General Psychology
Psyc 2301.004, Spring ’18
TR 8:00 a.m.-9:15 a.m., OCNR-118

Instructor: Collin Scarince
Email: Collin.Scarince@tamucc.edu
Office: Third Floor Bay Hall (near 352)
M: 9:00 am – 11:00 am
T: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Or by appointment

Course Information:
Required Reading: Real World Psychology by Huffman and Sanderson (2nd ed). ISBN: 9781119336433

Online Content: Blackboard
Supplemental materials: Other materials for assignments will be provided online through Blackboard.

Course Overview:
Welcome to Psyc2301, section 4—General Psychology—at TAMUCC! In this course, we will explore human behavior and the mind. If you think those are pretty expansive topics to cover, you’re right. The field of psychology is very broad and consists of several divisions, each with its own research questions and methodologies. These areas of interest range from the smallest biological mechanisms of thought, to complex social interactions between people. We are going to scratch the surface of the how scientists have tried to answer questions such as, “How are we able perceive the world around us?”, “How do we learn new information?”, “How do our minds develop?”, and “What happens when our mind isn’t working correctly?”

The format of this class might be a little different than you’re used to. There will be a mix of traditional lecture and team-based group work. You will be assigned to permanent teams and you will work together to complete quizzes, in-class activities, exams, and projects. This team-based, activity centered approach is the product of research on effective ways of learning by making it active. These active learning strategies have been shown time and time again to improve student engagement and, ultimately, learning (Plus, no one wants to hear me drone on for over an hour anyway).

This course has been designed to be interactive and more hands on than traditional lecturing classes to help you engage with the material at a deeper and more practical level. My primary goal for this class is for you to not only be able to wow your family with all the fancy words you’ve learned at college, but how to apply the basic principles of psychology outside of the classroom. I hope you enjoy it!
Learning Objectives:
By the end of this course, you will be able to...

- Describe psychological theories, principles and concepts relevant to the following topics: history and methods, biological bases of behavior, cognition, social behavior, personality, and psychopathology.
- Apply basic psychological principles to current events and daily human experience.
- Understand the ways that psychological phenomena influence health.
- Understand the scientific principles that underlie psychological research.

Assessments:

**Individual Work**

**Quizzes:** Before we discuss a chapter in class, you will complete a quiz on Blackboard. There will be a quiz for each reading, and the due dates are listed in the course calendar below. Your best 17 of the 20 quizzes (plus course pre-quiz) will count towards your final grade.

*Pre-quiz.* There is a pre-quiz available on Blackboard that will be due before the next class. I will use this quiz to 1) assign groups, 2) assess how much you, as a class, already know about psychology, and 3) assign grade weights. Completing this quiz is worth 3% of your final grade. Your performance will not determine your grade on this quiz. It will be graded simply as complete or incomplete.

**Application Paper:** You will write a paper in this course about applying operant conditioning techniques. Detailed instructions for the paper will be given later in the semester, but listed here is the general description of the assignments.

**Daily Activities:** You and your group will complete an activity during each class. These activities are intended for you to get a deeper and applied understanding of the material that will be covered in the readings. These are low-stakes assignments for you and your group to explore the material further. Some will require each member of your team to turn in a sheet, while others will only require one per team. There will be, at most, a total of 21 group activities. Your lowest 3 of these will be dropped from your final grade.

**Team Work**

**Final Team Project:** Towards the end of the semester, your group will make a video report on a psychological topic in the style of an investigative news show (ideally, something like Last Week Tonight with John Oliver). Your group will select one topic that you think impacts peoples’ lives and make an investigative-style news report about that topic. More details for this assignment will be given out around midterm.

**Team Exams:** You and your group will complete in-class team exams at the end of each unit. These exams will consist of problems or questions that require integrating several topics covered in a unit of the class. These exams are open book and will require your group to work as a cohesive unit to finish the exam in the allotted time.

**Team Quizzes:** At the beginning of each class, you and your team will answer five multiple-choice questions based on the reading. These questions will be more difficult compared to
the individual quiz questions, and will be closed book. The format of the quizzes will also allow for you to get partial credit for questions you are less sure about.

**Team Evaluations:** At the end of each unit you will rate your teammates on their performance and contributions to your teamwork. Each member will distribute a set amount of points across all group members (see more instructions below).

**Grade Weights:** To give you some control over how you will be assessed in this course, you will choose how assignments will be weighted, as a class. During the prequiz, you will select one of the grade weight options below. Whichever one receives the most votes will be how the assignments will be weighted. Choose carefully.

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<th>Lone Wolf</th>
<th>Equalizer</th>
<th>A-Team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
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<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Activities</td>
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<td>Final Group Project</td>
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<td>Team Exams</td>
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<td>Team Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Evaluations</td>
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**Grades:**
Final grades will be based on the cumulative percentage you earn on all assignments using the following scale:

- A = 90%
- B = 80% → 89%
- C = 70% → 79%
- D = 60% → 69%
- F = <60%

All raw percentages will be rounded based on the first digit after the decimal. Numbers of 0.5 or greater will be rounded up, and those lower than 0.5 will be rounded down. This rounding scheme is not negotiable. If you are on the borderline between two grades, this will determine which grade you are assigned. So, make sure you track your grade early and scoop up as many extra credit opportunities as you can to avoid falling short.

“Curving.” As stated above, your grade will be based on how well YOU perform in the class. I will not adjust your grade (for better or worse) based on the class average and variance for the course. Also, I will not adjust your scores for quizzes, papers, group activities, peer
evaluations based on the class average. The only scores I will adjust in this course are group exams, when necessary. If the class average for an exam is below 70%, I will add the difference to everyone’s exam scores to shift the mean up to 70%. That being said, don’t count on getting a point bump. Big classes like this tend to have evenly distributed scores right around a C or higher. Study hard so you can be sure you get the grade you want.

**Team Evaluations:**
You will evaluate your contribution and the contribution of your team members to team assignments at the end of each unit. You will be given a set amount of points (20 for each team member) to distribute amongst your teammates (including yourself). All the points in your point pool must be used. If you think everyone in your team contributes equally to your group work, you can distribute the points evenly (i.e., 20 points each). If you think someone did a spectacular job or was freeloading, you can change your distribution accordingly. Again, all the points available to your team must be used; so, if you add points to one person, you must take them away from someone else. You will also need to provide justification for your point distributions.

You must turn in evaluations for your team in order to get a grade for your own team evaluation. **Failing to turn in your team evaluation will result in a 0 for your grade!**

**Special Topics:**
The last few classes of the semester are reserved for special topics that you, as a class, will decide. The basic content of these special topics might appear on the exams as extra credit, and there will be activities in class. The possible topics to choose from are:

- Careers in Psychology
- Psychology as a Science
- Graduate School (psychology or otherwise)
- Using Psychology to Survive College
- So, what do you do, Collin?
- Psycholinguistics
- Engineering Psychology/Human Factors Psychology
- More on Brain Imaging
- More on Issues in Clinical Psychology

**In-class Policies:**
**Attendance:** I will not track your attendance, per se, but you must be in class to get credit for the daily activity. Also, teams will track their own members' attendance, which may be taken into account for the Team Evaluations. If you know you will be gone, let your team know when you will be gone whenever possible, so you can make arrangements for you to complete the assignment you’d miss on your own.

**Make-up/Late work:** Baring extreme circumstances, **no late work will be accepted.** The dropped activities and quizzes are built into the course to accommodate unexpected
circumstances that inevitably occur during the semester. If you know you will miss a day of class, let me know immediately so arrangements can be made. Also, there are plenty of opportunities to accumulate points through team activities. Missing one or two assignments will not devastate your grade.

**Daily Activities:** You will be assigned to permanent groups that you will work with every week. These groups are created to maximize diversity within them and to decrease the probability that a majority of the members will be gone in a single class. The idea that you’ll have to meet and interact with a few strangers might make you uneasy now, but this will be the same when you get a job. The group activities will consist of activities, discussion, debates, and problem solving.

**In-class participation:** You are expected to participate in class either in your team or with the class during lectures, when one is given. Your group participation will be evaluated by your teammates in the group evaluations. I mean, you’ve already made the effort to come to class; you might as well be involved.

**Contact with Instructor and TAs:** You can, technically, reach me through Blackboard; however, I prefer to be contacted through my email address Collin.Scarince@tamucc.edu. **To get the fastest response from me, email me with the following subject:** Psyc2301 question {LASTNAME}, {FIRSTNAME}. This will help keep your messages from being lost in the bottomless voids that are my email and Blackboard inboxes. If you email me after 5 p.m. or during the weekend, you might not receive a reply until the following business day.

**Digital technology:** I’m sure you all know the drill by now. Silence your cell phones and use any digital devices for class-related purposes, only.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit opportunities will be offered over the course of the semester and will often be distributed/announced in class. There will be one extra credit assignment for each unit, and smaller opportunities will occasionally be offered during a class period (just another reason to come to class). Because all of the extra credit opportunities are available to all students, no special consideration for extra credit will be offered on a student-by-student basis.

**On grades, scholarships, academic standing, and the like:** I understand that you, as students, may be under considerable pressure to get good grades to maintain scholarships, stay in school, or get into grad school. I really do get it; I’ve been there, too. I don’t want anything bad to happen to you as a result of failing this class, but your grade in this class is YOUR responsibility. We will do our best to assign grades that match the merit of all work that you provide us. **DO NOT** come to me, or the TAs, asking for better grades, because you need a good grade to keep you GPA at an appropriate level. It puts unfair pressure on me and the TAs, whether that is your intention or not. If you ever have questions about your grade on a particular assignment, always feel free to ask about it, and do so in a timely manner. Be mindful of your current grade on Blackboard, turn in all the assignments, and take time to study. If you can do all that, you’ll do just fine.
Institution Policies:

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Plagiarism/Cheating
Put simply, do your own work. In a course like this, where there is a mix of individual and group work, it is very important that you follow the instructions for each assignment. I will do my very best to make it clear what assignments you should do on your own (exams, quizzes, etc.), but bear in mind, even when working with your group members you should always try to actively contribute and understand the material. You aren’t in this class to get another letter on your transcript; you’re here to learn the content of this class. The best way to do that is to do your own work.

Along with that, never ever, EVER copy work by other people and outside sources. When writing papers for this class, always use your own words. Don’t get on Google and copy definitions and the like. I’m not interested in your copy-and-paste skills; I need to know if you are learning the material, and I can only do that if you do your own work.

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.)

Disciplinary action for academic misconduct is the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course. The faculty member is charged with assessing the gravity of any case of academic dishonesty, and with giving sanction to any student involved.

Penalties that may be applied by the faculty member to individual cases of academic dishonesty include one or more of the following:

1. Written reprimand;
2. Requirement to re-do work in question;
3. Requirement to submit additional work;
4. Lowering of grade on work in question;
5. Assigning grade of “F” or “0” to work in question;
6. Assigning grade of “F” for course;
7. Recommendation for more severe punishment, such as dismissal from the program or from the University.
**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Friday, **April 6th** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Grade Appeals Process**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, **Student Grade Appeals**, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, **Student Grade Appeals**. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).
Some Important Dates

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<tr>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
<th>DEADLINES</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>Classes begin Regular Spring and 1st 7-Week Session</td>
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<td>January 23</td>
<td>Last day to register or add a class</td>
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<td>February 27</td>
<td>Last day to apply for Spring graduation</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td>Last Day of classes for 1st 7-Week Session and Final Exams</td>
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<td>March 12-16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>March 19</td>
<td>First Day of Classes 2nd 7-Week session</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Grades due for 1st 7-Week session</td>
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<td>April 6</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
<td>Last day of classes Regular Spring &amp; 2nd 7-Week Session and Final exams</td>
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<td>May 3</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 4, 7-10</td>
<td>Final examinations</td>
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Changes to the syllabus:
The content of this syllabus is subject to change with appropriate notice. Any changes made to the syllabus, including class schedule, assignment due dates, and test dates, will be made to benefit the class if the pace of presenting the material is too fast or too slow. Check Blackboard for the most up-to-date due dates and assignments.