



General Psychology 1103
Fall 2026

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Don Knox, Ph.D.

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Required Text:

Psychology, 2Ed, Openstax. <https://openstax.org/details/books/psychology-2e>

Office Hours – 10:00 – 11:50 MWF OD 118

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ✓ learn about what psychology is, and how it is applicable to the world around us.
- ✓ understand how we learn, think and remember.
- ✓ gain a basic knowledge of human developmental processes
- ✓ learn about human characteristics such as intelligence and personality
- ✓ investigate problems in human functioning (psychopathology) and how such problems are treated.

Above and beyond this, we will approach the field of psychology critically as "a way of approaching and analyzing the world (Wade & Tavris, 1990, p. xvii)." This means that we will explore how to think critically about psychological phenomena and be skeptical about what we read.

As such, class discussions and projects will be designed to encourage your own exploration of psychology. Through the study of this field, you are likely to find that much of what we know in psychology directly relates to, and has the capacity to enrich, our experience of everyday life.

EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES

Examinations: There are four major exams. Each of the first 3 exams will cover 3 chapters.

Each of these exams is worth 25% of your grade. They are multiple-choice and each will consist of 50 - 70 questions.

The final exam is comprehensive and will contain 50 multiple-choice questions and is worth 10% of your final grade.

Theme Papers: Fifteen percent of your grade (15%) will be determined based on your completion of three Theme Papers. These papers will be no less than 500 words each and will need to be submitted electronically via D2L. The total number of points you can earn from these papers is 150, or 50 points per paper. The papers will consist of your application of concepts discussed in class, covered in your text, current events, or personal experiences. For example, you might decide to do one of your Papers on the impact of the Internet on how students learn, or the impact of teenage violence on psychological health later in life, or the impact of memory deficits on academic achievement, or the use of principles of learning to help at-risk youth acquire positive social skills.

Theme 1 topics – Circadian Rhythms, Sleep problems, Drugs, Phobias, classical conditioning, observational learning.

Theme 2 topics – nature/nurture, teratogen effects, adolescence, young adulthood, death and dying, Sex, gender, social issues

Theme 3 topics – therapy, types of therapy, stress, disease risk, health psychology

Research Requirement-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 two following research-related exercises. **The deadline for completing the research requirement is 2 weeks before finals week.**

1. Participate in one or more psychology research projects totaling at least 60 minutes. Research opportunities will be announced throughout the semester in postings that appear at

<https://msutexas.edu/academics/libarts/psychology/undergraduateresearch.php>

OR

2. Complete a research ethics essay. Participating students will read academic writings addressing research ethics. Following this, students will complete a 3-4 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 the second to last week of class.**

No credit will be awarded for participation, but students must complete one of the two above options. Failure to do so will result in a letter grade reduction for the course.

Grading: Each regular exam will represent 25% of your final grade and the final 10%. Fifteen percent of your grade will come from your submission of the Theme Assignments.

Breakdown of Grades		
Regular Exams	3 @ 250 points each = 750	75%
Theme Papers	3 @ 50 points each =150	15%
Final Exam	100 points	10%

Then use the following scale (there is no rounding or extra credit):

Grading Scale	
900– 1000	A
800– 890	B
700– 790	C
600– 690	D
Below 600	F

III. RELEVANT CLASS, PROGRAM AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Late submission of theme papers. Not allowed.

Academic Dishonesty: Please do not cheat or plagiarize. The MSU policy on cheating and plagiarism is in the MSU Student Handbook and Activities Calendar (Code of Student Conduct, Item 11) and I encourage you to review it. Additional information regarding the Academic Dishonesty policy is available from the Dean of Students office, in Clark Student Center. Cheating or engaging in plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) and/or a letter grade of “F” for the course!!!!!! If you find yourself even *thinking about* cheating on an exam or copying someone else’s work, please *talk to me* instead of doing it!!! This includes the use of AI and/or ChatGPT.

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.

Dropping the course: Please let me know if you plan on dropping the course. Often times, a student will decide to drop a course based upon their own perception of their progress. If I notice a student dropping back, I will do everything possible to bring that student up to speed. Let me help you make the decision to drop. This course is laid out so that a good portion of the grading will be completed prior to the drop date. I will have a section in the "my grades" that will indicate your progress to date to help you in your decision-making process.

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.

I will closely follow this policy in terms of your conduct in class. Anything that is disruptive to the class will result in you being Instructor Dropped from the class with a grade of F. I will enforce this policy in that my obligation is to provide the best and most informative course that I can. I cannot do that when there is behavior that disrupts the class. This also includes attempting to dominate or "teach" the class, interrupting the course frequently with stories that are not facilitative or relevant to the flow of the class, using electronics during class that are not directly related to the class material, and talking frequently to one's peers while course is being held. Any other behaviors that are deemed disruptive will also be enforced as deemed by our Code of Conduct policy. Remember that there are stories and questions that are facilitative to our class discussions, and some that are obstructive.

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 an 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](#) or <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>

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 individual's 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](#).

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

Grade Appeal Process

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

Student Code of Conduct

MWSU's official policy in the University's Code of Student Conduct on page 52, states:

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.

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.

Cell Phones and Pagers: Please turn all cell phones and pagers off (no sound) during class. DO NOT text message during class. DO NOT answer your cell phone in class. Exceptions include emergency calls (e.g., birth of child, family member in hospital). Students who are unable to comply will not be allowed to attend class.

Taping, cell phones and laptops: NOT ALLOWED

Note

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 101336 (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](#).

NOTE: THE COURSE SYLLABUS PROVIDES A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS MAY BE NECESSARY. FINAL EXAM DATE IS FIRM

<u>Proposed Class Schedule</u>		
Dates	Topic	Corresponding Chapter
8/24/2026	Start of Semester	
9/25/2026	Theme Paper 1 due (noon)	
Week 5	Test 1	1, 2, 4 and 6
10/30/2026	Theme Paper 2 due (noon)	
Week 10	Test 2	9, 14, 11
12/4/2026	Theme Paper 3 due (noon)	
Week 15	Test 3	13, 15, 16
Week 16	Final Exam	All