

**Psych 210**  
**Intro to Psychology**

**Class Syllabus and Calendar**

Meredy Goldberg Edelson, Professor

Spring 2008

**M W F 11:30am-12:30pm Smullin 216**

**Office Hours: 8:30-9:00am M W F; 1:30-2:30pm M W and by appointment**

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**Web page:** [www.willamette.edu/~medelson/](http://www.willamette.edu/~medelson/)

**Required Text:** Bernstein, D.A., & Nash, P. W. (2008). *Essentials of Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

**This is a Blackboard course. All students are required to enroll in Blackboard. Readings for the Graded Discussions (when assigned) can be found in the Course Document folder on Blackboard.**

This course will survey a variety of topics in psychology including: biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, research in psychology, human development, social influences on behavior, learning, health and stress, abnormal psychology, personality, states of consciousness, and memory. All topics will be organized within three broad units. As part of this exploration, students will also learn critical thinking skills for evaluating evidence in psychology and will examine how values may affect one's study of human behavior.

NOTE: This course meets the Analyzing Arguments, Reasons, and Values (AARV) MOI requirement and also serves as the entry course into the Psychology Major and Minor.

As an AARV course, there will be an examination of some of the fundamental ethical or value-laden issues that arise when discussing the study of human behavior. Specifically, five important ethical or value-laden issues will be addressed via assigned readings, film, demonstrations, and in-class discussions. Stated in the form of questions, these issues are:

1. How do values shape the conduct and interpretation of research in psychology? In other words, what is the effect of humans studying humans?
2. Is there a need for ethical guidelines to guide psychological research, and if so, what should the nature of these guidelines be?
3. What are the trade-offs in making value-laden decisions with regard to human behavior?
4. Should research results be used to prescribe moral behavior?
5. How should we evaluate the tension that exists between behaviors that are good for an individual vs. behaviors that are for the common good?

These questions will resurface in various formats throughout the semester, and students are strongly encouraged to think about and engage these questions as they complete the reading and participate in class discussion.

Points:

You can earn a total of **500 points** in the course which are distributed as follows:

**1. Exams (300 points).** There will be three, 100 point tests given during the semester corresponding to each of the three units of the course. Each test will consist of multiple-choice items worth 1 point each, fill-in-the-blank questions also worth one point each, and essay questions (which vary in points). The exams may cover material from the required text, assigned additional readings lectures, discussions, and videos. The tests will not be cumulative but will cover only the material since the previous test. The first two tests will be given in class, and the third test will be given during our regularly-scheduled final exam period. There will be no make-up exams except for emergencies and only if you see me before the regularly scheduled exam.

**2. Graded Discussions (100 points).** During the semester, there will be ten discussions that will engage one of the ethical or value-laden issues that were posed at the beginning of the syllabus. These discussions may begin by having an in-class demonstration, by watching a film, or by having students complete readings in advance of the discussion. Students will need to complete any assigned readings prior to the class discussion and come to class with a pre-written, typed paragraph briefly summarizing any assigned reading. For discussions with no prior reading, students will be asked to write a one-paragraph reaction following the class discussion to be turned in the day of the discussion. On the course calendar, discussions where readings are assigned prior to the discussion are denoted with \*\*. Students can earn up to 10 points for each discussion; and grades will be based on a combination of attendance, the written work turned in, and participation in the discussions. Given there are a total of 10 graded discussions (denoted in bold on the course calendar), students can earn a total of 100 points through participation in these discussions.

**3. Article summary (25 points).** Find an empirical article in a psychology journal (a report of a study that has been conducted) and summarize the article in no more than **2 paragraphs**. In your first paragraph, you should have the following: (a) a summary of the participants and how obtained (if relevant); and (b) a summary of the methodology used including what variables were measured and how (note: do not just list measures used; instead, operationally define the variables and note generally how they were measured—self-report, observation, behaviorally, other-report, etc.). In your second paragraph, you should have the following: (a) a summary of the results—put these in your words and do not report actual statistics or significance levels; and (b) a statement of what you think the implications of the results are (not what the author(s) think). You should read the entire article, but you should only summarize the Method and Results sections—do not summarize the Introduction or Discussion sections. There should be no quotes in your summary—everything should be paraphrased in your own words. In your summary, you should cite the article using APA format at the beginning of your summary and should have an APA-formatted Reference page after your summary.

The article summary is due: **February 4<sup>th</sup> (deposited before class time)**

**4. Argument paper (75 points)** Go to any popular press source such as a newspaper, msnbc.com, cnn.com, *Time*, or *Newsweek* and select one article on a current event in which an ethical dilemma is raised or implied. Briefly (in one paragraph) summarize the article and state what the ethical dilemma is. Then, argue in favor of one side of the dilemma and present evidence for your argument from a psychological perspective. That is, apply some information from the text that would support what you are advocating. For example, if you read a popular press article about having birth control available to middle school children, you would argue either why this should occur or why this should not occur. You would then need to use some evidence from your text to support your argument (e.g., what might developmental psychologists say about sexual development in middle schoolers that would support your argument? What might social psychologists say about peer pressure and sexual behavior in teens that would support your argument? etc.). Only make one specific argument and only provide evidence in support of your argument from one psychological perspective. In order to adequately address this assignment, you need to include the following in your paper:

- A one-paragraph summary of the popular press article that should serve as the introduction of your paper; the ethical dilemma raised should be clearly stated, and the popular press article should be cited in APA format
- An argument statement that clearly advocates for one side of the ethical dilemma the popular press article raised
- The application of evidence from your text that supports your argument (properly cited in APA format)
- A one-paragraph conclusion to your paper, reiterating the dilemma raised, your argument, and the implications if your argument is correct
- An APA formatted Reference page listing both the popular press article and your text

Stay in third person voice as you write this paper (e.g., "it is argued" vs. "I argue"), and there should be no quotes in this paper; just paraphrase both the popular press article and information from your text in your words. The paper should be typed and double-spaced and should be approximately **750-1000 words** (not including title page and references). NOTE: A well-written paper that fails to include all five components of the assignment as noted above will lose a significant amount of points. Therefore, be complete. Also, a paper that is significantly longer or shorter than the word length requirement will lose points. Please turn in a hard copy of the popular press article you selected when your paper is due (with your name on it).

Argument Paper is due: **March 31<sup>st</sup> (deposited by class time)**

**NOTE: Both the article summary and argument paper should be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word document uploaded to the Digital Dropbox in Blackboard. In order to upload the document, you need to first "add" the file and then "send" the file. The title page, paper, and references should all be in the same document, and the document should be named "[Your last name] article summary.doc" and "[Your last name] argument**

**paper.doc” respectively. Points will be lost if the name of the document is incorrect so please be sure to label your files correctly.**

**5. Participation in psychology research/psychology research writing assignment(0 points).** All Introductory Psychology sections have a participation in psychology research requirement. In order to avoid getting an incomplete in the course, each student can choose either to participate in psychology research or, for those students who would prefer not to participate in research, to complete a writing assignment related to psychology research. More information about this will be given later.

Grades:

Final grades will be determined using the following system:

(a) Total points earned are computed and a frequency distribution will be calculated

(b) The upper 10% of the class distribution is determined and the mean of this upper 10% is computed. Grades are then assigned according to the scale below.

95% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of A

85% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of B

75% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of C

65% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of D

(c) This is a modified form of an absolute grading system rather than “grading on a curve.” The percentage of A’s, B’s, C’s, D’s, and F’s are not determined in advance. It is possible for all students to be within 95% of the mean of the upper 10% of the distribution of points and thus, earn an A. Your grade depends on what you achieve, not on a predetermined distribution.

(d) If you fall on the border between two grades, you will be given the lower end of the upper grade (for example an A- instead of a B+) as a function of the following:

- Participating in class frequently
- Attending class regularly
- Appearing attentive and motivated to learn
- Showing consistent improvement during the semester

(e) Because your actual grade cannot be determined until all points are earned, I cannot tell you what your exact grade is at any given time. However, I will provide the class with estimates throughout the semester.

To be fair to all students, all late papers will be graded down according to how many days they are late. For each day a paper is late, 15 points will be deducted from the total.

However, the paper must be completed to avoid getting an incomplete in the course. This means that you need to do complete the paper and turn it in even if it is so late that you will not earn any points. If there are extenuating circumstances which interfere with your ability to turn your paper in when it is due, please see me before the paper is late. If you haven't talked to me and you do not turn your paper in when it's due (by class time), I will consider it late.

Computer problems are not acceptable excuses for why a paper is late; plan to have your paper completed in advance of the due date to avoid any last minute computer problems. Medical excuses for late papers or missed exams require a medical provider's note or they will not be accepted. Also, it is your responsibility to keep an electronic copy of all written assignments turned in.

#### A NOTE ABOUT PAPER GRADING:

I strongly believe that paper grades should reflect both how well students address the content of the paper assignments and the quality of their writing. Thus, both content and style will be graded. With regard to content, I will grade on the following aspects of your writing: (a) Organization—is the paper well-organized given the nature of the assignment? (b) Logic/coherence—does the paper make sense logically? (c) Fulfillment of the assignment—does the writer address all relevant aspects of the assignment in a coherent manner? With regard to style, I will grade on the following aspects of your writing: (a) Spelling/punctuation—is the paper free from misspellings, typos, and punctuation errors?; (b) Fluency—does the writing flow well without awkward and incomplete sentences? Are verb tenses consistent throughout and do you keep parallel forms in your writing?; (c) Is your paper appropriately referenced using proper APA format? Both content and style will be given **equal weighting** in paper grading.

#### A REQUEST REGARDING GENERAL CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Now that we are in the age of cell phones, pagers, iPods, and laptops, I have found that the use of these pieces of technology can be both positive and negative. They certainly make life easier, but they are not necessarily helpful in the classroom. I would ask that all cell phones and pagers be turned off or placed in a silent mode prior to the start of class. Having cell phones and pagers go off during class is disruptive both to me and my train of thought (which can be easily derailed at times!) as well as to your fellow students. If there is an emergency situation where you need to be reachable during class, place your cell phones or pagers in vibrate mode. If they go off, please leave the class to take the call. Please only respond to cell phones or pagers if there is a true emergency. If you use laptops for note-taking, this is fine as long as that is truly what you are doing with your laptop. Please do not check email, write letters, or surf the web. Please do not bring iPods and MP3 players to class at all. Class attendance is optional, not mandatory, (except for the days when the graded discussions are scheduled if students want to avoid getting a "0" for the discussion) so if there are other things you would rather do than attend class, that is your call. However, you should note that there is a high correlation between class attendance and grades. I would ask that if you make the decision to attend class, you engage in the class. One final note related to this: I hope that we can have lively discussions in this class,

but that means everyone needs to show respect to whomever has the floor at the moment. Therefore, I would ask that we eliminate chatting and side conversations and instead listen and respond to the shared conversation of the class. This shows respect to me as well as your fellow students, and makes the classroom dynamic one of mutual support and respect. Thanks!

## STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In order to learn, you must engage in the process of learning. Thus, it is not only the outcome that matters, but what and how you've learned along the way. I recognize that there are pressures to have a good outcome, to do well, to get a good grade; and these pressures seemingly increase as one enters college. Sometimes, these pressures can result in the temptation to bypass the process of learning to get the good grade; and, when this happens, plagiarism can result.

Plagiarism is a serious offense for many reasons. First, when you have used another's work and represented it as your own, it is impossible for you to be evaluated on what you've learned. The product you turn in does not reflect your contribution to the process of learning in any way (and, in fact, you may have bypassed the process of learning altogether). Second, the principle of academic integrity holds that, ethically, one should not present another's work as if it were one's own as this is the equivalent of intellectual robbery.

There are two primary types of plagiarism, neither of which are acceptable. Students are sometimes unsure of what constitutes plagiarism. Therefore, to avoid any confusion, I'd like to explicitly state what plagiarism entails. Please refer to this section as you write your paper. The following are considered instances of plagiarism.

1. Any time one **reproduces another's words or ideas without giving proper credit**, this is plagiarism. Thus, even if one paraphrases the ideas of another author without using the author's own words, that author must still be cited.

*\*\*Citations are needed any time one makes a statement of fact which was discovered or reported by someone else and isn't common knowledge, even if this statement of fact is paraphrased from the author you read*

*\*\*If another author's words are used verbatim, these must be in quotation marks and be properly cited.*

*\*\*If you use words too close to the author's original words, even unintentionally, this is still considered plagiarism. A good strategy for paraphrasing is not to look at the author's words when you paraphrase.*

2. Any time one **presents an idea as an original idea which is not**, this is plagiarism. Thus, "borrowing" an idea from a classmate, representing an already existing theory or conceptualization as one's own, or reproducing someone else's paper or assignment and presenting it as one's own are all examples of plagiarism.

These examples are not exhaustive of the types of plagiarism which could occur but are the two most commonly seen illustrations. It is expected that students will display academic integrity when completing assignments and taking exams. If you are not sure whether something is or is not plagiarism, it is your responsibility to check an appropriate resource to determine this or come ask me. At the point of a working draft, I will not consider anything to be plagiarized; thus, you should not feel hesitant to ask me or show me examples of writing where you may have concerns about this while you are in the process of drafting your paper. It is only once you turn in a final product that the criteria for plagiarism will apply. Students who are found to have engaged in plagiarism will receive a "0" for the assignment in question. I will ask you to redo the assignment to avoid getting an incomplete or an "F" in the course (thus, you will still need to do the assignment, but you will not get credit for it). The purpose of the rewrite is so that you are forced to engage completely in the process of learning that was missed or partly bypassed through the act of plagiarism. Additionally, as per University policy, a report of the plagiarism will be made to the Dean's office.

Please take the issue of plagiarism seriously. While the temptation to get the good grade at all costs can be there for some students, the point of obtaining a liberal arts education is *the education*. The grades mean nothing if nothing was learned in the process of obtaining the grade.

#### MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

I feel it is important for you to know my philosophy of teaching so that you have a better idea of what to expect both in the course itself and in the evaluation of your work. Many people throughout history have weighed in on what teaching and learning are all about, and I rather like Galileo's perspective. To paraphrase and modernize him a bit, Galileo said: You cannot teach people anything; you can only help them to find things out for themselves. I believe that this is true. I will do my best to serve as a guide as you learn about psychology this semester, but ultimately, I cannot control how well you learn; this decision is yours. The more you are dedicated to the process of learning, the more you commit to taking the time to read the text, to coming to class and participating in our discussions, the more you commit to studying, the more you will learn; this I promise. Should you, in the process of learning, have questions or need help, I'm willing to help you in whatever way I can. See me inside or outside of class, ask questions, ask more questions, challenge my answers. Be an active participant in your own learning. This teaching philosophy results in my belief that whatever grade you receive in the course is the grade you have earned; it is not the grade I have bestowed upon you. Be both proud of what you accomplish throughout this semester, but also be able to accept responsibility for those times where you have not fully engaged in the process of learning. Both of these situations are learning processes as well.

#### A FINAL NOTE ABOUT THE COURSE:

The study of human behavior is truly fascinating. It is not often we get to learn how behavioral scientists have "objectively" studied ourselves and what they have found. This course will only give you a flavor for what it is psychologists do and how they do it. You will

hopefully also gain an understanding of how to evaluate critically what you read in psychology and in science in general and will engage in some interesting ethical discussions about human behavior. I hope you enjoy this very brief introduction to psychology. The course calendar follows on the next page. It details all the information you need about topics, readings, scheduled discussions, assignment due dates, and exams. I will not routinely remind students about due dates, so please refer to the syllabus. A copy of the syllabus is also posted on my web page under the PSYC 210 course link. Please complete the readings prior to the class period for which they are first assigned so that we can engage in some lively discussion.

## COURSE CALENDAR

### UNIT I

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Jan. 14	—	Introduction to course
Jan. 16	Ch. 1	History of Psychology
Jan. 18	Ch. 1	Research Methods & Critical Thinking 1
Jan. 21	Ch. 1	Research Methods & Critical Thinking 2; <b>Discussion 1**: How far can researchers go? The need for ethical guidelines in research</b>
Jan. 23	pp. A1-A5	Statistics and writing in APA format
Jan. 25	Ch. 2	Neurons and Neuronal transmission
Jan. 28	Ch. 2	The Peripheral and Central Nervous Systems
Jan. 30	Ch. 2	The Endocrine System
Feb. 1	Ch. 2, 3	<b>Discussion 2**: Neuroethics;</b> Introduction to Sensation
Feb. 4	Ch. 3	Vision 1 <b>ARTICLE SUMMARY DUE</b>
Feb. 6	Ch. 3	Vision 2; Hearing 1
Feb. 8	Ch. 3	<b>Discussion 3: Cochlear Implants and the Deaf Culture;</b> Perception 1
Feb. 11	Ch. 3	Perception 2
Feb. 13	—	<b>EXAM 1 (Chapters 1-3 plus Appendix A)</b>

## UNIT II

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Feb. 15	Ch. 9	<b>Discussion 4: Ethics of Sex Assignment;</b> Cognitive development 1
Feb. 18	Ch. 9	Cognitive development 2;
Feb. 20	Ch. 9	Social and Emotional development
Feb. 22	Ch. 9	Moral Development; <b>Discussion 5: Whose morality is it anyway?</b>
Feb. 25	Ch. 11	Theories of personality 1
Feb. 27	Ch. 11	Theories of personality 2
Feb. 29	Ch. 11	Personality assessment
Mar. 3	Ch. 12	Issues of diagnosis; <b>Discussion 6**: Are you crazy?</b>
Mar. 5	Ch. 12	Anxiety and Mood Disorders
Mar. 7	Ch. 12	Schizophrenia and Dissociative Disorders
Mar. 10	Ch. 12	Personality Disorders; Mental illness and the law
Mar. 12	Ch. 14	Social Cognition: Attitudes, prejudices, stereotypes
Mar. 14	Ch. 14	Social Behaviors 1: Conformity, compliance, obedience
Mar. 17	Ch. 14	Social Behaviors 2: Conformity, compliance, obedience
Mar. 19	Ch. 14	Social Behaviors 3: Aggression and altruism; <b>Discussion 7**: Bystander intervention in emergencies</b>
Mar. 21	—	<b>EXAM 2 (Chapters 9, 11, 12, 14)</b>
Mar. 24-Mar. 28	—	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

### UNIT III

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Mar. 31	Ch. 5	Classical conditioning 1 <b>ARGUMENT PAPER DUE</b>
Apr. 2	Ch. 5	Classical conditioning 2; Operant conditioning 1
Apr. 4	Ch. 5	Operant conditioning 2;
Apr. 7	Ch. 5	Operant conditioning demo; <b>Discussion 8: Behavior Modification, Determinism, and Moral Responsibility</b>
Apr. 9	Ch. 6	Memory
Apr. 11	Ch. 6	Memory
Apr. 14	Ch. 6	Memory <b>Discussion 9**: Memory for Misinformation</b>
Apr. 16	—	NO CLASS: SSRD
Apr. 18	Ch. 4	States of Consciousness 1
Apr. 21	Ch. 4	States of Consciousness 2
Apr. 23	Ch. 10	Stress
Apr. 25	Ch. 10	Stress and our immune system
Apr. 28	Ch. 10	Even more stress <b>Discussion 10: The use of non-human animals in psychological research</b>
May 7 (9:30am)	—	<b>EXAM 3 (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 10)</b>