PSYCHOLOGY 115

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Chris Jazwinski

Self-Paced Study

COURSE SYLLABUS
Revised 8/29/06

CENTER FOR CONTINUING STUDIES
ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY
ST. CLOUD, MN  56301-4498

Please read the entire syllabus carefully. You, the student, are responsible for reading and comprehending all of the information related to course procedures.
Welcome to Introductory Psychology Online! If you need to get in touch with me, you need to know that I am most easily reached via e-mail. Please e-mail me at my Huskynet address chjazwinski@stcloudstate.edu. Write “psy 115cs” in the subject field so I can easily locate it. I will try to respond as soon as I can. If you don’t hear from me shortly, I would appreciate that you e-mail me again. I will generally not return calls left on my answering machine unless there is an emergency that requires my response.

SCSU e-mail policy:
It is now official SCSU policy that e-mail communications between HuskyNet e-mail accounts constitutes the official record of communication between students and professors. The primary reason for this is that the HuskyNet provides a highly reliable back-up record and because all students have an account and may access it from anywhere. In addition, by registering in this class, you have been automatically been enrolled in its Desire to Learn (D2L) section, which is linked to your HuskyNet account. I will use it to initiate all course-related e-mail communications. Therefore, it is imperative that you check your HuskyNet e-mail appropriately often. I will initiate e-mail contact ONLY to your HuskyNet account and prefer that you do the same for me. If you write from any other account, I will reply to that account, but am not responsible for any lost or bounced communications that may result on your end. In general, it is extremely advisable that you use your HuskyNet account for all university-related communication and to reserve other accounts for personal use.

USEFUL WEB SITES
• Psychology Department web site: http://www.stcloudstate.edu/psychology
• Dr. Jazwinski’s web site: http://web.stcloudstate.edu/chjazwinski

INTRODUCTION
In this course you will be introduced to the science of psychology. You will be exposed to a relatively large body of information collected from some of the major areas within psychology. The objective of this course is to give you an overview of the field of psychology as a whole.

This course is probably unlike most other courses that you have taken. You may be taken aback at the approach used (lots of tests and retests). However, if you are patient you will find that you will be able to use the approach in this course entirely to your advantage (attaining a higher grade via retesting).

This course is self-paced. What this means is that you must decide when you are sufficiently prepared to take a test. You will be studying and taking tests over relatively small units of material (chapters). You will be expected to achieve at least a minimum level of mastery over each required chapter (passing individual chapter tests at a 60% correct level or better) prior to moving on to subsequent chapters. Please consult Table 1 below for specific grade requirements.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Because Psy 115 is self-paced, it requires more self-discipline and responsibility from students than many other courses. Students must proceed on their own without prompts and reminders from the course instructor. The first order of business is to learn the course procedures. It is the responsibility of students to thoroughly familiarize themselves with all of the course requirements and procedures as stated in this course syllabus. Failure to follow course procedures unfortunately can lead to a failing grade. Lack of knowledge of course procedures and requirements is not a legitimate excuse for not meeting the requirements. Therefore, you should familiarize yourself with this syllabus. If you are reading this sentence then you already are doing a fine job of beginning to familiarize yourself with the course procedures!
Because this course is self-paced, it is also the responsibility of each student to monitor his or her progress in the course and to schedule sufficient test taking attempts in a timely manner.

Note: If your name changes during the course of the term, please e-mail me to let me know about it. Your d2l record will not be updated with a name change even though the class list will. As a result I may be unable to match things up correctly as I am not automatically notified of name changes.

FLEXIBILITY AND FEEDBACK
One of the great advantages of this course format is that students are able to adapt the pace of work and test taking to their own needs. Students are also able to retake tests without penalty. If a student takes a test and does not pass (i.e. receives a score of less than 18 out of 30), then this test result should be considered as feedback indicating that minimum mastery over the chapter material has not yet been achieved. It is recommended that a student continue to study the material and return for repeated testing as soon as possible (but no earlier than the following day). The highest passing score received from testing over a chapter (18 points minimum) is automatically counted towards the student’s overall grade. Please realize that there is no shame in not passing a test. Some students have told me that they consider their first test attempt as an indicator of how much more effort they must put into further study of the material.

Many students enjoy the flexibility that a self-paced course allows them. Some students are done with the class well before the end of the term. Many students mention that they like being in charge of their own learning process. They can schedule their testing when they feel that they are ready for it. Anxiety associated with testing is diminished when a student realizes that there are four chances to do well on a test.

There is a caveat. Retaking tests multiple times without restudying the material IS penalized. A student can take a test over any one chapter only up to four times. If a student fails to pass a required chapter after four attempts, then the student will receive a failing grade in the course. Therefore, if your test score is less than 18 you must wait until the next day to retake the test. It is assumed that you will use this delay to restudy the chapter material. Retaking a chapter test without restudying the material will most likely lead to poor performance. If a student runs out of retest options then he or she will fail the course!

To summarize: you may take only one test per day over the same chapter. The instructor will enforce this policy. Failure to follow the one test per chapter per day procedure will lead to a failing grade. The instructor is able to track all of your testing attempts. There will be no exceptions to this course policy.

PROCRASTINATION
Successful performance in this course requires considerable self-discipline. The most serious problem that students face in this course is their own procrastination. A majority of students who do poorly in the course cause their own poor performance due to procrastination (that is waiting for too long to begin serious effortful work on studying the material and taking tests). If it were not for procrastination, then every student in this course would have the capability of obtaining an “A” or “B”. Tests can be repeated up to a total of four times. Therefore, unlike many other courses, the student has several chances at doing better. There is no need to feel anxious about the text taking, unless you have started late, you are working at too slow a pace, or you are not devoting sufficient time for studying. Students who do not complete their work on time will not pass the course. Procrastination is not a legitimate reason for an incomplete.

It is very important that you start taking texts the first or second week of the term! Plan to take about two tests per week. Retakes (especially at the beginning of the term) are very common so don’t worry. If you require retakes on each chapter then you may need to take more tests per week.

If you find that you are having problems with the tests despite frequent attempts at test taking, you may wish to consult one of the following websites:
http://www.elt.cornell.edu/campus/learn/SSWorkshops/SKResources.html
http://www.unbsj.ca/studentservices/study/multiple_choice.html
You may also choose to contact the instructor, Dr. Jazwinski via e-mail at chjazwinski@stcloudstate.edu (please write “psy 115cs” in the subject field of your e-mail).

**TEXTBOOK:**

**STUDY GUIDE BOOK:**

Because independent work can be difficult, the study guide is *highly* recommended. If used appropriately, the Study Guide can provide assistance in learning the material and achieving a good grade.

**COURSE PROCEDURES:**
Students must complete 13 required chapters and achieve a minimum of 18 (out of 30) correct on each chapter test (the best score is recorded when more than one test over a chapter has been taken). A passing score (at least 18 out of 30) must be achieved before proceeding to the following chapters. The thirteen required chapters should be taken in order. The three optional chapters should not be attempted until a student has passed all 13 required chapters. Optional chapters may be taken in any order. Optional chapters are, by definition, not required and can be attempted for the purpose of improving one’s grade. Points from optional chapters can improve a student’s grade by no more than one level (e.g., a C can become a B; a C cannot become an A).

**Required Chapters (take them in sequence):**
1. Introduction to Psychology
2. Psychological Research
3. Neuroscience and Behavior
4. Sensation and Perception
5. Learning
6. Memory
7. Cognition and Language
8. Motivation and Emotion
9. Development
10. Personality
11. Psychological Disorders
12. Treatment of Psychological Disorders
13. Social Psychology

**Optional Chapters (choose one or more in any order after completing the required chapters):**
5. States of Consciousness
9. Intelligence
11. Sexuality and Gender
14. Health Psychology: Stress, Coping and Well-Being

**TESTING PROCEDURES**
- To arrange for test taking, you must contact the Office of Continuing Studies (308-3081). Please schedule your tests at least 24 hours in advance as a courtesy to the CS Office staff and to ensure that they have space for you.
- All test taking is proctored by individuals approved through the office of Continuing Studies. What this means is that you may not take tests at home! Please contact the CS Office to arrange for an approved proctor if you are taking tests at a remote site.
- Each chapter test is worth 30 points. You may take one or two chapter tests (*from different chapters*) on the same day. Two tests over the same chapter on the same day should not be attempted.
To summarize:

- **One test per chapter per day rule:** you may take only one test for each chapter per day (e.g., if you want to retake a test for Ch. 3 and you just took a Ch. 3 test that day, you have to wait till the next day). Failure to follow this procedure may lead to a failing grade. The instructor can look up the date and time of any test taking attempt.

- **Two tests (different chapters) per day rule:** you may take only up to two chapter tests (from different chapters) on the same day. Failure to follow this procedure may lead to a failing grade. The instructor can look up the date and time of any test taking attempt.

- To pass a chapter, you must score at least 18 out of 30 correct (60% or a D level performance indicating a minimum mastery of the material).

- Once you do score 18 out of 30, you have two options:
  1) you may go on to the next chapter; or
  2) you may retake the test to attempt to improve your score (tests from the same chapter cannot be retaken on the same day).

- Your decision whether or not to retake a chapter test (even after passing at 18 points) is an important one. The point total over all of the required and optional chapters determines your grade in the course. If you passed each required chapter with a score of 18, your overall grade for the course would only be a “D” (18 x 13 = 234; see Table 1 below; however, passing optional chapter tests does allow you to **bump up your grade by one level** (in this case you could bump your grade up to a C). If you wish to receive a “B” in the course, then your chapter scores (required chapters) should be on average equal to at least 24 points (however, you could be working at a C average of 21 and then bump your grade up to a B with the optional chapter tests).

- Once you accept your score as final, **you cannot go back and retake tests on a chapter.** For example, imagine that you are working on chapters two and three and have taken tests over these two chapters. Let us assume that you have received a score of 18 on chapter two and a 20 on chapter three. You may not go on to chapter four until you indicate that you are finished with chapter two (and accept the score of 18). If you decide to take a test on chapter four, then that means that you have chosen to accept the score of 18 on chapter two.

- If you have obtained a score of 17 or less on a chapter (less than passing) then this means that you must continue to work on the chapter until you receive a passing score of 18 or more. I recommend that you restudy the material prior to testing as it is unlikely that your score will improve on repeated tests without significant effort on your part (in fact your performance is likely to worsen due to forgetting).

- I do not recommend taking tests without having studied the material. Past experience shows that it is close to impossible to pass the tests “by chance”. Past experience also shows that students who try to do this usually perform very poorly in the course and become very frustrated with the testing procedures. Furthermore, retaking tests without restudying the material may cause a student to run out of retake options which may lead to an “F” in the course.

Your highest score from each chapter that you pass (18 points minimum) will be added into your **Total Accumulated Test Point Score.**

**Note:** Continuing Studies does not normally offer testing during finals. Please plan to be done with all of your test taking by the end of the term prior to finals.

Table 1 below shows the point cutoffs for each grade (A, B, C, and D). Students must pass all thirteen required chapters in order to pass the course. All required chapters must receive a test grade of at least 18 out of 30 points. This is a “D” level of performance and is considered to be a minimum mastery level. However, there is some flexibility. A student can choose to master one or more of the optional chapters to enhance his or her grade by one level (e.g., a D can become a C; a D cannot become a B or an A).
**Table 1: GRADE CUTOFFS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Test Points Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F     | • 233 or fewer points; or  
      | • one or more of the 13 required chapters has not received a passing score of at least 18 points |

(***Total Accumulated Test Point Score – only scores of 18 points or higher can be counted. Failure to pass all of the required chapters at 18 or better will lead to an F in the course.*)

**Table 2: GRADE COMPUTATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total points from required chapters</th>
<th>Grade based on cutoffs (see Table 1)</th>
<th>Total points from optional chapters</th>
<th>Grand Total (required + optional)</th>
<th>Final Grade based on cutoffs with the constraint that grade can be raised by only one level from the grade earned on the required chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter test points</td>
<td>(must be 18 or more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress at mid-term
You may wish to assess your grade level at midterm. If you are planning on a B in the course then you should have accumulated half of the points that are necessary for a B (312: 2 = 156) at midterm. *If you are behind then you should pick up your pace!*  

You should also keep track of your average test score. If you wish to get an A then you should not allow your average performance level on chapter tests to drop below a B average. B-level performance on a 30-point test is a score between 24 and 26 points. With a B average on the required chapters, you can bump up your grade to an A by completing one or more optional chapters. You cannot bump your grade up from a C to an A.

**INCOMPLETES**
Incompletes are not automatic in this course, and are granted only under special circumstances. You must contact the instructor for an incomplete (best to use e-mail). Incompletes will not be granted unless at least 9 of the required chapters have been completed (scores of 18 or greater obtained on these 9 chapters). Contact the course instructor to present your reasons for requesting an incomplete. Not all requests for incompletes will be granted. Procrastination is not a valid reason for requesting an incomplete.

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