

Introductory Psychology

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Office Hours: TTH before class or by appointment

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Course Objectives: The course will explore classic and contemporary theories of and research in scientific psychology. The specific objectives are:

- To learn about 'human nature' from the perspective of the discipline of scientific psychology.
- To understand the multiple scientific perspectives (behavioral, biological, cognitive, socio-cultural, evolutionary) on human behavior and how each of these differ from our 'everyday' theory.
- To appreciate that all behavior is the result of a complex interaction between genetic, biological, cognitive, environmental, and social-cultural factors.
- To learn about the methods, procedures, and techniques that psychologists use in academic studies and professional practice.

General Plan: In the first week of classes we will examine everyday explanations of behavior. The structure of these 'folk' explanations will be explored and the 4 underlying assumptions will be identified. These four assumptions include the *existence of mental states*, the *power of awareness*, the *centrality of rationality*, and the *accuracy of perception*. These assumptions will be the focus of attention over the next seven weeks of the semester as we consider Behaviorism and Learning (which challenges the power of awareness), Biological Psychology (which denies the existence of mental states), Sensation and Perception (which makes apparent the inaccuracy of perception) and Cognitive Psychology (which demonstrates human irrationality). During the last 6 weeks of classes we adopt a new tact in understanding human beings. As an alternative to everyday psychological explanations, we will examine human behavior as a product of interactions between distinct forces. These forces include environmental, biological, cognitive, genetic (evolutionary psychology & behavioral genetics), socio-cultural, and genetic influences on behavior. These forces and their interactions will be examined in the contexts of Social Psychology, Motivation, Development, Personality, Psychopathology, and Treatment.

Textbook: Myers, D. (2007). *Exploring Psychology (7th Ed.)*. New York, NY: Worth. (Note: students are also to buy access to the PsychPortal, available free if the book is purchased at the WSU bookstore.

Grading: There will be four **Exams**, to be taken in the Social Sciences Testing Center. Each exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions based on the assigned textbook chapters, class discussions, written assignments, computer assignments, and lectures. A Study Guide will be available before each exam as will practice exams. Each exam will cover only material from approximately 3-4 textbook chapters. In addition, there will be four short **Written Assignments**. Each of the assignments will involve written (typed, doubled-spaced) answers to general questions or evaluations. These written assignments will be distributed to students approximately a week before they are due. Every week students will be expected to complete various Computer Assignments based on simulations, quizzes and related activities on the required PsychPortal and ChiTester. Your performance on the Computer Assignments will be based on completing the assigned activities. You will be expected to take part in up to 6 credits of research (**Research Participation**) performed by faculty and students in the department. Finally, **Attendance** and **Participation** in class will also be factored into your grade.

Grades: The weighting of each assignment is described below.

Exams (4)	60%
Each exam.....	15%
Written Assignments.....	20%
Folk Psychology.....	5%
Veridical Perception.....	5%
Gambling.....	5%
Child Observations.....	5%
Computer Assignments.....	10%
Research Participation.....	5%
Class Participation & Attendance.....	5%

Class Policies: For a review of class policies go to the class web site.