

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

**Welcome to PSY 301H!
Introduction to Psychology - Honors
Fall 2015 Unique # 42155**

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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 are likely to be assigned; these will be available via Canvas and/or distributed in class.

There is a great deal more for you to learn about psychology this semester than I can cover in my lectures and in our class discussions. This is why you are given reading. I expect you to read all the assigned material, and this expectation will be reflected on your exams, as well as in the pace of lecture presentations and in our standards for grading your essays.

Graded Work

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

- 35% – Personal Project
- 30% – 2 exams worth 15% each
- 20% – 2 papers worth 10% each
- 10% – Brain Games Participation and Notes
- 5% – Find the Facts!

A closer look at these graded assignments:

PERSONAL PROJECT— (35%) Semester-long experiential project, created by you and personally meaningful to you. Your plan must be approved as appropriate by me or Leslie before you begin implementing it. Develop (with our help) an activity that will allow you to further explore your personal interests and connect those interests to academic psychology. *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.* Final presentations/ performances/ evaluations will be held at the end of the semester during the final exam period.

You might: Create and explain optical illusions. Paint depression, OCD, and schizophrenia. Make a puppet show to depict famous moments in psych history. Choreograph a dance about hallucinations. Apply psychological findings to yourself to improve your memory, happiness, or attitudes toward others. Imagine how a conversation/argument between two famous psychologists might proceed and write a story, poem, or song about it. Make some internet phenomenon happen. Train your pet to do something cool using behavior modification techniques. Dress up in costume and hand out free water at an event. Enlist

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your family members to learn a new skill together and make a video about the experience. Although some “natural experiments” are allowed (more on what this means in class), this is not *research* in that your project *cannot entail performing actual experiments on other people*. Much more about this project will be discussed in class, and you will want to peruse the hand-outs “Projects Past” and “Projects Possible” for more ideas. Get inspired. Design an activity that fits with your interests and strengths and then discuss it with us. 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 or Leslie (in office hours) at least once before **October 9th at the latest**. If you don't discuss the activity/project with us by then, the project will be graded as late. More information about specific expectations will be given to you in class. Your project grade will be based on the following components:

- Originality*: interesting, novel ideas/activities/products; project is memorable; shows personality or expresses something about who you are.
- Investment*: project reflects a great deal of work and thought; goes beyond expectations/impresses; shows commitment or dedication.
- Creativity*: nonstandard, artistic or offbeat, fun way of presenting your project/communicating your ideas; shows ingenuity, talent, or brilliance.
- Scholarship*: project includes a formal references list you provide to us at the time of performance/presentation; project experience/activity is clearly connected to formal psychological concepts; shows student achieved a deep understanding of their chosen topic

Everyone is required to attend the presentations and performances at the end of the semester. All presentations/performances are scheduled during the final exam time for the course and must be done then. Please plan accordingly.

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.

ESSAYS – (20%) You will complete two papers, each worth 10% of your course grade. These assignments require generating written responses to specific prompts, with a drafting/revising procedure employing peer and TA review; both process and outcome will contribute to your paper grade. Assigned essays may require students to contemplate, introspect, critically examine, empathize, persuasively opine, and/or find and employ scientific sources and credit them appropriately. Specific instructions for each assignment, including procedural requirements, will be provided in class.

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 even more important. Details TBA in class.

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FIND THE FACTS – (5%) – You will be provided with a topic or question and your task is to find authoritative sources to correctly answer the question or otherwise factually support the topic, avoiding pitfalls like myths and unreliable internet sources. You sign up for an in-class presentation time, when you will briefly educate us on what you learned in your search for the facts. More details will be presented to you 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, or be given credit for a late paper, you must convince Leslie 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. Talk to us as soon as you know you have a conflict!

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 = 93 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 makes everybody edgy. Therefore, my policy must be that borderline grades stay as they are. Thus, for example, an 89.49 is a B+.

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.

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

This course may be used to fulfill the social and behavioral sciences component of the university core curriculum (Core Component 080) and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

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. Don't risk your education. Understand what plagiarism is and avoid it. Never cheat. Be your best self!!

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