

Psy III C: Introductory Psychology

Professor: Allen McConnell
E-mail: mcconnar@miamioh.edu
Office: 316 Psychology Building
Phone: 513.529.2407
Student hours: Thursdays 9-10 a.m. on Google Meet, <https://meet.google.com/pfv-tbda-foh>
and at other times by appointment (established by email)

TA: LaCount “JJ” Togans
toganslj@miamioh.edu

Course info: Psy III, Section C, CRN 76692, Interactive Video Distance Learning
Class meeting time is Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:40 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Important: All activities and deadlines are based on US Eastern Time (i.e., the local time in Oxford Ohio) and not the time zone where a student resides (confusion about this point will not excuse late work, and the Canvas site will “shut off” assignments at the time of deadlines)

Resources

- OpenStax (2020). [Psychology 2e](#). Openstax.org. This is an open-source textbook that you can download as a PDF or view over the internet for free. A print version is available from publisher (see website).
- Other course materials available from the course’s [Canvas site](#).

Course overview

Psychology is the science that studies the mind and behavior, and this course examines processes underlying human behavior by applying the scientific method. Although seemingly simplistic, one quickly discovers (and appreciates) how any behavior results from the interplay of different psychological processes. For example, a single behavior such as “asking someone out on a date” is amazingly complex! At first, it might just seem to reflect a basic social psychology process such as romantic attraction. However, this act might also be driven by biological processes involving sex and mating, and it may be influenced by social belongingness needs or coping with feelings of low self-worth. Gender, age, race, ethnicity, and cultural beliefs may govern who one considers to date, and developmental and personality processes (e.g., childhood experiences that shaped one’s models about close relationships) may influence one’s ability to form or maintain romantic relationships. Also, one might worry about what others would think of being seen on a date with this person, and thus impression management matters too. Thus, a single act like asking someone out reflects complex psychological processes!

Student learning goals for this course:

- Understand psychological theories, principles, and concepts related to biological (e.g., biology of behavior, sensation, consciousness), cognitive (e.g., memory, cognition, perception, intelligence), developmental (e.g., learning, lifespan development, language), social and personality (e.g., social, personality, emotion, gender, motivation), and mental and physical health (e.g., abnormal psychology, health, therapies) issues.
- Describe and evaluate various methodologies used in psychological research.
- Apply basic psychological principles to human history, current events, and everyday human experience.
- Recognize diversity, individual differences, and similarities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, race) across contexts.
- Assess and critically analyze theories, research methods and findings (outcomes), and applications developed by psychologists and made available through textbooks, newspapers, professional and lay periodicals, and the internet.
- Recognize ethical considerations applied to conducting research and to professional conduct.

Grades

Source	Points each	Total points
1 Syllabus Quiz	30	30
6 Media Assignments	20	120
Best 4 of 5 in-term Exams	150	600
1 Final Exam	300	300
Total Points (grading scale based on 1000 points, plus 50 cushion points)		1050

Final grades will be determined by total points accumulated during the semester applied this scale:

Points	Percentages	Letter
925 - 1050	93% - 105%	A
895 - 924	90% - 92%	A-
865 - 894	87% - 89%	B+
825 - 864	83% - 86%	B
795 - 824	80% - 82%	B-
765 - 794	77% - 79%	C+
725 - 764	73% - 76%	C
695 - 724	70% - 72%	C-
665 - 694	67% - 69%	D+
625 - 664	63% - 66%	D
595 - 624	60% - 62%	D-
0 - 594	0% - 59%	F

There are 1,050 possible points available, but the grading scale is based on 1,000 total points, which means there are 50 “cushion points” available. These cushion points are included to give students flexibility should they experience challenges or disruptions during the semester. Students are strongly encouraged to earn as many points as possible rather than “burn through their cushion points early” (i.e., do not blow off early assignments) because these 50 points are provided to help students manage unexpected situations during the entire semester (e.g., being sick, moving). Thus, students should view cushion points as “something to save for a rainy day” rather than “something to burn through on a sunny day.” Students get to drop their lowest in-term (i.e., non-final) exam, providing students with additional flexibility. Finally, there will be a couple of opportunities to earn bonus points by completing extra media assignments (see below).

The professor reserves the right to adjust the above grading scheme. However, if modifications do occur, changes will only make it easier for students to get a better grade (i.e., the scale will never be adjusted against students). However, it would be unwise to anticipate that an adjustment will occur.

Final grades are based on the total points earned applied to the above scale, no exceptions. There is no end-of-semester negotiation period where students beg for better grades. Students who are dissatisfied with their performance should discuss the situation with the professor early in the semester. All in-term assignments (i.e., exams, media assignments, syllabus quiz) are due before Friday at 5 pm (US Eastern Time) for the week associated with the work. Late work, regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (remember, there are 50 points of grade cushion). Please submit assignments on time, and work ahead so that deadlines are not an issue!

On-line class meetings (OCMs)

We will hold synchronous on-line class meetings every week on Tuesdays, from 11:40 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., using WebEx (in Canvas, click on Cisco Webex in left menu to join or view recorded classes). Please keep this time available and be in the WebEx classroom a few minutes early (class will start at 11:40 a.m.). Each OCM will be recorded on WebEx and made available to watch later (please note, videos will not be posted immediately because they require post-processing, and the professor has no control over this delay and cannot “speed things up”). Although OCM attendance is not taken, students are *strongly encouraged* to attend (see previous sentence about delays in processing). OCMs will mostly present new material not contained in the textbook. During OCMs, students will have the opportunity to ask questions (primarily in an on-line chat window during class). We will plan to *not* hold OCMs on Thursdays, unless circumstances require it (e.g., technical problems with a Tuesday class). There are student hours on Google Meet Thursdays at 9 a.m. (see first page of syllabus).

Exams

Five in-term (i.e., before finals week) multiple choice exams will be administered before Thanksgiving break, with each one covering the material presented since the previous exam (i.e., they are not cumulative). Each exam will typically cover three book chapters along with other content provided in OCMs and during Canvas activities, with approximately 10 questions randomly selected from a large pool of items for each chapter. Each exam will have 30 questions (each worth 5 points, thus each exam is worth 150 points). Each exam is timed, with students having 30 minutes to complete it (students with documented accommodations receive additional time, based on information provided to the professor by Student Disability Services; see below).

Exams must be completed before 5 p.m. (US Eastern Time) on the Friday of the week they are assigned (e.g., Exam 1 must be completed before Friday, September 4, at 5 p.m.). To help students who have “a bad day on an exam,” each student’s lowest in-term exam grade will be dropped, and thus, one’s in-term exam grades will be based on the best 4 of the 5 in-term exams. All students must take the Final Exam (it cannot be dropped because it’s not an in-term exam), which means that even if a student chooses to not take one in-term exam (receiving a 0, which could be dropped), they need to *study the material* from that exam for the Final Exam.

Final Exam

Students will complete a 60-item, multiple-choice Final Exam that assesses mastery of content from across the entire semester (each question is worth 5 points, and thus the entire exam is worth 300 points). The final will feature questions selected representatively from across all of the material covered in the semester, and it will be administered to the entire class on Tuesday, December 8, at 12:45 p.m. (US Eastern Time). The day and time of the final exam will not be moved unless documented conflicts with other finals exist (students must alert the professor and provide documentation) -- the final exam will not be moved for other reasons.

Syllabus quiz

An initial six-question quiz on the syllabus and course policies will be due during the first week of class before Friday, August 21, at 5 p.m. (US Eastern Time). This quiz is intended to make sure students have reviewed the syllabus and course policies (each question is worth 5 points) and to make sure they are ready to take exams. Thus, please review this syllabus closely before taking the syllabus quiz.

Media assignments

During the semester, students will listen to or view popular media (e.g., podcasts, Ted talks) and respond to reflection prompts provided for each one (present in Canvas). Media assignments encourage students to apply course content to understanding important real-world phenomena. Student responses, uploaded to Canvas, are worth 20 points per media assignment and are graded by the TA. Media assignments must be uploaded before 5 p.m. (US Eastern Time) on the Friday of the week assigned (see last page). Late submissions are not accepted, regardless of the circumstances. Students only need to complete 6 of the 8 media assignments to receive full credit (120 points) for the media assignment portion of the class, and they may complete the other Media Assignments for *bonus* points (up to 40 bonus points possible for successfully completing all eight).

Important advice about studying and doing well in the course

Students will read 16 chapters in the textbook; however, the majority of lecture material in the OCMs will not cover book material. Instead, OCM presentations introduce new material and build connections between and among course topics. Thus, students must keep up with their reading assignments, take detailed notes on the readings (if one believes it's important to take notes on class lectures, why would the book be any different?), and make good use of the aids in the book. Specifically, at the end of each chapter in the textbook, there are definitions of key terms (test yourself on them!), summaries (if they seem fuzzy after reading them, re-read those sections of the chapter!), review questions (test yourself on them!), and personal application questions (work through them to deepen your understanding of the materials covered in the chapter!).

Also, the openstax.com website provides [student resources](#) to help students with time management skills, note taking advice, and answers to the review questions in the textbook. Thus, if a student asks the professor, "Where are the answers to the sample questions in the textbook?" it will be *painfully* clear that this student did not bother to read this portion of the syllabus (which ironically, suggests that such a student is already not taking course responsibilities seriously -- please don't be that person!). Finally, sometimes students new to college assume that reading for classes doesn't matter because the instructor will cover the important points in lectures. Do not make that mistake in this course -- stay engaged, be pro-active, and take responsibility for your learning!

Academic integrity

Both Miami University and the Department of Psychology are dedicated to providing a learning environment based not only on academic excellence but on academic integrity as well. In this course, it is expected that students will adhere to all Miami University guidelines regarding academic misconduct and academic integrity (<https://miamioh.edu/policy-library/students/undergraduate/academic-regulations/academic-integrity.html>). Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting work (homework, papers, etc.) conducted for another course without professor approval
- Submitting the work of another individual or party (whether in part or in whole) as one's own, including work from another student, a website, a book, or failing to provide appropriate citations for others' ideas
- Allowing other students to submit one's work as their own
- Possessing prohibited materials during a test or quiz in any form
- Providing or receiving assistance from another student without the professor's permission

Engaging in academic misconduct can result in penalties ranging from a *minimum* of an F on the assignment to an F in the course, an "AD" signifying academic dishonesty on Miami transcripts, academic suspension, and expulsion from Miami University. Misunderstanding appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct (see *Miami Student Handbook*, Chapter 5). Please see the professor for clarification regarding any of the above policies.

Class policies

RTFS: Countless hours have gone into crafting this detailed syllabus. Before asking a question, please read the syllabus! Most questions (e.g., “I know I missed the media assignment deadline, but can I turn it in late and get some points?” [no], “Is the final exam cumulative?” [yes]) are easily answered by reading the syllabus.

Assignments: Assignments are due before Friday, at 5 p.m. (US Eastern Time) on the week they are assigned. Late work (even 1 minute late), regardless of the circumstances, will not be accepted (Canvas will lock out the assignment after the deadline). Any changes to the schedule will be announced in Canvas and OCMs, and it is each student’s responsibility to attend to these announcements.

Writing competency: Writing competency is expected in all assignments. Students needing assistance with their writing skills should contact the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (<http://miamioh.edu/hcwe>).

Special considerations: In situations where special, documented circumstances exist (e.g., official university obligations, religious observances), special arrangements can be made with the professor. However, students must make these arrangements before the end of the second week of the semester and provide documentation for them. Also, please note that assignments can be completed in advance, thus the majority of conflicts with a due date do not require accommodation (e.g., a religious observance falling on a Friday due date is not an issue because the work can be submitted before that particular day).

Accommodations: Students with a disability who feel that they may need a reasonable accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of the course listed in this syllabus, or students with physical, medical or psychiatric disabilities, or students with AD(H)D or specific learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the Miller Center for Student Disability Services (<https://miamioh.edu/student-life/sds/>; 513.529.1541, V/TTY).

Course materials, recordings, and legal disclaimers: Attending class, obtaining course materials, and taking notes (on class discussions and course readings) are each student’s responsibility. The professor will not lend out notes or materials not provided on Canvas under any circumstances. If students miss an OCM, they should watch the WebEx capture of the class on Canvas (please note there is a delay before the video is made available). Students may lend notes to fellow students as long as they do not financially profit from doing so (i.e., the commercialization of class notes or class-related materials is strictly prohibited).

Uploads and electronically-submitted assignments: All assignments require uploading documents to Canvas. Uploaded documents must in one of three formats: PDF (Acrobat’s Portable Document Format), DOC (Microsoft Word’s Document format), or RTF (Rich Text Format). All other formats (e.g., JPEG, Mac Pages) will receive zeros because Canvas cannot process them. All documents will be scanned to ensure authentic scholarship (see academic integrity, above). Students with questions (e.g., how to upload documents, questions about academic integrity) should ask the professor well before assignments are due (e.g., problems with uploading or uncertainty about how to use Canvas will not excuse late or incomplete assignments). If Canvas is unavailable immediately before a deadline, email the assignment to the professor to ensure it is not late (but only do this if Canvas is down, and make sure you have tried Canvas multiple times on the due date; the email timestamp will serve as the indicator of whether the work was completed on-time, and emailed assignments after the due date and time will not be considered). Once students have uploaded an assignment to Canvas, they should double check to make sure it was received and posted correctly. Failure to double-check that an uploaded assignment was correctly posted is the student’s responsibility. Canvas does not “lose things,” so statements such as, “really, I uploaded it, I don’t know what happened, maybe our WiFi wasn’t working” will not excuse missing assignments. Students spend a lot of time on their coursework, so it’s important that they spend an extra moment to *confirm* that their uploaded assignment arrived in good shape. Missing assignments will receive zero points.

Illnesses and significant health disruptions: Should a student become seriously ill and unable to complete assignments for a sizable portion of the class because of illness, the student should contact the professor immediately by email to determine how alternative arrangements might be made. Students are ultimately responsible for the material covered in class, regardless of whether the student is absent or present. If a student's absences are of significant duration or severity, the professor will advise them about available options, including assigning an incomplete grade (see below) or requesting a medical withdrawal.

Incompletes: Except for cases of documented medical (see previous point) or family emergencies, incompletes will not be given. There is no need for students to do badly in this class: the professor will be available for student hours and will answer e-mail questions promptly. Points are earned in small, multiple increments rather than in a couple of monolithic assignments. There are 50 cushion points built into class, providing students with flexibility to handle adversity during the semester. Deadlines for dropping classes and withdrawals are provided by the Office of the Registrar. Students who miss these deadlines assume responsibility for the consequences. Please consult Miami's official publications regarding deadlines and university policies.

Classroom conduct, respecting others: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and civil manner in class, and they are encouraged to express their opinions and beliefs. It is another thing, however, to be disrespectful or rude to students or to the professor. It is fine to disagree with others and to express non-politically-correct views. However, bigotry or disrespectful behavior is unacceptable.

Disruptive conduct (e.g., distracting texting and computer use, conversations in class) is unacceptable and students who disrupt class (for students or for the professor) will be asked to leave class. Further, even though this course is being delivered on-line, students should treat each other with respect even if, at times, the forms of communication may seem less formal (e.g., posting a comment in an on-line chat window should not be viewed as less formal than saying something aloud in the presence of others). Please be courteous and respectful in all forms of communication and interaction in our course.

The Miami Department of Psychology is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion (for details, visit <https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/psychology/about/diversity-inclusion/index.html>). Here is a statement adopted by the Department of Psychology on diversity and inclusion:

We, members of the Department of Psychology, value diversity and inclusion because the goal of psychology is to improve understanding and outcomes for all individuals. We value persons of all identities, including dimensions such as age, culture, national origin, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and others. As psychologists, we understand that diverse groups bring diverse perspectives; this diversity produces better outcomes in a variety of contexts, including learning and decision making, and our ability to work with one another. Consistent with these values, our department actively seeks opportunities to increase and improve understanding of diversity. These enduring efforts include conducting research with diverse populations on topics related to intergroup understanding and asking questions that are relevant to different groups. We promote the academic and professional development of students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds and provide education to improve intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all members of our academic community. We endeavor to actively engage in positive behaviors in order to achieve these goals. In sum, we value diversity because multiple perspectives improve our ability to understand psychological processes and to understand and contribute to the communities we serve.

Semester schedule

Each week, we will have an on-line class meeting (OCM) on Tuesday starting at 11:40 a.m. (see details, above). Other activities (e.g., media assignments, exams) are due before 5 p.m. on the Friday of each week (dates are due dates, not “when to start doing” dates). Students need to stay up to date on readings (some textbook chapters will not receive any discussion in OCMs). All readings are for entire chapters in the textbook *unless* a range of pages are specified.

		Date	Topic	Assignments (due on the date listed)
Week 1	Tu	8/18	Introduction to the course	Chapter 1
	F	8/21	Overview of psychology	Syllabus quiz; Hidden Brain's <i>Social prescription</i>
Week 2	Tu	8/25	Research methods	Chapter 2
	F	8/28	Biopsychology	Chapter 3; John Oliver's <i>Scientific studies</i>
Week 3	Tu	9/1	Automaticity and control	Chapter 4
	F	9/4		Exam 1
Week 4	Tu	9/8	Sensation and perception	Chapter 5
	F	9/11	Learning	Chapter 6; Beau Lotto's <i>Optical illusions</i>
Week 5	Tu	9/15	Memory	Chapter 8
	F	9/18		Exam 2
Week 6	Tu	9/22	Judgment and decision making	Chapter 7 (225-240)
	F	9/25	Intelligence	Chapter 7 (241-255); Carol Dweck's <i>Growth mindset</i>
Week 7	Tu	9/29	Maximizing happiness	
	F	10/2	Lifespan development	Chapter 9; Dan Gilbert's <i>Science of happiness</i>
Week 8	Tu	10/6	Emotions and motivation	Chapter 10
	F	10/9		Exam 3
Week 9	Tu	10/13	Social influence	Chapter 12 (432-460)
	F	10/16	Social psychology	Chapter 12 (421-431); Hidden Brain's <i>In the air...</i>
Week 10	Tu	10/20	Intergroup relations	
	F	10/23	Industrial-organizational	Chapter 13; Eli Finkel's <i>Recipe for a good marriage</i>
Week 11	Tu	10/27	Stress, health, relationships	Chapter 14
	F	10/30		Exam 4
Week 12	Tu	11/3	Individual differences	Chapter 11 (395-412)
	F	11/6	Approaches to personality	Chapter 11 (379-384); Hidden Brain's <i>Sorting hat</i>
Week 13	Tu	11/10	Themes in clinical psychology	Chapter 15 (563-597)
	F	11/13	Psychological disorders	Chapter 15 (598-617)
Week 14	Tu	11/17	Forensic psychology	Chapter 16
	F	11/20		Exam 5
Finals Week	Tu	12/8	Final exam	(begins at 12:45 p.m. US Eastern and is available for 60 minutes unless accommodations have been made with the professor)