




Best Practices: Course Objectives


Last updated: July 2007

Each description contains links (rtf and pdf, or internet) to the entire syllabus from which it was drawn.

Every syllabus in the Project Syllabus database as of Spring 2007 was reviewed by at least two reviewers. The reviewers chose portions from the following syllabi because they were both exceptional and represent a variety of ways to present the information. This document is by no means an exhaustive list of good examples of this component of the syllabus.

Clinical Psychology: Ethics & Issues, Mitch Handelsman, Fall 2005, University of Colorado at Denver

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mh05ethicsf.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mh05ethicsf.pdf>

GOALS OF THE COURSE – I design and teach this course so you can:

1. Begin the process of active ethical acculturation by learning how to read, discuss, and appreciate the ethical dimensions of professional activities and behaviors, and how they fit with your own values and background.
 2. Learn how to make good decisions about ethical issues in psychology using a comprehensive decision making procedure which includes the APA Ethics Code, general ethical principles, and other sources of guidance.
 3. Do some deeper thinking and research about one particular issue (via the major paper).
 4. Develop oral and written communication skills.
 5. Learn to critique your own writing, and the writing of others, and to use feedback from others in revising your work.
 6. Explore more active ways of learning.
 7. Develop the ability to follow directions and meet deadlines.
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Introduction to Psychology, John Schwoebel, Fall 2005, Cazenovia College



<http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/js05introf.rtf>



<http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/js05introf.pdf>

Objectives

Knowledge of Psychology. I will evaluate your progress toward this goal based on the quality of your performance on the Question Essays, Web Activities, Exams, and OICS Project. The components of this objective include your knowledge of the:

1. Historical and cultural roots of psychology
2. Theoretical frameworks in psychology
3. Methods used to explore psychological questions
4. Current evidence and beliefs in the major areas of psychology


Scientific Attitudes and Skills. I will evaluate your progress toward this goal based on the quality of your performance on the Question Essays, Exams, and OICS Project. The components of this objective will include your increased tendency to:

1. Refuse to accept assertions based solely on authority
2. Be open to changing your own beliefs based on new information
3. Critically evaluate generalizations
4. Appreciate the limitations and tentative nature of scientific knowledge
5. Question the evidence and logic behind assertions
6. Think about the implications and applications of scientific findings
7. Express your thoughts clearly when speaking and writing

Personal Development. You are best suited to evaluate progress toward this goal. Components of this objective include:

1. Increased appreciation of the wondrous complexity underlying even our simplest behaviors, which may, in turn, lead to:
 - a. A decreased tendency to take your abilities for granted
 - b. An increased tendency to use your abilities/time wisely
 - c. An increased tendency to take better care of yourself
 2. Increased understanding of the factors influencing human behavior, which may, in turn, lead to:
 - a. An increased understanding of your own behavior and that of others
 - b. An increased ability to effect positive changes in you own life as well as in the lives of others
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Introduction to General Psychology, Margaret H. Launius, Fall 2007, Mansfield University

 <http://faculty.mansfield.edu/mlaunius/Psy1101/101Syllabus.html>

Objectives of the Course

Department Learning Outcomes: The following learning outcomes have been influenced by the recommendations of the American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Educational Competencies and adapted to be related to this particular course:

Knowledge Base of Psychology	An understanding of the knowledge base of psychology, including the ability to identify major concepts and theoretical models.
Information and Technological Literacy	Competence in searching for, identifying, and evaluating evidence from internet resources.
Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology	The ability to think critically about important issues addressed in class.
Research Methods in Psychology	An understanding of basic research methods in psychology.
Awareness of Sociocultural and Diversity Issues	Recognition and appreciation of individual differences and diversity among people from different genders, races, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
Applications of Psychology	An understanding of psychological principles as they <i>apply</i> to personal & social issues.

Teaching Objectives: I hope to share with you in the next 15 weeks some of the wonders and variety of the field of Psychology. In addition, I hope to help you get off to a good start on your own personal academic journey. With these two goals in mind, I have set forth the following objectives for this course:

- To provide you with an overview of the major areas in the field of psychology.
- To help you learn how to critically evaluate and think about the content of the course.
- To provide you the opportunity to apply psychological concepts to you and your life.

I will accomplish these objectives by using a variety of teaching methods including large class discussions, small group work, videos, outside writing assignments, lectures, and quizzes and exams.

Student Objectives and Competencies: At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify individuals important in the field of psychology and their contributions.

- Discuss knowledgeably the major theories and areas covered in the course.
- Critically evaluate material related to the course content.
- Conduct a literature search using both internet and library sources.

You will accomplish the above objectives by attending class, participating in discussions and group exercises, reading course materials, completing assignments, attending to videos, asking questions, and studying for and taking quizzes and exams.

Psychology of Peace and Conflict, Linda Woolf, Spring 2006, Webster University

Internet: <http://www.webster.edu/~woolflm/pspeace.html>

Course Objectives:

- 1. Objective:** To become more knowledgeable concerning the role of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding during all phases of conflict: preconflict, conflict, and postconflict.

Outcomes: Students will be able to discuss the concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding during all phases of conflict and apply the principles to a specific conflict.

- 2. Objectives:** To become familiar with the important psychosocial factors present during a preconflict situation and the peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding strategies that can be used to avert conflict. To become familiar with methods of conflict resolution that are commonly used and which, if used inappropriately, only serve to escalate conflict (i.e., hard bargaining, sanctions, and the use of force).

Outcomes: Students will be able to discuss the psychosocial factors that either facilitate or prevent conflict and war. They will be able to apply these principles to a specific conflict.

- 3. Objectives:** To become familiar with the importance of and the strategies involved in understanding the various aspects of conflict.

Outcomes: Students will be able to analyze a conflict and articulate the problem from multiple frames of reference. They will be able to articulate the concept of partisan perceptions and apply this concept to a conflict situation.

- 4. Objective:** To examine the nature of conflict resolution and the psychological dimensions associated with peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding for all parties involved in a conflict from soldiers to humanitarian workers.

Outcomes: Students will be able to develop a specific plan to be used in a specific conflict situation. This specific plan will address the psychological needs and concerns for the various participants in a conflict.

5. Objectives: To examine the steps involved in putting a conflict resolution plan to work and methods of dealing with ambiguity and change in such contexts.


Outcomes: Students will be able to articulate the methods used to implement a conflict resolution plan and address issues related to ambiguity and change within a plan.


6. Objective: To examine the psychological aspects of postconflict peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, as a society moves from intervention to reconciliation and reconstruction.

Outcomes: Students will be able to address the issues of forgiveness, reconciliation and reconstruction. They will be able to articulate the problems and concerns surrounding issues such as landmines, demilitarization, development of a civilian criminal justice system, and the creation of Truth Commissions. Students will address the problems inherent in a particular postconflict situation both generally and specifically.

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. --Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Great Psychologists, Michael Root, Spring 2005, Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mr02historyf.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mr02historyf.pdf>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

My course objectives are broken into three categories: learning skills, course specific, and personal development objectives. My hope is that by the end of this course you will exhibit mastery of the following course objectives:

Learning Skills Objectives

Metacognitive Skills Objective: Metacognitive skills are strategies for *learning how to learn*. Learning how to learn will help you master the material in this class as well as material in your other classes. Throughout the course, we will learn such things as how to learn actively, identify relevant information in your readings, and how to make the material pertinent to your life. We will spend time

developing effective learning methods that you can use to engage with the material in this course in the hopes that you will be able to generalize these learning methods to other aspects of your life.

Critical Thinking Skills Objective: Critical thinking skills are “mental tools” that enable you to ask penetrating questions, weigh available evidence, modify judgments based on existing evidence, and make rational, well-informed decisions. The development of and practice with critical thinking skills will assist you in any endeavor, be it your college career or your future job. This course will help you acquire critical thinking skills through writing assignments, class discussions, and self-reflection. By the end of the semester, you should be able to apply these skills to the material covered in class and to other facets of your life.

Writing Skills Objective: We all need practice in our writing skills, and I will try to help you strengthen your ability to write effectively with a variety of writing assignments. These writing assignments will help develop your metacognitive, critical thinking, and historical knowledge skills, in addition to helping you formulate your thoughts, provide rational arguments, and develop convincing conclusions about psychology’s history. The express purpose of the writing skills objective is to enable you to take the writing skills you have acquired in this course and utilize these skills in other areas of your education.

Course Specific Objectives

Historical Research Methods Objective: I expect you to become familiar with the approaches to historical research and how these methods can augment your undergraduate education. In addition, I expect you to acquire knowledge of the resources available for historical research at UNH. For example, by the end of this course you should be able to compare and contrast presentist and historicist writing and provide examples of each in the literature.

Theoretical Contributions Objective: By the end of the semester you should be well versed in the ideas developed by these historical figures and how these ideas have affected the field of psychology. For example, you should be able to define Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual stages and analyze how these stages affect our understanding of children’s psychological development.

Historical Figures Objective: By the end of this course you should be able to compare and contrast the individuals we cover throughout the semester and discuss how their life events shaped their ideas. For example, you should be able to provide a brief synopsis of the life of William James and how his background played a role in his thought.

Contextual Knowledge Objective: I want you to become familiar with the social, political, economic, and institutional contexts within which these individuals live

their lives. By the end of the semester, you should be able to integrate such things as the relevant contextual factors that played a role in the development of Darwin's theory of evolution.

Personal Development Objectives

Self-Development Objective: I hope that you will mature intellectually and emotionally throughout the semester. After completing this course, I hope that you can look at the world differently and that you become intellectually curious about yourself, others, and your environment. Additionally, I hope to foster in you a respect for opinions that differ from your own and that you demonstrate this respect in and outside of the classroom. Finally, I want you to develop the confidence and ability to discover the answers you seek about yourself and how you fit into society.

Fun Objective: Learning about psychology's history can be fun if you take an active role in your own education throughout the semester. Though not all topics we cover during the semester will be of interest to you, I challenge you to find something in every reading and in every class that makes you excited about the history of psychology. I hope that we can have fun while learning the subject matter in a relaxed but mature atmosphere.

Note on Course Objectives

I take these course objectives very seriously and I hope that you will too. Not only does your grade depend on meeting these objectives, they also can contribute to your intellectual growth. I feel that it is my responsibility to instruct you with these objectives in mind. I feel it is your responsibility to focus your learning experience with these objectives in mind. There will be a number of opportunities for me to assess your proficiency on mastering these objectives. Similarly, there will be a number of opportunities for you to assess my proficiency at teaching with these objectives in mind. Assessing my proficiency at meeting these objectives will allow you to present me with feedback on whether I am helping you meet these objectives. If need be I will adjust the class format to help you meet these objectives.

Methods of Social Science Research, Donna Stuber-McEwen, Fall 2005, Friends University



<http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/dsm05methods.f.rtf>



<http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/dsm05methods.f.pdf>

Course Outcomes: By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- *build a basic framework for understanding social and behavioral science research*
- *establish an appreciation for the benefits as well as the limitations of social and behavioral science research*
- *conceptualize more clearly a personal “world view” and its relationship to the scientific method*

Department Outcomes: This course supports the following Human Services/Psychology Department outcomes:

- *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles, techniques, and applications, employed in the scientific method*
- *Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to apply the basic principles and techniques employed in the scientific method.*
- *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major personality, developmental, and social psychological theories.*
- *Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to apply their understanding of the major personality, developmental, and social psychological theories to “real life” situations.*
- *Students will demonstrate an understanding of etiologies, interventions, and treatments associated with the full range of mental and emotional disturbances.*
- *Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to pursue careers in psychology and related fields and will distinguish types of academic experience and performance that will facilitate entry into the work force, post baccalaureate education, or both.*

Education Outcomes: This course also meets the following Standard for the secondary education teaching psychology endorsement:

- *The teacher of psychology will demonstrate an understanding of the use of major research methods in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation.*
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Experimental Psychology, William F. Ford, Spring 2005, Bucks County Community College

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/wf05experimental.f.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/wf05experimental.f.pdf>

II. Course Objectives

This course is designed to continue the process of training you to think and write like a psychologist. Specifically, this course will help you to:

- ❖ Develop an understanding of the experimental strategy in scientific investigation that includes an appreciation for the benefits and costs involved in selecting that strategy.
- ❖ Read and understand research reports that are published in the psychological journals.
- ❖ Apply the experimental method to answer questions about behavior through participation in laboratory exercises and experiments.
- ❖ Develop research skills for an efficient review of the psychological literature.
- ❖ Understand the American Psychological Association's ethical principles of experimental research with human participants.
- ❖ Prepare written reports of experimental investigations according to the stylistic conventions of the American Psychological Association.

Core Curriculum Learning Objectives:

- ❖ **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** The students will be able to:
 1. understand and express the meaning and significance of a variety of communications. (Interpretation.)
 2. use methods, concepts and theories in new situations. (Application Skills.)
 3. integrate and/or combine knowledge from multiple sources to create new knowledge. (Synthesis.)
 4. reason from what they know to form new knowledge, draw conclusions, solve problems, explain, decide, and/or predict. (Inductive and/or Deductive Reasoning Skills.)
 5. communicate and justify clearly the results of their reasoning. (Presenting Argument Skills.)
- ❖ **Information Literacy:** The students will be able to:
 1. determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
 2. determine the technologies and information formats appropriate for the information identified.
 3. access needed information effectively and efficiently.
 4. evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and value system.
 5. develop an understanding of the many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information legally and ethically.