PSYC 4390.001
Critical Thinking and Writing in Psychology
Fall 2019

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Phone: 361-825-2390
Class Location: T/Th 11am-12:15pm   IH 268

Office Hours (BH 318): MW 10a-1050a
                      TR 930a-1030a

Pre/Co-requisite:  PSYC 2301 and MATH 1442

Course Description: This special topics course has been designed to make you a stronger psychology student, in writing as well as in critical thinking. The course focus will be on learning and practicing skills rather than accruing information, therefore there will be less emphasis on exams, and more on writing. Students will learn the tools of psychological research, acquire the skills necessary to critically read a research article, and develop proficiency in the use of APA style. Students will also use both popular and controversial topics of interest to improve their critical thinking skills.

Course Description Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for this course will include the students’ ability to:

1. Finding and using proper scholarly sources appropriate for college level coursework
2. Improving quality of writing through an iterative multi-draft model
3. Developing the skills necessary to properly format a paper in APA style.
4. Organizing and expressing critical thought about the world through an exploration of popular and controversial topics in psychology

Required Materials:


Recommended Materials:


All other materials you will need for this course will be available through the library or provided through Blackboard.

Your Grade:

Below is a list and a description of how you will be graded this semester. It is expected that with the papers that they are to be handed in ON the day they are due, and handed in during the class period. *Late work will be subject to a significant penalty of a full letter per day for each day it is late.* Your grade in this course will be the average of the following:

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Your attendance in class is essential. Additionally, the quality of this class is largely based on the quality of the discussions – which you are expected to participate in.

Quizzes/Assignments (30%):

These will be random quizzes given at the beginning of class designed to make sure you are doing the reading and/or independent work. Not coming to class prepared negatively impacts the quality of the discussions we are able to have, and much of the learning in this class comes from those discussions. These are not meant to be difficult and if you do the assignment you will have no problem getting full credit for this portion of your grade. Quizzes will be unannounced and cannot be made up. Additionally both out of class and in class assignments will be given. Out of class assignments are expected on the due date or will be subject to the late penalty (10% per day). In class assignments cannot be made up.

Major Research Paper (50%):

This paper will be a substantial scholarly paper demonstrating your ability to critically think about your topic, your ability to analyze and synthesize research, and your ability to use APA style. You will work on this paper in stages starting in the beginning of the semester. Approximately half of the points you will earn on this paper are through tasks and drafts related to your paper (see below) with the other half on the final product. We will be using an iterative multi draft model, meaning that most of what you submit will be reviewed, given feedback and returned to you to make changes. Your grade for those sections will be based on the quality of your feedback incorporation. This will include, self, peer, and instructor editing. The entire paper will be worth 200 points – 100 points coming from drafts/redrafts and editing and 100 points for the final draft. It is vital that
you stay on track with this paper. It is expected that you will come to class with your drafts and redrafts on the days indicated. If you submit something late it will be subjected to a late penalty (10% per day).

Presentation (10%)

This will be a professional presentation. At around the midterm of the semester you will give a formal presentation on your topic. Guidelines for this presentation will be discussed at length and you will be graded on both your knowledge of your topic, and your ability to communicate that knowledge to the class.

% of total grade assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of total grade</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Attendance = ______ *10</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Quizzes/Assignments = ____ * .30</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Research Paper = ____ * .50</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Presentation = ____ * .10</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Total</td>
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Grading Scale:

90-100% = A
80 – 89% = B
70 – 79% = C
60 – 69% = D
less than 60% = F

Expectations

Class will start on time every day, and you should expect it to run the full period. Please avoid disturbing other students (by arriving late, leaving early, talking with a neighbor, etc.). Make sure that your electronic devices are turned off.

I expect students to make every effort to attend each class. Should you find it necessary to miss class, please note that you will be held responsible for all material covered during the missed class. It will be your responsibility to speak with a classmate about the course content you missed.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

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, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero for the assignment or exam.

**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, Nov. 8th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**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

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Disabilities Accommodations

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.

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.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of 8/26</th>
<th>In Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Work Due</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do we want to learn?</td>
<td>Dittman (2002)</td>
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<td>Intro to APA style, critical thinking and information literacy</td>
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<td>Week of 9/2</td>
<td>Thinking critically about popular and controversial topics in Psychology</td>
<td>Critical Thinking (CT) assignment 1, Noer (2006), Corcoran (2006), Brainstorming quiz</td>
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<td>Forming a hypothesis</td>
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<td>Library Instruction/Information Literacy</td>
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<td>Week of 9/16</td>
<td>Becoming a skeptical Reader</td>
<td>Smith (2002), Library Scavenger Hunt, CT 3</td>
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<td>APA “Boot Camp”</td>
<td>Find/summarize one article for literature review (10 points)</td>
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<td>Week of 9/23</td>
<td>Writing Outlines</td>
<td>Reference page and Annotated Bibliography (3 articles) (20 points)</td>
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<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>Complete CITI Training (Plagiarism)</td>
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<td>Week of 9/30</td>
<td>Thinking Critically About Student Behavior</td>
<td>Outline due (20 points), APA quiz, Peer Review (in class)(10 points)</td>
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<td>“Statistics 202”</td>
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<td>Week of 10/7</td>
<td>Interpreting Figures and Tables</td>
<td>CT 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thinking Critically About Stats</td>
<td>Outline Draft 2</td>
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| Week of 10/14 and 10/21 | Presentations | CT 5  
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------|
|                        |               | Lit Review Peer Review (Week 8)  
|                        |               | Lit Review Draft Due (Week 9)  
| Week of 10/28 | Individual Revise and Resubmit Meetings | CT 6  
|                        | Literature Review Drafts Returned |  
| Week of 11/4 | Thinking Critically About Culture Advanced APA Style Writing Lab #1 | Literature Review Draft 2 Due (20) Last Day to Drop Class is Friday – Nov. 8  
| Week of 11/11 | Thinking Critically About Online Research | CT 7 (Popular Press v. Journal activity)  
| Week of 11/18 | Other Modes of Professional Communication | CT 8  
| Week of 11/25 Thanksgiving Week – No Class Thursday | Writing Lab #2 | Personal Statement Due Bring Draft of paper to class  
| Dec. 3 | Final Peer Review | Extra Credit Peer Review  
| Final Exam Week | | Final Research Paper Due (100 points)  