** Refer to it only to check facts. If you have it open while you are writing, you will find it much harder to avoid paraphrasing it too closely and, even though your intent may not be to plagiarize, you may well find you are doing so.

Online discussion and participation

Participation

The textbook is discussed on 14 class days; see the schedule for details. The online discussions are designed to promote your understanding of research methods and findings, not merely to repeat information in the book. They are based on your reading as well as some additional material called *Lectures*. These are generally brief. Sometimes, you will be asked to respond to questions based on video segments. In general, you are expected to make a **posting**. Then, you will be asked to **reflect** on one or more of your colleague's postings and submit those reflections by 8:00 pm the next day.

Points

There are 20 discussions that focus on 20 different chapters from the textbook, although they also integrate your understanding across chapters (including those that introduce each section). You may skip any 2 discussions and get full credit. The average number of points is about 10 points per discussion (fewer early on in the semester). If you participate in 19, or 20 discussions, you will get extra credit (see the *Points* breakdown, below). Partial participation leads to partial points. Here are the criteria to get full credit for each discussion assignment:

Submit the discussion and reflection by the deadline.

Show clear evidence of careful thought and an understanding of the material.

In addition, your writing should be free from spelling errors and grammatical mistakes.

The online environment and this course

There are many interesting aspects to the Internet. But particularly with a field as broad as psychology, locating and reviewing most of these resources is too potentially time-consuming and open-ended to do in addition to the course content. So the format is very straightforward, with a few vivid (sometimes funny) video clips and focus opportunities to reflect on each other's work. You are welcome, though, to also communicate with each other for support and collegiality.

There will **not** be a lot of assignments sending you out to search for things on the web, to construct multimedia presentations, or to engage in multi-post discussions where you go back and forth on the same topic. The goal is to make the course manageable, predictable, and a real learning experience that would prepare you for further study in the field.

Announcements are made within Blackboard. You are **expected** to check your UVM e-mail account. That is the only way instructors can send confidential messages (for example, feedback on particular assignments).

Software requirements and plug-ins

Web Browser. I use Firefox, but any of the major browsers should work (Internet Explorer, Safari, and so on).

Plug-ins: You will need to be able to view video segments on YouTube and other sites that use similar plug-ins (Flash player). There are a couple of optional audio and video clips that can only be viewed and heard with RealPlayer.

Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader, for .pdf-format files (such as this syllabus).

Examinations

There are four. The first three contain about **50 multiple-choice** questions based on all the material covered since the previous exam, including **all assigned readings and online discussion**. Check the schedule carefully, though, as the chapter immediately before each of the first 3 exams will not be covered until the next one. This is intended to give you a longer period to study and prepare.

The final exam consists of about **150 multiple choice** questions based on **ALL** the material covered during the semester. It is divided into 4 sections. Three of the sections cover material from the first three exams, and the other is on the last couple of chapters. All exams include questions designed to test understanding of concepts and principles in addition to questions on information in the textbook and on material covered in class.

Exam-administration details

Notes. The exams are online and timed. You may refer to your notes and the textbook. Each item is presented in sequence. You must answer each item before going to the next, and you cannot return to prior questions to change your response. Also, you have only one chance to take each exam (you cannot start, stop, and begin again). You are expected to arrange for reliable internet connectivity, particularly for exams.

Scheduling. Exams are offered *only* at the times indicated on the schedule. If you miss an exam, your score on the final exam (percentage correct) will be used to replace the score on the missed exam(s). The final exam can replace one, two, or all three missed exams. You are advised not to skip any of the exams unless prevented from taking them by events outside your control. *There is no make-up or alternative time for the final exam.*

Grading. Each exam is analyzed. Items that are statistically unreliable predictors of overall performance are dropped from the test. Your exam grade is the percentage correct of the remaining items. Also, if your performance on the first three sections of the final is better than the related exam, then the percentage from the final will replace it. Details will be provided as the final exam gets closer.

Online practice quizzes. There will be 6 quizzes that focus on material from each section's introductory chapter. These will be posted and you can take them to prepare for the exam, but there are no points associated with them. They will be announced in the daily schedules.

Points, bonus points, and grades

Element and details	Points*	Bonus Points
Writing assignments	1 – 10 points per satisfactory assignment.	20
Class participation in online discussion	See the section, <i>Class participation</i> , above.	30
Examinations	Exams 1-3: 40 points each = 120 Final exam: 80 points	0
TOTAL	500	50
Other bonus-point opportunities (as announced)		(as announced)
Penalties	Deductions up to 500	
	<i>A</i> _s = 90% 450-467 = A- 468-482 = A > 482 = A+	
	<i>B</i> _s = 80% 400-417 = B- 418-432 = B 433-449 = B+	
	<i>C</i> _s = 70% 350-367 = C- 368-382 = C 383-399 = C+	
	<i>D</i> _s = 60% 300-317 = D- 318-332 = D 333-349 = D+	
	<i>F</i> = <60% (<300 points)	

*Note that the total number of points for each assignment may not add up to the same number allotted for each of these categories. If not, then the total percentage is converted into the requisite number of points.