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Teaching Assistants

Monday class (sec AA): Deepak Gera; deepak.gera@student.shu.edu

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Course Description

This course is designed to give Psychology majors the knowledge and tools they need to get the most out of the major and assist them in making informed decisions about career choices in Psychology. It is also designed to assist potential Psychology majors in determining if the Psychology major is the most viable option to assist them in achieving their career goals. During the course of the semester we will discuss the subdisciplines of Psychology and career options with varying levels of education. You will learn about Psychology at Seton Hall, including course requirements and opportunities available outside the classroom. Additionally, you will learn about writing in American Psychological Association (APA) format and have opportunities to practice writing in this format. Overall, I have two main goals for this course. The first is to give you some helpful tools and resources to enhance your experience as a Psychology major at Seton Hall, and the second is to give you a clearer sense of the knowledge and skills you'll acquire with a Psychology degree and how you can apply them upon graduation.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should:

- Be knowledgeable about the subdisciplines of Psychology
- Be familiar with the requirements of the Psychology major and opportunities available to you at Seton Hall
- Have an understanding of the career opportunities available to individuals with varying levels of education in Psychology and related fields (e.g. BA, MA, PhD, etc.)
- Have an understanding of and strategies for success in a job search or graduate school application
- Begin to develop information literacy skills (e.g. literature searching, use of APA format) that will facilitate success in future Psychology courses
- Understand some of your own strengths and weaknesses as a student and have specific strategies for improvement

You'll have the opportunity to demonstrate that you've met these course objectives in a variety of ways, including quizzes, self-assessments, class discussion, and the final reflection (see below for details).

Textbooks (required)

- Kuther, T.L. (2012). *The Psychology Major's Handbook (3rd ed)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Perrin, R. (2012). *Pocket Guide to APA Style (4th ed)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- 2012-13 Seton Hall University Undergraduate Catalogue (or the catalog from your freshman year). The current version is available online at <http://www.shu.edu/academics/catalogue-undergraduate.cfm>

Course Requirements

Your semester grade will be calculated based on three components: class participation, psychology related activities, and homework assignments.

Class participation (370 points*): You can earn class participation points three ways: through attendance, quizzes, and self-assessments.

Attendance (150 points): Your attendance and participation at each class meeting is important for success in the course. Our class will meet 15 times this semester. Attendance (which includes arriving *on time* and remaining throughout the *entire* class period) is worth 10 points per meeting. Texting during class will result in loss of attendance points for that day.

Quizzes (150 points): There will be 15 online quizzes covering the required readings and other course content, each worth a maximum of 10 points. They can be found on the course Blackboard page and must be completed *by 9am* on the day of each class meeting. The purpose of the quizzes is to get you thinking about each week's material before we meet so that we can spend our time discussing and applying the material. Technical difficulties with the quizzes (such as problems with Blackboard) should be addressed to the TA for your section.

Self-assessments (130 points): There will be 13 self-assessments, each worth a maximum of 10 points. The purpose of each of these assessments is to assist you in applying the course material to your own life. For example, chapter 4 in the Kuther book discusses study skills; the corresponding self-assessment will gauge your own study skills and how they may be improved. Due dates for each self-assessment will be indicated on Blackboard or during class.

*Clearly, there are more than 370 points available for class participation. If you earn more than 370 points, 50% of the additional points will be added to your overall points total for extra credit.

Psychology-related activities (120 points): These are designed to get you involved in some of the many activities of the Psychology Department and to give you the chance to obtain additional information related to your own career goals and interests.

You are required to complete at least 6 of the following psychology-related activities:

- Volunteering as a research participant
- *Attending a Psychology lunch talk (select Fridays at noon; schedule on Blackboard)
- *Attending a Psych Club meeting (Tuesdays at 5:30pm in Jubilee 383; "pizza & game night" doesn't count)
- ‡ Interviewing a person employed in a psychology-related field that you think you might like to pursue (see directions on Blackboard page). You may wish to use the Pirate Mentor Program to locate someone to interview; see the Career Center for details
- ‡ Interviewing a Seton Hall graduate student to discuss the application process and what graduate school is like. The student must be enrolled in one of the following programs at Seton Hall: MS in Experimental Psychology (includes 3+2 program), MA in Psychological Studies, MA in School and Community Psychology, MA in Counseling, MA in School Counseling, MS in Marriage and Family Therapy, PhD in Counseling Psychology, or EdS in School Psychology (see directions on Blackboard page)
- Attending a Seton Hall job fair, career day, or other career related event at which psychology-related jobs are presented (Hint: see the Career Center's website for details on job fairs)
- Meeting with a Seton Hall Psychology faculty member to learn about the role of students in his/her research program and discuss the possibility of assisting with research at some point in the future

Some activities (marked with a *) may be repeated *once*. For example, you may attend all Psych Club meetings during a semester, but no more than two will count for course credit. Each activity is worth 20 points. The activities marked with a ‡ will count as two activities and are worth 40 points.

For each activity, you must complete the documentation form found on the course Blackboard page. This form requires the signature of an official at each activity/event – be sure to bring the form with you! Submit this form to your TA no later than one week after the activity. The last date to submit a form is **Monday, April 29 at 4pm.**

You may not interview the same person more than once. For example, if you meet with a Seton Hall Psychology faculty member to learn about the role of students in his or her research, you may not also interview that faculty member as someone employed in a psychology-related field that you think you might like to pursue.

If you would like to engage in a Psychology-related activity that is not on this list, please see me at least a week prior to the event to discuss it.

You may complete up to two additional activities for extra credit. Each additional activity is worth a maximum of 5 points. Please note that only the activities marked with an asterisk can be done twice for any kind of course credit; this includes both extra credit and required activities.

Homework assignments

Academic plan (100 points; due February 25 for section AA and February 27 for section BB): Review the Psychology course offerings in the SHU Undergraduate Catalogue and the Student Advisement Checklist (this can be found on the Psychology majors Blackboard page). Map out your schedule for the remainder of your undergraduate career, indicating on the Advisement Checklist when you will take each course. Meet with your Psychology faculty advisor to review your course plan, and then describe the adjustments you've made to your plan based on the meeting with your advisor. See the detailed directions on our course Blackboard page. Students who have taken this course in previous semesters have reported that although this may seem like a daunting task, it is invaluable in class registration for the rest of your time at SHU!

Literature search and APA-style reference page (50 points; due April 8 for section AA and April 3 for section BB): Locate 5 empirical, peer-reviewed journal articles on a topic that will be given to you in class. Write an APA-style reference page using these articles. Include the first page of each article's PSYCInfo citation when you submit the assignment. This assignment will introduce you to APA format, which you will use extensively in your other Psychology courses.

Final reflection (60 points; due at our meeting during final exam week): Using the assignments & activities you've completed this semester, reflect on what you've learned about yourself and the field of Psychology. This assignment should be a minimum of 4 *full* pages in length (not including headers, titles, etc.)

Grading policy

Final grades will be determined based on the total number of points earned out of 700, as follows:

Points	Percent	Letter Grade			
658 and above	94 and up	A	539-559	77-79.9	C+
630-657	90-93.9	A-	518-538	74-76.9	C
609-629	87-89.9	B+	490-517	70-73.9	C-
588-608	84-86.9	B	469-489	67-69.9	D+
560-587	80-83.9	B-	420-468	60-66.9	D
			419 and below	59.9 and below	F

These cutoffs are firm, and I do not round semester grades. Do not ask me to give you an extra assignment to raise your grade or to round up your grade – I will not do so under any circumstances.

Strategies for Success

Based on my own teaching experiences and the comments I've received from students who have successfully completed this course, here are my top 5 strategies for success:

1. **Don't procrastinate.** Because our class only meets once a week, it's easy to put off quizzes, self-assessments, etc. until the night before the assignment is due. However, doing so makes it more likely that you may forget some aspect of the directions and needlessly lose points.
2. **Use a planner.** Again, the once-a-week nature of our class may be more challenging than you anticipate. Writing down assignment due dates in a planner will help enormously. If you do this for all your classes, it will also help you see when you are likely to be busiest during the semester so that you can plan accordingly.

3. **Budget more time than you think you need** for the homework assignments, particularly the academic plan. Being finished early is a much better feeling than scrambling to finish right before an assignment is due!
4. **Apply what you're learning** here to your other courses. For example, we'll talk about plagiarism and some strategies you can use to avoid it. The next time you write a paper, try those strategies. We'll talk about improving study skills; make a plan to try one or two new skills the next time you study for a quiz or test. One of my main goals in this course is to give you information you can use for the rest of your undergraduate career (and hopefully beyond!).
5. **If you have a question** about the course, **review the syllabus** to see if the answer is there. This is a great habit to acquire. Most faculty intend for our syllabi to be comprehensive and answer the most common student questions. If you can't find the answer in the syllabus or would like more clarification, please let me know and I'll be happy to help!

Policies and Procedures

Attendance: Attendance at each class is not mandatory. However, it is to your advantage to attend class regularly. **You are responsible for all material covered in class, whether you attend or not.**

I understand that missing a class or two is sometimes unavoidable. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes and any handouts/worksheets from a fellow student. I cannot and will not give personal lectures or give out my lecture notes. However, I will be happy to answer any questions you have once you have made the effort to find out what you've missed.

University closure: In the event that the University is closed, any exam or assignment scheduled for that date will be due at the next class meeting. However, since our class only meets once a week, I reserve the right to request that any assignment due at the time of a cancelled class be e-mailed to me at the time our class would normally meet so that we stay on schedule for the semester.

Etiquette: Please make every attempt to **be on time** for class. Please plan ahead for the inevitable traffic and parking problems that are bound to occur. I understand that lateness is occasionally unavoidable; if you are late, please enter the room quietly and take the first available seat.

Please **turn off all cell phones** before the start of class.

When you **send me an e-mail**, please give me specific information in the subject line, such as "quiz 10" or "writing assignment question." *E-mails with no subject line are automatically deleted* by my e-mail program, and e-mails with vague subject lines such as "important" or "help" often go straight to the junk mail folder, where I won't see them for days.

If you would rather be talking to your friends, working on an assignment for another class, etc., **DO NOT** come to class. These behaviors are disruptive, disrespectful, and unacceptable. They are rude both to your fellow students and me and will not be tolerated. I will not hesitate to call attention to any student who demonstrates any of these behaviors during class. Texting during class will result in loss of attendance points for that day.

Computer usage: Because I have found this to be problematic in previous classes, computers are not to be used during our class meetings unless otherwise specified.

Incompletes: In accordance with University and Department policy, incompletes will only be given in circumstances where a student has completed most of the assigned coursework but is faced with some unforeseen and documented circumstance that prevents him/her from completing the course requirements during the semester. Incomplete grades not resolved within one academic year will convert to a grade of F. I cannot and will not give an incomplete for poor course performance; you are responsible for seeking help if you need it and for being aware of withdrawal deadlines.

Late Work: All assignments are due at the start of class on the date specified. You are welcome to e-mail assignments to me, but I must receive them *before* (not during!) class. I will not accept any late quizzes, self-assessments, or psychology-related activities. The homework assignments (academic plan, literature search, self reflection) will be penalized at a rate of 5% of the total value of the assignment per day (counting weekend days) and will not be accepted more than 48 hours past the due date.

Blackboard page: I use Blackboard quite a bit, so please be in the habit of checking our course Blackboard page frequently.

Psychology Department Policy on Academic Honesty

I. Statement – The Department of Psychology will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Infractions will be appropriately penalized; students should understand that suspension or expulsion from the University is a possible result.

II. Definitions – “Academic dishonesty” shall be understood to encompass at least the following:

Cheating – whether on tests or on other course assignments, whether by the giving, receiving or taking of information. Additionally, turning in the same paper for two different assignments is cheating.

Plagiarism – stealing and/or passing off as one’s own the ideas or words of another; using without crediting the source. Includes (1) copying of text/research/assignments; (2) using someone else’s papers/research/assignments without permission and citation; (3) representing as one’s own work what is really the work of another person. This includes downloading from web sources. Students are responsible for understanding proper crediting procedures; unintentional plagiarism is still academic dishonesty.

III. Penalties

1. A student determined to be cheating on any test or who plagiarizes on a course assignment will be appropriately penalized at the discretion of the instructor. This may include receiving a zero on the assignment or “F” for the course.
2. Notice that a student has cheated or plagiarized will be sent to the department of the student’s major. All cases of plagiarism resulting in an “F” for the course will be reported to the Dean. This can result in a recommendation to the Dean for suspension or expulsion from the university.
3. If the chair of the Psychology department finds that a student who has declared a major or minor in Psychology or is a graduate student in Psychology has been found to have committed acts of academic dishonesty in more than one Psychology course, the student is expelled from the Psychology program after due notice of the discovery. After one year, the department may rescind the expulsion upon the application of the student provided the student evinces a genuine, informed, and vigorous commitment to academic integrity to the satisfaction of the department’s Academic Integrity Committee.
4. All department or instructor actions resulting from suspected violations of this policy will be taken in accordance with the student’s due process rights. Nothing in this policy statement shall be construed to preclude the department from taking appropriate disciplinary action against forms of academic dishonesty not stipulated here.

In this course, cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Copying, attempting to copy, or aiding another in the copying of answers from exams or assignments.
- Use of notes of any kind during an exam.
- Collaborating on assignments. Students may discuss assignments, but the work that each student turns in must be his/her own original work.
- Submitting an assignment for this class that you wrote and/or submitted for a different class (that includes previous semesters of this course). All work must be original and done specifically for this semester’s class.
- Plagiarism of writing assignments. Plagiarism includes taking ideas, writing, etc. from another and passing them off as one’s own. It also includes using another’s work without appropriate citation and *quoting without appropriate citation* – that is, quoting without placing the material in quotation marks with a

citation at the end of the sentence. Follow the four-word rule: if four words in a row are the same as the original source, it's plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me before an assignment is due.

The penalty for a first offense of any kind of academic dishonesty is, at minimum, a zero on the exam or assignment. The penalty for a second offense is an F in the course.

Disability Services Statement: It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at DSS@shu.edu.

American Psychological Association (APA) National Curricular Objectives: The APA recommends that Psychology course offerings in departments across the country address specific curricular objectives, with the overarching goal that a student majoring in Psychology will have each item covered in at least one course during their undergraduate career. Below is the list of the goals recommended by the APA; the curricular objectives addressed by this course are checked. By evaluating this information for each of your Psychology courses, you will be able to see how your undergraduate courses complement each other and gain perspective on the information and skills you are acquiring as a Psychology student.

Goal 1. Theory and Content

- 1.1 Describe the nature of psychology as a discipline
- 1.2 Use the concepts, language, and major theories to account for psychological phenomena
- 1.3 Explain major perspectives of psychology
- 1.4 Demonstrate knowledge representing depth and breadth in specific content areas, including:
 - (a) learning and cognition
 - (b) individual differences, psychometrics, and social processes
 - (c) biological bases of behavior
 - (d) developmental changes across the lifespan
 - (e) history of psychology
 - (f) relevant levels of analysis
 - (g) overarching themes, persistent questions, or enduring conflicts
 - (h) relevant ethical issues

Goal 2. Research Methods in Psychology

- 2.1 Describe the basic characteristics of the science of psychology
- 2.2 Explain different research methods used by psychologists
- 2.3 Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions drawn from research
- 2.4 Design and conduct basic studies using appropriate methods
- 2.5 Follow the APA Code of Ethics in the treatment of participants
- 2.6 Generalize research conclusions appropriately

Goal 3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

- 3.1 Use critical thinking effectively ✓
- 3.2 Engage in creative thinking
- 3.3 Use reasoning in arguments and persuasive appeals
- 3.4 Approach problems effectively

Goal 4. Application of Psychology

- 4.1 Describe major applied areas of psychology ✓
- 4.2 Identify appropriate psychology applications in solving problems
- 4.3 Articulate the use of psychological principles in social issues and public policy
- 4.4 Apply psychology to everyday life
- 4.5 Recognize ethical complexities in psychological application

Goal 5. Values in Psychology

- 5.1 Recognize the need for ethical behavior in science and practice
- 5.2 Demonstrate reasonable skepticism and curiosity ✓
- 5.3 Seek and evaluate scientific evidence
- 5.4 Tolerate ambiguity and recognize the complexity of psychological explanations
- 5.5 Recognize and respect human diversity
- 5.6 Assess and justify engagement in civic, social, and global life
- 5.7 Understand limitations of their knowledge and skill ✓

Goal 6. Information and Technological Literacy

- 6.1 Demonstrate information competence at each of the following stages:
- (a) Formulate a researchable topic ✓
- (b) Locate and choose relevant resources ✓
- (c) Use selected sources after evaluating their suitability ✓
- (d) Read and accurately summarize general scientific literature ✓
- 6.2 Use appropriate software to produce understandable reports
- 6.3 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly ✓
- 6.4 Demonstrate these computer skills:
- (a) Basic word processing, database, e-mail, spreadsheet, and data analysis programs ✓
- (b) Search the internet for high quality information ✓
- (c) Use proper etiquette and security when communicating through e-mail ✓

Goal 7. Communication Skills

- 7.1 Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats for various purposes ✓
- 7.2 Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats for various purposes
- 7.3 Exhibit quantitative literacy
- 7.4 Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
- 7.5 Exhibit the ability to collaborate effectively

Goal 8. Sociocultural and International Awareness

- 8.1 Interact effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds & cultural perspectives
- 8.2 Examine the sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences
- 8.3 Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions
- 8.4 Understand how privilege, power, & oppression may affect prejudice, discrimination, and inequity
- 8.5 Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors

Goal 9. Personal Development

- 9.1 Reflect on their experiences and find meaning ✓
- 9.2 Apply psychological principles to promote personal development
- 9.3 Enact self-management strategies that maximize healthy outcomes
- 9.4 Display high standards of personal integrity with others

Goal 10. Career Planning and Development

- 10.1 Apply knowledge of psychology to formulating career choices ✓
- 10.2 Identify the types of academic experience and performance that will facilitate entry ✓
- 10.3 Describe preferred career paths based on accurate self-assessment ✓
- 10.4 Identify and develop skills and experiences relevant to achieving selected career goals ✓
- 10.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of lifelong learning and personal flexibility to sustain personal and professional development ✓

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading Due
Weeks 1-2 (Jan 14, 28)	The Field of Psychology: What Do Psychologists Do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Psychology? Choosing a Major: Is Psychology for You? 	Kuther chapters 1 & 2
Weeks 3-6	Psychology at SHU: Degree Requirements and Opportunities	Kuther chapters 3 & 4;

(Feb 4, 11, 18, 25)	<p>Outside the Classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an Active Role in Your Education • Study Tips: Tools for Academic Success • Psychology Major Requirements • Getting Involved: Opportunities for Psychology Majors 	undergraduate catalogue
Weeks 7-9 (Mar 11, 18, 25)	<p>“Giving Psychology Away”: Locating, Understanding, and Communicating Psychological Research Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a Literature Review • Writing an Empirical Paper • Writing in APA Format 	Kuther chapters 5 & 6; Perrin
Weeks 10-12 (Apr 8, 15, 22)	<p>You Can’t Be an Undergraduate Forever, part 1: Career Opportunities with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Can I Do with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology? • Finding a Job with your Bachelor’s Degree 	Kuther chapters 7 & 8
Weeks 13-15 (Apr 29, May 6, finals week)	<p>You Can’t Be an Undergraduate Forever, part 2: Graduate School in Psychology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Can I Do with a Graduate Degree in Psychology? • Applying to Graduate School in Psychology 	Kuther chapters 9 & 10

During finals week, we will meet as indicated on the registrar’s web page (<http://www.shu.edu/events/exam-course-schedules.cfm>)