

# Introduction to Psychology PSYC 1

Fall 2025 Section 80 Fully Online 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/27/2025

## Course Information

Class Days/Time:	Asynchronous/on Canvas
Classroom:	On Canvas
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE-D1

## Course Description and Requisites

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. The content focuses on the exploration of major psychological theories and concepts, methods, and research findings in psychology. Topics include the biological bases of behavior, perception, cognition and consciousness, learning, memory, emotion,

motivation, development, personality, social psychology, psychological disorders and therapeutic approaches to treatment, and applied psychology.

GE Area: D (formerly GE Area D1)

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

---

### *Late assignments*

An assignment turned in after the due date (and time) will receive a 10% penalty per day late, up until a week after the deadline. Note the deadlines in the class syllabus and plan accordingly.

### *Academic Honesty*

You are held to the highest standard of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are not acceptable. You may never use the ideas or work of another person without proper citation (i.e. noting the name and source according to APA style). The work you turn in for all assignments should always be your own. I am interested in your original ideas, as well as your ability to properly cite others' ideas. Keep in mind that plagiarism does not necessarily have to be intentional to be serious. When in doubt, cite!

### *Contact*

I check my email on a daily basis Monday-Friday and should respond to most queries within 24 hours. Please feel free to approach me before/after class, or make an appointment for office hours.

### *Accessibility*

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations should talk with me by the end of the second week of the term.

## Course Goals

---

Why do good people sometimes make bad decisions? How different are men and women, really? What makes us fundamentally different from robots (or zombies)? This course tries to answer these questions and many others, providing a comprehensive overview of the scientific study of the most interesting topic in the world—you. It explores topics such as perception, consciousness, learning, memory, decision-making, religion, persuasion, love, and dreams. We will look at how we can know the mind of others (and ourselves), how they differ across people, how they are wired-up in the brain, what happens when they break down, and what happens when they function in extraordinary ways.

Class will include lectures, online class demos and small-group activities.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

---

**Program learning outcomes (PLOs)** are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the Psychology BA degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
  2. Research Methods in Psychology. Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.
  3. Critical Thinking Skills. Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.
  4. Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.
- Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

## GE Area D: Social Sciences

Area D courses increase students' understanding of human behavior and social interaction in the context of value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups, and natural environments. Students develop an understanding of problems and issues from different disciplinary perspectives and examine issues in their contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.

The CSU requires students to complete General Education courses in the Social Sciences in at least two different disciplines. Students may meet this requirement by either 1) taking two lower-division Area D courses in different disciplines, or 2) taking two lower-division Area D courses in the same discipline and an Area S upper-division GE course in a different discipline.

## GE Area D Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area D course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present;
2. compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts;
3. place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts;
4. draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues.

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

## Course Materials

Schacter, D., Gilbert, D., & Wegner, D. (2017). *Psychology* (4th edition\*). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

\*Previous/subsequent editions are also fine to use.

# Course Requirements and Assignments

---

## *Activities*

Assigned activities are an important part of this class and meant as a space for you to apply the theories and findings from the psychology to the real world.

## *Attendance*

All lectures are video recorded and posted on Canvas. They're essential for doing well in this class. Please don't fall behind.

## *Course Readings*

Readings should be done before each class. Useful discussions follow only when everyone has completed the readings thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Online assignments/demos/activities: We will do a variety of hands-on activities online that will demonstrate the topics covered in lecture, including: a mating game, a conditioning activity, measuring your subconscious, demonstrating the endowment effect and the curse of knowledge.

Exams: All midterm exams are noncumulative; however, the final exam is cumulative. Prior to each exam, there will be an review session; please prepare ahead of time and ask questions. Exam material will come from lectures, in-class activities, and assigned readings. All exams are open book, open note, contain 40

multiple choice questions, and timed (75 minutes).

Research participation: You are required to complete 4 hours of psychology research experiments OR complete the Alternative to Research Participation (outlined below). At least 1 hour must be completed by October 1st.

- To participate in research studies, please go through the Psychology Department's SONA system. There studies can include online surveys and/or laboratory experiments.

\*Alternative to Research Participation: You have the option of reading a published psychology paper in a peer-reviewed journal in lieu of participating in a research study and writing a 1 page summary of the hypothesis, methods, results and conclusions. You can opt for this alternative for any or all of the 4 research participation hours.

Per departmental guidelines:

*You have a total of 4 hours to complete (Research participation will count towards your course grade.)*

*You will be awarded only a fraction of the total credit hours associated with the study:*

*Should you elect not to continue your participation in a study.*

*In the event that your completion of a study was done in an unreasonably short period of time (e.g. 5 minutes for a 60 minutes online survey).*

*Research participation will be treated as a course assignment worth 6% of the final course grade. To obtain the full 6%, you will need to complete 4 hours of research participation (1.5% per hour).*

**Final Paper:** Your final paper will entail you writing an essay about a popular book written by a psychologist on a psychological topic. To help you stay on track for your Final Paper, you will be asked to turn in

- a) A proposed abstract summarizing your paper topic (a 1/2 page explanation of the book you chose and reference(s)) prior to turning your completed project
- b) A final draft (4-5 pages—1500 words minimum— summarizing the 3 major ideas and a minimum of 1 psychological study in support of each idea, along with references in APA style).
- c) An option to rewrite your paper based on feedback you received on the final draft.

\*\*\*\*ALL written assignments need to use 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

## Grading Information

---

Activities/Assignments:

Participation in activities: 10 pts

Research participation: 12 pts

Exams:



Midterm #1: 40 pts

Midterm #2: 40 pts

Midterm #3: 40 pts

Final Exam: 40 pts

Research Project:

Final Paper Topic + references: 10 pts

Final Paper: 20 pts

### Determination of Grades

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>

<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>

<i>D</i>	63 to 65%
<i>D minus</i>	60 to 62%

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

Month	Week of:	LECTURE TOPIC	Assignment/Reading
AUG	25	Psychological science  Reproduction	Ch. 1-2

	1	Assortive Mating  Survival	Ch. 13
SEPT	8	Neuroscience  Sensation & Perception	Ch. 3
	15	Taste  Memory	Ch. 4
	22	Midterm #1	<b>Midterm #1</b>
	29	Learning  Emotion & Motivation	Ch. 7
OCT	6	Getting Conditioned  Consciousness	Ch. 8

	13	Measuring the Subconscious Sleep & Dreams	Ch. 5  <b>Final paper topic &amp; summary due</b>
	20	The Endowment Effect Decision Making	Ch. 9
	27	Midterm #2	<b>Midterm #2</b>
	3	Psychopathology Cognitive Development	Ch. 10
NOV	10	Individual Differences Social Cognition	Ch. 15  <b>Final paper due</b>
	17	Midterm #3	<b>Ch. 11</b>
	24	THANKSGIVING	No reading

DEC	2	The Curse of Knowledge Wrap Up	<b>Midterm #3</b>
			Ch. 12 <b>Research participation due</b>
		Final exam due	<b>Final exam due 12/11</b>