

# PSYC 102: Readings in Intro Psychology

## Basic Course Information

Credits: 1

Fall 2006

Distribution Group II

Synopsis: Discussion seminar of articles and research reports in psychology

Mondays 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM in Sewall Hall 462

Instructor: Frank Tamborello

Email: tambo@rice.edu

Office: Sewall Hall 215

Extension: 2141

Office Hour: Monday 4:00 - 5:00 and by appointment

Course Website: <https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/portal/site/PSYC-102-001-F06>

## Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the current research, issues and controversies in psychology and encourage students to form and reflect on their attitudes and opinions on these topics. This course also has as its goals the development of functional literacy in formal, academic prose through constant practice in reading and writing at a high level. Students will be given background information on these topics in the form of weekly readings. Students are expected to come to class prepared to apply that knowledge in discussion on the day's topic. Additionally two short writing assignments will be required.

## Required Texts

Slife, B., Ed. (2005). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Psychological Issues*. 14th Ed. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 0073545589 ("Taking Sides")

Hock, R. R. (2001). *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology*. 5th Ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0131147293 ("Forty Studies")

## Other Resources

The Rice On-line Writing Lab:

<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~riceowl/index.htm>

## Grading & Class Requirements

### **Class Participation: 50%**

You must read the texts and come to class prepared to speak. I suggest coming to every class with at least two good discussion questions or points relevant to the day's topic - from the assigned reading or from something you have encountered outside the class. Please note that if you do bring in outside material to discuss, it must be relevant to the day's discussion and you must supply the class with a full reference so that interested individuals may find that material. I will grade on both the quality and the quantity of your class discussion. Please speak consistently throughout the semester and refrain from dominating discussion. Demonstrate your knowledge and help others to learn.

I will not bother to take attendance, but because class participation comprises such a large part of the final grade it will be impossible to pass this course if you miss a lot of sessions. If you feel that you have some legitimate reason for missing class (e.g., illness, family emergency, religious holiday, etc.), please try to contact me as soon as is feasible so that we may work out an alternate arrangement.

### **Text Reactions: 25%**

For each class, write about 250 - 500 total words reacting to the the assigned readings. Concentrate on one reading or cover them all, I'll leave that up to you, but I would prefer to see depth of thought rather than breadth of coverage. We're all reading these same texts, so please don't summarize. Please do provide some synthesis and analysis. Consider some or all of the following:

- What controversies are presented?
- What theories are involved?
- What evidence is presented?
- What potential problems are there with all of the above?
- Ask deep questions that were raised by the reading.

Submit these assignments to the class's Owlspace discussion forum no later than 7:00 PM Sunday before class. I will grade these based on depth of thought and clarity and conciseness of communication in your writing.

### **Papers: 2 x 10%**

Choose a topic we have covered or will cover in class and read up on it (peer-reviewed journals - ask me if your unsure whether a journal qualifies). What are the current debates in that topic? What research questions are that community of scientists trying to address? What theories are emerging to explain and/or predict aspects of human behavior? Write four to six pages (double-spaced and typed) addressing those points. Adhere to APA style for in-text citations and your reference list. I encourage you to talk to me early on for topic ideas and suggestions for sources.

Again, I will grade these based on depth of thought and clarity and conciseness of communication in your writing. I encourage you to bring drafts to me for feedback well before these papers are due. Although I encourage you to ask specific questions about your writing, I am willing to offer general feedback. Please allow at least 48 hours for draft turn-around if you want

me to read and respond to your entire draft. More specific questions about your writing can probably be addressed in one thirty-minute office visit or by email.

### **Student-Chosen Texts: 5%**

Each student will be required to choose at least one issue or controversy within psychology of your own interest and propose one good reading as a class-assigned text. Texts will be due two weeks before the day assigned to student-chosen readings (December 4). You must post the APA-formatted reference and abstract in the class's Owlspac discussion forum along with a PDF of the text (if available). If a PDF is not available for your chosen text, you must bring a photocopy to class on the due date, November 20. The class will then choose readings by vote, and those readings will be assigned for the student-chosen topic day. Please ask me well in advance if you would like suggestions about topics or where to look for topics and texts.

### **General Grading Policy**

Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been agreed upon with me. I will not accept excuses like "I forgot about the assignment." However, if something legitimate and/or extraordinary comes up, please talk to me as soon as you can.

### **Honor Code**

While I don't expect you to write out the honor code on all weekly reading responses or even your two papers, all aspects of this course are bound by the honor principle. All work should be your own, independent work. Any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, inadvertently or not, will be reported directly to the honor council. The Rice University Honor Code prevents any exceptions to this rule.

## **Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability that may impact your work in this class, please contact me outside of class. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Ley Student Center.

## **Miscellany**

I reserve the right to alter this syllabus and class policy as I believe the need arises. When I do make alterations, I will try to post the updated syllabus to the course website and notify the class of the change(s) as soon as possible. Please note that this is my first time instructing a course. I welcome any thoughtful comments about any aspect of the class you feel could be improved.

## **Course Schedule Outline**

August 28  
Introduction

September 4  
No class: Labor Day university holiday

September 11

Readings: Taking Sides (Issue 11: "Does ADHD exist?"), Forty Studies ("Thanks for the memories!", p. 116), Loftus (1994), Williams (1994a & 1994b)

September 18

Readings: Forty Studies ("You're getting defensive again!", p. 234), Cramer (2000), Eysenck (1952)

September 25

Readings: Taking Sides (Issues 7 "Does a mother's employment harm her children?", & 9 "Are human cognitive and behavioral activities determined?"); Forty Studies ("Discovering love", p. 126)

October 2

Readings: Forty Studies ("Watch out for the visual cliff!", p. 26; "What you see is what you've learned", p. 35; "To sleep, no doubt to dream...", p. 41), Wolfe et al. (p. 58 - 64), Wired Magazine, (Issue 10.09, September 2002) "Vision quest"

October 9

Readings: Forty Studies ("One brain or two?", p. 1), Phantoms in the Mind, Ch. 4 "The Zombie in the Brain"

October 16

No class: Fall Break

October 18

No class: I'm out of town.

October 23

Readings: Forty Studies ("Knock wood!", p. 77; "Maps in your mind", p. 109); Newell, Shaw, & Simon (1958)

October 30

**First Paper Due:** Hand it in at the beginning of class.

Readings: Newell (20 Questions); Anderson et al, 2004; Card, Moran, & Newell: preface & chapter 1

November 6

Readings: Taking Sides (Issues 2, "Should animal research in psychology be eliminated?" & 3 "Classic dialogue: Was Stanley Milgram's study of obedience unethical?"), Forty Studies, ("Obey at any cost?", p. 308)

November 13

Readings: Taking Sides (Issues 4 “Are humans naturally violent?”, & 16 “Do video games lead to violence?”), Forty Studies (“See aggression... do aggression!”, p. 84), Stories (Ch. 32: “Does TV violence sell?”, p. 312)

November 20

Readings: Taking Sides (Issue 13 “Is drug addiction a choice?”), Junky\* pp. 52 - 75

\*WARNING: This stuff is pretty racy and contains some harsh language. Talk to me by November 13 if you would prefer to read something else.

November 27

Readings: Taking Sides (Issue 18 “Is pornography harmful?”), Forty Studies (“A sexual motivation”, 158)

December 4

**Second Paper Due:** Hand it in at the beginning of class.

Topics & readings chosen by class

## For Further Reading

These are some books I've read that have something to do with psychology, even if only obliquely. I've found each one to be a fascinating leisurely read.

Burroughs, W. W. (1977). Junky. New York, NY: Penguin Books. ISBN: 0-14-00.4351-9

Casey, S. (1998). Set Phasers on Stun and Other True Tales of Design, Technology, and Human Error. (2nd Ed.) Santa Barbara, CA: Aegean Publishing Company. ISBN: 0-9636178-8-5

Mezrich, B. (2002). Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 0-7432-4999-2

Ramachandran, V. S., & Blakeslee, S. (1998). Phantoms in the Mind: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind. New York, NY: HarperCollins. ISBN: 0-688-15247-3

Sacks, O. (1995). An Anthropologist on Mars. New York, NY: Vintage Books. ISBN: 0-679-75697-3

Sapolsky, R. M. (1998). Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: An Updated Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases, and Coping. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman & Company. ISBN: 0-7167-3210-6

Winchester, S. (1998). The Professor and the Madman. New York, NY: HarperCollins. ISBN: 0-06-017596-6