

# Psychology as a Science and Profession

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**Course Objectives:** There are four major objectives:

1. Students will learn about the **scientific** nature of psychology and appreciate its importance in the practice of psychology.
2. Students will learn about career opportunities in the discipline and how to prepare themselves for such careers.
3. Students will acquire basic skills used by psychologists including critical reading skills, research skills, statistics skills, APA writing skills, and ethical reasoning skills.
4. Students will apply the psychology skills they learned to complete a small group research project.

**Textbooks:** There are two required textbooks for this course.

Landrum, R. E., & Davis, S. F. (2010). *The psychology major* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Sadler River, NJ: Pearson.  
Stanovich, K. E. (2010). *How to think straight about psychology* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Sadler River, NJ: Pearson.

**Grading:** There will be **two exams**. A take-home midterm exam (15% of the grade) will be based on the material from the lectures, assigned readings, class discussions, and the textbook assignments. A multiple choice and short answer exam, based primarily on the Stanovich book will be given towards the end of the semester. **Three written assignments** is also required. The first is a group project in which students review and critique of a particular form of pop psychology (Pop Psychology Paper 5%). The second is an individual exploration of the job of a particular kind of psychologist (Psychologist Paper 5%). The third is a full APA paper (APA 10%) reporting on data we generate in class. **Two formal presentations** and **four planned but informal discussions** and are also required. The two formal presentations, each worth 5% of your grade include group presentations of the pop psychology paper and a Stanovich chapter. The planned informal discussions (see calendar) are based on responses to prepared questions or activities and reports on papers. Finally, students' class **attendance and engagement** will be graded.

## Distribution of Grades:

Exams (2) .....	25%
Take Home.....	15%
Research Exam.....	10%
Papers (3) .....	30%
Pop Psychology Paper.....	10%
Psychologist Paper.....	10%
APA Paper.....	10%
Presentations/Discussions (5) .....	25%
Informal Discussions (4).....	15%
Pop Psychology Presentation....	5%
Stanovich Presentation.....	5%
Attendance & Engagement.....	20%

**Course Structure:** The over-arching question, which will be a theme running throughout the course is, "*What is involved in becoming a psychologist?*" To answer this question, the **first four weeks of class** will be devoted to examining the fundamental question of why psychology demands that its practitioners be scientists (the scientist- practitioner model). We will discuss the model and its alternatives (the practitioner-scholar; evidence-based practitioner) then consider the image, limitations and dangers of pop psychology which seems to be not scholarly, scientific, or evidence-based. Pop Psychology includes the worst kind of self-help books, media psychologists, and other charlatans. **The next month** of classes will explore pathways to becoming a psychologist. We will explore career options, graduate school preparation, and how best to negotiate the undergraduate major in psychology. Invited speakers will give students an opportunity to talk to those in the profession or those who are joining it. Students will explore the profession themselves by researching a particular career path available to psychologists. **Over the subsequent three weeks**, we will learn how to think like a psychologist. We will review the book, *How to Think Straight about Psychology*, which is an engaging and a well defended account of psychology as a science. Finally, during the **last few weeks of class**, students will learn the skills of a psychologist. These skills include research, APA style writing, using statistics, and ethics. To apply these skill students will work on a small research project in which they collect data, analyze it, and write it up in APA style.

**Class Policies:** To read the policies of the class, go to the web site

**Calendar:**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1/4 Lecture 1 Syllabus Quiz Distb.		1/6 Lecture 2 Informal discussion of science of psychology	
	1/11 Lecture 3		1/13 Lecture 3/4 <b>Syllabus Quiz Due</b>	
1/17 MLK Day	1/18 Lecture 4 <b>Paper 1 Dist'b</b>		1/20 Guest Speaker: Dianna Rangel	
	1/25 Lecture 5		1/27 Formal Presentations of Papers	
	2/1 Lecture 6 <b>Paper 1 due</b>		2/3 Lecture 7 Major Advising <b>Paper 2 dist</b>	
	2/8 Lecture 8		2/10 Informal Discussion of Paper 2 <b>Paper 2 due</b>	
	2/15 Lecture 9 <b>Exam 1 Dist'b</b>		2/17 Larry Hensen	
2/14 President's Day	2/22 Lecture 10		2/24 Roundtable, <b>Exam 1 Due</b>	
	3/1 Lecture 11 Formal Presentations		3/3 Lecture 12 Formal Presentations	
	3/8 Lecture 13 Formal Presentations		3/10 Lecture 14 Formal Presentations	
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>				
	3/22 Lecture 15		3/24 Lecture 16 Informal Discussion of research papers	
	3/28 Library Activities		4/1 <b>Exam 2</b> (In Testing Center)	
	4/6 Lecture 17, SPSS Tutorial.		4/8 Lecture 18 <b>APA Paper Dist'b</b>	
	4/13 Lecture 19		4/15 Informal Discussion on Ethics <b>APA Paper Due</b>	