

**PSYCHOLOGY 101:  
GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY  
FALL 2018  
SYLLABUS**

**Instructor: Dr. Alexander Swan**

Office: Burgess Hall 106B

Email: [aswan@eureka.edu](mailto:aswan@eureka.edu)

Office Phone: 309-467-6418

Office Hours: MW 10:30-12, TR 9:30-11, F 10:30-12, MTRF 3-5

OR GO HERE: <http://swanpsych.com/contact-about-me/>

My Website: [www.swanpsych.com](http://www.swanpsych.com)

---

**BASIC COURSE INFORMATION**

---

**MEETING:**

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 8 AM to 9:15 AM

Where: Venum-Binkley Hall 25

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Keith, K. D., & Beins, B. C. (2017). *The Worth expert guide to scientific literacy: Thinking like a psychological scientist*. New York: Worth Publishers. (KB)

A supplementary Introduction to Psychology Textbook (NOBA): the full PDF can be found on Brightspace. It includes topics I hope you'll find interesting, and it will provide background information to many of the things I will mention in class. I will assign readings from this text to read alongside the main text above. (NOBA)

**COURSE WEBSITE:**

All the course announcements, quizzes, grades, this syllabus, and other resources will be available through the course portal on Brightspace. I will try my best to make the Powerpoint slides used for the lectures available online BEFORE each lecture. However, sometimes life will happen and they might not make it until afterward.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

College catalog description: Introductory course planned as a prerequisite to all other psychology courses and has as its objective the orientation of students to the vocabulary, techniques, problems, and theories of current psychology.

Here's my take: in general, psychology is the study of human thoughts and behaviors. It is a science, too, much like biology and chemistry. In recent years, it has become apparent that folks don't want to evaluate claims appropriately and supplant facts with belief and opinions. In this course, we're going to approach the study of psychology broadly, from the perspective of evaluating evidence and thinking critically about psychological findings. Rather than give you facts about the many fields of psychology and jump from topic to topic, we're going to spend lots of time honing our skills in the scientific method—a skill that will benefit you way beyond this course or an undergraduate psychology major. Sprinkled throughout the course will be studies from psychology that gave us our current understanding of various facets of human behavior and thought.

**CLASS FORMAT:**

The course will consist of lectures, demonstrations/activities, videos, and class discussion. Reading assignments should be completed BEFORE the chapter is discussed in class.

### **INTENDED LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Appreciate psychology as a behavioral science.
- Spot misconceptions about psychological science.
- Understand and *critically analyze* basic psychological theories, research, and claims you encounter in the general media.
- Distinguish between pseudoscience and true psychological research.
- Apply psychological knowledge to better understand events in the world around you.
- Understand the factual information and concepts presented in the course as well as the terminology used by psychologists.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

|                            |               |  |
|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Unit Quizzes (4)           | 20% (5% each) | Various dates                                |
| Pseudoscience Paper        | 30%           | DUE: Tuesday, October 23, 2018               |
| Podcast Assignment         | 30%           | Final Product DUE: Tuesday, December 4, 2018 |
| Finding Claims Assignments | 10%           | Various dates                                |
| Participation              | 10%           | Various dates                                |

### **GRADING SCALE:**

|                 |    |                 |    |                 |    |
|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|
| ≥ 93%           | A  | ≥ 80% and < 83% | B- | ≥ 67% and < 70% | D  |
| ≥ 90% and < 93% | A- | ≥ 77% and < 80% | C+ | ≥ 63% and < 67% | D  |
| ≥ 87% and < 90% | B+ | ≥ 73% and < 77% | C  | ≥ 60% and < 63% | D- |
| ≥ 83% and < 87% | B  | ≥ 70% and < 73% | C- | < 60%           | F  |

**NOTE: Grades will not be changed for any reason, except for clerical errors!**

### **A. UNIT QUIZZES:**

- The in-class Quizzes (3 “Units” & Final) consist of short-answer questions and are based on both the lectures and text readings. Each Quiz (including the Final) will only cover material from the unit. Although none of the Quizzes are cumulative, new material tends to build upon previous material. ANY material covered in the lectures or readings may appear on the Quiz. Some of the material in the readings will not be covered in the lecture and some of the material in the lecture will not be covered in the readings. **You are responsible for both!**
- Quizzes must be taken on the date scheduled. Vacation is not a valid excuse, nor is an exam scheduled at the same time. If you must miss a Quiz due to some emergency, then you can make it up by taking an essay exam. A doctor’s note or some other formal verification of absence is required to make up a Quiz. This is the **ONLY** condition under which I will give a make-up. All make-up Quizzes are **ESSAY** in format and must be taken during a make-up period agreed upon by you and me.
- No use of notes is allowed for any Quiz. Please be aware that cheating on a Quiz will result in a grade of zero (0) for the exam and reporting of the incident to the Division Chair and Provost. Cheating includes use of notes, books, cell phones, or copying from someone else’s Quiz.

### **B. PSEUDOSCIENCE PAPER:**

- In the age of “fake news”, I find the best use of your time in an Introductory/General Psychology course is to learn the valuable critical thinking skills that will help you distinguish science from pseudoscience. There are a number of myths in psychology that are still pervasive in our cultural and

popular knowledge (e.g., right brain vs. left brain people). These myths are perpetuated in claims that fall into the realm of pseudoscience and distract from real scientific facts and findings. There are warning signs, of course. You will use these signs to help you locate shaky claims. For this course project, I want you to go out into the world and find a pseudoscientific claim to promote scientific thinking as early as possible in your college career.

- I will provide a separate document with more details and we will discuss these details in an early semester class period.
- Basic details are as follows: A 3-page, double-spaced paper describing your pseudoscientific claim and a detailed analysis of its shortcomings based on the warning signs described in Schmaltz & Lilienfeld (2014) and a CRAAP Test Evaluation (must be attached to paper).

### **C. CREATE A PSYCHOLOGY PODCAST EPISODE**

- For this assignment, you will be producing a podcast related to a topic in psychology. These topics are available in a separate document on Brightspace. Only one topic per pair. Topic assignments are first-come, first-served!
- The topic can be something we study in class, or a totally different topic.
  - Remember, in choosing a topic, think of it in the same terms as choosing the topic for a paper – it shouldn't be so broad that you have trouble covering it in the time-span of the podcast (20-30 min), but it shouldn't be so narrow you have trouble finding information or filling the allotted time.
  - For example, "Sigmund Freud" would be way too broad (maybe one aspect of Freud's life would be a better topic), and the defense mechanism of "denial" would be too broad.
- There is a separate document on Brightspace with detailed assignment instructions, due dates for various pieces of the project, and suggested podcasts to model yours on.
- We will discuss the specifics of the project early in the semester during class so we can all be on the same page.
- You may work by yourself or with one additional person (no more than two people in a group!)

### **D. FINDING CLAIMS**

- For each Investigation topic, you will prepare for class by finding as much evidence as possible for the claim we intend to discuss in class. For example, if the claim is "opposites attract," you'll want to find as many claims about that idea that opposites DO attract. Before we start discussing the topic, we'll throw them on the board and dissect them as we go through the topic. I will then present research to refute those claims. These assignments are due for each "Investigation"-labeled class date on the calendar. I will collect either a type- or hand-written paper at the end of class.

### **E. PARTICIPATION GRADE:**

- Small assignments will be given at the beginning of class on random days throughout the semester. Points will be given out for completing the assignments that will count toward your participation grade. It is highly recommended that you arrive to class on time in order to complete these assignments.

---

## **COURSE POLICIES**

---

### **1. GETTING INFORMATION:**

- **EMAIL PROTIP:** I use email for almost all communications/announcements. If you do not check your Eureka email often, forward it to an address you do check. **YAHOO ADDRESSES GET SENT TO MY SPAM FOLDER.** The best way to contact me is always via email. If you cannot come to office hours and/or decide to send an email, be sure to use the following format so that I can help you:

To:  
Subject Line: "PSY 101: (insert your topic here)"  
From: your full address

*Dear (insert name of person you are contacting here),*

*Hello, my name is (your full name here) and I am a student taking PSY 101/General Psychology. I have a question regarding (insert your question here).*

*(Considerate closing of your choosing),  
Your full name*

A word of caution: I will do my best to reply within 48 hours. Depending on the nature (and popularity) of your question, my answer may be direct OR posted as a general class announcement on Brightspace. Please hold off on resending a message until 48 hours have passed. Finally, I may not respond to emails between the hours of 8 PM and 8 AM, so please keep this in mind when deciding whether to resend the message.

- **OFFICE HOURS:** As you may note from the first page of this syllabus, I will be in my office a lot. I have an open-door policy: stop by whenever within the time frames and I will be happy to chat. Additionally, if my door is open during the day and it's not one of the above time frames, I am available. If my door is closed, but you know I'm here, then you should come back. You can check my website for these times rather than emailing me to ask me if I'll be there. You might want to email me to let me know you're coming, but walk-ins are welcome. I will specify whether there are circumstances that will cut into my office time as needed.

## 2. LATE WORK AND MAKE-UP POLICY:

- If participation in university-sponsored events (e.g., athletics) or observance of a religious holiday or other sanctioned event prevents your attendance, you must contact me prior to the relevant date, and you must have any appropriate documentation. If an assignment is due on that date, arrangements must be made to complete the assignment ahead of time, if possible.
- Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due at the beginning of class (unless otherwise noted for electronic assignment submissions). Late assignments will only be accepted in the case of extraordinary circumstances and appropriate documentation, and may involve point/percentage deductions (standard penalty is 10%/24-hr period). Please alert me to these extraordinary circumstances by email within 24 hours of the missed class, and we will set up a time to discuss these on a case-by-case basis.
- Without appropriate circumstances and documentation, early Quizzes or Quiz make-ups will not be granted.
- **BENEFIT OF DOUBT POLICY:** However, I recognize that sometimes life happens; therefore, I have built some flexibility into the course to allow for illness, other obligations, and bad days.
  - First, on Quizzes, extra credit will be offered from one Quiz to the next if there is a 10% improvement. For example, if Quiz 1 receives a 60%, a 70% or higher on Quiz 2 will result in an additional percentage increase of extra credit. If you miss a Quiz AND notified me appropriately, and cannot make-up the Quiz prior to the next Quiz, I will count your next Quiz score twice (so no zeroes are given out).
  - In addition, your lowest Participation and Claims assignment will be dropped from your final category computation. You will not be able to make these up—they are dropped for whatever reason you missed, no questions asked!

### 3. **GRADE DISPUTE POLICY:**

- If you disagree about how your term paper was graded, you must dispute the issue *in writing* (not email). Write a paragraph about why you think your attempt was correct/sufficient and turn it (with the original assignment) in to me at the lecture following the return of the relevant assignment. Only reasonable and well-justified complaints will be considered, and all decisions are final. Please note that if you submit a complaint, I will re-grade the entire assignment, and your grade could increase, decrease, or remain the same. **This policy does not apply to final course grades.**

### 4. **CLASS ETIQUETTE:**

- **Please do not use your cell phones during class.** I would prefer them to be put on silent or off and away in your bag/pocket. If your cell phone goes off during class or quiz, please silence it immediately; do not let it ring through. I will remind everyone prior to exams to make sure their phones are turned off. Please refrain from text messaging during class. I know you think you're being subtle; I assure you that I can see you texting.
- Please do not leave the class partway through unless it is an emergency; it is very disruptive. If you must leave, please sit near a door or at the edge of an aisle so as to not disrupt your fellow classmates.
- Please have respect for the class, your peers, and yourselves by being fully present in the class. Please avoid anything not relevant to the class, such as sleeping, surfing the Internet/social media, or doing homework for other classes.
- **LATENESS:** Please try to arrive a few minutes before the start of lecture. We will begin promptly at 8:00 AM, and it can be distracting to me and to your peers if you arrive late. I will try not to keep you late.

### 5. **LAPTOP & TABLET POLICY:**

- Research indicates that taking notes by hand results in significantly better retention of conceptual information than taking notes on a laptop (see Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014), even when students are engaged in the material (i.e., are not also checking their email or Facebook feed).
- Further, laptop use can be distracting in various ways to the entire class. Because my goal is to maximize the likelihood of a favorable learning environment, **I strongly recommend that you not use laptops in class.**
- However, laptops will be permitted on a probationary basis; should the use of laptops be taken advantage of or prove distracting to other students, I will revisit this policy then.

### 6. **ATTENDANCE:**

- **Students who take notes, ask questions, respond to questions, and come to office hours are typically the ones who succeed in this class.**
- Though attendance is not required by College policy, I strongly recommend you attend class prepared and present. As such, you will not be penalized in your grade for missing a class. However, I WILL REWARD folks who arrive to class on time and attend each class, most likely with some helpful exam advice, if you catch my drift. If you do happen to miss a class, that's OK, but you will be responsible for *all* material covered in lecture, some of which will not be covered by the textbooks. If you know about an absence beforehand, please send me an email to let me know.

### 7. **ADVICE FOR COURSE SUCCESS:**

- It is important for all students to realize that there will be a distribution of grades in this class that reflects your mastery of some very technical and often-challenging concepts. Complete mastery of all concepts will earn an "A," good but imperfect knowledge earns a "B," average or adequate knowledge will earn a "C," and poorer knowledge will receive grades of "D" or "F." By these

criteria, the majority of grades should (and likely will) be “B/C” grades. Remember that your grade in this course is not a reflection of your general ability or your character.

- **This is a difficult, but not impossible course;** it is my hope that you will find this class challenging but rewarding in terms of the knowledge you will walk away with. If you anticipate having difficulty (or when you are), I strongly urge you to do the following:
  - Attend every lecture, and take good notes. While attendance will not be graded, per se, the ability to truly learn and use the material in this class is strongly related to attendance.
  - Review lecture notes on the day of the lecture (before you go to bed). If you need clarification on anything, ask in the next lecture, lab, or office hours. Don’t wait until right before the exams!
  - Manage your time wisely. This is an intense course with many moving pieces. Familiarize yourself with the syllabus, put important dates in your calendars now, and space out your work – there is just too much to do it at the last minute
  - Use the resources available to you – that includes your course materials (especially this syllabus), me, and the many amazing services offered on campus.
  - Discuss the material with another student. Form a study group. Go to office hours. Ask me questions. **ASK QUESTIONS. ASK ALL THE QUESTIONS—DO NOT WALLOW IN YOUR OWN CONFUSION.**

---

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE AND COLLEGE INFORMATION**

---

### **ACCESSIBILITY (ADA) STATEMENT:**

The Learning Center, located on the first floor of Alumni Hall, provides academic services to all Eureka College students. Consultations are available in the areas of math and writing. Study groups, individual academic counseling, and course specific tutoring are also available by contacting Jason Zimmerman at x6520 or [jjzimmerman@eureka.edu](mailto:jjzimmerman@eureka.edu).

Any Eureka College student with a disability or other special circumstances requiring accommodations or other consideration in order to successfully complete the requirements of this course is requested to identify himself/herself to the instructor and discuss the matter privately. This disclosure should be made within the first week of the course so proper accommodations can be made.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**

Eureka College strives to instill individual responsibility and integrity in its students, and expects its students to behave with integrity throughout their time at the College. Any giving or receiving of unpermitted aid on tests or assignments is considered cheating. If a student is uncertain about how to document sources or incorporate materials into a paper, it is his or her responsibility to seek help by speaking to the faculty member, another professor, or a Writing Center tutor. The College’s Academic Dishonesty policy is outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic dishonesty constitutes a major breach of the trust that exists between the instructor and the student. It includes passing off another’s ideas as one’s own, any attempt to gain information about a test or exam prior to the test or exam date without the instructor’s consent, and providing unauthorized assistance on a test, exam, paper, or other assignment to another student. Cheating on a test, exam, quiz, paper, or other assignment will result in a failing grade for the assignment. Further dishonesty will result in failing the course. Students who fail for academic dishonesty will not have the option of withdrawing from the course. If you are in doubt about what plagiarism means, or about how to appropriately document sources in your work, please contact me; I will be happy to help.

**COUNSELING SERVICES:**

Provided by Tazwood Center for Wellness, seeing a professional counselor as a Eureka College student is easy and free. Whatever is on your mind, don't be afraid to talk to someone.

Tazwood Center for Wellness visits campus twice a week for on campus counseling appointments. Each student receives 6 free sessions per semester.

Tazwood Center for Wellness  
3248 Vandever Ave. Pekin, IL 61554  
309-437-5522 (Phone)  
309-347-1148 (Emergency Response Services)

**CHANGES TO SYLLABUS:**

I reserve the right to make policy/course changes to the syllabus at any time with advance notice to students.

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

*Note:* The schedule is subject to change depending on the progress of the course.

| Week | Day | Date  | Lecture | Lecture Topic                                   | Readings         | Assignments Due                       |
|------|-----|-------|---------|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1    | T   | 8/21  | ----    | <b>NO CLASS – OPENING CONVOCATION</b>           |                  |                                       |
|      | R   | 8/23  | 1       | Course Introduction                             |                  |                                       |
| 2    | T   | 8/28  | 2       | Scientific Literacy: Mythbusting                | KB: Ch 1         |                                       |
|      | R   | 8/30  | 3       | Scientific Method & Science vs. Pseudoscience   | KB: Ch 1         | Group/Topic for Podcast               |
| 3    | T   | 9/4   | 4       | Investigation: Biopsych Claim                   | NOBA: Reading 6  | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 9/6   | 5       | Facts vs. Alternative Facts                     | KB: Ch 2         |                                       |
| 4    | T   | 9/11  | 6       | Investigation: Sensation & Perception Claim     | NOBA: Reading 10 | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 9/13  | 7       | Ways of Knowing                                 | KB: Ch 3         |                                       |
| 5    | T   | 9/18  | 8       | Investigation: Memory Claim                     | NOBA: Reading 31 | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 9/20  | ----    | <b>QUIZ 1</b>                                   |                  |                                       |
| 6    | T   | 9/25  | 9       | Understanding Stats 1                           | KB: Ch 4         |                                       |
|      | R   | 9/27  | 10      | Understanding Stats II                          | KB: Ch 4         |                                       |
| 7    | T   | 10/2  | 11      | Investigation: Intelligence Claim               | NOBA: Reading 26 | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 10/4  | 12      | Measurement I                                   | KB: Ch 5         | Rough Script/Bibliography for Podcast |
| 8    | T   | 10/9  | 13      | Measurement II                                  | KB: Ch 5         |                                       |
|      | R   | 10/11 | 14      | Investigation: Stats/Methods Claim              | NOBA: Reading 4  | Claims Due                            |
| 9    | T   | 10/16 | ----    | <b>NO CLASS – FALL BREAK</b>                    |                  |                                       |
|      | R   | 10/18 | ----    | <b>QUIZ 2</b>                                   |                  |                                       |
| 10   | T   | 10/23 | 15      | Closer Look: Myths & Misconceptions             | KB: Ch 6         |                                       |
|      | R   | 10/25 | 16      | Investigation: Consciousness Claim              | NOBA: Reading 25 | Claims Due                            |
| 11   | T   | 10/30 | 17      | Heuristics                                      | KB: Ch 7         |                                       |
|      | R   | 11/1  | 18      | Closer Look: Why smart people do stupid things? | KB: Ch 7         |                                       |
| 12   | T   | 11/6  | 19      | Investigation: Cognitive Claim                  | NOBA: Reading 27 | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 11/8  | 20      | Attributional Errors                            | KB: Ch 8         |                                       |
| 13   | T   | 11/13 | 21      | Investigation: Social Claim                     | NOBA: Reading 33 | Claims Due                            |
|      | R   | 11/15 | ----    | <b>QUIZ 3</b>                                   |                  |                                       |
| 14   | T   | 11/20 | ----    | <b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>            |                  |                                       |
|      | R   | 11/22 | ----    | <b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>            |                  |                                       |
| 15   | T   | 11/27 | 22      | Psych & Everyday Life                           | KB: Ch 9         |                                       |
|      | R   | 11/29 | 23      | Attitudes Toward Science                        | KB: Ch 10        |                                       |
| 16   | T   | 12/4  | 24      | Psychopathology Film                            | NOBA: Reading 51 | Final Podcast File, Script, & Bib     |
|      | R   | 12/6  | 25      | Film/Film Discussion                            |                  |                                       |
| F    | T   | 12/11 | ----    | <b>FINAL QUIZ (8 – 10 AM)</b>                   |                  |                                       |