

Psychology 111 • Section 009 • Fall 2009  
Syllabus

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Course Objectives (Promissory Note):

- 1) Advance your understanding of the main ideas of psychology and how they relate to one another and the wider discipline as a whole.
- 2) Become critical thinkers, able to evaluate assertions made by experts and explore alternative interpretations.
- 3) Apply *deep learning* to psychology generate novel solutions to traditional problems.

Required Text:

Myers, David G. (2009). *Psychology* (9<sup>th</sup> edition). Holland, Michigan: Worth Publishers.

General Notes:

Psych 111 is an introductory course is therefore a broad survey of the field and not a detailed exploration of any one aspect. While we can not cover every aspect of psychology in detail, if a particular subject interests you, I would welcome an opportunity to discuss it with you outside of class.

As one of the aims of BYU is to “increase faith in God and the Restored Gospel,” students are encouraged to bring spiritual, theological and religious insights to bear on the subject matter. Conflicts between religious perspectives and current scientific understandings will be an important component of critical thinking. Our classroom discussions will explicitly make mention of LDS perspectives on each issue.\* Alternative perspectives are welcomed.

You are encouraged to challenge the ideas of the text, your professor and each other. Alternative views provide balanced perspective, help refine our own ideas, and can even lead to radical and surprising changes in our understandings (some would call this process “learning”). While disagreement and dissent that leads to discussion and dialogue are encouraged, students are reminded to be respectful, civil, courteous and appropriate in the class room and in your interactions with the professor and your fellow students.

\*Consistent with the scripture: “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.” (D&C 42:14) I will strive to prepare to teach with God’s influence and the presence of the Spirit. I ask that you come similarly prepared (see D&C 50:19-22 “[H]e that receiveth the word of truth doth... receive it by the Spirit... Wherefore, he that [teacheth] and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.”)

## Course Details:

### Groups:

You will be assigned into groups of about 5 for the term to facilitate classroom discussions and to help you study and, therefore, your group work will be crucial to your class participation scores. You will also complete an assignment with your group (see below).

### Assignments (or “Learning Opportunities”):

**Critical Reflection Questions:** On the class schedule below you will find a list of scheduled topics and corresponding chapters in the Myers book. The textbook is designed to serve you in your quest for knowledge about psychology. Its purpose is not to subject you to a heavy load (metaphorically, it is quite literally heavy though). Therefore, I recommend quality reading over quantity reading. It is less important that you read every word and sidebar (although the cartoons are funny), and more important that you comprehend the main ideas of each chapter. To help you engage with the material, you will have the opportunity to prepare 3 *critical reflection questions* for each class period based on that week’s reading. Although these questions are mercifully short on writing, they should demonstrate several crucial skills: 1) Understanding 2) Critical thinking 3) Engagement 4) Creativity/Imagination. Basically, the questions should be questions you’d personally want answers to regarding that week’s topic. In preparing the questions it may be helpful to imagine you had unlimited resources (time and funds) to further investigate that topic. With that in mind, your questions should be what you would want to pursue. You should explore possibilities, challenge assumptions and implications, seek to move forward your understanding and be excited. These questions will form an important component of our class and thus require serious effort (see below). We have provided a few examples to model examples of quality questions.

**Application Activities:** Twice during the term you will do an activity outside of class that specifically relates to a course topic. In the first activity you will choose one of three options and prepare a *brief* one-page report detailing your activity (further guidelines will follow). For the second activity, you are to meet with your group and create an application activity based on a topic covered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the course. You should all do this activity, but you need only to turn in one (1) joint report. This report should be more detailed (page length recommendation 3-5). More details on both of these assignments will be forthcoming latter in the semester.

**Class Participation:** You are expected to be a regular and active contributor to classroom and group discussions, including asking questions and making comments during lectures. Additionally, you will meet with your group for 15-20 minutes each class period. During this time you will be asked to share your critical thinking questions and generate possible solutions. The groups will take turns sharing their best insights with the rest of the class. Your class participation grade will be based on your peer group’s evaluation and my evaluations of your activity in the classroom.

**Learning Demonstration and Assessment:** You are primarily responsible for your learning in this course. As such, you will have two opportunities to inform me of your progress and assess your own progress. Additionally, this assignment will allow you to demonstrate your critical thinking skills. In a two (2) page paper, briefly state your educational goals for this class, assign yourself a grade (the grade you assign will not directly affect your grade for the class), and provide a short (two sentence) justification for that grade. In the remainder of the paper you are to take one of the critical thinking questions your group discussed and attempt a tentative answer to the question. This demonstration will be evaluated with an eye towards critical thinking and deep learning (i.e. an exploration of the implications, applications, evidences, and alternatives to your ideas).

**Exams:** There will be two exams, one halfway through the semester and one at the end. The exams will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer. If it helps you can consider the learning assessment as part of the midterm and final evaluation. If it doesn't help, then forget I brought it up. Either way, try not to be more stressed than will help you best represent your learning.

Grade Breakdown:

**Critical Reflection Questions:** 20%

**Class Participation:** 5%

**Application Activities:** 15% (5% + 10%)

**Learning Assessment:** 20% (10% each)

**Exams:** 40% (20% each)

These scores, plus any extra credit (see below) will form your final grade. A letter grade will be assigned based on the following ranges: A = 100%-93%, A-=90%-92%, B+=89%-87%, B=86%-83%, B-=82%-80%, C+=79%-77%, C=76%-73%, C-=72%-70%, D+=69%-67%, B=66%-63%, B-=62%-60%, anything lower than a 60% will receive an E (Failing grade). I do not curve, but may adjust the scores upwards if I deem it necessary at the end of the semester.

Extra Credit:

For those interested in even more work, I will award up to 5% extra credit points on your final Learning assessment. Participating in a number (up to three) research projects and writing up your experience, reactions and other comments (i.e. how they relate to course topics) will grant you the full possible points. Alternatively, there are a number of extra curricular learning opportunities that you may attend and write up (at least three hours of such activities with a write up are required for full extra points). All extra credit must be turned in by the last day of classes.

Late and Make-up Work:

Late work will be accepted with a -10% penalty per day (excluding Sundays).. If you cannot make a scheduled assignment or exam, you must make arrangements ahead of time to schedule an alternative.

Bonus:

Psych Central (1150 SWKT) has been established as a peer tutoring and resource center for students enrolled in Psychology 111. An extensive library of print, video, and electronic resources is available there, together with peer tutors who are on duty several hours each day. The hours of operation are posted on the front door.

Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading/Questions Due	Assignments
3 Sept	Psychology & Thinking Critically	Prologue, 1	
10 Sept	Consciousness	3	
17 Sept	Nature, Nurture, and ?	4	
24 Sept	Development	5	
1 Oct	Sensation and Perception	6	Activity Reports
8 Oct	Memory	8	
15 Oct	Thinking and Language	9	Learning Assessment Due
22 Oct	Intelligence	10	Midterm
29 Oct	Learning, Motivation and Work	7:324-325, 11:443-471, 478-495	
5 Nov	Emotion Stress and Health	12	
12 Nov	Psychological Disorders	14	
19 Nov	Therapy	15	Group Activity Reports
26 Nov	Thanksgiving		Root for BYU
3 Dec	Personality	13	
10 Dec	Social Psychology	16	Learning Assessment Due

Final in Testing Center.

Instructor Infallibility:

Neither BYU nor its sponsoring organization has a doctrine of infallibility for any one but God. Therefore, your instructor may be wrong on occasion. Again, classroom discussion is encouraged, however, if you are aware of an error, especially one affecting grading and evaluations, please bring it to my attention promptly.

### **Official University Policies and Legal Et cetera.**

Honor Code Standards. In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

You are reminded that you have agreed to abide the Honor Code as a condition of your continuing enrollment. You are expected to abide by all conditions of the Code, including the dress and grooming standards, while in the classroom. Unlike the Pirate's Code, the Honor Code is more like rules than suggestions. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment. Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440).

Students with Disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

### **Department of Psychology Expected Student Learning Outcomes for Majors**

The objectives of the department's undergraduate curriculum are closely matched to those advocated by the American Psychological Association, the discipline's primary professional body. Graduates with a B.S. degree in psychology will:

- (1) Be able to demonstrate that they understand and can apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation of results in light of previous findings.
- (2) Be able to use computers and other research-related technology to competently collect, access, and manage information, communication, and other purposes.
- (3) Be able to express realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological understanding, skills, and values in occupational and family-related pursuits in a variety of settings.
- (4) Be able to critically reflect on the content of psychology as well as on disciplinary values in light of their knowledge of and commitment to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to sustain personal values that are true to the gospel while maintaining their serious study of psychology.