

College of Arts and Science
Department of Psychology
Oakland University

Basic Psychological Processes – Fall '12

Course: Psy 215

Course Section: #43896

Class Time: M,W, F: 9:20 – 10:27 AM

Class Location: SFH 173

Instructor: Cynthia Sifonis

Office: 222 Pryale Hall

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Office Hours: W:11-12; F:11-1

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Course goals:

In this course you will be introduced to the psychological processes that form the foundations of human thought and behavior. The topics covered in this course will include brain function, genetics, perception, learning, consciousness, memory, language, and artificial intelligence. Because these processes form the foundation of what it means for us to be human, much of the lecture time will be spent tying psychological theories presented in the classroom to your everyday experiences. Not only should this make the concepts easier to learn, it should also provide insights into the sources of your and other's behavior. Hopefully, it will also make the basic processes underlying psychology "come alive" for you.

In addition to attending lectures, by reading various articles and completing brief homework assignments that have you reason about the material you are learning, you should gain an understanding of the fields of study that comprise the "basic processes" of psychology. This should let you know whether you would like to pursue these topics further at the 300 level and, if so, should provide you with the foundation to succeed in those courses.

Evaluation:

There will be **four** exams equally spaced throughout the semester. The exams will contain a variety of multiple choice and short answer questions. Your average exam score counts for **75%** of the course grade. In addition, you will be assigned 7 short writing assignments worth 10 points each. The writing assignments will count for **25%** of your total grade.

Grade Calculation: Your grade in the course will be generated by the following formula:

$(.75 * (\text{avg. exam})) + (.25 * (\text{avg. homework})) = \text{course grade}$

For example: If you received an 85% average on your exams, and a 90% on the writing assignments, your score in the course would be:

$$(.75 * 85) + (.25 * 90) = 63.75 + 22.50 = 86.25\%$$

According to the following grading scale you would earn a GPA of 3.3 for the course.

Grading Scale:

4.0 = 100.00% - 98.60	2.9 = 79.59 – 78.60	1.9 = 69.59 – 68.60
3.9 = 98.59 – 96.60	2.8 = 78.59 – 77.60	1.8 = 68.59 – 67.60
3.8 = 96.59 – 94.60	2.7 = 77.59 – 76.60	1.7 = 67.59 – 66.60
3.7 = 94.59 – 92.60	2.6 = 76.59 – 75.60	1.6 = 66.59 – 65.60
3.6 = 92.59 – 89.60	2.5 = 75.59 – 74.60	1.5 = 65.59 – 64.60
3.5 = 89.59 – 88.60	2.4 = 74.59 – 73.60	1.4 = 64.59 – 63.60
3.4 = 88.59 – 86.60	2.3 = 73.59 – 72.60	1.3 = 63.59 – 62.60
3.3 = 86.59 – 84.60	2.2 = 72.59 – 71.60	1.2 = 62.59 – 61.60
3.2 = 84.59 – 82.60	2.1 = 71.59 – 70.60	1.1 = 61.59 – 60.60
3.1 = 82.59 – 80.60	2.0 = 70.59 – 69.60	1.0 = 60.59 – 59.60
3.0 = 80.59 – 79.60		

Expectations:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an environment of academic integrity and respect for the educational process and the safety and well being of all members of the community. Adherence to the Student Code of Conduct will be expected; violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Code of Academic and Student Conduct can be found at <http://www2.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/handbook/conduct.cfm>

All independent work submitted for a grade must be your own work. Plagiarism of any kind, dual submissions (turning in an assignment for this class you have already submitted for a grade in another class), and cheating on exams will result in a failing grade for that assignment and possible evaluation by the university academic misconduct committee.

Add/Drops & Incompletes: The University add/drop and incomplete grade policies will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the University deadline dates for dropping the course.

Examination Policy: Exams must be taken at the time indicated on the syllabus. Missed exams can only be made up if you provide documentation of a legitimate University-approved excuse (e.g., medical emergency) within **one week** of the missed exam.

Special Considerations: Students with disabilities who may require special considerations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services. Students should also bring their needs to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible.

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is not mandatory but it is highly recommended. Because there is no textbook for the class, your ability to take accurate notes is essential for success in this class. Because it is difficult to take accurate notes when you are not present, attendance can only improve your performance. You are responsible for the lecture and reading material, so it is in your best interests to attend class. Additionally, the lectures include videos and various classroom demonstrations that will assist your understanding of some of the concepts in this field.

Course Requirements:

Outside readings: Can be accessed through Moodle. The readings assigned for each section will be posted on this syllabus, Moodle and the class web page.

Textbook: Sniffy the Virtual Rat Lite, Version 3.0 (with CD-ROM) (Paperback).

Authors: Tom Alloway, Greg Wilson & Jeff Graham.

Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing; 3 edition (March 3, 2011)

ISBN-10: 1111726175

Writing Assignments: During the semester you will be assigned a total of 7 short writing assignments. Each assignment should consist of no more than 1 page of text (approximately 500 - 700 words) and will be submitted via Moodle. The topic for each assignment will be related to concepts and material discussed in class for that section.

Six points will be awarded for the clarity and accuracy of the response and **4 points** will be awarded for the organization of the paper, proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. The one exception to this grading scheme and word limit will be for the homework assignment in the Learning section of the class covering Conditioning. Because the assignment involves using “Sniffy the Virtual Rat” software as well as the writing component, this homework assignment will be worth **20 points** and students can go over 700 words to satisfy the assignment requirements.

Web Page: I have designed a web page for this class that is intended to be a useful supplement to the course. On this web page you will be able to access your syllabus, links to relevant or interesting topics, lecture handouts and recordings of the lectures. The html address for the class web page is: <http://www.cindy.sifonis.com/Classes/BPP215/215Page.htm>

You will also need to be able to access Moodle to access your test scores and the readings and to turn in your homework assignments.

<https://moodle.oakland.edu/moodle/login/index.php>

Lecture Handouts: PowerPoint lecture handout will be provided for the lectures. Students have told me that having access to these handouts is very useful it allows them to discern the organization of the lecture and it helps them to organize their notes. Because important terms and definitions are provided on the handout, students find that it is easier to keep up with the lectures (which are fairly fast paced). The handouts are also valuable study tools for the exams.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Subject	Chapter
9/3	Orientation	
9/5 – 9/17	The Biological Basis of Behavior	<i>Sacks Readings</i> <i>Specializations of the Brain</i> <i>How Dopamine Affects Work</i>
9/16	<i>Writing Assignment #1 due</i>	
9/19 – 9/28	Genetics	<i>Perils of Cloning</i> <i>Genomics 101</i> <i>Prenatal DNA Testing</i>
9/30	<i>Writing Assignment #2 due</i>	
10/1	EXAM #1	
10/3 – 10/12	Sensation & Perception	<i>Inattentive Blindness</i> <i>Smells Like Clean Spirit</i> <i>Between the Ear and the Brain</i>
10/14	<i>Writing Assignment #3 due</i>	
10/15 – 10/24	Learning	<i>Sniffy the Virtual Rat v3</i>
10/26	EXAM #2	
10/28	<i>Writing Assignment #4 due (Worth 20 points)</i>	
10/29 – 11/7	Consciousness	<i>Truth & Hype of Hypnosis</i> <i>Times of Our Lives</i> <i>High Times</i>
11/11	<i>Writing Assignment #5 due</i>	
11/9 – 11/19	Memory	<i>The Lost Mariner</i> <i>Cache Cab</i> <i>Inside the Mind of a Savant</i> <i>Acquired Savant Syndrome</i> <i>The Forgetting Pill</i>
11/18	<i>Writing Assignment #6 Due</i>	
11/21	EXAM #3	
11/26 – 11/30	Language	<i>Kanzi</i> <i>The Emergence of Intelligence</i>
12/2	<i>Writing Assignment #7 Due</i>	
12/3 – 12/7	Artificial Intelligence	<i>Machines That Think for Themselves</i> <i>Rise of the Robots</i>
12/12	EXAM #4 (FINAL EXAM) 8:00 – 11:00 AM	