

Psychology 100: Introductory Psychology, Fall 2008

Course Instructor

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Office Location: Cyberspace

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Office Hours: I will be available online almost always. If you need to meet in person (and live near UMass), feel free to set up a meeting.

Course Structure

This course will consist of a broad overview of the field of psychology. Topics will include the natural and social science sub-areas of psychology, including biological psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, and clinical psychology.

Topics will be related to research and theories underlying contemporary issues and problems in day-to-day life. Being an online course, a considerable amount of peer-to-peer interaction will keep you engaged in the current topics. You will be required to view lectures and demos online, and frequently post responses to thought questions online.

Required Text (Available in the campus bookstore. Electronic version also available at a lower price. (If purchasing the actual book, check www.half.com or any other website first. You might get a lower price!)

Myers, David G. (2008). *Exploring Psychology* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Additional readings, lecture notes and class assignments will be available on Blackboard Vista course website.

Course Website: <http://www.amherst.umassonline.net/index.cfm>

Course Expectations

But wait, it's an online course, how do I expect to learn without ever seeing the instructor or any other students?!

An online course affords many opportunities that are not possible with a traditional classroom-based course. The biggest advantage in an online course rests in you, the student. Students in this course may be located anywhere in the world and may offer very different experiences and opinions conducive to a diverse learning environment. What this course lacks in face-to-face discussion, it makes up for in technology. You will be contributing to discussions regularly, offering your opinions, and being responsive to others. The end product is a learning environment that allows the students to not only learn from the instructor and the material, but also from each other. I will be there to guide you through all the way, so nobody will get lost or left behind.

There are many advantages to online learning that are not always components of traditional classroom courses. Students can often negotiate parts of online courses at their own pace, use tools designed to appeal to a variety of different learning styles, collaborate and communicate with their peers and instructors in different ways, and be at the forefront of new technology. However, there are also some potential challenges that students need to be aware of.

Internet Literacy- Since this is a course that is taught exclusively online, it is expected that you are comfortable using a computer and the Internet. This entails being able to log in to the course website, navigate through websites (taking quizzes, discussion boards, etc.), navigate the Internet to websites, and frequently use email. If this is going to be a problem for you and you need any extra assistance, please contact me early in the semester and I will help you with it. The ‘online’ aspect of this course should not be intimidating to anyone.

If you’re having trouble or technical issues with Blackboard Vista 4, please contact the Office of Information Technologies (OIT). You can send OIT an email at amherstsupport@umassonline.net or call 1-800-569-6505. You can also contact support via live text chat by visiting the UmassOnline homepage at <http://www.amherst.umassonline.net/index.cfm> and clicking on the link, “live text chat”.

Logging in- Announcements, discussion contributions, points of clarification and assignment details will be posted regularly, so it is imperative that you visit the course website often. In order to make sure everyone is doing this, you will be required to log in at least three times a week, Monday through Friday. I will keep track of how often and when you are logging in and points will be deducted from your participation grade if you do not meet this minimum requirement.

Participation- The success of this course rests largely in your hands! I strive for informal, interactive class environments in which questions are routine, and hope to have enjoyable and provocative discussions. The flip side of this is that you need to take responsibility for participation. I expect you to be ready to ask questions and discuss the material. Participation and the message boards are significant parts of your grade, so it will be impossible to get a good grade without contributing regularly and thoughtfully.

Respect- Always be respectful of your peers and the instructor. Multiple points of view are welcome and expected, but don’t launch an attack if you don’t agree with a comment or perspective. You can disagree or say something that’s controversial without being disrespectful. And please remember that it is easy for on-line communications to be misinterpreted, so always evaluate and reevaluate your posts before they are public.

I still don't understand how this course will be beneficial if we can't even talk to one another? This is where discussion boards come in! A large portion of this course will hinge upon our ability to effectively communicate through the discussion board. You will be required to post regularly, as well as to respond to your colleagues' topics. Instead of being put on the spot for opinions or responses to questions as with a typical classroom, you will have the opportunity to post well thought out responses.

Communicating in online courses requires more time, thoughtfulness and effort than traditional classroom courses. In a traditional course you hear a question, think about it, raise your hand and volunteer the answer. In an online course you read a question, think about it, type an answer, think about what you've typed, edit what you've typed, and *then* submit your answer. This can take a long time depending on how quickly you read, think and type! Another challenge with communicating online is accurately conveying emotion and emphasis, so you need to be thoughtful in how you present yourself. If you want to emphasize something, use ALL CAPS. If you want to convey emotion, feel free to use signals of emotions (a.k.a., emoticons) such as :), ☺, or :(.

Please consider all of these issues and put in the effort needed to communicate as effectively as possible.

Online courses can be trouble for procrastinators! Do you check your e-mail repeatedly when working on the computer? Do you start a paper the night before it's due? Are you a top scorer in FreeCell, Minesweeper and/or Solitaire? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you may have a problem with procrastination! Working independently is a large part of an online course, so putting off the work until the last minute will lead to big trouble! If you're a procrastinator (you know who you are), schedule frequent work sessions with short breaks, split assignments into smaller components, tack a copy of the semester schedule on the wall in front of your workspace, on your refrigerator, on the bathroom mirror - whatever you have to do to get the work done without procrastinating!

Creating community takes a little more time. Online learning can feel a bit isolating without the face-to-face interactions you have in a traditional course. There will be many opportunities to collaborate with your peers and communicate with me, so I hope we'll be able to build a community quickly. If you're still feeling detached from the course, please let me know and we'll experiment with new ways of getting to know each other.

Lectures

The course materials will be posted exclusively to Vista. Lectures will be posted via PDF format and you should check to make sure you can view these types of files. A test PDF is posted, as well as instructions for downloading the free software to view it.

Since lectures cannot be ‘delivered’ a script will accompany each lecture. The script will contain information regarding each slide (if I had the resources, I would record the audio and upload it – perhaps coming soon!!). You should follow the script as you advance through the slides. You are expected to view the slides **after you complete the required reading**. The slides for each week will be posted on Sunday before the week begins. Each week will consist of two lectures worth of slides. Although the schedule recommends that you view the slides on or before Tuesday and Thursday each week, you are welcome to go through them whenever you like.

The Message Board

The message board will allow you to express your opinions about certain topics related to the course. The majority of the course will take place on the message board and if executed right, it will create a nice environment where we can all learn. You will be required to interact with the message board multiple times during each week. The board will be split up into 3 main sections:

Course related topics: Each week you will be required to create **at least one thread** (a thread is the start of a topic) regarding the material for that week. In addition to starting one thread, you are required to respond to **at least two other threads** started by other students. Thus, you will be required to post **at least three times every week**. Since more threads afford more topics and opportunities to respond, it is important to start your thread early in the week. The deadline for posting each week is on Sunday morning before I post the lectures for the upcoming week. As an example, I will start a thread each week as well. You are more than welcome to comment on my thread, but I ask that you rely on this only after you have read each of your colleagues first. Although you won’t be graded specifically on the content of your post, you are expected to post well-thought responses. **Posts are expected to be one to two paragraphs in length.**

Course related issues: This will be an open forum for questions and comments related to the material. If something is not clear or you found something particularly interesting, feel free to open a discussion about it. I will act as the moderator making sure things go well. Of course, if you have a specific question, you can email it to me. If I think your question will benefit others, I will post it to the message board. Threads started in this section will not count towards the weekly quota.

Off-topic threads: Do you have a hobby that is eccentric? Do you have a pet or pets? Do you want to discuss the upcoming election? Do you have a job or do something interesting? This section of the message board is for these kinds of topics. These topics are so we can build a community between us and to get as comfortable as possible interacting with one another. Please avoid expressing strong opinions that may be offensive or may incite arguments. If I feel anything is questionable, I will delete it immediately. The board is for you, so don’t abuse it!

Quizzes

Every Wednesday a quiz will be posted covering the material for that week. It will focus on the second lecture from the previous week as well as the first lecture of the current week. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. You may use your book for the quizzes, but it is important to have your notes organized because there will be a time limit for each quiz.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course. The final is not cumulative and will only cover material discussed after the first exam. The exams will be longer versions of the quizzes and will consist of multiple choice and short answer type questions. Also like the quiz, the exams will have a time limit and you can use the book and notes. Makeup exams will be considered only under rare occasions, notification of which must occur **before** the date of the exam. Makeup exams must be taken within a week of the original test date.

The final exam will be discussed later in the course. It will be identical in format to the first exam and should be treated like a second exam and not a huge final.

Points Distribution

Exam 1	20
Exam 2	20
Quizzes	20
Discussion Boards	35
Participation	5
Total:	100

Grade Equivalents

A 100.0–93.0; A- 90.0–92.9; B+ 87.0–89.9; B 83–86.9; B- 80.0–82.9; C+ 77.0–79.9; C 73.0–76.9; C- 70.0–72.9; D+ 67.0–69.9; D 63.0–66.9; D- 60.0–62.9; F below 60.0

Outline of Topics		
Date	Topic	Reading±
Tuesday, September 2 nd	Introduction. What is Psychology?	
Thursday, September 4 th	Psychology as a science	Chapter 1: pp. 1 - 14
Tuesday, September 9 th	Research methods in psychology	Chapter 1: pp. 15 - 30
Thursday, September 11 th	Neural communication and hormones	Chapter 2: pp. 34 – 44
Tuesday, September 16 th	The brain	Chapter 2: pp. 45 – 62
Thursday, September 18 th	Nature	Chapter 3: pp. 67 – 81
Tuesday, September 23 rd	Nurture	Chapter 3: 82 – 93
Thursday, September 25 th	Child Development	Chapter 4: 98 – 122
Tuesday, September 30 th	Adulthood	Chapter 4: 123 – 134
Thursday, October 2 nd	Sensation and the senses	Chapter 5: pp. 138 – 161
Tuesday, October 7 th	Perception	Chapter 5: pp. 162 – 176
Thursday, October 9 th	Consciousness and Sleep	Chapter 6: pp. 182 – 199
Tuesday, October 14 th	Columbus day observance	
Thursday, October 16 th	Hypnosis and Drugs	Chapter 6: pp. 200 – 213
Tuesday, October 21 st	Classical Conditioning	Chapter 7: 221 – 231
Thursday, October 23 rd	Operant Learning and Observation	Chapter 7: 232 – 246

Tuesday, October 28 th	Exam 1	
Thursday, October 30 th	Encoding, Storage and Retrieval	Chapter 8: 253 – 268
Tuesday, November 4 th	Forgetting and Constructive Memory	Chapter 8: pp. 272 – 284
Thursday, November 6 th	Thinking and Language	Chapter 9: pp. 289 – 308
Tuesday, November 11 th	Veterans' Day	
Thursday, November 13 th	Intelligence	Chapter 9: 309 – 324
Tuesday, November 18 th	Emotion I	Chapter 11: pp. 371 – 385
Thursday, November 20 th	Emotion II	Chapter 11: 386 – 412
Tuesday, November 25 th	Personality I	Chapter 12: pp. 420 – 434
Thursday, November 27 th	Thanksgiving!! Enjoy some good food.	Spend some time reviewing to keep things fresh.
Tuesday, December 2 nd	Personality II	Chapter 12: pp. 435 – 452
Thursday, December 4 th	Psychological Disorders	Chapter 13: pp. 458 – 491
Tuesday, December 9 th	Therapy	Chapter 14: pp. 496 – 524
Thursday, December 11 th	Social Thinking and Social Influence	Chapter 15: pp. 529 – 544

*This syllabus is a guide for how the course will go but is subject to change.

±Additional readings may be posted to Vista that are relevant to certain topics.

Mandatory Disclaimer

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is representing someone else's work as your own. This includes copying information from ANY website without proper citation, copying someone else's paper, buying a paper, or letting someone copy your work. In this course, there will be no opportunities for collaboration on written assignments. You are expected to talk to your classmates about the course material but NEVER to share in the writing of papers, nor are you to use papers written by previous students in this course. Plagiarism will result in a grade of F and a report will be filed with the Academic Honesty Board. This penalty will be enacted both for the person who copies and anyone who allows copying to occur. Plagiarism will be discussed in class and you will be expected to understand what constitutes plagiarism. You are expected to understand your sources sufficiently well to write your own paper *in your own words*. However, you should cite the sources of ALL ideas in your papers even when you are paraphrasing a source.

The Department policy states all students are expected to adhere scrupulously to the University policy concerning academic honesty, which is found in "Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities" at the following website:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm