



San José State University
Department of Psychology
Introduction to Psychobiology, PSYC 030-02
Fall 2025 (42716)

Instructor: Jill Citron, PhD

Class Days/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm

Class Location: Hugh Gillis Hall, room 122 (in between DMH & the MLK Library)

Email: jill.citron@sjsu.edu

Drop-In Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm & by appointment

Office Location: DMH 350

Prerequisites: **BIOL 021 or BIOL 065**

Canvas: Course materials, including the syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions, can be accessed on the Canvas learning management system course website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. Messages to the class may be sent through Canvas or MYSJSU. You are responsible for checking Canvas frequently for updates.

Description: Biological psychology is an important subdivision that systematically studies behavior and mental processes. Biopsychologists aim to understand the biological basis of brain function and behavior. This field explores many aspects of human functioning through mechanisms such as evolution, genetics, neural pathways, and hormonal influences on both normal and abnormal behavior. This class aims to enhance understanding of the brain and behavior, beginning with the smallest unit of the human nervous system—brain structures—and their connections with the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.

Course Format: This course includes class lectures, assignments/discussions, and readings from the textbook and scientific journals. Lectures will build on reading assignments, and we will explore additional sources not covered in the readings. We meet in person for lectures and use Canvas for quizzes, discussions, and submitting assignments. Regular attendance in class is essential for success in this course. Coming prepared and ready to engage with the material is necessary for learning.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes (CLO)

PSYC 30 - Introduction to Psychobiology covers the biological fundamentals of cognition and behavior. This course looks at the structural and functional parts of the nervous system, from the cellular level to the system level. It will explore how information from both internal and external environments can guide and influence adaptive behavior.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, Psych 30 students will be able to:

CLO1 – *Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts related to basic neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and psychopharmacology. Assessment for this CLO will be in test 1, and Infographic 1*

CLO2 – *Students will be able to describe and communicate the major transduction mechanisms, neuroanatomical pathways, and theoretical perspectives related to vision and non-visual sensory systems, motivational systems, and learning processes. Assessment for this CLO will be in test 1, and Infographic 1*

CLO3 – *Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate experimental approaches and related empirical findings for various methodological approaches in biopsychology. Assessment for this CLO will mainly be conducted through the Hallmark Assignment.*

CLO4 – *Students will be able to think critically and creatively about biopsychological approaches to addressing behavioral and mental health issues. This CLO will be assessed through activities, quizzes, and class discussions.*

CLO5 – *Students can apply biopsychological principles to individual, interpersonal, and group behavioral and mental health issues. This will be assessed through tests and the Hallmark Assignment.*

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successfully completing the psychology major requirements...

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – 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.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – 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.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Library Liaison:

The SJSU librarian specializes in social sciences and may serve as a resource for developing research ideas and finding the most appropriate research materials.

Psychology Librarian: Christa Bailey, Phone: 408-808-2422

Email: christa.bailey@sjsu.edu <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/psychology>

Required Textbook: Watson, N.V., and Breedlove, S.M. (2025). Minds Machine (5th edition). Oxford University Press. Available at the bookstore, a link to purchase directly from OUP can be found on the Canvas home page.

Other Required Readings: Other required readings are available on CANVAS.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures regarding add/drop, grade forgiveness, and other relevant matters. Refer to the current semester's catalog, policy section. The Late Drop Policy is available at <https://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/fall-2025.php> Please be aware that there are changes due to

This semester, the last day to add a class or drop a class without a "W" is September 16th.

Attendance

This is an in-person class. Students are expected to attend all meetings, as you are responsible for material discussion, and your active participation in class benefits all class members.

According to University Policy F15-12, "Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for material discussed therein and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. In some cases, attendance is crucial to achieving course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with their peers in the class. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."

Assignments and Grading Policy

During this course, you will be required to participate in class and to complete various assignments, two Infographic exercises, three examinations (two tests and a final exam), classroom activities, and presentations on hallmark research studies that changed the course of biopsychology.

SJSU classes are designed such that to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (typically three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and other related tasks. More details about student workload can be found in <https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>

Please anticipate that your grades in Canvas will continue to fluctuate throughout the semester. Please do not contact me at the end of the semester to ask if I will round up your grade. I want all my students to succeed, and I will always round grades up (not down) when possible.

Definition of a Credit Hour

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the course's duration. As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150 minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week. Please review the following sources and policies, as well:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>

Make-up Exams and Late Assignments

Please check your schedule to ensure that you have no conflicts with due dates. Let me know if you need an extension. Contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we can create an alternative plan.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San Jose State University. Familiarize yourself with the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy <https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that students receive fair grades. A reminder about academic integrity and Chat GPT: All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic Misconduct includes (but is not necessarily limited to) using ideas, words, images, or content in any other media that you did not create and presenting that content as if you were the creator. [Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 \[pdf\]](#)

Copying content that you have not created—either directly or in a modified form—without properly acknowledging the creator qualifies as academic misconduct, as does utilizing unauthorized digital tools such as artificial intelligence to create content. An assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized tools will automatically receive a zero, and you will not be allowed to repeat the assignment for a passing grade. Depending on the severity of the case, academic misconduct may result in a failing grade in the course. If you are unsure or have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

A simple rule to follow: if you use more than four words from another source, they must be cited.

All students must use Turn-It-In.

GRADING INFORMATION AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be based on the number of points that you earn during the semester. The following table provides a breakdown of the points that you can earn during the semester.

Assignment	How Many?	Points Per Assignment	Total Points	Approximate % of Final Grade
Chapter Quizzes	10	10	100	32%
Infographic	3	10	30	11%
Discussion	1	20	20	7%
Hallmark Study	1	40	40	12.5%
Name Coach	1	1	1	.3%
Midterm	2	40	80	25%
Final Exam	1	40	40	12.5%
Total:			311	100%

Grading Scale:

Percent	Grade
100 – 94	A
93-90	A-
89 – 87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79 – 77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66 – 64	D
63 -60	D-
59 or below	F

University Policies: Per U University Policies: According to University Policy S16-9, relevant university-wide policy information for all courses, such as academic integrity and accommodations, will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information webpage at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

Infographic: In these assignments, you will be using Canva to design an infographic demonstrating your understanding of the structures and functional steps of three different systems. Your task is to create an image that highlights the parts of the system.

Name Coach acts as a recording and playback platform that lets students and instructors within a course easily record and share the correct pronunciation of their names. This feature enables all course members to learn the proper way to pronounce each other's names. Detailed instructions are provided in Canvas.

Student Resources

Student Computer Resources –

Computer labs and other technological resources for students can be found in various places on campus:

For information regarding the loan of laptops, tablets, and other computer materials, <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services> • For IT Support visit - <https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php>
For a list of software available to all SJSU students visit - <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computingservices/software-available>

ACCESS Success Center

The Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in Social Sciences (ACCESS) Success Center “provides general education advising for undergraduate students majoring or intending to major in any of the departments in The College of Social Sciences.” Visit their webpage for more information and to schedule an online appointment, <https://www.sjsu.edu/education/studentsuccesscenter/advising-and-tutoring.php>.

Accessible Education Center (AEC)

Ability Redefined - Please reach out to me as soon as possible in the beginning of the semester, for any support. “If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with AEC to establish a record of their disability. ” **Academic Senate Policy F06-2 [pdf]**

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections website “offers free mentoring, tutoring, and supplemental instruction services for students at SJSU. Peer Educators are students just like you; they understand the triumphs and challenges of being a student at San José State University.” If you have questions about services, contact the Peer Connections at 408-924-2587 or email at peerconnections@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage for more information, <https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/programs/tutoring/index.html>

SJSU Writing Center– Check for different ways to access these services during the COVID-19 SIP.

The SJSU Writing Center “offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of our services are free for SJSU students.” If you have questions about services, call the Writing Center at 408.924.2308 or email us at writingcenter@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage to make an online appointment <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services invites “all students to come into Counseling and Psychological Services, located at the Student Wellness Center, room 300B, for any support. *If you have questions about services, contact CAPS at (408) 924-5910 or email at counseling.services@sjsu.edu or visit their webpage, <https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/>*

Major Assignments

Below is a tentative list of important course events. Instructions for each assignment is available on Canvas.

SECTION #1

Name Coach

Due: 8/31

Infographic #1

Due: 9/21

Section Test #1

Date: 9/22

Chapters: Chapters 1-4

SECTION #2

Infographic #2

Due: 10/12

Discussion

Open: 9/28

Due: 10/19

Section Test #2

Date: Wednesday, 10/27

Chapters: Chapters 5-7

SECTION #3

Infographic #3

Due: 10/23

Hallmark Studies

Presentation Materials Due: 12/01

Presentations: 12/01, 12/03, 12/08

Comments Due: Thursday, 12/10

Last Day of Instruction 12/8

Section Test #3

Date: 12/16 @ 9:45 am 0 12:00 pm

Chapters 8-12

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning) as the instructor deems necessary.

Week	Date	Topics	Reading Before Class	Assignment
	W- 8/20	Course Introduction & Syllabus	Get the textbook!	
1	M -8/25 W- 8/27	Structure and Function: Neuroanatomy and Research Methods	Chapter 1	Name Coach Due: 8/31
2	M- 9/01 W- 9/03	No Class Neurophysiology	Chapter 2	
3	M- 9/08 W- 9/10	The Chemistry of Behavior	Chapter 3	
4	M- 9/15 W- 9/17	Development of the Brain	Chapter 4	Infographic #1 Due: 9/21
5	M-9/22 W-9/24	Section Test #1 No Class	Chapters 1-4	
6	M-9/29 W-10/01	The Sensorimotor System	Chapter 5	Discussion Open: 9/28
7	M-10/06 W-10/08	Hearing Balance Taste & Smell	Chapter 6	Infographic#2 Due: 10/12
8	M-10/13 W-10/15	Vision	Chapters 7	Discussion Due: 10/19
9	M-10/20 W-10/22	Vision		
10	M- 10/27 W- 10/29	Section Test #2 Hormones and Sex	Chapters 5-7 Chapter 8	
11	M-11/03 W-11/05	Homeostasis: Active Regulation of the Internal Environment	Chapter 9	

13	M- 11/10	No Class – Hallmark Preparation Activity		
	W- 11/12	Biological Rhythms and Sleep	Chapter 10	
14	M-11/17	Emotions, Aggression, and Stress	Chapter 11	Infographic #3
	W-11/19			Due: 11/23
15	M- 11/24	Psychopathology- Last Lecture	Chapter 12	
	W-11/26	Thanksgiving Break		
16	M- 12/01	Hallmark Presentations 12/01 – 12/08		
	W- 12/03	Students must be present for all presentation days		
	M- 12/08	Hallmark Presentations 12/01 – 12/08		
		Students must be present for all presentation days		
Final	Monday 12/16		9:45 am – 12:00 pm Test #3	In Class