

PSYC S399: Applied Psychology

Winter 2021/22



(Photo by Filip Urban on Unsplash)

1 Course information

Class schedule Section 01: M/Th 2:00 am–3:50 pm
Section 02: T/F 2:00 pm–3:50 pm
A202

Instructor Alan Jern
Email: jern@rose-hulman.edu

Open meeting time Mondays 4:00 PM–5:00 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 human

beings, 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	35
Online participation	270
Class participation	100
Homework responses	120
Presentation	150
Blog post	325
Total	1000

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, 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 score for the first day of readings and your lowest score 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 participation score 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.

3.1.3 Attendance

I will not take attendance. But you will miss out on most of the educational value of the course if you do not attend. And, logically, you cannot participate if you are frequently not in class. If you are feeling ill, please do *not* come to class.

3.2 Homework

Some weeks, you will get a homework assignment that serve 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	25
First draft	50
Final draft	250
Total	325

One of the secondary goals of this course will be 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
≥ 900	A
870–899	B+
800–869	B
770–799	C+
700–769	C
670–699	D+
600–660	D
< 600	F

4 Course policies

4.1 Late assignments

For the entire course, you will have **two free late days** that can be used for assignments (you cannot use these to submit late comments for online discussions). Assignments will be considered one day late if they are submitted any time after the submission deadline up to 24 hours later. Assignments will be considered two days late if they are submitted any time between 24 and 48 hours after the submission deadline. You don't need to notify me in advance if you plan to use one of your late days—I will keep track of your late days.

Any assignments submitted after using your late days will not be accepted. The purpose for this policy is to help me grade and return your work in a timely fashion.

4.2 Blind 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 a feature on Moodle called blind grading that lets me grade your assignments without seeing your names—your names (which Moodle knows) are revealed after I've finished grading the assignment. I do this to keep my grading as fair as possible. If you put your name on the assignment, it undermines the process.

4.3 Communication

You can expect the most up-to-date information about the course to be on the Moodle page. When I make changes to the schedule, I will share the most important updates as Announcements on Moodle which will automatically be emailed to you.

I will post more minor updates, like responses to student questions, in a Teams group that you will be automatically added to. If you have a question for me (about course content, requirements, or assignments) that isn't specifically about you, post it on Teams. That way, I can answer it there and everyone can see my answer. If you email it to me, I will just ask you to repost it in Teams. I will also hold my office hours (called “open meeting times” above) on Teams.

Therefore, you should check Moodle and Teams regularly (at least twice per week for Moodle and once per week for Teams).

4.4 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 you to encourage you to be self-sufficient whenever possible. 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, whether an upcoming exam is open-book), **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.)

4.5 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; (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 engaging in the behavior.

5 Course schedule

The course schedule, along with reading assignments and a list of tasks for each week will be posted on Moodle.

5.1 Readings

Introduction

- Zhang, I., Givvin, K. B., Sipple, J. M., Son, J. Y., & Stigler, J. W. (2021). Instructed hand movements affect students' learning of an abstract concept from video. *Cognitive Science*.
- Hutson, M. (2021). [Students who gesture during learning 'grasp' concepts better](#). *Scientific American*.

Happiness

- Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2014). Prosocial spending and happiness: Using money to benefit others pays off. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.
- Kumar, A., Killingsworth, M. A., & Gilovich, T. (2020). Spending on doing promotes more moment-to-moment happiness than spending on having. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.
- 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*.

Sleep

- Dinges, D. F., Pack, F., Williams, K., Gillen, K. A., Powell, J. W., Ott, G. E., ... & Pack, A. I. (1997). Cumulative sleepiness, mood disturbance, and psychomotor vigilance performance decrements during a week of sleep restricted to 4-5 hours per night. *Sleep*.
- Walker, M. P. (2008). Cognitive consequences of sleep and sleep loss. *Sleep Medicine*.

Media and well-being

- Verduyn, P., Gugushvili, N., & Kross, E. (2022). Do social networking sites influence well-being? The extended active-passive model. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.
- Kushlev, K., Dwyer, R., & Dunn, E. W. (2019). The social price of constant connectivity: Smartphones impose subtle costs on well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.

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*.

Intelligence

- Ritchie, S. J. (2015). *Intelligence: All That Matters* (Chapter 3).
- Ritchie, S. J. (2015). *Intelligence: All That Matters* (Chapter 4).

Prejudice

- Mousa, S. (2020). Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq. *Science*.
- Chaney, K. E., Sanchez, D. T., Alt, N. P., & Shih, M. J. (2021). The breadth of confrontations as a prejudice reduction strategy. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

Changing people's minds

- Broockman, D., & Kalla, J. (2016). Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing. *Science*.
- Brossard, D., Scheufele, D. A., Kim, E., & Lewenstein, B. V. (2009). Religiosity as a perceptual filter: Examining processes of opinion formation about nanotechnology. *Public Understanding of Science*.

Parenting

- Gladwell, M. (1998). Do parents matter? *The New Yorker*.
- Alison Gopnik 2018 interview on [The Hidden Brain](#).