

**Syllabus
Writing in Psychology
Fall 2023**

Professor: Nicholas Maxwell, Ph.D. Office: 118 O'Donohoe e-mail: nicholas.maxwell@msutexas.edu	Course #: PSYC 3303, Sec. 102 Time: 12:30pm –1:50 pm; TR Location: PY 101 Office Hours: 2:00pm – 4:30pm, TR
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Required Texts:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Ed.).

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).

Attendance:

Class attendance is ***required.*** This might sound crazy, but regularly attending class is the best way to ensure that you do well on the final paper (less formatting errors, improved clarity, etc.). If you do miss class for a non-excused reason, you are responsible for figuring out what you missed. Don't expect me to follow up with you.

Excused-Absences: The only absences that will not be counted are absences for a mandatory, university-sponsored event or religious holiday. Written notification 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 15th day of class.

*You must verify your emergency with documentation. *You must contact me via email no later than 24 hours after the missed exam!** If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

Late Submissions on Writing Assignments:

Writing assignments submitted after the deadline (Topic Proposal, Article Summaries, Drafts, Final Submission, etc.) will lose 10% of their total point value per day they are late (e.g., 10 points will be deducted for an assignment worth 100 points, 20 points for an assignment worth 200, etc.). You have the deadlines now (see course schedule at the end of the syllabus), so start planning ahead now!

Make-up Exams:

No make-up exams will be given ***except in the case of an emergency***, such as a serious illness, a serious accident, or a death in the family ***OR*** in the case of a previously excused absence (see *Attendance* section above for what qualifies as an *excused absence*).

Course Requirements:

1. **Exams:** Students will complete ***two*** exams during the semester. Each exam will be worth 100 points and will assess knowledge of APA style, best practices for writing, etc.
2. **Term Paper:** You will select *any* topic in psychological research and will use this topic as the basis of an APA style manuscript that will 1) summarize results from various peer-reviewed papers on this topic while 2) critically evaluating the methods that the researchers employed. This will involve comparing and contrasting these results with each other with you ultimately indicating whether you believe the research summarized is valid and represents a real phenomenon based on available evidence OR if the research in question is methodologically flawed. Whatever you decide, it is important for you to *justify* your position in this paper! You may wish to talk about ethical considerations, whether the study used a non-traditional sample, etc. This paper should 10 – 12 pages in length (you will lose points for being too short or too long!) and you must discuss results from at ***ten*** different EMPIRICAL studies in psychology (e.g., published research in peer-reviewed journals – not magazines, Wikipedia, etc.!).

In addition to comparing and contrasting articles, ***you must also provide meaningful critique/interpretation of each article! Think about how the different articles you are discussing relate to your research topic and how they fit together with one another.*** This term paper will be used to assess student progress towards course objectives. Two working drafts of the term paper will be required at various points in the semester (see the schedule below). More details will be posted on D2L. The term paper will be broken down into the following assignments:

- a. Topic Proposal (50 points)
- b. Annotated Bibliography and Article Summaries (100 points)
- c. Draft #1 (100 points)
- d. Draft #2 (100 points)
- e. Final Draft (200 points)

A list of topic ideas will be posted on D2L. Your topic proposals must be submitted to me by email no later than **9/1** (if you're reading this at the beginning of the semester, be thinking about your topic ideas now!). See course schedule for all deadlines!

Acceptable topics include: Violent media and aggression, learning styles, different types of therapies, the role of genetics and intelligence, implicit biases/prejudice, cognitive benefits of being bilingual, can people predict their memory abilities, the validity of personality testing, etc.

3. **Participation:** Classes are most productive when everyone contributes. Class participation (***50 points***) will be assessed based on attendance, participation during writing days and class activities, and your contributions to class discussions.
4. **Extra Credit:** Extra Credit may be given at my discretion. However, any extra credit opportunities will be made available to the entire class. If you email me asking for extra credit, I'll probably just ignore your email....

Grades:

Your final grade in the course will be calculated based upon ***800*** total points.

800-720	A
719-640	B
639-560	C
559-480	D
< 480	F

Desire-to-Learn (D2L):

This course utilizes the MSU D2L program for assignment submission. Relevant course materials will also be posted on D2L. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program.

Cell Phones:

Unless you anticipate that you might receive an emergency communication, please turn off your cell phones in class. If you receive an ***emergency*** phone call or text in class, please excuse yourself and quietly leave the classroom to take the message.

Email Policy:

You are required to use your MSU Texas email accounts for this class. I will not send emails to any other email accounts. I will also not send out class information to any other email address other than your university email account. **Before emailing me about your question, make sure that your question has not been answered/addressed in the syllabus or elsewhere!** When emailing me, please put the course number (PSYC 3303) AND section number (Sec. 102) in the subject line. This will immediately let me know which class you are in so I can respond faster.

I will try my best to get back to you within 24-hours (during the week) or within 3 days (weekends, holidays, if you decide to email me at 10:00pm on Friday...)

Cheating Policy:

Cheating will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating on exams or written assignments will result in dismissal from this class with a grade of "F" and referral to the Dean of Students. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized notes of any kind during an exam, looking on another's exam, allowing another student to look on your exam, plagiarism, and self-plagiarism.

Disability Services:

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 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 DSS has been provided.

Midterm Grade Reports:

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, the instructor for this class will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account. **Midterm progress reports will only be provided for students with a grade of C or less in the course.** Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcripts, 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.

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.

Important Dates

Last day for Fall 23 schedule changes: **8/31**

Deadline to file for **DECEMBER** graduation: **9/25**

Deadline to file for **MAY** graduation: **10/2**

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": **10/30**

Refer to: Drops, Withdrawals & Void

Course Schedule:

Important! The reading for each day is what's expected to have been read *prior* to that date.

Week	Date	Topic/Reading	DEADLINE/NOTES	Assigned Reading
1	8/29	Course Overview/Writing in the Profession		APA Ch. 1
	8/31	Generating Research Ideas		
2	9/5	Finding and Evaluating Research		
	9/7	No Class!	1 on 1 meetings to discuss/approve paper topic	
3	9/12	Citations, Referencing, and Plagiarism	(Topic Submission due by 9/12 @ 11:59pm – 50 points)	APA Ch. 8, Ch. 9, Ch. 10
	9/14	Citations, Referencing, and Plagiarism	Citation Practice (Computer Lab, OD 126)	APA Ch. 8, Ch. 9, Ch. 10
4	9/19	Thinking Critically about Research		
	9/21	Writing Day	Work on Bibliographies (Computer Lab, OD 126)	
5	9/26	Exam 1 Review		
	9/28	Exam 1	Bibliography and Article Summaries (Due: Friday, 9/29 – 100 pts.)	
6	10/3	APA Structure and Content		APA Ch. 2
	10/5	Writing Day	Work on Draft 1 (Computer Lab, OD 126)	
7	10/10	Analyzing Evidence and Interpreting Results		
	10/12	Writing Day	Work on Draft 1 (Computer Lab, OD 126) Draft 1 Due: Friday 10/13 @ 11:59pm	
8	10/17	Grammar & Mechanics		APA Ch. 4, Ch. 5, Ch. 6
	10/19	Grammar & Mechanics		APA Ch. 4, Ch. 5, Ch. 6
9	10/24	Grammar & Mechanics		APA Ch. 4, Ch. 5, Ch. 6

Week	Date	Topic/Reading	DEADLINE/NOTES	Assigned Reading
	10/26	Feedback Sessions (No Class)		
10	10/31	Feedback Sessions (No Class)		
	11/2	Exam 2		
12	11/7	The Publication Process	In class peer review activity	
	11/9	Peer Editing		
13	11/14	In Class Writing	Work on Draft 2, OD 126	
	11/16	No Class (Maxwell gone for Conference)		
14	11/21	Graduate School Preview	Draft #2 Due 11/21 @ 11:59pm	
	11/23	NO CLASS! (Thanksgiving)		
15	11/28	Peer Editing		
	11/30	Peer Editing		
16	12/5	In Class Writing	Work on Final Draft, OD 126	
	12/7	In Class Writing	Course Wrap Up/Work on Final Draft, OD 126	
17	Final Exam		No Final Exam (So you can focus on the paper! 😊) Final Paper due: Monday, 12/11 @ 8:00am	