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


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 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 Owlspace 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

September 18

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

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
November 13
Readings: Taking Sides (Issues 4 “Are humans naturally violent?”, & 16 “Do video games lead to violence?”), Forty Studies (”See aggression… do aggression!”), 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.


