

Syllabus
Writing in Psychology
Spring 2020

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Course #: PSYC 3303-201
Time: T/TH: 11am – 12:20pm
Location: PY 102, OD 126
Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 2PM-4PM
Thur: 3:30PM-4:30PM

Texts:

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. Attendance is required for the course – this includes in-lab writing/editing days. If attendance is a problem, I will start taking attendance and it will count as a percentage of your final grade.
3. Assignments (40%): Students will complete assignments throughout the semester. Assignments are due at the start of class on the due date. **Assignments not turned in on 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:
 - Library resources assignment / Using PsychInfo and Google Scholar
 - 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, abstract, 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 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 Wednesday May 6th 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.

- 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*, because that would be a multi-volume book 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?*
- 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.

9) The bulk of your paper should present evidence relevant to 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 sections, conclusions 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.

Grades:

Your final grade in the course will be calculated based upon 900 total points.

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:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating on written assignments will 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
1/21-1/24	Library resources – Google Scholar/PsychInfo		Assignment 1 assigned: Finding articles
1/27 – 1/31	APA	Assignment 1 due	Assignment 2 assigned: Thesis statement, synthesizing two articles
2/3 – 2/7	APA	Topic Submitted For Approval (2/6) Assignment 2 due	Assignment 3: Detailed experimental article summary
2/10 -2/14	Writing basics	Assignment 3 due	Assignment 4: Synthesizing articles
2/17 – 2/21	Writing basics		
2/24 – 2/28	Writing basics	Assignment 4 due	
3/2 – 3/6	Writing basics	Draft #1 Due (2/27)	Assignment 5: Identifying thesis statements
3/9 – 3/13	Writing basics	Assignment 5 due	Assignment 6: Article summaries
3/16 – 3/20	SPRING BREAK		
3/23 – 3/27	Writing basics	Assignment 6 due	Assignment 7: Paper introduction
3/30 – 4/3	Writing basics	Assignment 7 due	
4/6 – 4/10	Writing basics	Draft #2 (4/5)	NO CLASS 4/9
4/13 – 4/17	Professional Development		Assignment 8: CV
4/20 – 4/24	Professional Development	Assignment 8 due Draft #3 (4/17)	Assignment 9: Cover letter
4/27 – 5/1	Grad School	Assignment 9 due	
5/4 – 5/8	Presentation basics	Draft #4 (5/1)	
5/10 – 5/14	Finals week	No final	