



Course Syllabus: General Psychology
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences
PSYC-1103 Section 203
Spring 2025

Contact Information

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Course Description

Texas Core Objectives (Competency Based)

1. Critical Thinking Skills—including creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills—including effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written communication.
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills—including the analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
4. Social Responsibility—including intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Course Objectives

1. Help students to gain an overview of the fundamental principles of psychology.
2. Increase student ability to glean and retain pertinent information vis-à-vis independent study.
3. Gain a perspective of the relevance of psychological research in today's world.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Spielman, R. M., Jenkins, W. J., & Lovett, M. D. (2020). *Psychology 2e*. OpenStax. [Link to Textbook](#)

Course Requirements

1. **Exams.** For this course, you will take a total of three noncumulative exams, each covering three chapters from the text. Tests will be thirty multiple choice questions with a few short answer questions that require a scantron which students can purchase from the bookstore. On each test, there will be an opportunity for extra credit. The tests will cover material from the text and from the lectures. Students will have the entire class time to complete the exam. Tests will generally be reviewed three class sessions after they are given.

- a. **Missed exams.** No makeup exams will be offered unless the student misses due to a medical or family emergency, a university-sponsored event, a mandatory requirement, or a religious holiday. Documentation must be given no more than one class session after the exam, although advance notice is preferred. Makeup exams may not be identical to those the class receives and the structure may also differ at my discretion. Once exams have been returned to students the opportunity to make up the exam has passed.
2. **Applied Paper.** Demonstrating knowledge of a subject requires the ability to properly apply it. Students will have the opportunity to turn it in early as a first draft and resubmit before the final deadline for a higher grade. The paper should be between 500-1500 words, though this is a soft requirement. Any use of generative AI (ChatGPT or similar) is prohibited. All papers will be checked against AI. Using Grammarly, ProWritingAid, or similar programs is fine and does not count against the paper though you should avoid using any generative AI aspects to those programs (ex. Rewording for clarity). The specific prompts and grading rubric for the paper will be uploaded into D2L.
3. **Research.** It is important that students of psychology learn firsthand something about the scientific nature of the discipline. Therefore, all students in PSYC 1103 and 2203 are required to participate in one of the following research-related exercises. No extra credit is given for research participation, but failure to complete the research requirement will result in a one letter grade reduction for the course. Students must participate in one or more approved psychology research projects totaling at least 90 minutes no later than 5pm Monday May 8th, 2025. Research opportunities will be announced throughout the semester in postings that appear on the psychology department's website at [Psychology Research Link](#) OR Complete a research ethics essay. Participating students will read academic writings addressing research ethics. Following this, students will complete a 3 or 4 page double spaced, typed summary and review of the information they read. Tables, figures, pictures do not count toward the minimum page requirement. Essays must also be submitted no later than 5pm Monday May 8th, 2025.
4. **Attendance.** Attendance is required for the course. Each student will be allowed three unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional absence will result in a 5% reduction of the student's final grade. Students will be responsible for the information presented during the class periods for which they were absent. This information includes, but is not limited to, course content, syllabus changes, and information regarding the research requirement. The only absences that will not be counted are absences for a mandatory, university-sponsored event or religious holidays. Mandatory university sponsored events must be verified by the Dean of Students, Provost, or Athletic Director. Written notification for mandatory university-sponsored events must be provided to the professor at least two days prior to the day of the event. Absences for religious holidays must also be cleared through the Dean of Students. Students must inform the instructor of religious holiday absences by the 15th day of class.
5. **Extra Credit.** While exams will offer extra credit, there is one other method to obtain extra credit throughout the semester. MSU offers tutoring in a variety of subjects including psychology. If you attend a tutoring session for this class specifically then you can earn up to 6 points of extra credit on an exam (that's a 20% increase!). You will need to print out the form on D2L and give it to the tutor at the end of your session. **Students will not receive credit unless they do this!** [Tutoring Link](#). Note: extra credit only affects the grade of your overall exams, NOT the research portion.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

Assignments	Percent
Exam 1	25
Exam 2	25
Exam 3	25
Applied Paper	25
Total	100

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	Less than 60

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Course Schedule

*Note: Dates are subject to change at instructor's discretion and updates will be posted to D2L

Dates	Exams/Paper	Due Date	Readings
1/21	N/A	N/A	Syllabus
1/23-2/18	Exam 1	2/18	Chapter 1: Introduction to Psychology Chapter 2: Psychological Research Chapter 4: States of Consciousness
2/18-4/1	Exam 2	4/1	Chapter 6: Learning Chapter 9: Lifespan Development Chapter 11: Personality
N/A	Applied Paper	First Draft: 4/17 Final Draft: 5/8	N/A
4/3-5/8	Exam 3	5/8	Chapter 14: Stress, Lifestyle, & Health Chapter 15: Psychological Disorders Chapter 16: Therapy and Treatment

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: January 21. Check dates on [Academic Calendar](#).

Deadline to file for graduation: February 17.

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” April 30. Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Helpful Notes

1. **Dropping the course.** When considering dropping, talk with me beforehand regarding your reasons. You may perceive that you are doing worse than you actually are and I might be able to help you make an informed decision one way or the other. Note: dropping the course is the responsibility of the student, not the instructor! **I will not drop anyone; you need to do it.**
2. **Participation.** The more you put into the course the more you will get out of it. If you ask questions, stay engaged, and listen then you will do much better in the class overall. Talking with me is also great practice for networking which is a valuable life skill.
3. **Office Hours.** Many students mistakenly believe that instructors will be bothered by attending office hours and asking questions but this is generally not the case. If you are struggling or uncertain about anything and do not feel comfortable bringing it up in class or immediately after then you can see me during office hours or email me to set up an appointment.
4. **Email.** If you need to miss or need help, reach out. Generally, instructors will be more understanding if you talk with them than if you don't. I appreciate emails letting me know you will be out, even if I don't respond. If you need me to respond, say so in the email.
5. **D2L.** I use this frequently and so should you! If class is canceled for any reason, it will be on D2L. Test information or rescheduling will also appear here. Check daily.
6. **Trigger Warnings.** Throughout the course, material may cover subjects that are sensitive to specific people. While I try to be careful, I cannot predict or avoid every topic that might cause discomfort, especially since psychology studies every element of the human experience. As a result, if the discussion or material is too overwhelming for the student to handle, it is the student's responsibility to leave the classroom and take care of themselves before returning. If this is a recurring problem, students might wish to visit the Counseling Center located on the northern side of campus and may call (940) 397-4618 to schedule an appointment.
7. **Tutoring.** On the first floor or the library in the Learning Center there are psychology tutors. These are graduate students who may be able to help you understand aspects of psychology that you are struggling with. They are free and happy to assist you.
8. **Powerpoint Presentations and Notes.** I treat each slide as the bare minimum bullet points for the lecture. If you are taking notes (and you SHOULD take notes) and only writing down what is on each slide, then you will have the beginning of a decent study guide for each test. You should treat each bullet as something to study and focus on when reading through the textbook. When taking notes, you should write these by hand if at all possible. I know it is tempting to simply take pictures or type, but you will remember significantly better if you write it all by hand. I try to keep the amount of words on any slide small so that students can write by hand without feeling rushed.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

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](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)