Syllabus
Writing in Psychology
Fall 2020

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Course #:   PSYC 3303-X10
Time: MWF – 1pm – 1:50pm
Location: PY 102, OD 126
Office Hours: Virtual by appointment only: best times are Monday & Wed. 2pm-4:30pm

Mask policy:

Masks are required by all students at all times in the classroom. Anyone who is not wearing a mask will be asked to leave and I'll reserve the right to drop them from the course.

Course Format:

This is a hybrid formatted course. For this course, what that means, is that we'll meet in-person for the first two weeks or so, and then we'll switch over to an online format. In these in-person meetings I'll go over a lot of the things that will be important for the course (e.g. APA, using library resource/PsychInfo/Google Scholar, plagiarism, etc.).

Texts (required):

American Psychological Association (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Ed.). Washington, DC.

Course Objectives:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of electronic databases
2. Know the essentials of APA manuscript preparation (e.g., appropriate referencing, formatting, use of visuals, content criteria)
3. Write according to APA style guidelines (e.g., clarity, brevity, mechanics, grammar)
4. Gain experience in professional development in the psychological sciences

Course Requirements:

1. During the first couple weeks, we will meet in person at least twice per week. If for some reason you can't attend, you'll be responsible for getting info from a classmate about what was covered. Each in-class meeting will cover information that you'll need to know for writing your paper.

3. Assignments (40%): Students will complete assignments throughout the semester. Assignments will be uploaded to D2L with clear deadlines. **Assignments not turned in on or before the due date will be accepted up to 1-day late (weekends and holidays included) but will only be worth a maximum of 50% of their original point value.** Assignments in addition to term paper to include (but are not limited to):

   - Library resources assignment / Using PsychInfo and Google Scholar

- Writing summaries of papers
- Writing a synthesis of two+ papers
- Creating an academic CV
- Writing a cover letter for a job or a personal statement draft for graduate studies

4. Students will write a term paper (60%). General Guidelines: Students will prepare a 10 page term paper (i.e. minimum of 2,500 and maximum of 3,000 words in the main body of the paper – excludes title page and references). You can choose to do either analytical or argumentative research paper. You will need to cite at least 10 peer-reviewed *empirical* articles for the paper. You may need to cite more depending on your topic. Book chapters can be cited but they do not count toward the 10 cited articles. Non-peer reviewed sources must be from widely recognized legitimate sources (e.g. Pew Research Center, or government web sources such NIH, NIMH, NSF). Non-peer-reviewed *legitimate* sources can be used but do not count toward 10 sources. At least five sources must be published in or after 2010. *Direct quotes are not allowed in the paper.* Including direct quotes in the final draft will substantially reduce your grade on the paper. **The final draft of the term paper will be due on Monday November 23rd before midnight**. Broadly, the final draft will be graded on: (a) APA style, (b) readability, and (c) quality of information. A full grading rubric will be provided long before the paper is due.

Assignments that lead up to the final draft (e.g. paper drafts, article summaries, article synthesis, introduction) will count as part of the 60% of this portion of the grade. The first and second draft will be worth 10% each, a reverse outline will be worth 5%. These percentages may change slightly, but I'll let you know if they do (usually done to maximize students' grades).

More details on that huge term paper:

1) Topic: you may write upon virtually any topic that involves social, personality, cognitive, developmental, or abnormal psychology. Pick a topic that you're excited about. You should work with me to devise an appropriate topic. You will need to pick a topic on which you can thoroughly write about in 10 pages. Your topic can't be *Autism Spectrum Disorder,* or *Alzheimer's Disease* because those would be multi-volume books if it was thorough. You should attempt to answer a question with your paper. E.g. *What are the biological markers of declines in semantic memory in older adults?; Under what conditions, if any, do psychopaths engage in pro-social behaviors?; Does social media usage predict beliefs in misinformation?; Under what conditions do unskilled individuals accurately and inaccurately assess their level of skill?* I'd caution against topics such as serial killers, autism, and social media/self-esteem as they tend to be (not always!) boring papers, frankly. Not to say you couldn't write an interesting paper on these topics, but from my experience teaching this course, I would proceed with caution. Writing a paper that integrates that latest and best information in psychological science is key.

Possible paper topics (*You can use these!*). I'll try to keep an ongoing list of possible topics for the first few weeks that I'll post on D2L. These are just the first ones off the top of my head that interest me:

Changes in personality across adulthood
Questionable research practices in psychological research and what it means for the science
Evidence for and against the effects of stereotype threat
Personality predictors of belief in misinformation
Effects of gender stereotypes on career outcomes
Problems associated with fMRI research (small sample sizes, questionable research practices)
Problems associated with implicit association tests
The effects of stereotypes of disability in social/educational/career contexts

2) The paper will include two major components: The paper should include a thorough and well-written literature review. This will be the bulk of the paper. Also, your paper should include a section in which you propose future research directions based on your thorough analysis of the existing literature on the topic.

3) Your literature review should focus primarily on peer-reviewed journal articles related to your topic. You may also use scholarly books as references but these do not count toward the required word count. You should thoroughly search the PsycINFO database for relevant sources. Keep pop psych and newspaper/magazine references to a minimum (only use for examples, if at all).

4) References: Your reference section will reflect the thoroughness of your reading in your chosen topic area, so the best papers will likely have a larger number of references beyond the required 10. Only references that are actually cited in your paper should be included. All references will need to adhere to the APA format **and include the DOI number**.

5) After you have read the articles and books or book chapters pertinent to your topic, devise a thesis. Your thesis should be specific rather than broad.

> **Bad (too broad):**
> The Treatment of Alcoholism
> Personality and Eating Disorders
>
> **Good (specific):**
> Is Antabuse an Effective Treatment for Alcoholism?
> The Relationship between Perfectionism and Anorexia Nervosa

8) Your thesis should appear early in the paper (probably in the introductory paragraph – though, not necessarily).

9) The bulk of your paper should present evidence supporting your thesis.

10) One effective technique is to present two opposing points of view on your thesis topic, and demonstrate that the preponderance of evidence supports a particular point of view.

11) Your paper should have an introduction (including a thesis and reasons why your thesis is important), a body presenting detailed and specific evidence to back the thesis, a future directions section, conclusion section, and a reference section.

12) Papers will need to include one APA table that includes each of the empirical publications. A good way to organize this table would be to have three columns: Column 1 would be the citation, column 2 the research design, and column 3 a very brief (one short bullet point) sentence about the primary findings.

13) **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. Be very careful to cite conclusions, theories and ideas (as well as data) that you've acquired from other authors. Also, do not engage in patchwork plagiarism – this is when you take something that has been written by someone else and change a few words, or combine a part of one sentence with a part of another sentence. You are responsible for reading the section of the APA manual on plagiarism and following those guidelines. Plagiarism will result in an F and I'll reserve the right to drop you from the course and report you for academic dishonesty.**

English Language Learners:
I've found that those whose primary language is not or has not always been English benefit greatly from visits to the writing lab and to the Intensive English Language Institute here on campus. These campus resource centers help out tremendously with basic grammar issues that tend to come up with English language learners. https://msutexas.edu/ieli/index.php

Writing Center:
All students are encouraged to visit the writing center for help with their drafts: https://msutexas.edu/writing-center/. I'm not an English professor and am teaching you the specifics of social-science writing using APA style. When it comes to the basics of structure and grammar, if you are having a hard time or are not happy with my feedback on these aspects of your writing, it is best to learn such things from people who have dedicated their professional lives to teaching it.

<u>Grades:</u>

Your final grade in the course will be calculated using the standard grading scale.

90 or above   A
80 or above   B
70 or above   C
60 or above   D
Below a 60   F

Missed Assignments:

Again, assignments must be turned in on or before the due date at the start of class. Late assignments will be accepted up to one day late for up to half credit. Assignments more than one day late will be given a zero.

Cheating Policy:

To reiterate: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating on written assignments will likely result in dismissal from this class with a grade of "F" and referral to the Dean of Students. **Do not use a paper in part or full from another course - this constitutes *self-plagiarism.*** I reserve the right to pass any students' written work through Turn-It-In which will check your paper against published/unpublished/ and student papers.

Midterm progress:

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account for students who are at risk of not passing the course. Students who are below a C will receive a midterm progress report between weeks 5-8 of the semester. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with me.

Disability:

Please let me know how I can make the course more accessible. In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

Course Schedule (Specific Assignments and Due Dates are Subject to change):

Week	Topic	DUE	Additional Info / Assignments
Class	Dates		**Assignment 1: Finding articles**
Week 1	8/24-8/28	**Assignment 1 due**	**Assignment 2: Thesis statement**
Week 2	8/31– 9/4	**Topic Submitted For Approval (9/6) Assignment 2 due**	**Assignment 3: Detailed experimental article summary**
Week 3	9/7 – 9/11	**Assignment 3 due**	**Assignment 4: Synthesizing articles**
Week 4	9/14 – 9/18		
Week 5	9/21 – 9/25	**Assignment 4 due**	**Assignment 5: Identifying thesis statements**
Week 6	9/28 – 10/2	**Assignment 5 due**	**Assignment 6: Article summaries**
Week 7	10/5 – 10-9	**Assignment 6 due**	
Week 8	10/12 – 10/16		
Week 9	10/19 – 10/23	**Draft #1 Due (10/25)**	**Assignment 7: Reverse Outlines**
Week 10	10/26 – 10/30	**Assignment 7 due**	
Week 11	11/2 – 11/6		**Zoom meetings**
Week 12	11/9 - 11/13	**Draft #2 Due (11/09)**	**Assignment 8: CV / Zoom meetings**
Week 13	11/16 – 11/20	**Assignment 8 due**	**Assignment 9: Cover letter**
Week 14	11/23 – 11/27	**Assignment 9 due**	**Thanksgiving Break**
Week 15	11/30 – 12/4	**Final Draft DUE WEDNESDAY DEC. 2nd BEFORE MIDNIGHT**	
Week 16	Finals Week	**No final**	