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FIRST Portfolio: Introduction to Psychology (Psych 181)

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FIRST Portfolio: Introduction to Psychology (Psych 181)

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Abstract

This course portfolio analyzed student learning in Introduction to Psychology, Psych 181 at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln. This course is often taken by first year students of various backgrounds and majors; this course is a pre-requisite for many other psychology courses. In general, the course covers basic psychological concepts in the realm of biopsychology, developmental psychology, social and personality psychology, cognitive psychology, and clinical psychology. Student enrollment for this section is capped at 200. This portfolio outlines my course goal, objectives, and assessments of those goals. There is also a reflection throughout regarding how well students feel supported and how much the content allows students to apply material or use critical thinking and suggestions for areas that can be improved in future iterations of the course.

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Psych 181 Portfolio

Objectives of this Peer Review Portfolio

I have many goals in completing this portfolio. My primary goal is to ensure that my course goals, learning objectives, and (formal and informal) course assessments line up. Having those elements properly matched should help ensure the achievement of my other goals for this course. I have taught this course 5 times and am becoming more comfortable in the general content and structure, but I have never explicitly taken a backwards design approach with this course. The course I am analyzing is a foundational course in Psychology (i.e. Introduction to Psychology), so I also want to ensure that my course is properly preparing students for more advanced coursework and/or the MCAT.

It is also my hope that completing this portfolio will allow me to more deeply analyze the type of content I provide. Specifically, I want to ensure that my course materials incorporate diverse voices, consistently connects material across all 5 units, and provides adequate opportunity for students to apply course material and practice critical thinking. I also want to analyze how to fully capitalize on my recitation sections, which is something that has been generally used for this course in the department but to my knowledge, has never been used with my specific section until Fall 2020. This new use of recitations has also resulted in me managing ~5-7 (undergraduate & graduate) teaching assistants, whereas I previously had 1 graduate assistant.

Lastly, this portfolio will take into consideration some of the unique features of the course. For example, in the Fall, this section tends to have ~60-70% of 1st semester freshmen. Given this demographic of first-time college students, there tend to be a lot of misconceptions and unique challenges that need to be considered to best support these students' adjustment generally to college life and to the rigor of a college course. Therefore, I want to determine the types of supports currently set up in my course and identify any additional scaffolding that could be provided to help these students succeed. As a gateway course for the major, there is also the consideration of disparities within the D/F/W rates. Specifically, this course sees the most disparities with first generation students. I hope the process of this portfolio will help me identify ways to help close that gap.

In summary, my goals for this portfolio are to:

- Ensure that course goals, learning objectives, and assessments are in sync
- Analyze the type of content in my course
 - The use of diverse voices
 - Adequate opportunities to apply material
 - Adequate opportunities to practice critical thinking
- Consider additional methods of support, especially for:
 - First semester freshmen
 - First generation students

Overall, this portfolio should help me document and address these various concerns as well be useful in my reappointment and promotion process. Given that this course is taught by

~3 other instructors, the insights from this portfolio may also be of use to them and will be shared with those interested in viewing it.

To start down the path of completing my goals for this course portfolio, I'm going to take time to discuss some background information on the course as well as some specifics of the course goals.

Description of the Course

Introduction to Psychology (Psych 181) is a 4-credit entry level course for many other courses in the Psychology department. The content covers a vast array of disciplines within Psychology, including research methods, neuroscience, developmental, cognitive, social, and abnormal/clinical psychology. Three credit hours are treated as traditional face-to-face lecture time (at least for my section), and 1 credit hour is a recitation section. The recitation component for my specific section was only recently added and is treated as an online asynchronous element. Other Introduction to Psychology sections have switched to this modality as well, though previously one section did have face-to-face recitations. My Fall section has 200 students; other sections throughout the year generally range from 25-450 students taught either in person or online.

While students ideally take this course before other psychology courses (so that it can serve as a foundational course), it is possible for students to take some other psychology courses prior to this one (i.e. Social Psychology, Psychology of Diversity, Psychology of Environmental Sustainability, Psychology of Terrorism, and/or a University Honors Seminar in Psychology). We generally advise our Psychology majors/minors to take Introduction to Psychology prior to more advanced courses. However, given that other, higher-level courses are used for outside majors, the department has decided to reduce the barrier to entry for those courses. Therefore, it is not unheard of to have students who had originally taken a 200 (or even 300) level psychology course before deciding to change their major or get an additional psychology course, resulting in them completing Introduction to Psychology after a previous psychology course. Many students have also taken or are concurrently taking Psychology 100 which is a career planning course for psychology majors. This course also serves as a prerequisite for courses cross listed in Psychology and Ethnic Studies (i.e. Psychology of Immigration), Gerontology (i.e. Psychology of Adult Development and Aging), and Educational Psychology (i.e. Developmental Psychopathology). Introduction to Psychology also serves as an ACE #6 course (i.e. Use knowledge, theories, and research perspectives, such as statistical methods or observational accounts, appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate social systems or human behaviors).

While there are a few exceptions, Introduction to Psychology is generally a gateway course to other psychology courses. Therefore, this course serves an important role in potentially "recruiting" new majors or minors as well as laying a solid foundation for future course work. While I do not have any data on how many students change their major/minor to psychology after taking this course, anecdotally, I have had quite a few explicitly tell me this was the case. Given the importance of Introduction to Psychology to the major, the department has enlisted Professors of Practice to teach all but one of the sections with the goal that these professors will have the most time, knowledge, and commitment to making this foundational course successful.

Why this course?

As mentioned previously, this course has a lot of unique challenges and is essential to the major. I believe focusing my portfolio on this course will help enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of my teaching and may be useful to other Introduction to Psychology instructors. This analysis should also benefit the department as a whole. I have also chosen this course because of the unique challenges it poses to me as an instructor. Introduction to Psychology necessarily covers a broad range of material, much of which I am not as familiar as I would like to be (given my training as an Experimental-Social Psychologist). While not really negative, I also receive the lowest student evaluations for this course, and therefore want to more deeply analyze my teaching here.

This course is important for students to succeed in many higher-level Psychology courses and also provides crucial information for those taking the MCAT. I want to ensure that my teaching best prepares students for whatever they will do after taking the course, and to accomplish that, I need to do a comprehensive benchmark course portfolio that utilizes a backwards design approach. I also want to make certain that my course is appealing and useful for students from various backgrounds (e.g. those that have taken other Psychology courses and those with no prior Psychology coursework). Introduction to Psychology is also a 4-credit hour course with a new (to me) recitation component that I want to ensure I am utilizing well.

I have taught this course 4 times prior to writing this portfolio, so I feel I have a relatively solid understanding of the course and content, but I'm also still new enough to have a lot of room for improvement. For example, I recognize that many students have zero exposure to psychology prior to taking this course, but I also know others have more experience (through high school or other UNL courses). There are times when I'm not sure I am fully balancing these considerations in my teaching and may jump in too quickly on a topic that students are wholly unfamiliar with. I also know this course does not have as much authentic learning experiences as the other courses that I teach; part of this is due to a concern of covering enough content as well as a concern over the number of assignments students must complete. I believe by approaching this course more intentionally, I can find less relevant areas to cut and ways to better create an authentic learning experience. Overall, I want to explore which lessons may need to be reduced or may benefit from more active learning, more engaging "hooks" and connections to everyday phenomena, and/or a more scaffolded approach. Completing this course portfolio will help me assess what areas I need to direct more of my attention to ensure I am meeting all of my goals for the course.

Lastly, as is common with gateway courses, Introduction to Psychology has a slightly higher D/F/W disparity gap than other courses in the major (particularly with first generation college students, but there is also a gap based on one's racial group). I would like to use this portfolio as an opportunity to explore why that may be the case and look for ways to close that gap. I am hoping that by finding ways to make my course more inclusive, engaging, and cohesive, I can overcome some of that disparity. I believe one cause of this disparity may be due to having a high number of 1st semester freshmen who may experience a bit of a culture shock in the expectations and rigors of college academics and who may be navigating major life changes for the first time or on a much larger scale than they are used to (e.g. self-sufficiency,

independence, time management, finding new friends, feeling anonymous in a large classroom, or dealing with feelings of isolation). I believe creating a supportive environment where all students feel they belong and can succeed may be useful in addressing some of these disparities; however, I also want to explore if there are any (hard or soft) skill deficits that may also perpetuate these disparities in Introduction to Psychology. Overall, I will be exploring what kind of academic and psychological supports may be most helpful to encouraging students to complete the course and to perform their best academically.

Course Goals

The course goals are outlined within the **Fall 21 syllabus** for this course; however, I will cover them in a bit more detail here.

Course goal #1. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology.

This course extensively focuses on concepts and theories across the field of Psychology (i.e. developmental, social, cognitive, neuroscience, abnormal/clinical, and research methods); therefore, it is important that students will have some familiarity with and understanding of these concepts. Through this course, I hope to dispel some common misconceptions about psychology and human behavior (e.g. that psychology involves mind reading, right-brain vs. left-brain myths, etc). I hope that students will also be able to make connections regarding how psychology fits in to the general realm of science and can draw upon ethical lessons learned from historical and modern practicing of psychology. Additionally, with a well-rounded, introductory knowledge of psychology, students will be better equipped to complete the final course goal (i.e. apply these concepts to everyday life).

Course goal #2. Appreciate key figures and historical events that has helped shape psychology.

By the end of the course (and each unit), students should be able to generally identify key figures that were instrumental to the field of psychology (in all subdisciplines) and understand how psychology has become the type of field it is today. This knowledge should also help empower students to recognize psychology as a truly scientific field and to appreciate the breadth of psychology's subdisciplines.

Course goal #3. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology.

Given students' natural exposure to human behavior and cognition, there are often many incorrect assumptions and intuitions that students have related to the field of psychology. Therefore, it is my goal that students will be able to accurately identify when psychology-relevant information they are learning (in or outside of the classroom) is related to the scientific process or some, potentially unreliable method (e.g. through methods like heuristics, fallacies, or confirmation bias). I hope that my course helps students become more inquisitive and critical.

Course goal #4. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills.

As alluded to earlier, in order to achieve Course Goal #3, students will need to be able to engage in critical thinking and scientific reasoning. To me, this means that students ask questions and challenge assumptions and biases. It will involve students needing to ask and answer questions such as “Why is this true?”, “How do we know?”, and “What is the evidence?” I believe generating and nurturing inquisitiveness will serve my students well in all other academic courses and in their day-to-day life. However, since this is a beginning level course, I do worry that this goal sometimes gets overwritten by the goal of covering and learning new content (i.e. elements related Course Goal #1 and #2).

Course goal #5. Apply psychological concepts to “everyday” phenomena and critical issues.

I believe being able to apply learned concepts to everyday experiences will help students learn the information by fully engaging with the concepts. Therefore, even if students do not take any higher-level Psychology courses or the MCAT, they can benefit from the course and potentially use that knowledge to improve their own lives and those around them (e.g. through the ways in which they approach mental health, memory/learning, sleep, attention, bias, stress, prosocial behavior, conformity, and obedience). I want them to find excitement and relevance from the concepts they learn, which I believe can most easily and effectively be achieved by connecting the course content to their lived experiences.

Enrollment/demographics

I do collect general demographics on my students, so I am aware of who I am teaching, their individual concerns, and general pedagogical considerations that need to be made. For the course that I analyzed with this portfolio (i.e Fall 21), I had 198 students; 73% were first year students. This is a normal distribution, especially since at least half of my class seats are intentionally reserved for new students. Most students are between the ages of 18-20 at the start of the semester; however, I also noticed a good number of 17 year olds (i.e. ~1%). Occasionally, I have non-traditional students and/or students with children of their own, but this is a relatively rare occurrence (~4-10%). Additionally, in the Fall of 2021, 32% of my students were first-generation and 78% were White.

Many students at the time of taking this course are undecided (i.e. 10%) or likely to change their major. In the past year, I’ve seen ~15-20% start the class with a psychology major or minor. There are generally 10% of students who are majoring or minoring in biology and 10% with a nutrition major or minor. Additionally, ~5-10% are Criminal Justice majors/minors. Less than 5% are majoring or minoring in areas like Journalism, Philosophy, Political Science, Math, Computer Science, Business Administration, Finance, History, and Communications. Therefore, there is a very wide range of student majors in my course.

Approximately 50-60% of students take this course because it is required by their major, degree, or college. Another 35-40% of students take this course as an elective. Some students have taken a psychology course in high school while others have zero experience with the subject. Those who have taken other introductory science courses have some familiarity with research and the scientific method (which is most of the first unit); however, I generally assume

they have no experience with this information as it tends to be a little more difficult for them to grasp (even with prior exposure).

One thing that is unique to this course, especially in the Fall, is the number of students I have who have never been in a class of this size. A good number of students went to high schools with approximately the same number of students in our classroom (or even come from schools that had less students than are in our classroom). Many students mention this as an initial concern on a survey I give at the beginning of the semester, and I have directly talked with many students trying to adjust to a setting where they know absolutely no one even in a large room, whereas in high school, they were familiar with everyone they encountered.

As first year freshmen, many of my students (~70-85%) live in dorms and/or with a roommate. Many students are also working or currently looking for work. Therefore, I am keenly aware of life adjustments that are happening outside of the classroom which may impact their academic performance. I plan to use these considerations throughout my course portfolio as I suspect they will have an impact on students' achievement of my learning objectives and course goals.

Teaching Methods, Course Materials, and Course Assessments

Now that there is some provided background on the course and its intended goals, I'd like to discuss my specific approach to teaching this course (i.e. my teaching methods, course materials, and course assessments as well as a rationale for these features). As part of this process, I will include an explicit consideration of 2 of my portfolio goals: analyzing the type of content in my course and consideration of support provided to first semester freshmen and first generation students.

Teaching Methods and Rationale

This section will outline the different methodologies I use in teaching, what course goals I hope to achieve with each method, and why I use each methodology. I'll start off by focusing specifically on what happens within the classroom.

In class elements. Given that this course is 4 credit hours and a gateway course for many other Psychology courses, there are a lot of course components for Intro Psychology. The primary elements that make up my contact time with students are lecture and peer-to-peer discussions. I have been trying to implement more activities and demonstrations as well. I see students for 150 minutes each week (traditionally in-person, but when I had to teach this course online, I counted lecture videos and class assignments as my 'contact' hours).

At the start of each class/lecture, I've found it incredibly important to review material discussed in the previous lesson. When I first started teaching in graduate school, I undervalued this process to my (and the student's) detriment. Reviewing each lesson helps me gauge what students recall from our previous class and helps me identify what they are still struggling with. There have been many times where I was surprised by their lack of knowledge and have had to spend 15-20 minutes reviewing past material instead of the 5 minutes I had planned for review. While this cuts in to time for the new lesson, I have found it extremely valuable for students to

make sure they are on solid ground with past material before proceeding too far with new material. Even though my course content does not always build on each module to the extent that I would like, there are elements that they will need to understand from one lesson to be able to fully understand a new lesson. However, I think the utmost importance of reviewing for me is to make sure that students are comfortable (and somewhat confident) in their knowledge of previous material so they feel capable and secure in handling new information. Additionally, reviewing material from a past class (with a 1-2 day delay) triggers the spacing and testing effect, which psychological research has found to be useful for student learning (Roediger & Karpicke, 2018).

The reviewing of previous content quite easily works towards Course Goal #1: (Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology) and is usually applied in nature as I come up with novel examples (which hits on Course Goal #5: Apply psychological concepts to 'everyday' phenomena and critical issues). However, I hope it also contributes towards Course Goal #2 (i.e. Appreciate key figures and historical events that has helped shape psychology). I think if I more intentionally design the review questions to connect phenomena to broader historical contexts within psychology, I can better achieve goal #2.

I do provide some participation points for in-class attendance/engagement. Usually, those points are relatively simple to obtain and are meant to reward those who are engaged as well as help buffer points for those who may struggle with exams or more traditional assessments. Unless I'm teaching online, I do not provide participation points every day as the variable reward schedule is better at creating lasting behavior than a fixed schedule (e.g. Van Houten & Nau, 1980), and I don't think it's appropriate or necessary to provide these points every day. (When teaching online, I did do participation points every day through a variety of mini-assignments that were designed to mimic in-class discussions and checks of understanding; I found these helped students be confident in what they were learning and made listening to lectures online a little more meaningful). Obtaining participation points for an in-person class may involve answering a review question through Canvas or completing a quick survey (where I either am asking for their feedback on something in the course or am just asking a 'fun' getting to know you question, like 'Describe your favorite meal.'). All participation points are completed through Canvas which allows for easy grading and an easy check on attendance when need be. This method was also useful in Fall 2021 as I was able to leave that participation question open online for any online students to complete as soon as they were able to watch the recorded lecture.

My main goal during class time is to cover content from the book that may be more difficult and to go more in-depth on certain topics. I do not like to teach only information that students have seen in the textbook, but rather, I try to use my lectures as a supplement and clarification of the textbook. I've found that many students appreciate a balance of new and revisited information so that they can see how the textbook material is connected to other course content and can make sure they fully grasped information they've (hopefully) previously read. In my experience, many students do not feel comfortable, nor do they retain information well from solely reading.

During my lectures, I use a PowerPoint as a guiding outline for myself and students. I try to reduce the amount of text and superfluous pictures and instead provide highlights of important information and graphics when they seem like they will contribute to student understanding and engagement. I have found the ‘design’ function in PowerPoint to be very helpful in presenting information in a varied, visually appealing, and useful format. I do provide a copy of slides to students, though those slides often have intentional gaps to encourage students to write down important information, as writing notes is more effective in learning than simply reading what someone else has written (Dunkel et al., 1989). I explicitly inform students that the notes I provide are not complete, and even if they write down everything that I have on the slides I present, they are still going to be missing key information. Therefore, I encourage them to write down examples that we discuss and any other information that would be useful in helping them remember new content. To encourage and help facilitate this process, I actually offer extra credit to students who submit their notes (as long as the notes include something not written on the slides). I also encourage students to look at other student’s submitted notes so they can get ideas on how to organize their notes and see what kinds of information other students are adding. My hope is that they use other’s notes to help fill in any gaps they may have as they prepare for the exam.

I do have a slight equity concern with the notes feature of the class. I worry that students who are less certain of their knowledge of the material (i.e. those who may most benefit from such an exercise) will not participate due to fear of being judged for how they’ve written their notes or because they feel this activity is not meant for them. I believe it’s likely that these students may disproportionately be first generation and/or first-semester freshmen. Since this concern relates to one of my main goals of this portfolio, I’d like to take some time outlining my thoughts in this area.

Over the past couple of years, I have experimented allowing students to view others’ notes even when they have not posted their own notes. I believe this permissiveness helps combat some of the equity concerns I have; however, I worry that (a very small number of) students may then take others’ notes and submit as their own for extra credit. I did not find evidence of this happening but given that there are 200 students (and usually 1/3 submit notes), it’s always possible I overlook or miss something. I’m also concerned that by allowing everyone to view everyone else’s notes, there may be some students who do not attend lecture and simply rely entirely on those notes for their learning. I have also not received pushback when I’ve explained to students why I only allow those who submit notes to see others’ notes, but of course, the students I worry most about being disparately impacted are not likely to speak up.

To combat these different considerations, I’m going to try something new this semester. I’m going to let students view the notes of everyone else for the first exam unit so they have the ability to try to learn from others’ note taking if they are unconfident in their abilities and/or need to see some good examples first. I will also ‘like’ those notes which I initially think are exemplary. ‘Liking’ posts in a discussion board puts those towards the top of what students see, and while I’ve encouraged students to ‘like’ those notes which they think are best, I’ve never actually seen them do it (across 4 different courses in 2 years). Therefore, I’m hoping I can model that behavior I’d like to see or at least make explicit which notes I think would be most helpful to students who may be struggling more with this process. After the first exam, I

changed the discussion board settings so that only those who are posting notes can view others' notes. This change helped me feel more secure that the notes feature is being used in the way I intend. I did not notice any major difference in attendance based on how accessible the notes feature was (i.e. if they had to post their own copy of the notes or not). However, in a survey, I did notice less students finding the notes feature helpful after I forced students to post their own versions first. This data point gives me further pause from limiting notes access in the future, as I don't think the negative effects I was concerned about really occurred based on access to notes.

The content I cover within lectures is explicitly and intricately linked with all 5 of my course goals. It is my hope that those who utilize the note-sharing feature are further developing Course Goal #1 (i.e. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology), Course Goal #2 (i.e. Appreciate key figures and historical events that helped shape psychology), and Course Goal #4 (i.e. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills). I would like to be more intentional about including diverse voices throughout the semester; I think I do a better job of that in earlier modules, and I do think I provide relatively diverse viewpoints on different psychological phenomena, but I know that I have fallen into the bias of discussing more stereotypical psychologists (i.e. white men). One idea I've heard to hold myself more accountable on that front and to help students see the diversity is to provide pictures of different psychologists that I discuss.

Within my lectures, I have intentionally sectioned off areas with a slide that I call "Muddy points." There are usually 2-4 of these slides in a 50 minute lecture. It's a way for me to intentionally check that students feel comfortable with the material thus far and allows for a natural segmenting of material, which I find especially helpful for a class such as Intro that covers a large breadth of information that sometimes has to be chunked a little. These slides do not include anything other than the heading "Muddy points?" and an image of a cute animal (who is usually muddy), and then I'll ask if there are any questions on what we've covered thus far. Students tend to like the humor and break that such a slide provides; I've even had students provide pictures of their own pets that I can use for these slides, which I think helps create a greater sense of belonging within the class. This is something I'd be especially interested to measure for first generation and first semester students. One thing that I've realized from having a colleague sit in on a lecture is that I should take more of an opportunity during this time to test their knowledge instead of just asking for questions they have, particularly when they indicate they don't have questions.

I often throw in opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion during class time as well. I generally design these discussions as a think-pair-share or just a pair-share activity (depending on how deeply I want them to think on a topic). The questions I pose to students are almost always applied and rarely have one 'correct' answer (only review questions have one correct answer). Instead, I want to stimulate students' interest and application of the material to their own lives, so I'll ask them to come up with an example for a particular phenomena or have them weigh the validity of a particular theory (generally one that is highly debated in the field). These prompts are designed to facilitate Course Goal #1 (i.e. demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology), Course Goal #4 (i.e. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning), and Course Goal #5 (i.e. Apply psychological concepts to 'everyday' phenomena and critical issues). I would like to be more cognizant of achieving

Course Goal #3 (i.e. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology) with these discussions.

After students have completed the think-pair portion of the discussion, I then have students volunteer to share information they talk about in their small group or pairing. While students were discussing amongst themselves, I will try to ‘auditorily patrol’ the classroom to get ideas of what they are discussing. If there is a hesitancy to share information with the class (or if I heard a good discussion that is not being mentioned in front of the whole class), I will summarize what I heard that I thought was insightful and see if anyone wants to elaborate or add to that example. I do not like to cold-call students as many have noted to me how uncomfortable it makes them, and there are also many who struggle with social anxiety. Therefore, I believe calling on my students in such a manner will heighten their anxiety and shut off their openness or ability to learn, which then hinders the accomplishment of any of my 5 course goals.

I do not use quite as many in-class demonstrations or activities as I would like as my first couple of years teaching this course has focused more on figuring out what content I want to spend the most time on and how to best convey information through lecturing and discussions. I have been able to incorporate these elements a little more when we switched to online learning, and I have absolutely integrated them into the course’s online recitations (which I’ll discuss more in the next section).

Elements outside of class. I give similar consideration to what I have students to complete outside of class time as I do for when they are learning in the classroom. The components that make up this time are a bit more varied than what occurs in the classroom. Many of these elements I actually consider to be assessments of their learning, so they will be described more in the ‘Course Assessments’ section. However, I will spend some time in this section discussing the recitation, textbook, and research requirement of the course as I see those as more of a teaching tool rather than an assessment.

Recitation. As I mentioned previously, the use of recitations is relatively new to me as an instructor and to my specific section of Intro. Traditionally, recitations were intended to be in-person meetings of ~25 students as a means to create a smaller, focused group that allowed for more easier teaching and informal testing of certain material (particularly more difficult concepts). While the goal of this format is good (and was hopefully achieved), it is not super sustainable for all Intro sections to take this face-to-face approach. Around Fall 2020, the main instructors of Intro advocated firstly that all sections of Intro officially incorporate recitations as it created a huge disparity between sections to not have that component (i.e. some students were getting more practice and material than other students even though everyone was paying for the same amount of credits, and grades were more heavily weighted given the extra credit hour; there was also disparity in the amount of work instructors needed to teach each section). To rectify this disparity, our Intro Psychology instructors have switched to online recitations (with the option for in-person should an instructor choose); previously, there had only been one course with face-to-face recitations, which resulted in the management of at least twice as many TAs and more instruction needed for those TAs. There was also a lot more variability in students’ experiences with different TAs, even though there was prior training and attempts at equalizing experiences. It is our hope that the online recitations will help standardize students’ experiences and help reduce the disparate workload on instructors. The 3 main Intro instructors also received

a grant to pull together various recitation activities for different topics, so that new (or seasoned) instructors would not have to create online recitations from scratch; those suggestions also serve as a good resource for anyone looking to revamp recitations from year to year.

Since recitations are new to me, I've had a bit of a learning curve in how to teach them and how to manage the 5-7 Undergraduate Learning Assistants (ULAs) who have helped me run and grade those sections. One important lesson I've learned is to be very organized in how I assign tasks to ULAs and how I keep track of what's been completed. I've found that using a google document or checklist from monday.com has been very helpful. I have also learned that I need to be very specific in my directions to ULAs so that grading is consistent and meeting my standards. I do try to do some informal quality control checks on grading, but I realize I need to be more formal and systematic in that process. During this Fall 21 course, I did survey my ULAs to identify any areas I can better support them and to determine benefits they are getting out of the experience. I have not yet had time to analyze that data, but I will before teaching the course again.

The recitation component of the course makes up 1 credit hour of Intro Psychology, so students are expected to spend ~1 hour a week with this assignment. All online recitation sections that I'm aware of treat it as an asynchronous element to the course, but the specific activities and topics vary across sections. In my particular section, I have 10-12 recitations in a 16 week semester (some weeks there is not enough new content to justify a recitation component and/or it's an exam week). Recitations are used to apply content learned that week. I used to have recitations due on Friday (for a MWF course), but I realized that is not always enough time if I want to have the recitation be related to content covered Wednesday or Friday; therefore, in Fall 2021, I started having recitations due on Sundays (unless there's an exam and the timing makes more sense to be due on Fridays).

I try to make the recitation activities themselves pretty varied. There are a couple that involve watching a video (like a TED talk) and discussing some elements of it. Others involve conducting mini studies or demonstrations. For example, they have to come up with a way of testing classical and operant conditioning and write about the results. Some recitations have students complete a scale (e.g. a stress or sleep deprivation scale) and then reflect on the results and ways to help improve any habits based on psychological research. And other recitation sections ask students to apply a concept in a new way, either by coming up with a unique example or by contributing to a debate in the field (e.g. the presence of true altruism). Recitations are graded based on how well they addressed the prompt and if they correctly applied the material.

I do ask for feedback on each recitation, and I've found in general students really like various types of recitations as it reduces the feeling on monotony and predictability, without it feeling wholly unfamiliar (which I feel is especially critical in an online assignment). On average, I think most students prefer the recitations that involve some sort of self-understanding related to a psychological concept, which I think is a useful way to accomplish Course Goal #5 (i.e. Apply psychological concepts to 'everyday' phenomena and critical issues). The design of the recitations themselves is also directly tied to Course Goal #1 (i.e. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology) and Course Goal #4 (i.e. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills). This is another area that I think Course

Goal #3 (i.e. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology) is implicitly highlighted but could be made more explicit. I believe these recitations are also great opportunities to help connect material across modules; currently, I focus pretty intently on only one concept from a specific module, but I'd like to explore more about how I can use recitations to show the connections of a specific concept to other phenomena and areas of psychology.

Textbook. I also expect students to read the textbook outside of the in-person class meeting. The textbook I assign is Myers & DeWall- 11th edition (2019). I chose this book most for its smart quizzing feature and the way it displays the stats of students' quiz results (which makes it very easy for me to determine which areas they are struggling with most). I discuss the smart quizzing feature more in the 'Course Assessments' section.

I also chose this book because I like the examples it uses and the way it applies material. It seems easily understandable and relatable to students. Additionally, the price is fair (~\$57). I use inclusive access which further reduces the price by ~\$15. Since the quizzes are only featured in the online product (and those are necessary for the course), it is highly important to me that the book be as cheap as possible. While this may create a concern of equal access based on cost, inclusive access does allow for the textbook to be charged to one's student account like tuition (making it easier to cover with scholarships/grants). Additionally, I believe the smart quizzing feature helps counteract other equity concerns, as I believe it helps promote and individualize each student's learning, no matter what level they are. In fact, in my Fall 21 course evaluations, the textbook and its quizzing feature were probably the most highly mentioned components of the course. Therefore, I believe the benefits outweigh the costs, and I am very clear on that reasoning with my students. Students who prefer a paper version also have the option to buy a loose-leaf copy from the bookstore (for ~\$20), though they will still be required to have the online platform as well for the quizzes (which also has an ebook included).

Another reason I chose this book is that it is split into modules, which is basically just shortened sections of a chapter. There might be 2-4 modules that would usually make up an entire chapter. I find the moduled approach more useful as I'm not able to cover a full chapter within one class period, and I like the more focused approach. Basically, rather than expecting students to read and retain a very large chunk of information for an entire week or two, I am only asking them to focus on what I can cover within a day's time. This does of course mean though that there are readings almost every day (excluding the days that I take 2 days to cover a module). However, a good handful of students mentioned in my Fall 21 course evaluations that they really liked having multiple mini assignments throughout the week, which included regular readings.

I used to require students to read the textbook (and complete the subsequent quizzes) prior to the start of class. My goal with that was to use that as a method to hold them more accountable for reading. That approach is still the method I prefer, but I realized that some students learn better by reading after lecture, and overall, it's more important to me that they have an understanding of the material in general- rather than that the timing occurs prior to lecture. Therefore, I do allow for students to complete the reading and quiz by the end of the day that the topic was covered in lecture. This extension allows students to use the textbook in a manner that works best for them- i.e. as a formative or summative tool.

Research requirement. The other component that occurs outside of class is the research requirement, which exists for all sections of Intro Psychology. This is a component that is usually required in Intro Psychology courses at all universities where any research is conducted as it is a way for the psychology department to fill the research participant pool. However, in order to avoid coercion, students must be presented with an alternative to research participation. Therefore, to fulfill the research requirement for my course, students have the option to do 2 things: participate in a research study and/or summarize a research article. They have to earn 120 points total; each 30 minutes they spend as a research participant is worth 10 points while each research summary they write is worth 20 points. Therefore, they can mix and match what they do to attain all 120 points; ideally, I would like students to have experience with both research options; however, I cannot require their participation in research. Instead, I simply explain why I think there are benefits to both options and encourage them to try at least one of each.

Explaining these options and why it's a requirement is actually something that usually takes up an entire class day as I've found students to have a lot of questions and confusion that needs to be worked out. I have created a more detailed instructions document to try to outline the expectations and process for each option. I have also gone from having them generally summarize a research article to having them answer specific questions in an outline/abled format. That outline also provides some information on where to look for the answers to different questions. Since they have not yet been taught how to fully read and interpret research articles, this activity is meant to give them familiarity with research reports rather than to have them apply or engage in significant critical thinking. Therefore, this assignment mostly focuses on Course Goal #1 (i.e. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology). However, I do ask a couple of questions that try to elicit some application of Course Goal #3 (i.e. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology); however, students are really only graded on their ability to show general understanding of the article, rather than on their ability to apply or critique an article. There is a document provided by the department that helps explain the option of being a research participant.

I believe the extra time I have committed to providing more detailed instructions and more thoroughly answering questions during class time is beneficial to all students. It is also my hope that it may especially help students less likely to speak up and less likely to have much prior knowledge about this type of process, which I think would likely be first generation and first semester freshmen. I also touch base a couple of times during the semester to remind students of this requirement and to check in with any new questions or issues that have popped up. Students do tend to wait until the end of the semester to work on this assignment; however, since it's expected to take at least 6 hours, that timing usually does not work in students' favor. Therefore, I remind students of the time commitment and encourage them (both within class and in the syllabus) to accomplish a certain amount by a specific date in the semester.

The research summary is graded as pass/fail (as is the research participation). For anyone who submits a summary that has a grade of 0, they are able to revise and resubmit that summary if it is prior to the end of the semester (hence another reason I encourage them to complete the task sooner than later). I believe this ability to resubmit helps reduce anxiety for students to get it 'right' and allows for a more thorough learning process. However, for the first time ever, I

started grading research reports as 0, 10, or 20 (i.e. full) points. This was done as the work was not quite up to the level it should have been but also didn't seem fully deserving of 0 points. I'm not fully sure why the submissions in Fall 21 seemed to have more mediocre submissions than previously, but I think I may simply need to tone down the requirements for the assignment, make the instructions more clear, and/or spend a little more time in class talking about research articles and how they're written.

I do also want students to fill out a study guide outside of class time. I provide them with a list of terms that are important to know, and usually that list covers 90-95% of what's on the exam. I tell them to write down definitions for each term as well as examples, and then most importantly, to compare how terms within and between modules are similar and/or different from each other (as many test questions are trying to determine how well they can distinguish between similar concepts- which I believe helps me capture how well they truly know a concept). I also tell them that it will be most helpful to them if they are actually looking up the information in their notes and book as they fill it out so they can revisit that information. Many students I've met with who struggled on the exam were not completing these steps, and sometimes only glanced through the study guide mentally checking off what they thought they knew.

Course Assessments

In general, my course assessment philosophy is to be more formative than summative. I find that this approach 'lowers the stakes' and results in mistakes being seen as more acceptable; in fact, making mistakes seems to be helpful to students' learning and reduces overall anxiety. There are 2 main things that I consider to be assessments in my standard face-to-face class: unit exams and module readings quizzes from the textbook.

As mentioned previously, I found my textbook especially appealing given its smart quizzing feature. The smart quizzing feature means that students will continue to receive questions on topics based on how well they are answering questions. For example, they will receive more questions on topics that they are struggling with and less of those they seem to know well. The quiz also presents more difficult questions (which are worth more points) for students who get more questions correct; this process allows for a more in-depth and quicker testing for those who already know the material pretty well. The smart-quizzing feature requires students to reach a certain number of points, so they are graded as pass/fail on attaining a particular level of understanding (i.e. they are graded on whether or not they reach the minimum level of expected knowledge), but the quizzing is done in such a manner as to cater to each individual student's needs. Students have cited this as helpful.

I believe this quizzing process acts in a formative role and especially helps attain Course Goal #1 (i.e. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology). There are also some applied questions, which helps in working towards Course Goal #4 (i.e. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills) and Course Goal #5 (i.e. Apply psychological concepts to 'everyday' phenomena and critical issues). I assign a quiz with every module, which tends to be ~26-29 quizzes a semester (with an average of ~2 per week and 3 per week maximum). I do drop a certain number of the lowest scoring quizzes, and since the quizzes are pass/fail, students can essentially skip a certain number of quizzes before there are any consequences to their overall grade. I do encourage students that if they feel

overwhelmed in a particular week, they should take advantage of this policy; however, it is beneficial to their learning overall to complete these quizzes, so I normally only drop 2-4 quizzes in a semester.

The main form of assessment in my course is the unit exams. I have based my units on the 5 pillars of Intro Psychology outlined by an APA taskforce (Cognitive; Developmental; Social and Personality; Biological; Mental and Physical Health; Gurung et al., 2016); hence there are 5 exams. I have made significant changes to the process of these exams over the last 2 years. I originally gave a standard, timed multiple-choice exam that students had to take at the Testing Center with no outside resources. During Covid, I completely changed my exam procedure and have found it to be extremely helpful for student learning as well as for their mental states, and it's a change I have and will continue. Specifically, I allow for 3 attempts on the exam with no location restriction. Additionally, students can take the exam with notes, the textbook, and even use the Internet, so long as they are not using other people. Students have 3 days to take the exam, with one of those days being the time we would normally have taken the exam in class or at the testing center; I do not teach anything new on that day but am available for any questions during our usual class time.

The reason why I'm okay with such a flexible and open exam format is because I essentially have 6-10 different versions of each exam question. Specifically, I have created question pools of 6-10 questions, so that students will randomly see only one version of a question each time they take the exam. I have intentionally written the questions so that those being pulled from the same question pool are measuring one's knowledge about the same concept and are of similar difficulty; I do check for specific questions that may have been missed more than others and adjust where needed. I communicate to students that the goal of these questions to test them on a concept from a variety of angles (e.g. within one question pool, a question may focus on students identifying an independent variable while another question option has students indicate the dependent variable but all questions are focused on being able to identify the difference between independent and dependent variables).

Since this format of testing is pretty unique, I do provide example questions when reviewing each day so the students can see how I design multiple versions of the same question and so they can understand the level of application they will have to engage in. I also host in person review sessions (during a typical class day) in which we review a variety of questions, some of which are actually a version of one of the exam's 400-500 question options. Those review questions are in a PowerPoint, which has extra information in the notes sections for when students study at home. Those notes contain information on which module to find the answer, what the answer is, and a brief explanation on why one answer is correct (or why others are incorrect).

Basically, regarding the exam, students are sincerely taking a different test with each attempt. It is highly unlikely that they will see the same question on multiple attempts and even if they do, it will not happen for all 50 questions on the exam. Even if they partner with other students and take the exam at the same time, each student will receive different questions, so it would almost take them more time trying to coordinate and check what questions they might have in common. Additionally, I do not provide the correct answer, so even if they see the same question twice, they have to have figured out what the right answer is. I do have Canvas indicate

which questions they missed and am willing to talk through things with students in case they can't figure out the correct answer after they take the exam. My main goal is that they understand the bigger picture trying to be tested, and I believe learning from one's mistakes helps that process. Therefore, I encourage them to use previous exam attempts to help understand the concepts being tested. This creates a great formative assessment, with some summative knowledge being required as well.

In order to best serve students most at risk of struggling with the exam (e.g. first semester freshmen, first generation students, those with mental health issues, etc.), I am very open about the types of support I will provide all students, regardless of their official accommodation status. I communicate this information in class, in the syllabus, and through emails. I do not provide answers to students while they take the exam, but I do help them in other ways. Basically, the types of things I've done have involved splitting the exam in half (which is helpful for those with testing anxiety or who overthink questions and are therefore overly exerted by the end of the full length exam), being present while students take the exam (which has been helpful for those who don't understand the wording of the questions, those with language barriers, or those who tend to overthink questions), and I've discussed wrong exam questions with students in between attempts to help them learn from past mistakes. I've found these approaches to be helpful to a variety of students, including international students, those with anxiety, ADHD, OCD, and those who never learned good testing strategies.

Many students have made comments (in official evaluations and specific exam surveys) regarding how much they appreciate the testing format. It seems that having 3 attempts greatly reduces many students' level of anxiety. I think this approach is useful in general for students who are unfamiliar with college exams' format and/or how to study well (particularly first semester freshmen) and is generally useful to everyone who has not previously taken a course with me (i.e. most of the students) as each professor tends to have their own style for developing exam questions. With 3 attempts, students are able to use 1 of them as a trial to 'test the waters' and direct their future studying on the same exam. And yet, with so many versions of the exam, I am confident that further attempts on the exam indicate real learning rather than being a result of an artifact. I also believe students perform better with this exam process because they have less anxiety, allowing them to really focus on learning rather worry about earning a specific grade.

Quite a few students have also stated how they appreciate the fact that they feel like they are learning while taking the exam instead of just having the exam measure what they know at one point in time (which could be heavily influenced by difficult, outside factors). Some do struggle a little with the format and sometimes think the process involves 'trick' questions. I will continue to provide examples throughout the semester and provide helpful advice to hopefully reduce those impressions. I have noticed over the years as I continually refine questions with undesirable discrimination statistics, that I have had less of these complaints.

Most of my exam questions are applied examples and cannot simply be googled. This also helps achieve Course Goal #5 (i.e. Apply psychological concepts to 'everyday' phenomena and critical issues), Course Goal #4 (i.e. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills), and Course Goal #1 (i.e. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology). I do check each semester for questions that may have been uploaded online

but have yet to run into such an issue. I believe that's mostly due to the exam feeling like a lower stakes assessment and not worth the time it would take to cheat (e.g. they won't ever have access to all possible versions of a question, so it would take a coordinated effort of quite a number of students to make that option actually useful to future students). The exams are still timed and do require students to at least have information organized in an easily accessible manner; most students take ~40 minutes to take the 50 question exam, which I've found to be fairly similar to when students took the exam at the testing center without outside resources.

Conclusion

Overall, Course Goal #3 (i.e. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology) is one I need to pay more attention to when designing assignments and what occurs in class. I have created a whole lesson devoted to identifying sound science, and I hope it's something they will become at least implicitly aware of in other topics. However, I know that is not enough, which I think is evidenced by students in my upper level courses struggling with some basic terminology related to the scientific method.

The traditional method of teaching research methods through a specific unit and through the research requirements assignment of the course is not sufficient (even with the more detailed outline I created for research reports). Especially since the research methods and scientific thinking modules occur at the beginning of the semester, I believe students have gaps related to the context and applicability of this material. I think I need to capitalize more on incorporating concepts like control groups, double blind studies, reliability, independent and dependent variables, confounding variables, operational definitions, replication, random assignment/true experimental design, between/within subjects design, and elements of significance testing across modules (and not just zero in on them in the 'research methods' module).

I think most of these concepts can best be illustrated by discussing specific research studies related to a particular module and highlighting one or two of those terminologies through that example. Currently, I focus more on general theories and their application without always providing specific studies associated with those theories. However, there are some terms (i.e. independent/dependent variables, confounding variables, and operational definitions) I would like to incorporate on a pretty frequent basis, by which I mean at least explicitly defining and applying those terms twice each exam unit. Currently, I do include information about validity and standardization when discussing intelligence, so I plan to use that lesson as a model on how to regularly incorporate technical, scientific processes and terminology into daily lessons.

Given the breadth of what must be covered in Intro Psych, I would also like to do a better job of connecting content between modules and even between exam units, which I think I can do by providing more historical context and more explicit elaboration on those connections. This focus would likely also enhance Course Goal #2 (i.e. Appreciate key figures and historical events that has helped shape psychology). Completing this portfolio has actually greatly helped me in parsing out what different modules have in common and how to best connect them. Using that newly created framework, I'm hoping I can better present material as a cohesive story of psychology instead of as independent topics.

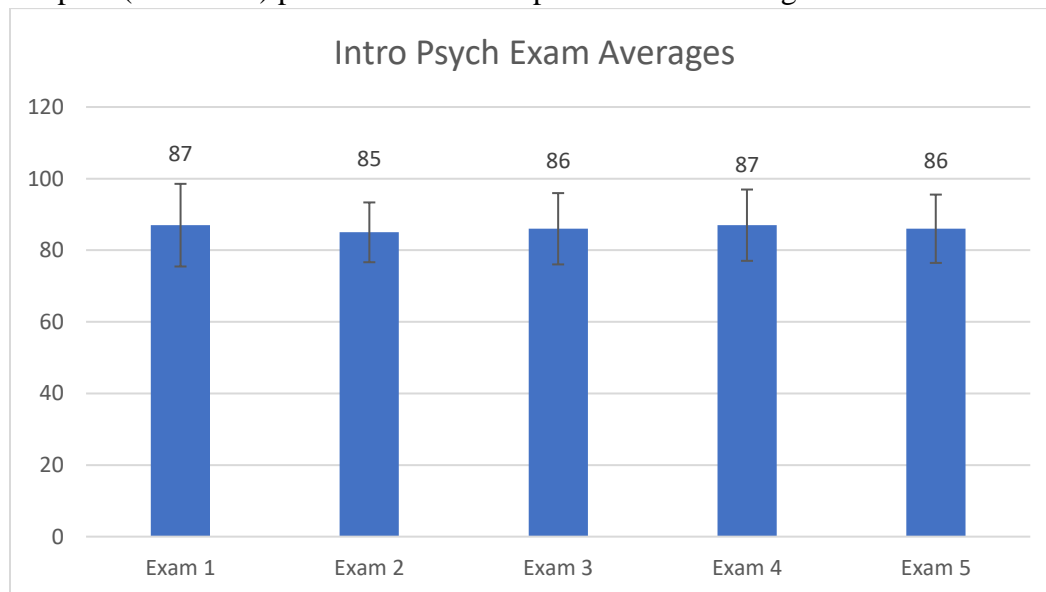
Assessment of Goals

The first of my portfolio goals was to ensure that course goals, learning objectives, and assessments are in sync. Therefore, I will re-outline the course goals and summarize different assessments related to each goal. Additionally, because my course goals overlap with my second goal for the portfolio, I believe this section will also address that goal: to analyze the type of content in my course, to ensure the use of diverse voices, and to provide adequate opportunities to apply material and practice critical thinking.

Course Goal #1. Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology.

The most effective way that I assess students' general knowledge in the course is through exams. Each exam focuses on a different pillar of psychology according to the model proposed by Gurung et al. (2016). One thing to recall when looking at my course exam averages is that students were allowed 3 attempts over the course of 3 days; however, each time they took the exam, they were likely given different questions as each exam question came from a pool of ~6-10 total questions. This model gives the exam a formative as well as summative purpose, so scores may be slightly inflated compared to a pure summative approach. I do know that exam scores are ~10% higher since I've used this new approach, though I think part of that is due to my growth as an instructor in developing exam and because students are actually learning the material better.

Graph 1 (see below) provides a visual depiction of the averages for each exam.



In general, all exams seem to be relatively similar in terms of the average score, though there is a slightly higher standard deviation for the first exam compared to the others. However, I did have 3 question pools I gave back points for in Exam 4 as the discrimination statistics (and overall accuracy) were not consistent with other question pools. Without that adjustment, Exam

4 had an average of 81%, which was lower than the other exams. I think the main issue here was that I unintentionally made questions a little harder for this exam compared to other exams as this topic is the one that I specialized in for my doctorate (i.e. social psychology). I have fixed those question pools and hope not to have this issue in future semesters, but I will try to be extra aware of the ways in which I teach and assess this content compared to other content in Introductory Psychology. Overall, I do think these exam averages across ~200 students does indicate adequate knowledge of general concepts and theories in psychology (aligning with Course Goal #1).

The first exam focused primarily on the pillar of biopsychology, though it also disproportionately includes research methods. Gurung et al.'s (2016) model suggests that research should be more interspersed throughout the course, but this is something I have not been as good at incorporating yet, with the exception of some validity, standardization, and reliability material discussed in Exam 3's unit. Exam 2 focused on developmental psychology, and students did take an average of 5 less minutes on this exam compared to the others. Exam 3 focused primarily on cognitive psychology, Exam 4 on social and personality psychology, and Exam 5 covered clinical/abnormal psychology.

I had thought that the material in Exam 1 might be the most difficult, given its extra technical content in addition to it being the first exam, so I'm pleasantly surprised there isn't a major point difference in that exam compared to other exams. However, I have been considering that it may make more sense to rearrange my course material so that cognitive psychology is taught first, and then biopsychology. Biopsychology tends to be more polarizing regarding how much students enjoy the content, and so may be overly challenging as the first unit on psychology. Also, I already have one module from cognitive psychology in the first exam unit, because I like to use it to give students tips on studying, so the entire cognitive unit being taught first makes logical and cohesive sense as well.

Course Goal #2. Appreciate key figures and historical events that has helped shape psychology.

This goal covers material across all exams. I think the best way to assess this goal is to look at the percentage of exams questions correct related to explicitly testing knowledge of key individuals and events in psychology history (instead of questions related to testing terminology or psychological processes). However, doing this detailed of an analysis would take too long and seems unnecessary given that most of these types of questions are in Exam 1, and the class average for that exam was 87%. Additionally, when I asked students at the end of the semester, "How well do you feel like you learned the material in this course?", 17% responded 'somewhat well,' 69% responded 'pretty well,' and 13% responded 'extremely well.' No one (out of 156 responses) indicated that they learned 'nothing at all' or 'not very well.'

However, as a result of paying more attention to this goal while teaching this class in Fall 2021, I realized there are some areas that we spend a little more or less time on historical/key figure elements. For example, the unit on neuropsychology spends a little less time on key figures and historical events than the unit on developmental psychology. With this insight, I

should be better able to make adjustments in future semesters to even out some of this gap (which likely exists due to my personal unfamiliarity with neuroscience).

Course Goal #3. Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology.

I actually have a whole module devoted to this goal, which involves learning about heuristics, fallacies, and identifying misinformation and pseudoscience. However, this semester I accidentally forgot to include some of that information (due to an issue I had with files saving from last semester). So I am not able to assess this goal as well as I would like; however, I think I can use an assignment related to this topic here for some general information on assessment. One of those assignments required students to discuss a unique example of a spurious correlation. The class average grade for this assignment was an 85.4%. Out of 198 students, 148 received a grade between 95-100%; 17 students received a grade between 80-85%; 9 students earned a grade between 60-65%, and 3 students received a grade between 40-45%. There were 20 students who did not complete this assignment. I believe these grades indicate good knowledge of this specific concept; however, there were a handful of students who were given the opportunity to redo the assignment as they initially listed an example already given by someone else.

I used to have another assignment related to this concept, but I switched it out for one focused on historical figures in psychology (to try to get them exposed to more diverse psychologists). I need to contemplate how I can integrate both without overloading the students with work that week. In the future, I hope to have another assignment (accompanied by more detailed content) related to this course goal as a better assessment.

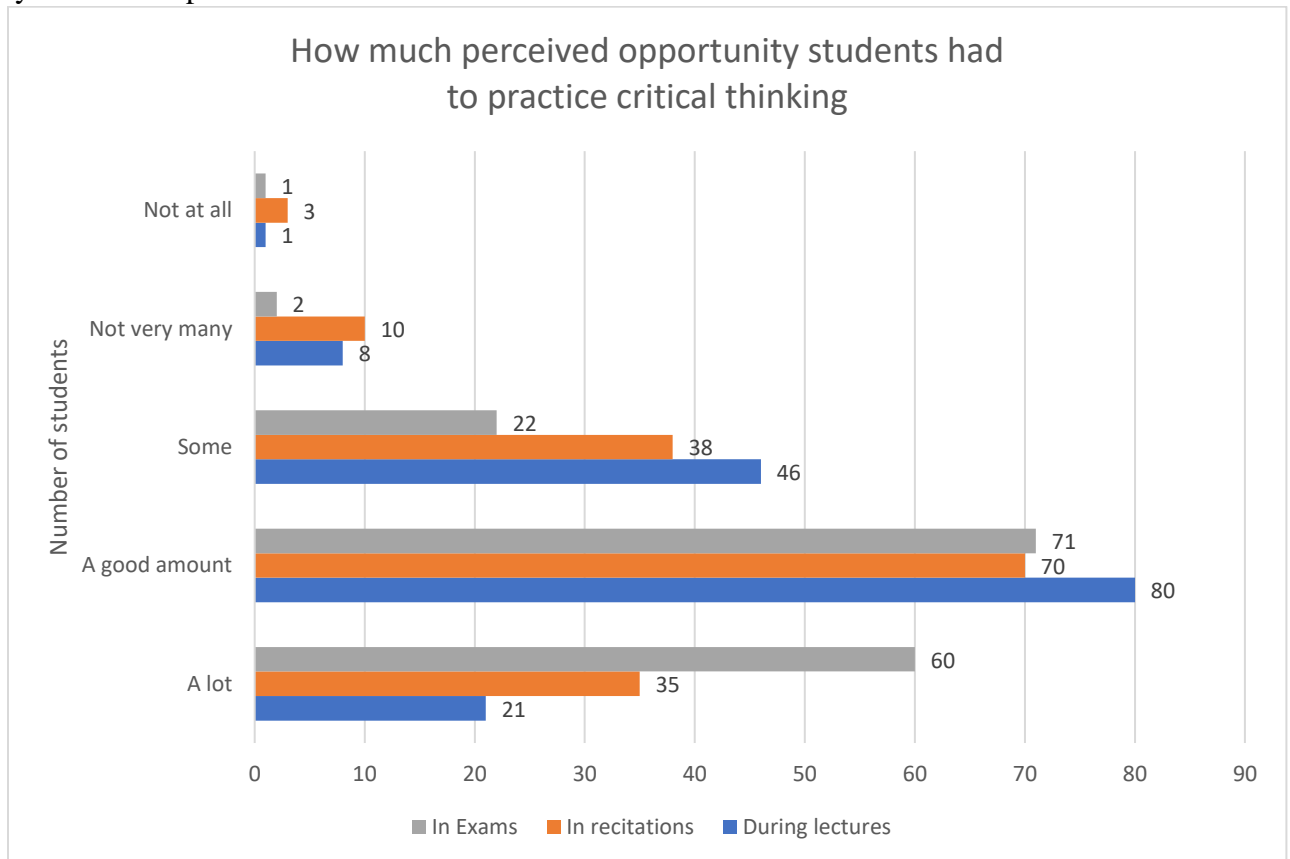
One last statistic I can offer related to this course goal though are the statistics for 2 exam question pools related to this topic. One question pool focused on how disinformation is spread. Across 7 questions, students picked the correct answer ~80% of the time. The other question pool contained 7 questions focused on identifying pseudoscience. Students correctly answered questions in this pool ~83% of the time. These statistics are a bit lower than I would generally like to show ‘proof’ of understanding these concepts; however, as mentioned earlier, I also did not lecture on this topic as much as I usually do, so I’d say the scores are okay given that factor. There is definitely still room to improve.

Course Goal #4. Further develop critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills.

As discussed previously, I believe students should display critical thinking and scientific reasoning by being able to ask and answer questions such as “Why is this true?”, “How do we know?”, and “What is the evidence?” I did not take official count, but I definitely noticed that towards the beginning half of the semester, students were more likely to ask these sorts of questions during class than they were in the latter half of the semester. I’m not sure why that would be the case; there still were some questions in the latter half, but they were just less frequent. Overall, most of these questions came from the same handful of students, so I do not have a fully accurate picture on how well all students were using these skills (though I have had many students report in evaluations and general surveys their appreciativeness of the ability to ask questions and get answers in the next class if I don’t know them immediately).

I do believe I have created exam questions and assignments that require the use of critical thinking and scientific reasoning skills; however, it is hard to determine how much they actually used these skills in responding to those questions (even if they got them correct). Therefore, I decided to directly ask my students about how many opportunities they felt they had to engage in critical thinking during this class.

I asked them how well they felt they were able to apply critical thinking in 3 different areas of the class (i.e. in recitations, lecture, and in the exams). The following graph provides a summary of those responses.



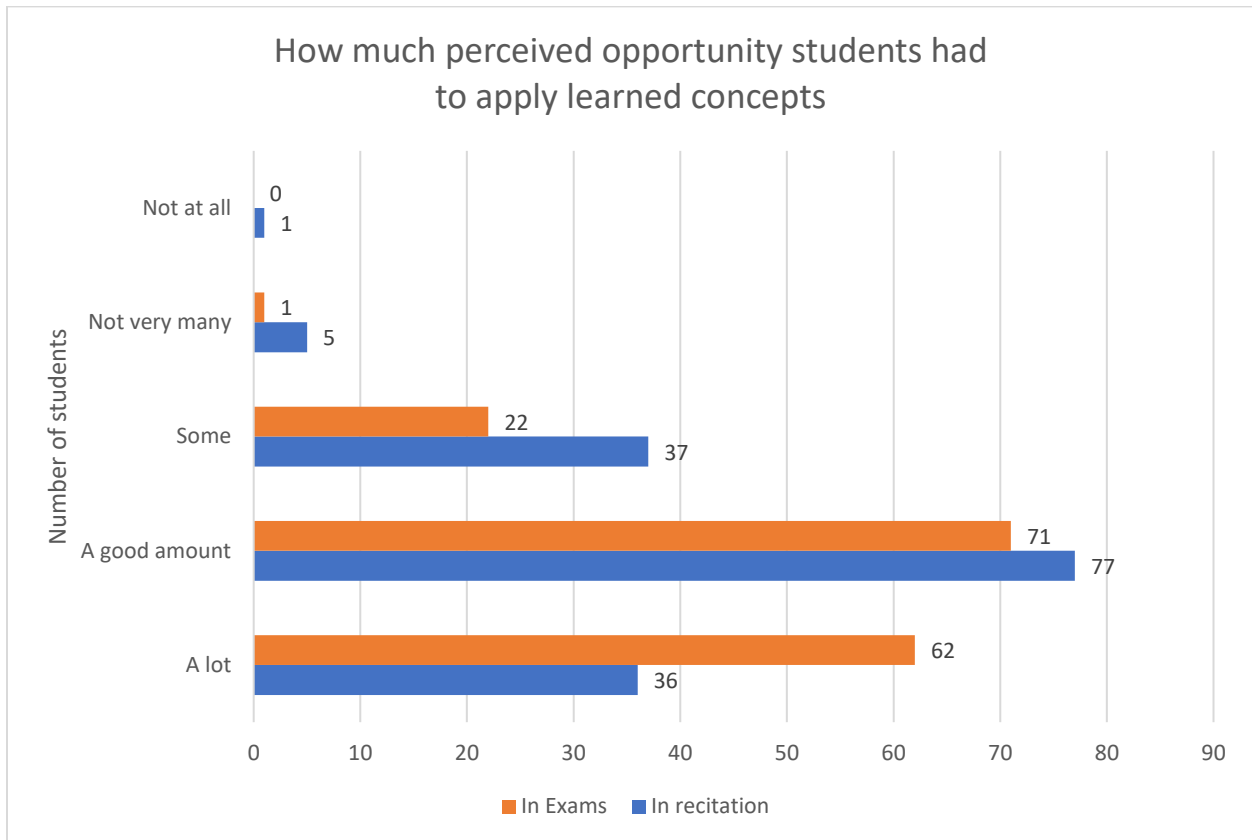
Overall, students seemed to find exams as the best opportunity to practice critical thinking (compared to lectures and recitations). However, for all 3 types of opportunities, at least 60% of students reported that they had ‘a lot’ or ‘a good amount’ of opportunities to apply critical thinking. Only 8% of students reported ‘not at all’ or ‘not very many’ opportunities to apply critical thinking in recitation assignments; 6% reported this issue in lectures, and only 2% reported low critical thinking opportunities in exams. These results make me feel pretty confident that I have structured my course well overall to achieve my goal of allowing for critical thinking.

Course Goal #5. Apply psychological concepts to “everyday” phenomena and critical issues.

This last goal is one that is one that I try hardest to engrain throughout all my units. When lecturing, I provided many examples throughout the semester of different psychological concepts as they apply to one’s everyday life. I also encouraged students to come up with their

own ideas in small groups and with the class as a whole. My exam questions also used novel examples to test their understanding of concepts in real life examples.

To determine if students noticed or felt there were adequate opportunities to apply material, I asked them how many opportunities they felt they had to apply material related to class in recitation assignments and in exams. I should have included a question focused on application within lecture, but missed that opportunity. The following chart shows the responses for the application related questions:

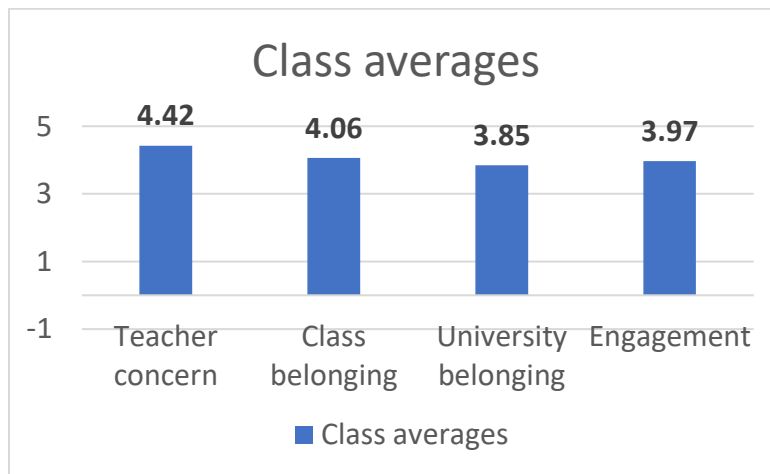


Overall, I'm very happy with what students reported for this objective. Similar to opportunities for critical thinking, exams were rated highly in terms of opportunities for application (i.e. 86% reported 'a lot' or 'a good amount' of application opportunities). However, there was also a large amount of students who reported that recitations were good application opportunities as well (i.e. 72% reported 'a lot' or 'a good amount' of application opportunities). Only 4% rated recitations low in application opportunities, and only 1 person reported low application opportunities in exams.

These results indicate to me that my reformatted exams have likely had my intended effect (i.e. to be focused on critical thinking and application skills). I'm also happy that the work put into my recitations seem to also be accomplishing that goal. Additionally, students provided positive feedback at the end of semester regarding the diversity and usefulness of the recitations (which was rewarding as I put in some extra thought after my informal mid-semester survey had a couple of people seem to indicate recitations felt less useful than they could be).

Additional reflection on course goals

I tried to focus heavily on creating a safe learning environment where students felt their opinion was valued and that they belonged in the class. I believe this approach best allows for students to generally learn, in ways that are relevant to all of my course goals. Additionally, having my students feel included and like they belong is a specific, unofficial goal of mine for every course I teach. Below is a graph summarizing students' responses to a belonging and engagement survey I gave them around the middle of the semester. Essentially, I asked students about how much they felt I cared about them, how much they felt they belonged in the class and at the university, and how engaged they felt in the class. The response options were on a 5-point scale.



The results generally indicated that students felt like they belonged in the class, that their teacher cared about them, and that they were engaged with the material. One area I might try to focus on in the future is how engaged they feel with the material; I want to spend more time thinking of activities or more discussions they can have with their peers. I think the best way for me to do this will be to cut out a couple of days' lessons to allow for more time in class to connect with other students while also engaging with and applying the course material.

At the end of the semester, I also ask students how well they felt supported by their instructor in the course. With 156 student responses, 60% said they felt 'extremely supported,' 34% felt 'pretty well supported,' and 6% felt 'somewhat supported.' No one reported not feeling supported 'at all' or 'not very well.'

Conclusion

Overall, I feel pretty good about the way I have taught and assessed my course goals. Students seemed to perform relatively well on exams, and the class average was ~88%. I think the one goal that could use the most attention in the future is Course Goal #3 (Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology). I also want to do better about integrating some of the elements discussed in the 5 pillars model (Gurung et al., 2016); specifically, I want to more consistently discuss elements related to research methods and ethics across the 5 units.

While students generally seemed to feel supported, my student feedback survey did provide me some insight on what else I can do to help students feel supported in the class (which I think will help further enhance all my course goals). Some of those suggestions included to reach out more to students. Usually, I email students after each exam, either to congratulate them on a high score, an improved score, or reach out if they seem to be struggling. While I don't email all 200 students for every exam, I do usually end up directly emailing 50-100 students for a given exam, which results in a good number of students being contacted by the end of the semester. This year I only reached out individually to students after the first and second exams. I simply found myself more overwhelmed than usual and did not feel I had the proper mental resources to continue this practice for other exams. Therefore, I know I need to better plan out my work and break time in the future, so that I can feel more refreshed and able to continue my old tradition of individually emailing students after each exam.

Some students also suggested more group assignments and opportunities to engage with other students in the course. One student even mentioned wanting more one-on-one time with me, as the instructor. While that's not fully feasible to do during class time with my large section, I know I could do a better job walking around and talking to students before or during class. Especially if I provide more opportunities for peer discussion during class (as I've mentioned earlier), I think I could better interact and get to know students individually. One challenge I have to consider with having more peer discussions though is that students who sit further from others tend to not engage with anyone at all. I know for some this may be by choice, but for others, it may just be happenstance. I would like to find a way to help overcome that initial hesitancy many have about approaching other students in order to best capitalize on such an activity.

Lastly, one thing I would like to focus on in teaching future sections of this class is to find a way to integrate more authentic learning experiences. I might do this through revamping the research requirements option, editing a recitation, and/or introducing a new project/assignment. I feel I would have to cut some course content though in order to introduce an entirely new project/assignment, so that may be less feasible than editing something that already exists.

References

- Dunkel, P., Mishra, S., & Berliner, D. (1989). Effects of note taking, memory, and language proficiency on lecture learning for native and nonnative speakers of English. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 23(3), 543-549. www.jstor.org/stable/3586929
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Appendix I: Syllabus

PSY 181- Section 350

Witt

Spring 2021

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays at 11:30-12:20pm*

Burnett Hall Room 103

Instructor: Dr. Chelsea Witt (she/her pronouns)

cwitt@unl.edu

Office Hours: Monday at 12:30-1:30pm and Thursday 11:30am-1pm in Burnett 226 or online. Other times by appointment.

Zoom link for office hours & any class meetings: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/3666131403>

Office phone: 402-472-7765

Important note:

I want you to be successful in this course- which ultimately means you understand the material better by the end of the semester than you did prior to taking this course (and ideally, you enjoyed the process!).

My pledge to you:

- I will be responsive to all emails/questions within 24 hours- if not sooner (during Monday-Friday).
- I will help explore alternative study/testing methods for anyone who asks.
 - This course is designed to be challenging. You may find that just putting in a certain number of hours isn't sufficient if you aren't also pairing that effort with strategies that are effective for your personal learning.
- I will host as many meaningful, in-person sessions as I'm able or as desired by students.
- I will treat you with the utmost respect and appreciation of your innate human dignity.
- Your success in and engagement with the class are my #1 priorities.

What I ask of you:

- If there are ever any issues, questions, or points of confusion, please contact me.
 - The sooner you reach out, the more likely we can achieve a positive outcome.
- Contact me asap (ideally within 1-3 days) regarding any difficult situations that are impacting your class performance and which require some adjustment/accommodation in the class.
 - While I may not be able to address all concerns in the manner you desire, I absolutely cannot assist if you don't reach out.
 - I rarely (if ever) need the details of the issue for us to have a conversation on how to help you best succeed in the course; you can simply say that you're struggling with things in/outside of class and you wonder if we could discuss accommodations to enhance your learning.
- Treat me and your fellow classmates with respect (see more in the "class policies" section).
- Do the best you can with what you have at that point in time and try to have fun learning!
 - Don't be too hard on yourself if you get something wrong. School (and life really) is about learning and would be pretty pointless if you immediately got everything right.

***Note related to COVID:** Please do **not** come to class if you feel unwell at any level with symptoms similar to COVID. Even if you think you just have minor sniffles, headache, etc., play it safe. I will always provide a way to participate online at any point in the semester. The specific process of that online participation will be determined the first week of classes.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Textbook:

Myers & DeWall. (2019). Exploring Psychology in Modules (11th edition). New York: Macmillian.

This course is participating in Inclusive Access referred to as Engage (Unizin). This is part of the STAR Initiative (<https://teaching.unl.edu/star-initiative/>) working to lower cost for textbooks for UNL students. Your required textbook for this class is listed above and will be delivered electronically through Canvas via a publisher link. Inclusive Access reduces the cost of your book and online access by ~\$15. It is the cheapest way to access the online component of this class (i.e. Launchpad) which is needed for all module quizzes. I will show you how to access Launchpad.

You **do** have the option to opt out, but you would then need to secure access to Launchpad in another fashion. Students may opt out of the purchase of these materials up to the last day to add a course: February 5th, 2021. You may use this link to opt out of the Inclusive Access program: <https://go.unl.edu/engageoptout>. If you opt out, then change your mind and decide you would like to have access to the book and Launchpad, you may opt back in before February 5th. **If you choose to opt out of inclusive access, you will not have access to all the materials you need to be successful in this course, unless you find another way to access Launchpad.**

If you experience any difficulties accessing your e-book, please reach out to the textbook publisher Help or Unizin Engage by emailing bsevera@nebraska.edu and copy me, your instructor. Please do this ASAP to avoid difficulty accessing course material.

If you would like a paper copy of this book, you may order a loose leaf option through the bookstore or find another copy elsewhere. However, **your access to Launchpad does already include an electronic copy of the book, so you are not required to have any other versions.**

The cost of this book will appear on your student bill as "Inclusive Access Material" and can be applied toward any available financial aid. If you have any questions on this, please contact Student Accounts at 402-472-2887 studentaccounts@unl.edu.

CLASS DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with a basic and general knowledge of the broad theoretical, scientific, and conceptual foundations of the discipline of psychology, including the biological, cognitive, emotional, developmental, abnormal, cultural and social aspects of behavior. As a general survey of the field of psychology, this course will provide you with an introduction to the key concepts and principles of psychology, the methods for collecting and evaluating evidence regarding the causes and correlates of behavior, and the application of psychological knowledge and principles to improve the quality of life for individuals and society.

COURSE GOALS

- Demonstrate knowledge of general concepts, theories, and terms used in psychology
- Appreciate key figures and historical events that has helped shape psychology
- Be able to identify sound science-based information in psychology
- Further develop critical thinking skills (i.e. asking and answering question such as “Why?” “How do we know?” “What is the evidence?”)
- Apply psychological concepts to “everyday” phenomena and critical issues

TECHNOLOGY USED IN THIS CLASS

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

- Internet access sufficient to stream ~3 hours of online video per week if you plan to complete this course online at any point.
- Ability to download and use software including Zoom and Microsoft Word. These are available for free via UNL (see [ITS site](#) for more information)
- **Ideal, but not required:** access to a camera or webcam with video and audio recording hardware
 - This element is particularly useful for virtual, office hour type meetings and any synchronous Zoom meetings.

Please note that while mobile technology may be sufficient to meet these requirements, it is **not recommended** for completing the class’s work.

CANVAS and email:

You are expected to check CANVAS and email regularly for this course. The materials for class will be posted in CANVAS including assignments instructions and submissions, PowerPoints, and your grades. I will also send emails regarding any special announcements, materials to bring to class, last minute changes, etc. In addition, you will be taking quizzes, exams, and asked to submit your class assignments electronically on CANVAS. If you have any difficulty with CANVAS, it is your responsibility to inform me as soon as possible and take steps to resolve the problem.

If you need to send an email, I will be able to more quickly respond and address common questions if you start the subject with the class name (i.e. Intro: [rest of subject]).

LaunchPad:

Instructions for LaunchPad will be covered the first day of class. Additionally, the home page of CANVAS has guides and instructional resources to assist you.

Tech support: Please note that I am a trained psychologist and not IT personnel. If you have any technological issues with LaunchPad, please contact tech support; they will likely be able to help you quicker and more accurately than I can. **The documents posted on CANVAS should be used as a first line of defense to hopefully speed up the solution to any technological issues; most of the time those instructions resolve all issues.** If you still have an issue, simply inform tech support of any of those steps you have already taken.

You can call 1-800-936-6899 or live chat tech support's 24 hour line; this information is also found within LaunchPad and on the login screen. Note that calls will get a quicker response than emails. I do receive notice of tech support incidents, especially those related to grades/assignments –so any relevant problems reported to tech support will be relayed to me.

CLASS POLICIES

Classroom etiquette:

I ask that you show respect both for me, yourself, and each other. Being respectful includes (but is not limited to) being timely with assignments/reaching out early with any issues, speaking clearly and calmly, rethinking assumptions of others, working collaboratively with others, actively listening, and avoiding distracting behavior during the time you're working on class material.

When working in groups or in a pair, I expect you to work with other students respectfully by listening to others' ideas, making the effort to help others when needed, and working out any personality conflicts together. Most group conflicts can be solved with honest but respectful communication between group members; however, contact me should the situation be otherwise.

Attendance:

Students are expected to participate in class. Participation includes in-person and/or online engagement with course material. Our classroom will be big enough to allow for all students to be socially distant in the class at one time.

This class is run primarily in person. There will be online options for those who need at any point in the semester.

Overall, the 'attendance' expectation for this class involves the following:

- completing assigned readings and quizzes
- attending/watching lecture and supplemental videos
- taking notes
- engaging in participation discussions (in person or online)

Because material from readings and lectures will be tested on, it is important to complete all assigned work.

It will be hard to succeed in this course without participating regularly. Besides simply learning the material on the exam, participating in class will allow you to deepen your understanding of the material. Additionally, participation points will suffer if you're not engaging in the ways outlined above.

Exam procedure:

Exams will be due on the day noted in the syllabus; **you will have a 3-day window to complete each exam.**

All exams will be taken through CANVAS. **You can use your notes, readings, and other class material while taking the exam; however, you should be taking the exam on your own.** If there is evidence that students have shared exam questions or taken the exam with another person, involved students will receive a zero for the exam.

The exam will be timed, so I still advise studying just like you would for an exam with a single attempt. You will have a maximum of **3 attempts** for each exam; your highest score will be what is counted in the gradebook.

While you have multiple attempts on the exam, you should also know that **you will not get the exact same exam questions on each attempt.** Questions will be pulled from a large pool; the pool contains questions that may look similar to questions you've already seen, but there are key differences. Therefore, you need to carefully read each question *and* the response options. Throughout the class, you will be exposed to this type of questioning in order to prepare you for the exams and to help you understand a concept from multiple angles.

Late assignments policy:

Assignments are officially due by 11:59pm on the days indicated in the syllabus. **Please notify me in advance if you will not be able to complete work on time;** if we can, accommodations will be made.

Given the extra accommodations that I have found are necessary in the past, **there will be a 48-hour grace period for all assignments, except for extra credit opportunities and exams** (without prior communication). That grace period is not encouraged to be something you constantly rely on or use as an alternative deadline; instead, it is intended to be used more in situations where unexpected or difficult life circumstances occur or you need a little extra time to submit quality work. If you turn in assignments within this grace period, no justification or notice is required; however, you may receive an email from me checking in. **Assignments submitted past this grace period, with no alternative arrangements made, will receive a 0%.**

Exams will be open for 3 days' time; you will not be able to submit it late, but you may request for your 3-day window timeframe to be moved, so long as no attempts were made at the time of request.

Any potential excusable changes to deadlines outside of the 48 hour grace period must be made ahead of time unless appropriate documentation is provided (e.g. a doctor's note or screenshot if the issue is technological). If you already have university accommodations for a medical condition, I do not need any documentation beyond the approved SSD form. Students must **not** submit documentation with personal health information.

If an unforeseen emergency occurs, please contact me asap so accommodations can be made if appropriate.

Electronics:

Cell phones should not be used during class time, except for cases of an emergency. If you use a computer for in-person components, please be respectful of those around you and only use it for class related tasks. **Students actually perform better** if they and those around them take notes by hand rather than with a computer. Unless you have an SSD accommodation, if you are being overly distracting with technology, I will ask that you stop or leave. If relevant, I advise you also approach online work with a similar mentality- that you stay focused on the task at hand.

Writing Center:

You are encouraged to take any and all papers to the writing center for review before they are turned in. There are two ways you can connect with a Consultant: Online (a real-time, video conversation) and eTutoring (email feedback). To learn more about these options and view video tutorials, please visit [Online Writing Services](#). You can sign up any time by visiting unl.mywconline.com. For more information about the Writing Center, please visit unl.edu/writing.

Recording of class related materials

I invite all of you to join me in actively creating and contributing to a positive, productive, and respectful classroom culture. Each student contributes to an environment that shapes the learning process. Any work and/or communication that you are privy to as a member of this course should be treated as the intellectual property of the speaker/creator, and is not to be shared outside the context of this course.

Students may not make or distribute screen captures, audio/video recordings of, or livestream, any class-related activity, including lectures and presentations, without express prior written consent from me or an approved accommodation from Services for Students with Disabilities. If you have (or think you may have) a disability such that you need to record or tape class-related activities, you should contact Services for Students with Disabilities. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Failure to follow this policy on recording or distributing class-related activities may subject you to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.

Achievement Centered Education (ACE) Information:

Learning Outcome: PSYC 181 has been approved for ACE Learning Outcome #6 (“Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior”).

Reinforcements: This class will reinforce critical thinking, primarily by focusing on the use of evidence and hypothesis testing in science. Since everyone is familiar with human behavior, we tend to think of

ourselves as “experts.” This approach is based on anecdotes, but science proceeds by systematically collecting and analyzing data. We need to understand how we acquire and analyze our information and become proficient at distinguishing between hypotheses and evidence.

Opportunities for learning the outcome:

- PSYC 181 consists of more than 30 lectures designed to increase and reinforce your understanding of the knowledge, methods, and history of the discipline of psychology.
- Regular mastery-based reading quizzes will help you identify what you do and do not understand so you can clarify areas of confusion.
- Participation in psychological research studies and/or completion of research article reports will increase your familiarity with psychological research methods and your understanding of how current psychological research fits within the broader field of psychology.
- You are encouraged to consult with the professor at any time about the concepts covered in the course. This is especially valuable after you have received feedback regarding your performance on exam questions.

How your achievement of the ACE outcomes will be assessed:

There are 5 unit exams to assess your mastery of the course outcomes. All of the questions are multiple choice. A large majority of the questions are designed to measure your comprehension of the knowledge, methods, and history of psychology at high cognitive levels. That is, many questions require you to use information to reach a conclusion about a phenomenon or to evaluate the reasonableness of a claim. Relatively few questions are concerned with vocabulary or basic information alone.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The University's [Student Code of Conduct](#) addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision.

Plagiarism involves intentionally representing someone else's thought or words as your own. Instances of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty include:

- Quoting directly from someone else's work without using quotation marks and/or a citation
- Paraphrasing someone else's ideas or statements without citing your source
- Submitting as your own work an assignment written wholly or partly by someone else.
- Fabrication of information or citations
- Unauthorized possession of past or present exams
- Tampering with the academic work of other students
- Facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others

A violation of academic honesty will result in a failing grade on the exam, assignment, and/or course. You may also be reported to UNL administration and your home department.

Disability Statement:

If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska- Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements.

Official accommodations cannot be used without first notifying the instructor of such accommodations. Therefore, if there are any accommodations you would like to use, please contact me as soon as possible so they can be implemented. With officially registered accommodations, you are under no obligation to report the reason for such accommodations.

SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall; 402-472-3787;
<https://www.unl.edu/ssd/home>.

Title IX:

UNL is dedicated to the prevention of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, and providing a safe campus for its employees and students. In order to be proactive in its efforts, UNL has established procedures and policies to investigate complaints and address identified concerns. On the following website (<https://www.unl.edu/equity/title-ix>), you will discover information about Title IX, available resources, and university policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct. We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance at (402) 472-3417.

Incompletes:

Students are eligible for an incomplete grade only if they have already completed 75% of the course work. Per UNL policy, incompletes will be given “only when the student [is] unable to complete the requirements of the course because of illness, military service, hardship, or death in the immediate family” (<http://registrar.unl.edu/grade-information-spring>). Incompletes will NOT be given simply for students who fail to take the final exam as scheduled.

Academic Support Services

You can schedule free appointments for individual academic coaching with First-Year Experience and Transition Program staff through MyPLAN. You can also take advantage of study stops--which provide individual and group study with learning consultants in a variety of disciplines--and free group workshops on topics such as time management, goal setting, test preparation, and reading strategies. See success.unl.edu for schedules and more information.

Counseling and Psychological Services

UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. [Counseling and Psychological & Services \(CAPS\)](#) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450. [Big Red Resilience & Well-Being](#) (BRRWB) provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770.

Diversity & Inclusion:

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation.

Face covering guidelines:

As of July 17, 2020 and until further notice, all University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) faculty, staff, students, and visitors (including contractors, service providers, and others) are required to use a facial covering at all times when indoors except under specific conditions outlined in the COVID 19 face covering policy found at: <https://covid19.unl.edu/face-covering-policy>. This statement is meant to clarify classroom policies for face coverings:

To protect the health and well-being of the University and wider community, UNL has implemented a policy requiring all people, including students, faculty, and staff, to wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose while on campus. The classroom is a community, and as a community, we seek to maintain the health and safety of all members by wearing face coverings when in the classroom. Failure to comply with this policy is interpreted as a disruption of the classroom and may be a violation of UNL’s Student Code of Conduct.

Individuals who have health or medical reasons for not wearing face coverings should work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (for students) or the Office of Faculty/Staff Disability Services (for faculty and staff) to establish accommodations to address the health concern. Students who prefer not to wear a face covering should work with their advisor to arrange a fully online course schedule that does not require their presence on campus. Students in the classroom:

- 1) If a student is not properly wearing a face covering, the instructor will remind the student of the policy and ask them to comply with it.
 - a) **Proper wearing of a mask includes avoid touching the outside of your mask and fully cover your mouth and nose.**
- 2) If the student will not comply with the face covering policy, the instructor will ask the student to leave the classroom, and the student may only return when they are properly wearing a face covering.
- 3) If the student refuses to properly wear a face covering or leave the classroom, the instructor will dismiss the class and will report the student to Student Conduct & Community Standards for misconduct, where the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Instructors in the classroom:

1. If an instructor is not properly wearing a face covering, students will remind the instructor of the policy and ask them to comply with it.
2. If an instructor will not properly wear a face covering, students may leave the classroom and should report the misconduct to the department chair or via the TIPS system for disciplinary action through faculty governance processes.

*Exceptions to the Face Covering Policy are only granted after an approved health safety plan is developed.

You will also be required to get regular saliva tests in order to access campus buildings. More information can be found here: <https://covid19.unl.edu/spring-testing>.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Exams (500 points)

There will be 5 exams, each worth 100 points. Each exam will cover material from the assigned readings, lectures, and demonstrations preceding the test. Some questions in the exam will have been in the reading but may not have been discussed in class or may have been discussed in class but not in the reading. Therefore, it is important to both attend class and to do the appropriate readings. The final exam will **not** be comprehensive. *Students should expect higher-level understanding and application questions*, alongside knowledge-based questions on the exams.

Since you have multiple days to take the exam, the deadline will not be changed for any reason unless there have been pre-arrangements with the instructor for academic accommodation purposes.

LaunchPad Points (125 points)

LaunchPad offers students a chance to complete textbook-tied activities to enhance their learning. For this class, you are required to complete quizzes for each module. The quizzes are titled “LearningCurves” within LaunchPad. You can access LaunchPad through CANVAS. **Specifically, you should access the ebook and assignments through the ‘Home’ tab in CANVAS or through direct links posted within CANVAS’s modules.**

These quizzes are graded as pass or fail. In order to get credit, you must reach the target score, which is indicated at the top of the screen while taking the quiz. If you answer correctly the first time, you will get more points towards the target score. If you don’t know the answer, there are hints available, but this will take away some potential points towards the target score. If you don’t want to lose out on any points, you can click the ebook option which will take you to the appropriate section in the ebook. **This quiz goes a lot faster if you have done the relevant reading ahead of time.**

If you do not complete a quiz or if you do not reach the target score, you will receive a zero for that quiz. However, you are allowed multiple attempts before the due date to receive full credit. Ideally, if you have read the book ahead of time, you will not need to retake the quiz, and the entire process will be a lot quicker and smoother for you.

There are a total of 28 LaunchPad quizzes that you can complete over the course of the semester. Each ‘passed’ quiz is worth 5 points in the class. **The lowest 3 quiz scores are dropped**; therefore, you are only required to pass 25 quizzes. These quizzes will be set up to drop at the beginning of the semester, so **your first few quizzes will not officially register as grades until you have 3 of the lowest quizzes dropped.**

The policy of dropping the lowest 3 quizzes is designed to help you with time management and in cases where you may miss a quiz accidentally or due to unforeseen circumstances. However, even if you have

all 25 completed quizzes that you would like to count toward your grade, you are still encouraged to take quizzes for your own benefit in preparation for the exam.

There are other activities that you may choose to engage with in LaunchPad, though they will not be counted toward your grade; instead, they are low-stakes activities purely for your benefit. You may find these other resources especially useful for topics that are more difficult or as supplemental review before the exam. The ungraded activities that will be available include video activities, flashcards, assessing your strength activities, infographic activities, and immersive learning activities.

All activities in LaunchPad are based on material from the textbook; they may not always have the exact same information covered in lecture.

Research Requirement Points (120 points)

These projects help you learn about psychological research through direct exposure to empirical research studies. You must get 12 research credit points. These points will count for 120 points towards your final grade.

You have two options to fulfill this requirement. You can choose to only do one option or you can mix and do some of both options until you have the required number of points for your research requirement.

More details on these options are provided in the documented titled “Instructions for research requirement points- Options A & B” posted in CANVAS.

OPTION A:

You can earn points through research participation with the Sona system. The Sona system is an online recruitment platform for psychologists to conduct research. By participating in a research project with UNL’s psychology department, you can help researchers learn more about human behavior and get a firsthand experience with psychological research.

The deadline for this option is set at a department level, usually around Wednesday, April 28th. Therefore, when there are no future timeslots for any studies, there are no more opportunities for this option, and there’s no way for me to extend this deadline at all.

OPTION B:

You can earn points through reading and reporting on research articles. You can access the articles for this option through CANVAS under the ‘Modules’ tab. These articles are studies conducted by UNL

psychology faculty or were chosen for being more student-friendly in their readability. All of these studies are similar to studies one might participate in through Sona.

All reports need to be turned in **by Sunday, April 25th**. If you fail a report (i.e. due to plagiarism), **rewrites are allowed up until that deadline**.

Participation Points (~75 points)

These points will occur on random days during the semester. You will only be able to receive these points by being present in class or completing the corresponding online assignments. If you have a documented medical emergency or official accommodation that resulted in you missing class, I will exempt these points so they will not count toward your final grade, but you will need to notify me.

When relevant, I will provide further instruction on how to obtain these points; it will be a simple process. These points are meant to act as an extra bonus for attending class; however, your primary benefit of attendance is being adequately prepared for the exam. There will be questions on the exam that were covered in lecture but not covered in the textbook.

Recitation Points (60 points)

Most weeks have a recitation activity, and each recitation activity is worth 5 points. Recitation activities are designed to engage further into a particular topic and apply that topic in some fashion. Many recitations are also designed to help develop knowledge and familiarity with research methods and terminology.

Overall, there will be ~880 points in the class

Note: Grades will be rounded down if below .5% or rounded up if equal to or above .5%. You can use the “What-if-grades” function in CANVAS to project your grade.

Grading scale

A = 93-100%	A- = 90-92%	B+ = 87-89%	B = 83-86%
B- = 80-82%	C+ = 77-79%	C = 73-76%	C- = 70-72%
D+ = 67-69%	D = 63-66%	D- = 60-62%	F = 0-59%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Specific in-class activities are not included on the syllabus. This schedule outlines the topics that will be covered each week. Assignments associated with each topic are to be completed **by 11:30am** on the date listed; more specific information about the assignments will be provided in-person or in CANVAS.

Week 1

Monday, January 25th

- Course introduction tasks
- Syllabus-related tasks

Wednesday, January 27th

- Learn about research requirements and Launchpad

Friday, January 29th

- Any other general intro information needing covered
- Will start discussing Module 1 with any extra time, but no reading/quiz required until next week

Week 2

Monday, February 1st

- What is psychology and how did we get here?
 - Read Module 1: History and scope of psychology
 - Complete Module 1 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, February 3rd

- Psychology as Science
 - Read Module 2: Research strategies
 - Complete Module 2 Launchpad quiz

Friday, February 5th

- Starter pack for being Scientifically Literate
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 3

Monday, February 8th

- How to be a better student
 - Read Module 22: Studying and encoding memories
 - Complete Module 22 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, February 10th

- Grey matter: Why it matters

- Read Module 3: Neural and hormonal systems
- Complete Module 3 Launchpad quiz

Friday, February 12th

- The lizard brain
 - Read Module 4: Tools of discovery, older brain structures, and the limbic system
 - Complete Module 4 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 4

Monday, February 15th

- What makes us human
 - Read Module 5: The cerebral cortex
 - Complete Module 5 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, February 17th

- Continue learning about “What makes us human”
- Recitation activity for the week

Friday, February 19th

- Review for Exam 1

From Sunday, February 21st – Tuesday, February 23rd

- **Take Exam 1**
 - You need to contact me *prior* to taking the exam if you need to adjust this window of availability for any reason.
 - I will be present at our usual class time on **Monday, February 22nd** for anyone interested in completing an attempt in-person. I still plan on you taking the exam with a computer, unless you notify me otherwise.

Week 5

Wednesday, February 24th

- Consciousness and what you may have missed while wide awake
 - Read Module 7: Consciousness
 - Complete Module 7 Launchpad quiz

Friday, February 26th

- Dream interpretations
 - Read Module 8: Sleep and dreams
 - Complete Module 8 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 6

Monday, March 1st

- From cute baby to terrorizing toddler: Psychology in childhood
 - Read Module 11: Infancy and childhood
 - Complete Module 11 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, March 3rd

- Dealing with the “L”s: Challenges in Adolescence
 - Read Module 12: Adolescence
 - Complete Module 12 Launchpad quiz

Friday, March 5th

- Adulthood: How to age well
 - Read Module 13: Adulthood
 - Complete Module 13 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 7

Monday, March 8th

- Review for Exam 2
 - There will be optional, virtual review sessions you can attend; you will also be able to work on the review material at your own pace.

Take Exam 2

- Exam 2 will be **open from Tuesday, March 9th - Thursday, March 11th**
 - You need to contact me **prior** to taking the exam if you need to adjust this window of availability for any reason.
 - I will be present at our usual class time on **Wednesday, March 10th** for anyone interested in completing an attempt in-person. I still plan on you taking the exam with a computer, unless you notify me otherwise.

Friday, March 12th

- **NO IN PERSON OR ONLINE CLASS**; Spend time working on Sona credits and/or research reports

Week 8

Monday, March 15th

- Classical conditioning... should ring a bell
 - Read Module 19: Basic learning and classical conditioning
 - Complete Module 19 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, March 17th

- How to train your dragon
 - Read Module 20: Operant conditioning
 - Complete Module 20 Launchpad quiz

Friday, March 19th

- **NO IN-PERSON OR ZOOM CLASS**; there will be asynchronous work assigned online to apply what you've learned
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 9

Monday, March 22nd

- When two lefts don't make it right: Mental shortcuts and false memory
 - Read Module 25: Thinking
 - Complete Module 25 Launchpad quiz
 - Optional: Read Module 24

Wednesday, March 24th

- Are you smarter than a 5th grader?
 - Read Module 27: Intelligence and its assessment
 - Complete Module 27 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Friday, March 26th

- Review for Exam 3

From Sunday, March 28th – Tuesday, March 30th

- **Take Exam 3**
 - You need to contact me *prior* to taking the exam if you need to adjust this window of availability for any reason.
 - I will be present at our usual class time on **Monday, March 29th** for anyone interested in completing an attempt in-person. I still plan on you taking the exam with a computer, unless you notify me otherwise.

Week 10

Wednesday, March 31st

- What gets you out of bed
 - Read Module 29: Basic motivational concepts, affiliation, and achievement
 - Complete Module 29 Launchpad quiz

Friday, April 2nd

- How to deal with stress
 - Read Module 33: Stress and Illness
 - Complete Module 33 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 11

Monday, April 5th

- **Note: This class will be held fully online asynchronously instead of in-person**
- Leading your first cult: A beginner's guide
 - Read Module 35: Social thinking and social influences
 - Complete Module 35 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, April 7th

- Why you gotta be so rude?
 - Read Module 36: Antisocial relations
 - Complete Module 36 Launchpad quiz

Friday, April 9th

- Examining our superheroes
 - Read Module 37: Prosocial relations
 - Complete Module 37 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Week 12

Monday, April 12th

- Personality: The Mambo Number 5
 - Read Module 39: Contemporary perspectives on personality
 - Complete Module 39 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week

Wednesday, April 14th

- Review for Exam 4
- **Reminder:** Complete all Sona points and/or research reports soon

Take Exam 4

- Exam 4 will be open from **Thursday, April 15th – Saturday, April 17th**

- You need to contact me *prior* to taking the exam if you need to adjust this window of availability for any reason.
- I will be present at our usual class time on **Friday, April 16th** for anyone interested in completing an attempt in-person. I still plan on you taking the exam with a computer, unless you notify me otherwise.

Week 13

Monday, April 19th

- Introduction to Clinical Psych: How does that make you feel?
 - Read Module 40: Basic concepts of psychological disorders
 - Complete Module 40 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, April 21st

- Major Depression and Bipolar Disorder
 - Read Module 41: Anxiety disorders, OCD, and PTSD
 - Read Module 42: Major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder
 - Complete Module 41 & 42 Launchpad quiz

Friday, April 23rd

- Schizophrenia and other disorders
 - Read Module 43: Schizophrenia and other disorders
 - Complete Module 43 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week
- **Complete all research report options by Sunday, April 25th**

Week 14

Monday, April 26th

- Introduction to therapy: What are the treatment options?
 - Read Module 44: Introduction to Therapy
 - Complete Module 44 Launchpad quiz

Wednesday, April 28th

- Evaluating treatments: What works best?
 - Read Module 45: Evaluating psychotherapies
 - Complete Module 45 Launchpad quiz
- Recitation activity for the week
- **Complete all Sona point options around this time**

Friday, April 30th

- **STUDY DAY; NO IN-PERSON OR ZOOM CLASS**
- Review for Exam 5 on your own with provided study materials

Week 15

Due by Tuesday, May 4th

- **Take Exam 5**
 - Exam 5 will be open from **Monday, May 3rd – Wednesday, May 5th**
 - You need to contact me *prior* to taking the exam if you need to adjust this window of availability for any reason.
 - I will be present at finals class time on **Wednesday May 5th at 10am-12pm**; I still plan on you taking the exam with a computer, unless you notify me otherwise.