

Syllabus  
General Psychology  
Fall 2024

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Course #: PSYC 1103, sec. 105 AND 150  
Time: TR 8-9:20am  
Location: PY 101  
Office Hours: TR 9:30-12, W 11-12

Spielman, R. M., Jenkins, W. J., & Lovett, M. D. (2020). *Psychology 2e*. OpenStax.

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.

Course Requirements:

1. **Exams.** For this course, you will take a total of five noncumulative exams, each covering two chapters from the text. Tests will be multiple choice with a few short answer questions and will 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. Tests will generally be reviewed a week 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.
2. **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 December 2, 2024. Research opportunities will be announced throughout the semester in postings that appear on the psychology department's website at <https://msutexas.edu/academics/libarts/psychology/undergraduate-research.php>

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 December 2, 2024. **FOR WFISD high school students: this requirement does not apply to you, only to MSU college students.**

- 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. Also, **for WFISD high school students:** I understand that you may be unable to make it to class for reasons other than those listed above. Let me know if you need to miss for some specific reason that does not fit in with any of the above (e.g. school events, testing, inclement weather, etc.).
- Extra Credit.** While exams will offer extra credit, there **may** be opportunities to obtain extra credit throughout the semester. Note: extra credit only affects the grade of your overall exams, NOT the research portion. Thus, if you got 100% on all exams and did extra credit but did not do the research assignment, then you would still receive a B for the course.

Grades: Grades are based on a 100-point scale.

A 100-90

B 89-80

C 79-70

D 69-60

F 59-0

Cheating Policy:

Although cheating does occur on campus, any evidence of cheating (e.g., looking on another's paper, allowing someone to look on your own paper, using an unauthorized memory aide, or plagiarism) will result in automatic dismissal from the course with a letter grade of "F" and a referral to the Dean of Students, as cheating is a violation of the university honor code.

Disability:

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the University's Disability Support Services (DSS) during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the DSS has been provided.

## Mandated Reporting:

This information is to inform the student of the limits of confidentiality while enrolled at MSU Texas or any other Texas state school. Due to federal and state law, MSU Texas faculty and staff are required to report key information regarding student welfare. For example, I am required to complete a report for any student who indicates experiencing sexual abuse/misconduct, physical/emotional abuse, domestic violence, stalking, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or related experience. These reports will be sent to the MUS Texas Title IX Department and/or the Dean of Student's office (<https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>).

Student disclosure may occur via a face-to-face meeting, in-class self-disclosure, email, statement made in a written assignment, etc. If a student asks a faculty or staff person not to share the information, please note that by law, we have to report and I will report. Please note that as students, you may be aware of classmates/dormmates struggling and can make an incident report at: (<https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>).

## 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.
2. **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 come see me during office hours or email me to set up an appointment.
3. **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.
4. **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 at least a couple times a week to stay on top of course information.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **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 given slide small so that all students can write by hand without feeling rushed.

## Tentative Schedule

Note: **These dates are approximate and may change as the instructor deems necessary.**

Dates	Assignments/Exams	Readings
8/27-9/10	Exam 1 (9/12)	Syllabus Chapter 1: Introduction to Psychology Chapter 2: Psychological Research
9/12-9/24	Exam 2 (9/26)	Chapter 4: States of Consciousness Chapter 6: Learning
9/26-10/15	Exam 3 (10/17)	Chapter 9: Lifespan Development Chapter 11: Personality
10/17-11/5	Exam 4 (11/7)	Chapter 14: Stress, Lifestyle, & Health Chapter 15: Psychological Disorders
11/25-11/29	Thanksgiving Break!	
11/7-12/5	Exam 5 (12/5)	Chapter 16: Therapy and Treatment