



**Syllabus  
General Psychology  
Spring 2026**

Instructor: Summer Hickman, M.A., LPA-IP  
Office: O'Donohoe Hall 117  
Email: [summer.hickman@msutexas.edu](mailto:summer.hickman@msutexas.edu)  
Office Hours: by appointment

Course #: PSYC 1103, Section X20  
Class Time: asynchronous  
Location : D2L

**\*Note: When emailing, put General Psychology X20 as the subject.**

**Textbook:**

OpenStax College. (2020). *Psychology 2e* [OpenStax Psychology 2e Textbook Link](#)

Students have three options regarding the textbook. You may view it online, download a PDF, or purchase a print copy. All three options are available at the OpenStax link.

**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. Each Monday I will post supplemental materials regarding the chapter(s) covered that week. These will consist of either notes for reading, PowerPoint presentations of the chapter, and links to relevant videos to assist with learning the concepts covered. On exam weeks, the Monday material will provide an overview of what to expect for the exam, highlight key points you will want to remember, and address any additional areas of discussion in preparation for the exam.

2. In order to encourage students to keep current with their reading and to help students prepare for exams, nine quizzes will be given during the semester. These quizzes will help students identify important concepts emphasized in the exams and will cover material presented in the textbook and the supplemental and discussion materials presented in D2L. Quizzes will be administered through D2L and may be multiple choice or short answer in format and will be worth 10 points each for a total of 90 points. \***The quizzes will be open for two days (Thursday from 12:00am to Friday at 11:59pm Central Time) and you will have ten minutes to complete each quiz.** You will have \***two** attempts for each quiz (discussed further below) and the best attempt will be counted as the score for that quiz. \***No make-up quizzes will be allowed—NO EXCEPTIONS!!** There will be two quizzes the first week of class; one over the syllabus and one over chapter 1—the syllabus quiz will be for extra credit.

3. **Assessment for Empirical and Quantitative Skills-** Core requirement for the State of Texas. There will be a quiz the week after the first exam which will include 15 items over research methods, sampling, and correlation vs causation. Core requirement for the State of Texas. This quiz will be worth 15 points. \***You will only have one attempt to take this quiz.** Like the chapter quizzes, this quiz will not be timed but unlike the chapter quizzes, \***you will only have one attempt to take this special assessment. Additionally, this quiz, unlike the chapter quizzes, will be completed using the LockDown browser, which will be explained below.**

4. **Ethics assessment-written assessment.** Core requirement for the State of Texas. A key aspect of Psychological Research is the ethical treatment of participants. Although research ethics are strongly emphasized by modern psychologists, early studies sometimes crossed ethical lines, exposing participants to risks that would be considered unacceptable today. For this assignment, you will choose one famous psychological study that raised ethical concerns and analyze it using the following guidelines. \*This assignment will count for 25 points and will be completed through D2L. \*You will have one attempt to complete this. \*You have 50 minutes to answer this question and in your essay you should:

1. Provide an overview of the study
  - a. What questions were the researchers trying to answer?
  - b. Who were the participants?
  - c. What were the procedures
  - d. Summarize the key findings
2. Analyze the ethics based on APA standards
  - a. Identify which ethical principles or standards were most relevant
  - b. Discuss any specific ethical concerns raised by the study
  - c. Clearly explain how the study violated these guidelines
3. Impact on Modern Psychological Research
  - a. How did this study influence ethical practices in modern psychology?
  - b. How would this study need to be redesigned today to meet ethical expectations?

Studies to Choose from: The Monster Study 1939, The Aversion Project 1970s and 1980s, The Stanford Prison Experiment 1970, The Monkey Drug Trials 1969, Landis' Facial Expressions Experiment 1924, Little Albert 1920, Learned Helplessness 1965, Milgram Study 1974, The Well of Despair 1960, David Reimer 1965-2004 (see Ethics Article Option folder under Content for brief descriptions of each study).

5. Exams will be worth 100 points each for a total of 500 points (5 exams). Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions **or** a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Material on the exam will include both information presented in online discussions and supplemental material, as well as information contained in the text. In other words, all materials presented in D2L as well as all material in the text are apt to appear on the exams. The exams are non-cumulative so you will only be tested over the information presented since the previous exam (this applies to the final exam as well). Exams will be administered through D2L. **\*Students will have a three-day window to take each exam (from Wednesday at 12:00am to Friday at 11:59pm Central Time) and each exam will be time-limited (60 minutes).** Like with the weekly quizzes, you will have **\*two** attempts at each exam (discussed further below) and the best attempt will be counted as the score for that exam. **\*No make-up exams will be allowed.** **\*Students not completing the first exam will be dropped from the course.** The final exam for this course will cover the last two chapters discussed (Chapters 15 and 16) and will be open from 05/11 to 05/15 and will follow the same design as all other exams (i.e., 60-minute time limit, two attempts). **\*Exams are closed book meaning no notes are allowed. Exams will be taken using the LockDown browser which will be explained below.**
6. Each week on Monday a discussion topic will be posted and will remain open for commenting until Friday at 11:59pm Central Time. Since consistent participation in a course maximizes learning and performance, this is how I will monitor attendance for the course. **\*Each student is required to post at least once a week in the discussion group.** Make sure that your post includes at least 25 words, uses correct grammar and punctuation, is respectful to your peers, and is relevant to the content being discussed. **\*Failure to participate in the weekly discussion will count as an absence and if more than three discussions are missed, you may be dropped from the course.**
7. It is important that students of scientific 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. **\*Completing the research participation counts for 20 points and this assignment is a pass/fail assignment meaning you will only receive the 20 points IF you complete the full assignment. The deadline for completing the research requirement is May 4, 2026 by 5pm CST.**

Participate in one or more approved psychology research projects totaling at least 90 minutes **\*no later than May 4, 2026 by 5pm CST.** **\*Failure to complete at least 90 minutes will result in a grade of zero for this assignment.** Research opportunities will be announced throughout the semester in postings that appear at: [MSU Undergraduate Research Participation Page](#)

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 be submitted no later than May 4, 2026 by 5pm.**

**\*Important! Once you click to take the quiz or exam, the countdown clock begins and it cannot be reset.** **\*You may not save the exam and restart it later.** It must be completed in one sitting. The quizzes and exams must be completed within the allotted time. Plan accordingly so you can complete them within the time frame and prior to it expiring. Once the allotted time is over, any unanswered questions will be

scored as zeros. Quizzes and exams can be taken up to two times and the highest score will be counted as the final score. If you run into technical issues during the first exam administration (e.g., your computer dies, internet goes out, a storm causes a power outage), this will count as your first try and you will have one more try to complete it. If you run into trouble during the second exam administration, then your score from the first administration will be counted as your exam score. Make sure you plan to take the exams at times when your computer is running properly, is charged, and there are not storms or other distractions present that could affect the administration so you will be able to make the best use of the two tries you are allotted.

**Grading:** The summary of point values for assignments is as follows:

Exams—500 points  
Quizzes—90 points  
Ethics essay—25 points  
Research participation—20 points  
Empirical and quantitative skills assessment—15 points

There is a TOTAL of 650 points available with the following grade breakdown (grades will not be rounded up so, for example, an 89.9 is a B):

585-650=A  
520-584=B  
455-519=C  
390-454=D  
<389=F

### **Attendance:**

Attendance is required for the course and will be monitored via the discussion posts as outlined above. The \*only absences that will not be counted are absences for a mandatory, university-sponsored event or religious holiday. 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 be cleared through the Dean of Students. Students must inform the instructor of religious holiday absences by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of class. Since this is an online course, generous time allocations have been made for all assessments and discussions which should minimize the need for approved absences or accommodations.

### **Midterm Progress Report:**

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, a Midterm Progress Report will be provided through each student's WebWorld account (not D2L). The purpose of this is to identify and inform students who are at-risk of a low or failing grade so they can be proactive about raising their grade throughout the remainder 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 to discuss how to make the most out of the remaining half of the semester.

### **Disability:**

Students with disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before accommodations can be provided. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact me and must provide documentation by Disability Support Services. The Director of Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397-4140, TDD (940) 397-4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Midwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability and complies with Section 504 and Public Law 101-336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) in its admissions, accessibility, treatment and employment of individuals in its programs and activities.

A copy of the ADA Compliance Document is available online at [disability faq](#). It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications. Students who require special accommodations must register with Disability Support Services before these accommodations can be provided. An Accommodation Request Form can be obtained at [Accommodation Request](#).

## Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. \*Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. \*Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!! There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

## 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. Brightspace (maker of D2L) has tutorials available on YouTube. Please go to [Brightspace YouTube](#) for additional help.

## LockDown Browser

Your exams require the LockDown Browser and a Webcam.

Most of the time you will not encounter any problems, however, listed below are some common issues.

1. Make sure you have the most recent version of the [LockDown Browser](#) on your computer. You can install the latest version at the link above.
2. The most common issue is the loss of connection during the test. If you get a blank page or a spinning wheel, you will need to exit the test, close the browser, and re-enter the test.
3. If you are taking this test at home, it is best that no other device is being used that requires the Internet while you are taking the test.
4. **Chromebook Laptops are NOT compatible with the LockDown Browser**, so you will need to locate a different device. If you have the ability to come to campus, the LockDown Browser is on the computers in the Clark Student Center lab and the first floor Dillard lab. **Note:** There are no cameras on these computers, you will need to bring your own webcam or check one out from the Library.

If you need assistance with issues, please use the Report a Problem link at the top of this page or email [d2lhelp](#).

Always let your Instructor know that you've had a technical difficulty and have reached out to us. Please be aware of:

1. The LockDown Browser flags problematic behavior like going off camera, talking, or even being back lit. The instructor gets an alert. All moderate and high alert notifications result in the video being watched for evidence of academic dishonesty. Please don't sit with a lamp or bright light behind you as the camera has a hard time reading your face.
2. Please do not take an exam with anyone else present. If you are in an MSU computer lab, we understand that other people may be around. Please don't have conversations with them until after you complete the exam.
3. The **environment scans are not acceptable in many cases**. Students are to show the room including the desk/table top and the wall behind the computer. Students who fail to properly scan the environment are watched very closely. Any behavior that appears like a person is looking at notes or another device may be reported as academic dishonesty.

### **Informed Consent**

This information is to inform the student of the limits of confidentiality while enrolled at MSU Texas or any other state school. Due to federal and state law, faculty and staff working for a university are required to report any information that falls under Title IX. Any student who indicates experiencing sexual abuse/misconduct, physical/emotional abuse, domestic violence, stalking, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or related experiences will have an incident report sent to either the MSU Texas Title IX and/or the Dean of Student's office. 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: [Student Referrals and Incident Reporting Forms](#)

Report forms are:

Bias Incident Reporting Form  
Campus Incident Report Form  
Concerning Student Behavior Form

General Student Complaint Form  
Sexual Misconduct Report Form  
Student Alert Form

### **College Policies and Procedures**

Can be found at the bottom of the MSU home page or at [Human Resources Policy](#)

### **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 individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#). Any evidence of cheating will result in a grade of "F" and being reported to the [Dean of Students](#).

### **Wikipedia**

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in this class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Written assignments will be run through a plagiarism and AI checker called Turn It In. If at any point Turn It In identifies that a student used AI to complete an assignment (such as ChatGPT), an automatic grade of zero will be given to the assignment.

### **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 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 FBI video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

### **Instructor Drop:**

An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor’s drop of a student takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10-week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4- or 5-week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

### **Travel Plans**

Please do not make travel plans that will interfere with your access to a computer or the internet. You are responsible for maintaining electronic(s) equipment and internet access every day during the semester.

### **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.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

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

### **Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed**

*"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."*

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, We, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters.

We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student.

We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

**Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate**

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

**Notice: \*Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.**

Week	Dates	Modules and Topics	Graded Assignments
1	01/19 to 01/23  *Class begins on 01/20	Introduction to the course and syllabus Chapter 1—Introduction to Psychology	Syllabus Quiz for extra credit 01/22-01/23  Chapter 1 Quiz 01/22-01/23
2	01/26 to 01/30	Chapter 2—Psychological Research	Chapter 2 Quiz 01/29-01/30
3	02/02 to 02/06	Review for Exam 1	<b>Exam 1</b> (Ch.1&2) open from 02/04-02/06
4	02/09 to 02/13	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Assessment	15-point Quiz 02/12-02/13
5	02/16 to 02/20	Chapter 4—States of Consciousness	Chapter 4 Quiz 02/19-02/20
6	02/23 to 02/27	Chapter 14—Stress, Lifestyle, and Health	Chapter 14 Quiz 02/26-02/27
7	03/02 to 03/06	Review for Exam 2	<b>Exam 2</b> (Ch.4&14) open from 03/04-03/06 Midterm Progress Report posted by 03/06
8	03/09 to 03/13	Spring Break	
9	03/16 to 03/20	Chapter 9—Lifespan Development	Chapter 9 Quiz 03/19-03/20
10	03/23 to 03/27	Review for Exam 3	<b>Exam 3</b> (Ch. 9) open from 03/25-03/27
11	03/30 to 04/03  *no class on 04/03	Ethics Assessment in D2L	Essay completion open from 04/01-04/02
12	04/06 to 04/10	Chapter 6—Learning	Chapter 6 Quiz 04/09-04/10
13	04/13 to 04/17	Chapter 11—Personality	Chapter 11 Quiz 04/16-04/17
14	04/20 to 04/24	Review for Exam 4	<b>Exam 4</b> (Ch.6&11) 04/22-04/24
15	04/27 to 05/01	Chapter 15—Psychological Disorders	Chapter 15 Quiz 04/30-05/01
16	05/04 to 05/08	Chapter 16—Therapy and Treatment  Review for Exam 5  <u>*Research Participation or the Research Paper must be completed no later than 05/04 by 5pm CST</u>	Chapter 16 Quiz 05/07-05/08
17	05/11 to 05/15	Finals Week	<b>Exam 5</b> (Ch.15&16) open from 05/11 to 05/15