WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

I’m sure before you signed up for this course you could have told someone that psychology is the study of thought and behavior. But what does that really mean? What are the basic theories that help explain why we do what we actually do? Is common sense as accurate as we tend to think? In learning to see and think about ourselves and our world from a scientific perspective, we’ll see that understanding the reason why we do what we do can be tremendously helpful in our own daily lives.

Before we can get into specifics it is essential that we understand the difference between “common sense” and research evidence. That is, despite how sure we might be of something, it’s just an assumption until we support it with scientific data. We’ll start by learning how we can design research studies to gain that knowledge, the rules for interpreting data, and the ethical guidelines for conducting that research.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Use all four general perspectives of psychology to explain a wide variety of thought and behavior
- Design a study to answer a specific research question
- Effectively train animals (and humans)
- Apply what we know about learning and memory to develop more effective study habits
- Label and describe how thought and behavior is controlled by specific areas of the brain
- Describe our sensory systems and explain how illusions trick us into perceiving things that don’t exist
- Reduce their own stress with effective strategies
- Explain why sleep and dreaming are important
- Identify the major classes of drugs and their effect on the brain, thought and behavior
- Analyze their own behavior using theories and research on how we are influenced by other people
- Draw connections between the development of humans from babies to adults and the evolution of the species
> Identify the major categories of psychological disorders by the symptoms presented

### REQUIRED RESOURCES

A Turning Technologies clicker such as:  
**Response Card: RCRF-LCD**  
ISBN# 978-1-9-3493140-0

**There is no required textbook for this course.**  In collaboration with Dr. Scott Roberts and Dr. Ryan Curtis, we have prepared a collection of freely available online resources, so ensure that you have access to a personal or campus computer and a pair of headphones. You can find them here: [http://ter.ps/openpsyc](http://ter.ps/openpsyc).

### STANDARD COURSE POLICIES

For policies on academic integrity, accommodations for disabilities, excused absences, copyright laws and grade appeals please visit [http://ter.ps/psycsyllabi](http://ter.ps/psycsyllabi). I expect you to know the details of these.

### COURSE FORMAT, GUIDELINES, AND REQUIREMENTS

First and foremost, this is not a straightforward lecture class. Time in class will be primarily devoted to discussions, demonstrations, and applications of the scientific knowledge in the field. You will be responsible for completing regular assignments designed to help you prepare for each class meeting. That may require a bit more work than some of your other classes, but you'll get a lot more out of it in return.

The course is designed to achieve the Department of Psychology’s Learning Objectives for every course:

- **Content in Psychology** – We'll survey the general perspectives on which psychology is founded upon as well as the history, theories and findings on which we base our knowledge in this field.
- **Research Methods in Psychology** – Everything we learn will be based on research from decades of scientific study. We will examine the methodologies along with their strengths and limitations.
- **Critical Thinking Skills** - The assessments will challenge you to apply your knowledge to real examples and form arguments based on sound theory and research.
- **Communication Skills** – You will be asked to demonstrate what you have learned via scientific writing, group and class participation and professional presentations.

**You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present.** Be sure to exchange contact information with at least two classmates. If you are unable to come to class because of an illness or another extenuating circumstance, please be aware that I will not be providing/distributing lecture notes. You will be expected to contact another student(s) in the class to receive notes/information. If you were present in class and would like to go over specific material from lecture, you are more than welcome to visit myself (or the TA) and we will gladly assist you. It is your responsibility to contact me and/or the TA for extra help as necessary.

Please remember to use the course email address (psyc100selterman@gmail.com) for any correspondence about the course (with the exception of private/personal matters that only I should see, in which case you should contact me at dselter@umd.edu). When you send an email, please include your section number (e.g., “0206”) in the subject line of the email. Please do not contact us through the ELMS messenger.

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**In a student’s words:**  
“Even though I said that there was a lot of workload, I'm happy that there was. I learned so much from this course- more than I have ever learned in any of my high school and college classes. This is by far my favorite class this semester and has made me look into Psychology a lot.”
**Also note: while some people may tolerate “trolling” (in other words, intentionally and willfully attempting to cause discord or friction through hateful or rude speech), those behaviors will not be tolerated in my course. You are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or me will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the University Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.**

However, I will also add that a key element of the scientific method is the ability for individuals to be provocative and to challenge conventional wisdom. Do not assume that the textbook authors or I are the absolute final word on the field of psychology, and do not hesitate to question previous research findings. In addition, do not assume that your teachers or fellow classmates cannot benefit directly from your ideas, even if you strongly disagree. The ideal environment for scientific growth is one in which we can be critical while being constructive, provocative while being respectful, professional while being easy-going. Do not be afraid to challenge authority (in this case, academic scientists). Furthermore, do not hesitate to place crude and/or offensive behaviors under the scientific microscope. Psychology is the study of human life, and human life is X-rated. To approach a full understanding of what people feel, think, and do, it will inevitably include addressing some aspects of human nature that are uncomfortable. Political correctness and self-censorship are the enemies of science.

**INDEPENDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENTS**

**Before** class, you will be required to complete a worksheet designed to highlight information in the assigned readings and assess your learning of the material. Every worksheet is different, but you can expect each one to require between two and four hours of outside coursework each. You submit your answers in a quiz on ELMS. These quizzes are due on Wednesdays at 12:00pm (noon). Note: ELMS will not automatically submit your worksheets at noon, so please make sure to submit before the deadline. For the first worksheet (Worksheet 00), you are required to get a perfect score (100%) in order to move on to the next worksheet. But you are allowed to take the quiz for Worksheet 00 as many times as necessary (ELMS will always keep your highest score).

You are welcome (and encouraged) to work cooperatively, though all answers submitted must represent only your own writing. Further, for essays you must type and save your answers prior to submitting them online… that way, if ELMS fails for some reason you don’t lose any of your work. If you have questions on a worksheet, please email me 48 hours before it is due so that I may respond in time.

Please note: If you experience any problems with Worksheet submissions (e.g., ELMS glitches), they must be brought to our attention before the due date. After the due date, we will not be able to assist you with technical glitches. The same policy applies for all assignments in this course. Also note: ELMS will not automatically submit your worksheets at noon, so please make sure to submit before the deadline.

**IN-CLASS LEARNING ASSESSMENTS**

Some class meetings will begin with an in-class “learning check” designed to help you and I assess your learning of the assigned material. Many, (though not necessarily all) of these assessments will require a clicker, so be sure you have yours, register it, and keep some spare batteries on hand. See
http://clickers.umd.edu for details on how to register your clicker and for technical support. If your clicker is not working correctly you should contact the OIT Helpdesk.

Please note: Once the in-class assessment has begun you will not be permitted to complete it for credit and it cannot be made up. Therefore, like any professional environment, it is critical that you are early or on time. In the event of excused absences that assessment will be dropped from your point total, meaning that it will not count against you.

**Blended Learning Course Design**

This course is designed as a blended learning course, which means that scheduled course time will involve a variety of learning activities, including in-class demonstrations and out-of-class exercises. We’ll discuss this in more detail during our first class meeting, but you should know in advance that some activities will require you to participate online instead of in the class room.

These assignments will be evaluated to assess (1) your demonstrated learning of the material, (2) the extent to which you form clear arguments supported by factual statements and (3) the quality of your academic writing. You are welcome (and encouraged) to work with classmates on these assignments, though your submission must represent only your own writing.

Students who have not had as much experience with academic writing are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available on campus. The UMD Writing Center offers individual appointments to help you draft, proof and complete writing assignments. Even experienced writers can benefit! To schedule an appointment, and to see the other resources available to you, visit [http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter](http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter).

On the weeks that you are not submitting a writing assignment, you will be doing a “study smart” in-class activity. If you do not participate in the in-class activity, 10 points will be deducted from your corresponding writing assignment.

Please note: The due date for all writing assignments is **Friday at 10:00 pm** on the date scheduled for your group. However, we give you an automatic 2-day extension such that you can submit the papers by that Sunday at 10:00 pm without any penalty on your grade. Papers submitted after 10:00 pm on Sunday will not be accepted for any credit—however, we still recommend that you ask your TA for qualitative feedback so that you can improve on future assignments.

Note: **ALL** assignments must be submitted online (no hard copies), and please upload them in a .pdf format. DO NOT use .pages or any other file format. Also note: if we cannot read or access your submission for any reason (e.g., if the file is corrupt), or if you accidentally uploaded the wrong document (e.g., uploading the assignment directions rather than your paper), then your paper cannot receive a grade. Please double-check to make sure that your file was submitted correctly, otherwise you will receive a 0. I recommend downloading your submission from ELMS to ensure that it was uploaded correctly.

**Exams**

There will be 3 exams designed to assess your learning of the essential concepts and theories in the course. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer questions and short essay questions. The worksheet questions, in-class assignments and review sheets will prepare you for exactly what learning you will need to
demonstrate on the exam. Anything that is covered during lecture, discussion section, or in the textbook is fair game to appear on the exams.

You can expect exams to be cumulative with regards to the application of earlier theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence to newer material. In accordance with university policy, make-up exams will only be offered in the event of an excused, documented absence. Missing an exam without appropriate documentation will result in a grade of zero points.

Note: You will not be permitted to use the bathroom during exams.

Note: You are required to bring a pen and pencil to the exam, along with your student ID.

Note: No student will be allowed to start an exam once the first student finished has turned in his or her exam and exited the room.

Note: I encourage you to go over your exams with the TAs, especially if your grade does not match your performance goals. For any given exam, you have until the next exam is given to review it with the TAs. In other words, you have until the date exam #2 is given to review exam #1 with the TAs or myself. Students will not be able to review their exams during finals week.

**Research Experience Requirement**

Part of learning about psychology is experiencing psychological research. All PSYC100 students are required to participate in 5 hours (credits) worth of research studies. You will be the participant in the study. If you do not complete all 5 credits by the last day of class, your final course grade will be reduced by one full letter grade (10%). You can learn about research participation here: [https://psyc.umd.edu/undergraduate/participating-research](https://psyc.umd.edu/undergraduate/participating-research). To sign up for the studies, go to [http://umpsychology.sona-systems.com](http://umpsychology.sona-systems.com) and create an account. You may then sign up for any study for which you qualify.

We recommend that you earn your first full credit by completing the “Mass Testing Questionnaire” - a collection of surveys you can complete online. The advantage to you is that many researchers use that survey to recruit participants, so when it comes to picking studies that you would find interesting and that fit in your schedule you’ll have more options to choose from. The earlier you complete the Mass Testing Questionnaire the better.

Please note: the psychology department’s policies for SONA have changed, and it is your responsibility to keep up with information about SONA policies (e.g., deadlines, alternative assignments, how many online credits you can complete, what penalties exist for missed studies, what to do if you’re under 18 years old). For all SONA-related questions, please contact Steve Young, who is the SONA administrator in the psychology department main office. The contact email is [SONAhelp@umd.edu](mailto:SONAhelp@umd.edu).

**University & Department Policies**

As a member of this campus community I expect that you are aware of, and will adhere to, all relevant policies that relate to this course. All university policies can be found at [www.president.umd.edu/policies](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies). For policies on academic integrity, accommodations for disabilities, excused absences, copyright laws and grade appeals
please visit http://ter.ps/psycsyllabi. You will also find this page useful: http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html. You are personally responsible for reviewing these policies, and I expect you to know the details within them.

Mutually-Derived Expectations

If you are experiencing a problem with the course or if you foresee a problem, PLEASE talk to me before it gets any worse. We will be much more sympathetic if the problem is small and if we have forewarning.

I believe it is essential that we, as members of a learning community, agree upon what is expected of each other. My role is a teacher, not a babysitter. I will not be providing constant reminders about course assignments/material. YOU are responsible (as an adult) to manage your work effectively. As a course instructor, my role is to design and manage a learning environment that is rigorous, engaging and focused on evidenced-based teaching practices. As a student, your role is to take personal responsibility for your learning and actively engage in all aspects of the course. What you see here comes directly from working with students in previous semester, and we’ll discuss these in class so that we can add or clarify anything that I’ve missed.

You, as a student, have the right to expect that:

- All work is evaluated by reasonable, objective and transparent criteria intended to assess learning
- All students are treated with equality, professionalism and respect
- I will be prepared and on-time for every class meeting and scheduled appointment
- I will maintain a classroom conducive to active learning, discussion and critical thinking
- I will, when possible, integrate contemporary examples, videos and activities to reinforce learning
- I will be available to assist with coursework and offer referrals to campus resources upon request
- I will read and respond to your emails within 24 hours on weekdays
- I will do my best to answer any questions you have, and if I don’t know the answer, I’ll do my best to work with you so we can find it (in other words, I won’t just make stuff up).

I, as an instructor, have the right to expect you will:

- Devote the necessary time and energy to master the course material.
  Note: According to Department of Psychology guidelines you should budget an average of 2-3 out-of-class hours per week for every hour in-class. If your schedule does not currently permit you to satisfy these requirements I advise you to take the course at another time.
- Be prepared and on-time for every class meeting, having completed the assigned work
- Save newspapers, word & math puzzles, texting, IM, email, Facebook, etc. for outside of class
- Sleep in your bed, in someone else’s bed, in the hall, or under a tree… but not in class
- Take responsibility for getting anything you might have missed from a fellow classmate
- Monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours
- Adhere to all course and university policies, deadlines, requirements and grading criteria
- Seek assistance when you need it and see that your questions are answered to your satisfaction

Technology in Class

Technology can be a great way to enhance education. It can also be a great distraction. Laptops will be allowed in class unless other students are distracted by the use of laptops. If 10% or more of the class is
distracted by other students’ use of laptops (as polled by clicker) then laptops will be banned from class for a specific period of time. This ban will not include electronics allowed due to DSS accommodations.

**Course Evaluations**

You will have at least three formal opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of this course, though I first want to encourage you to schedule a meeting with me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for how I can help support your learning and engagement. First, I will post an anonymous survey on ELMS part way through the semester to help us identify ways that we can work together to further enhance our cooperative approach to learning. A second, end-of-the-semester evaluation will give you the opportunity to reflect on the whole course. Finally, the University will ask you to evaluate all of your courses through the online system (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) towards the end of the semester.

As members of this learning community your feedback is crucial to the success of our program, and therefore to the value of your degree. All I ask is that in evaluating all of your courses you approach it the same way you expect instructors to evaluate your performance… be open, honest and objective.

**Grades**

**Grades are not given, but earned.** Your grade is determined by your performance on the various learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). With the exception of calculation errors, no grade changes will be made to your final grade at the end of the semester. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

I encourage you to take advantage of extra credit opportunities, but be aware that no amount of extra credit can effectively boost a failing grade. An “F” cannot turn into a “D” with extra credit. Other extra credit opportunities, if they are offered, will be announced in class and cannot be made up if missed. Also note: any extra credit opportunities (whether given in class or online) cannot be made up if they are missed.

I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing within 1 week (7 calendar days) of receiving the grade. If you request a re-grade, I will handle it (not the TAs) and my re-grade is final. Your grade may go up, it may go down, or it may stay the same. You must submit a ½ page explanation of why you feel your assignment/paper was unfairly graded and why you deserve a re-grade. Note: A re-grade is different than an error in scoring/grading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worksheets and Follow-ups (15)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Midterm Exams (20% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Checks</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Analysis Writing Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Please note:** Your grade in this class is **weighted** according to the relative percentage weights for each assignment/exam; it is not the accumulation of a raw total number of points. If you have questions about how grades are calculated, come see me and/or the TAs for clarification—you may also use the grade calculator, but keep in mind that this will give you an estimate based on limited information.
Your final letter grade will be based on the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Cutoffs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60.0%</td>
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</table>

“+” denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.

“A” denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.

“C” denotes acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected.

“D” denotes borderline understanding of the subject. These grades denote marginal performance, and they do not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.

“F” denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.

Students should make themselves fully aware of all grading policies and seek clarification when needed prior to the established academic deadlines for the course. Students have the right to review their work and the assessment criteria and the right to expect that objective errors in assessment or calculations are corrected. Students should not expect that their final grade will be altered for any other reason, regardless of how close they might be to some cutoff or important consequence (e.g., scholarships, academic probation, impact on GPA).

Students who believe that their final grade is not an accurate representation of their scholarly performance are expected to first resolve the matter with their instructors. All students have the right to appeal a final grade under the University of Maryland’s policy on “arbitrary and capricious grading.” Visit [http://ter.ps/gradeappeal](http://ter.ps/gradeappeal) for details to the policy and appeals process and feel free to request a meeting with the Department of Psychology's Director of Undergraduate Studies if you have any questions or concerns (301-405-5866).

Only extremely unusual circumstances will result in being able to turn work in late. Dr. Selterman is the only person who can make that determination. This does not include technical difficulties. If eligible to be turned in late, work will be penalized 1 letter grade per 24 hours after the time it was due. This policy does not apply to the blended learning assignments.

Other extra credit opportunities, if they are offered, will be announced in class and cannot be made up if missed.

Note: I encourage you to take advantage of extra credit, but be aware that no amount of extra credit can effectively boost a failing grade. An “F” cannot turn into a “D” with extra credit.

I highly recommend utilizing a network-based drive to ensure that you do not risk losing your work should a computer die, get lost or be stolen. There are many free options available…including Google Drive and Dropbox [https://db.tt/90AoMKHM](https://db.tt/90AoMKHM). Tip: it works best if you download and install the free software because then you can just save things to the folder on your computer like you already do and it will automatically save a copy on the network that you can access from anywhere. If even stores previous versions of the file in case you edit or delete it.

A NOTE TO THE CLASS
I am anticipating a very thoughtful, interesting and insightful class. I expect us to have some great conversations about psychology and how it relates to your lives and society. Although the course will be challenging, I believe you will all enjoy being in the class and learning what psychology has to offer.

**Course Schedule**

WS = Worksheet (submitted online before class)  
SS= Study Smart (In-class review activity)  
SA = Scientific Analysis Writing Assignment (during scheduled course hours, but outside of the classroom)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Class Meeting</th>
<th>Discussion (Friday)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topic (Textbook Chapter)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>General Theories in Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 9/7: WS 00, WS 01</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Cognition, Intelligence and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 9/16: WS 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>Research Methodology and Ethics</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 9/21: WS 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>Behavioral Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 9/28: WS 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>Exam 1 – Thursday October 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Biological Foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 10/12: WS 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>Sensation &amp; Perception</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 10/19: WS 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 10/26: WS 7</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Relationships &amp; Sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 11/2: WS 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Exam 2 – Thursday November 10th</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 11/16: WS 9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Psychopathology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 11/16: WS 9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Personality and Social influence</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 11/30: WS 10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Social Thought</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due Wed 12/7: WS 11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If time permits: Lifespan Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due WS 12</strong></td>
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</table>

**FINAL EXAM: TBA; In regular classroom**
NOTE: The schedule above is tentative. It is an approximate schedule of topics and readings. I may be forced to shift things around slightly depending on time and other factors. I will announce in class any changes as they happen, and I will post notes on Canvas that reflect this. The one aspect of the schedule that I expect to remain fixed is the exam dates.

ALSO NOTE: This syllabus is not a binding document. I reserve the right to modify the syllabus for any time and for any reason. If anything is modified, I will notify the class but it is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements and updates. In addition, if you are confused about anything on the syllabus you are responsible to ask either me or the TAs for clarification.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Class meetings and course materials, including instructions, presentations, assessments, content outlines, and similar materials are the intellectual property of the course instructor and protected by legal copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own personal use. You may not, nor may you allow others to, distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without the express written consent of the instructor. Similarly, you own copyright in any work products that you create for this course. If I am interested in sharing your work with others I will ask for your written permission. Copyright violations may result in referrals to the Office of Student Conduct and/or civil penalties under State and Federal law (www.copyright.gov/title17).