

# PSYC S110: Applied Psychology

Spring 2024



(Photo by Filip Urban on Unsplash)

## 1 Course information

*Class schedule* Section 01: M/Th 12:00 pm–1:50 pm  
Section 02: T/F 12:00 pm–1:50 pm  
J206

*Instructor* Alan Jern  
Office: A202D  
Email: [jern@rose-hulman.edu](mailto:jern@rose-hulman.edu)

*Open meeting time* Thursdays, 2:00–2:50 pm (On Microsoft Teams)

## 2 Overview and objectives

Psychology is the study of how people think and behave. What could be more applicable to your life? Most people find these topics interesting but they find the details of psychology research fairly dry and dull. That's because research psychologists are mostly interested in understanding *how* and *why* people think and act the way they do, not necessarily helping people think and act *better*.

This course isn't unified by any particular theme or set of topics. Instead, it's unified by a focus on applications: What have psychologists learned that might be most useful to you as people, friends, citizens, parents, students, or consumers? At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Read a social science journal article and take away the key points from it.
- Identify some of the problems of generalizing too broadly from a single study.
- Interpret a media report of a research study with a critical eye.
- Summarize the results of a social science journal article in an accurate and succinct way for a broad audience.
- Apply psychology principles learned in the course to situations you encounter in life.
- Generate several research-backed strategies for improving your own well-being.

### 3 Assessment

Component	Points
Syllabus quiz	10
Online participation	170
Class participation	100
Homework responses (6)	60
Presentation	100
Blog post	185

#### 3.1 Participation

This course will be heavily dependent on discussion. Therefore you are expected to come to class having already completed the required reading and prepared to discuss it thoughtfully.

##### 3.1.1 Online score

To make discussions more productive, some pre-discussion will happen online through [Perusall](#). See Moodle for details about signing up and using this site. Your online score for each reading will be based primarily on the number of thoughtful, high-quality comments you make throughout the reading and the number of upvotes and responses you make to other students' comments. In general, the more thoughtful and engaged you are in the discussion, the higher your score will be.

Your scores for the first week of readings and your lowest score after that will be dropped.

##### 3.1.2 In-class score

The Perusall discussions will serve as a jumping-off point for our discussions in class. Your in-class participation will be self-assigned using a rubric I will provide you. At two points in the quarter, you will use the rubric to determine what participation score you have earned for that half of the quarter. I will review these scores and may make adjustments if I feel they are wildly off the mark. Your in-class participation score will be the sum of these scores.

### 3.2 Homework

Some weeks, you will get a homework assignment that serves as the basis of discussion in class. To encourage you to complete these assignments, you will submit a short write-up of what you did that will be scored on a pass/fail basis.

### 3.3 Presentation

You will be randomly assigned to one class day to give a presentation. The details of this presentation will be posted on Moodle.

### 3.4 Blog post

Benchmark	Points
Topic	10
First draft	25
Final draft	150
Total	185

One of the goals of this course is for you to learn how to communicate scientific ideas to others. You'll get some first-hand practice doing this by choosing a psychology journal article and writing about it in the style of a blog post or media report. You'll develop your post over several weeks with several milestone assignments until the final submission.

### 3.5 Final grade

Grades will be assigned as follows.

Points	Grade
$\geq 90\%$	A
87%–89.9%	B+
80%–86.9%	B
77%–79.9%	C+
70%–76.9%	C
67%–69.9%	D+
60%–66.9%	D
$< 60\%$	F

## 4 Course policies

### 4.1 Late assignments

Late assignments (including the self-assigned participation scores) will receive a point penalty that doubles for each additional day they are late. Specifically:

- 1 day late: 1% deduction

- 2 days late: 2% deduction
- 3 days late: 4% deduction
- 4 days late: 8% deduction
- 5 days late: 16% deduction
- 6 days late: 32% deduction
- 7 days late: 64% deduction
- 8+ days late: No credit

An assignment counts as 1 day late as soon as the deadline for that assignment has passed. If you submit an assignment late, you do not need to notify me. Just submit the assignment on Moodle. It will be automatically timestamped and I will deduct the appropriate number of points when I grade it.

**There will be no exceptions made to this late policy and no assignments will be accepted later than 7 days after their deadlines. You should plan to submit your assignments before the deadline. The purpose of this policy is that if something unexpected comes up, you can submit one or two days late with minimal penalty.**

Note: The late policy does not apply to the online discussions on Perusall because the whole point of those deadlines is to prepare you for in-class discussion.

## 4.2 Anonymous grading

Do not include your name on anything (including file name) you submit on Moodle, unless I say otherwise. The reason for this is because I use an anonymous grading feature on Moodle that lets me grade your assignments without seeing your names. Your names are revealed after I've finished grading the assignment. I do this to keep my grading as impartial as possible. If you put your name on the assignment, it undermines the process for everyone.

## 4.3 Asking for help

I highly encourage you to contact me if you ever need help in this course. That's what I'm here for! But I also want to encourage you to be self-sufficient. So if you ever ask me a question that can be easily answered on this syllabus or the Moodle page (a due date, a page limit, a detail about the late policy), **I will deduct 1 point from your grade total.**

The corollary of this policy is that if you ever find anything on this syllabus or the Moodle page that looks like a genuine mistake (the wrong date, inconsistent information) and you ask me about it, **I will give you 1 point of extra credit.** (Only the first person to tell me gets the extra credit.)

You don't need to be afraid to contact me. The point of this policy is to incentivize you to try to find answers yourselves first. If you look for an answer and genuinely can't find it, I want to know that too. Just tell me you tried to find it on your own first and where you looked. You won't be penalized for this.

## 4.4 Academic integrity

Academic misconduct will be addressed according to the policies described in the Rose-Hulman student handbook. Academic misconduct includes: (1) submitting work that is not your own (including AI-generated work); (2) copying ideas, words, or graphics from any source without appropriate citation; (3) misrepresenting your work or yourself (i.e., deliberately submitting the wrong assignment or lying to explain a late assignment); (4) collaborating with other students when this is not permitted; and (5) submitting the same work for credit in two courses without prior consent of both instructors. If you are unsure whether something qualifies as academic misconduct, please check with me before doing it.

## 5 Course schedule

The following (rough) schedule lists topics, readings, and assignments for the whole term. Please see Moodle for exact deadlines.

### Week 1: Introduction

- Seo, H. (2024). [Jeopardy! Winner Reveals Entwined Memory Systems Make a Trivia Champion](#). Scientific American.
- Thieu, M. K., Wilkins, L. J., & Aly, M. (2024). Episodic-semantic linkage for \$1000: New semantic knowledge is more strongly coupled with episodic memory in trivia experts. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*.

Due: Syllabus quiz

### Week 2: Happiness

- Folk, D. & Dunn, E. (2024). How can people become happier? A systematic review of preregistered experiments. *Annual Review of Psychology*.
- Ankin, L. B., et al. (2020). Does spending money on others promote happiness?: A registered replication report. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: Attitudes and Social Cognition*.

Due: Homework 1

### Week 3: Happiness

- Kahneman, D., & Deaton, A. (2010). High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
- Killingsworth, M. A. (2021). Experienced well-being rises with income, even above \$75,000 per year. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Due: Homework 2; Blog post topic and journal article

## Week 4: Sleep

- Dinges, D. F., et al. (1997). Cumulative sleepiness, mood disturbance, and psychomotor vigilance performance decrements during a week of sleep restricted to 4-5 hours per night. *Sleep*.
- Creswell, J. D., et al. (2023). Nightly sleep duration predicts grade point average in the first year of college. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## Week 5: Media

- Haidt, J. (2023). [Social Media is a Major Cause of the Mental Illness Epidemic in Teen Girls. Here's the Evidence.](#) After Babel.
- The Studies Show, [Episode 25: Is it the phones?](#)

Due: Homework 3; Participation 1 score; Blog first draft

## Week 6: The legal system

- Wells, G. (2017). Eyewitness testimony. In *Reforming Criminal Justice (Volume 2: Policing)*.
- Kassin, S. M. (2015). The social psychology of false confessions. *Social Issues and Policy Review*.

Due: Homework 4

## Week 7: Prejudice

- Mousa, S. (2020). Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq. *Science*.
- Chang, E. H., et al. (2019). The mixed effects of online diversity training. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## Week 8: Prejudice

- Broockman, D., & Kalla, J. (2016). Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing. *Science*.
- Munger, K. (2016). Tweetment effects on the tweeted. Experimentally reducing racist harassment. *Political Behavior*.

## Week 9: Changing minds

- Tan, C., et al. (2016). Winning arguments: Interaction dynamics and persuasion strategies in good-faith online discussions. *International World Wide Web Conference*.
- Santoro, E. & Broockman, D. E. (2022). The promise and pitfalls of cross-partisan conversations for reducing affective polarization: Evidence from randomized experiments. *Science Advances*.

Due: Homework 5

### **Week 10: Parenting**

- Gladwell, M. (1998). Do parents matter? *The New Yorker*.
- Nelson III, C. A., et al. (2007). Cognitive recovery in socially deprived young children: The Bucharest early intervention project. *Science*.

Due: Blog post final draft; Homework 6; Participation 2 score