

**THIS IS YOUR COURSE SYLLABUS –
please, KEEP IT HANDY and REFER TO IT OFTEN.**

**Welcome to PSY 301H!
Introduction to Psychology - Honors**

Fall 2013 Unique #43585
MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m., SEA 2.108

Instructor: Kirsten Bradbury, Ph.D.
Office /Hours: SEAY 3.214 /MWF 8:30-9:00 and F 11:00-12:30/
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TA: Leslie Rice
Office (Hours): SEAY 3.426C /MW 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. and by email appointment
Email: lrice@utexas.edu

We are here to help you – please take advantage of our office hours. Come see us!!

Required Texts

The Science of Psychology: An Appreciative View, 2nd edition. By Laura King (2012).
With Connect Plus Psychology Access Card. Published by McGraw-Hill.
ISBN: 978-0-0774-7091-3

Psychology and the Real World. Edited by Gernsbacher, Pew, Hough and Pomerantz (2011).
Worth Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-4292-3043-8

Additional readings may be assigned; these will be posted to Blackboard and/or distributed in class.

A note regarding whether you need to read the textbooks: I will lecture and lead class discussions on a wide range of topics, and you and your classmates will present additional material. However, there is a great deal more for you to learn than we can cover in class. I expect you to read all the assigned material, and this expectation will be reflected in the pace of lecture presentations and in our standards for grading your essays, as well as on your exams.

Graded Work

Your course grade will be based on the following graded assignments:

- 30% – Personal Project
- 30% – 2 exams worth 15% each
- 15% – Psych Science PSA (Class Presentation)
- 15% – 3 papers worth 5% each
- 10% – Brain Games Participation and Notes

A closer look at these graded assignments:

PERSONAL PROJECT— (30%) Semester-long personal project. Must be personally meaningful to you. Must be approved as appropriate to the assignment by me. Final presentations/performances/evaluations will be held at the end of the semester. *Your project is worth almost a third of your course grade and should be treated accordingly. It must be an original, independent, creative, and scholarly work. It must reflect a semester's worth of hard work, careful thought and investment.* Ask a novel question or explore an intriguing idea; find a person, theory, area of study, idea, or finding that interests you. Then develop (with my help) an activity that will allow you to further explore the topic. You might: Create and explain illusions. Paint depression, OCD, and schizophrenia. Make a puppet show to depict famous

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moments in psych history. Apply psychological findings to improve your memory, happiness, or attitudes toward others. Write a story, poem, or song—and perform it. Imagine how a conversation/argument between two famous psychologists might proceed. Construct study aides. Make some internet phenomenon happen. Choreograph a dance about some aspect of kinetic perception. Observe and explain something happening in your natural environment or conduct a “natural experiment” (more on what this means in class—this project cannot entail performing research on other people). Etc! Get inspired. Design an activity that fits with your interests and strengths and then discuss it with me. You are welcome to discuss your ideas with me as soon as you'd like. After we come to an agreement concerning the goals and requirements of the activity, you may begin working on it. Group project requests will be considered on a case by case basis, but if you will be proposing a group project I strongly recommend having individual ideas ready as back-ups so you do not have to scramble if the group idea doesn't get approved. You should meet with me (in my office) by **October 11th at the latest**. If you don't discuss the activity with me by then, the activity will be graded as late. Everyone is expected to attend the presentations and performances at the end of the semester. More information about specific expectations will be given to you in class. Your project grade will be based on the following components:

- Originality: novel/unique questions, comparisons, arguments, etc...
- Independence: reading/study/research that goes beyond the text/lectures
- Creativity: nonstandard, non-term-paperish, fun way of communicating your ideas
- Scholarship: reflects a great deal of work and thought and the achievement of a deep understanding of your chosen topic

EXAMS— (30%) There will be two exams, each worth 15% of your course grade. Exams will be comprised of both multiple-choice items and open-ended items that require written responses. Exams will be given during regular class times (see Course Calendar). Exams are formatted to require you to know the material well and work quickly. The emphasis of the second exam will be on the readings and class material covered since the first exam. However, the second exam is cumulative, in that you are expected to learn the course material meaningfully, not just memorize facts for retrieval soon afterward. Some questions on the second exam will require you to integrate and/or apply material from the first section of the course. You are responsible for readings whether or not they are covered in class and for lecture material whether or not it is covered in the readings. We reserve the right to refuse to give make-up exams except in cases of documented need (see below for more on make-ups). Information about any curve, dropped items, etc., will be provided following each exam.

Psychological Science PSA– (15%) Like a Public Service Announcement, your Psych Science PSA will be an engaging and fast-paced presentation of science information important to a well-educated public. Give us the straight scoop on some psychology-related topic! You will do some “library research” on a topic of social value and then perform a brief, individual presentation to the class, at an assigned time during the semester. You could find examples of low-quality vs. high-quality information on a topic and contrast these; present scientific evidence that allows us to debunk a myth; use trust-worthy sources to correct a common but erroneous belief; get us to question an assumption or stereotype; interview a top researcher on your topic; or provide us with potentially life-saving or otherwise critically important information. Knowledge is power, so combat ignorance and empower us with some science! Topics are selected via a collaborative process to be discussed in class. The time limit for your presentation is 10 minutes, firm—we deduct a lot for running over. This assignment is worth as much as an exam grade, so plan accordingly. The presentation itself is brief, but doing it well will

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require substantial preparation. Impress us!

ESSAYS – (15%) You will complete three short papers, each worth 5% of your course grade. These assignments require generating 500-word (about one double-spaced page) responses to specific writing prompts. Assignments may require students to contemplate, introspect, critically examine, empathize, or persuasively opine. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. Essays are typically submitted electronically to the TA.

THE BRAIN GAMES – (10%) You must be in class to participate in this one-time event! Come to class with organized, hand-written notes on the brain and nervous system and the behaviors/functions related to each area. Include information on neurotransmitters and their links to behavior. Make diagrams and sketches as needed. You will use these notes (and your knowledge of the brain gleaned by creating them) to compete in The Brain Games, a series of competitive games about the brain and biopsychology. Winning will earn you and your teammates points—but participating, being a good sport, and handing in good notes are just as important. Details TBA in class.

Extra Credit – Up to 3% extra credit may be earned by participating in the Good Little Readers Club. Details TBA in office hours. Come on by.

Make-Up Exams and Late Work:

If you hope to reschedule an exam or presentation date ahead of time, make up a missed exam or presentation date, or be given credit for a late paper, you must convince the TA that you have a legitimate/important/compelling/unavoidable reason for your request. The best way to be convincing is to *provide documentation supporting your request*. In most cases of legitimate need, documentation is very simple to obtain. However, we also recognize that life is complicated and we do not wish to contribute additional stress to what is probably already a stressful situation for you, whatever it may be. We are not in the business of making students miss important family trips and so on if you ask us nicely to accommodate such life events sufficiently before the fact that we may reasonably do so. Just talk to us.

Grades:

Your course grade is based on your performance on graded work as described above under “Graded Work.” We assign weights to your scores according to the % values given above to yield an overall percentage score. This percentage score is represented as a letter grade for the course, according to the following grade distribution:

A = 92 and up	B+ = 88-89	C+ = 78-79	D = 60-69
A- = 90-91	B = 82-87	C = 72-77	F = 59 and down
	B- = 80-81	C- = 70-71	

Percentage course grades are calculated to two decimal places and rounded to the nearest whole number, such that, for example, the lowest A- is 89.50 (rounds to 90).

Borderline Grades Stay Borderline: Every semester, some students score just below the borderline of the next highest grade. I have great sympathy for people who find themselves in that position, but I have also found that raising those grades simply uncovers a new group of people whose grades are near the new borderline. This situation makes everybody edgy. Therefore, my policy must be that borderline grades stay as they are. Thus, for example, an 89.49 is a B+. **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS.** Please, don't even ask.

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Research Requirement:

All students enrolled in PSY 301 must fulfill a departmental research requirement consisting of either participation in psychological research (as a subject) or writing a paper on psychological research, in addition to class work. If you fail to complete the research requirement, you will receive an (X) Incomplete in the course (and will need to complete the requirement later). We will be distributing a PSY301 Research Requirement Information Sheet in class; please read it carefully. Leslie and I do not administer this system. If you have questions, you are welcome to ask us and we are happy to help if we can. In most cases, you will need to get answers by emailing [**301research@austin.utexas.edu**](mailto:301research@austin.utexas.edu) .

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

The UT Honor Code applies to all aspects of your work in this course. We report suspected plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty to the Honor Board. Don't risk your academic career!!