General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  Psych 1: General Psychology  GE Area  D

Results reported for AY  2012-2013  # of sections  22  # of instructors  11

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Department Chair:  Ron Rogers  College:  Social Science

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

1. **What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?**
   
   SLO 4: Students will be able to evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

2. **What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?**

Exam Question Assessments (2 sections)

Two sections of General Psychology assessed LO4 during the Fall of 2012 via 6 targeted test questions (see Appendix A). The results were as follows:

The mean percent correct on these LO4 questions across these two sections was 84%.

Written Assessment Assignment (4 sections)

Two very large sections of Psych1 (N ≈ 280) and two average sized sections (N ≈ 50) assessed LO4 by means of a writing assignment in which students had to write a 2-page essay on why the claims and evidence of certain people were pseudoscience rather than science. These topics included rumpology, alien abduction, astrology, and the moon landing hoax. The specific questions that the students had to write about and answer are listed in Appendix B.

Assessment Criteria and Procedures for Written Assessment

Data were collected from 4 out of 22 sections of General Psychology during the Fall of 2012 and Spring of 2013. Although the number of sections is very small, the number of students assessed in these four sections was close to 50% of all General Psychology students due to the two very large sections participating (N > 280).

Assessment procedures for Instructor 1 who taught two very large sections of General Psychology, were as follows:

1. The instructor graded a subset of 8 of the papers

2. Three Instructional Student Assistants (ISAs) graded the same papers after meeting with Instructor for a 1 hour training period in which they received both verbal and written instructions on the grading criteria (see Appendix C)
3. Although 3 of the 4 ISAs met the standard .80 inter-rater reliability criterion, (see Table 1, Appendix D) on the first round, they graded 3 more papers the Instructor graded to confirm reliability (see Table 2, Appendix D).

4. The rank order correlations were also calculated and in round 1, two of the four ISAs met reliability standards .80 and in round 3 all 3 ISAs ranked perfectly with the instructor (r = 1.0).

5. All raters had inter-rater reliability of at least .73 (and two exceeded .90) with the instructor before they were allowed to grade the essays.

Results (Grade Distributions) of these assignments were as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>A%</th>
<th>B%</th>
<th>C%</th>
<th>D%</th>
<th>E%</th>
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<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>45.25</td>
<td>33.25</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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In sum, about 90% of the undergraduates are reaching the proficient benchmark of a “C” or above in their understanding of what makes something a pseudoscience, which falls generally under the learning objective category of evaluating social science information and drawing on different points of view.

(3) **What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)**

The overall results suggest that across a sample of more than 50% of the students in six sections of General Psychology, students are doing quite well on LO#4. More than three-fourths are obtaining As or Bs on the written assignment to evaluate pseudoscientific claims. Approximately 90% are obtaining Cs or better. There are clear differences, however, between sections on the distributions at the high end, with one instructor’s sections obtaining many more As than the other (and vice-versa on Bs). Likewise, there were few differences between sections on the low end of the distribution (D and F).

Based on these overall results, we will implement the following procedures to

1) obtain assessment data from a larger percentage of sections, and

2) standardize the assessment criteria.

The GE Coordinator will contact the Instructors not only at the beginning and end of the semester (current policy), but also 2 additional times during the semester to assure that they are following through with their assessments.

In order to standardize and make compliance easier for instructors, the GE Coordinator will develop a bank of items and assignments appropriate for each LO each year from which the instructors may chose to administer or not (and develop their own).

**Part 2**

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Sections are generally aligned with the GE criteria listed above. Recommendations listed in (3) are appropriate and follow-through on them will enrich assessment activities for this course.
Appendix A

Topic: Conformity
Exam Question: Soloman Asch’s classic study on conformity showed that _____.

a. a majority of people went along with group answers that were clearly wrong
b. most people would shock a harmless victim if given a command to do so
c. people do not adapt to social roles very quickly, especially if they change residence
d. diffusion of responsibility would keep a victim from receiving a bystander’s help
e. the social roles of the prisoners and guards were powerful in controlling behavior

Section 8 (N = 45) (N = 45) = 96% correct
Section 14 (N = 46) (N = 46) = 87% correct

Topic: Mental Illness Treatment and/or Assessment
Exam Question:
35) Individuals with this disorder experience dramatic shifts in mood going from a “high” or irritable state to a “low” or “sad/hopeless” state with some periods of normalcy in between these states.

a. bipolar disorder
b. major depressive disorder
c. obsessive-compulsive disorder
d. generalized anxiety disorder
e. attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder

Section 8 (N = 45) = 91% correct
Section 14 (N = 46) = 94% correct

Questions 43-45 refer to the following scenario:
Jim went to see a psychologist at the request of his girlfriend. Their relationship had been suffering due to Jim’s behavior over the last 12 months. For example, he engaged in many repetitive behaviors, such as touching the doorknob 100 times before turning it or going back into the house 55 times to “double check” that he had not left the stove burner on. He also worried excessively, even though he really knew that he did not need to worry. In fact, he expressed to his girlfriend that he thought it was silly he acted the way that he did, however, he was very troubled and upset that he was unable to change. He needed help and his girlfriend helped him find a mental health professional.

43) Jim has _____ disorder.
   a. generalized anxiety (GAD)
b. obsessive-compulsive (OCD)
c. paranoid schizophrenia
d. bipolar
e. major depressive

Section 8 (N = 45) = 100% correct
Section 14 (N = 46) = 100% correct

44) Dr. W. Allen believes that Jim’s obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors are due to a traumatic event that happened during his childhood. He thinks that Jim has repressed this event and that through talk-therapy, such as insight therapy or free-association, Jim can overcome his troubles. Clearly, Dr. W. Allen was trained in the _____ approach to psychology.
   a. behavioral
   b. biomedical
   c. cognitive
d. psychodynamic
e. modern
Dr. Bachofner is treating Jim. She has developed a treatment plan that involves merging two types of therapy. One portion is being used to teach Jim new ways of thinking and perceiving his world; the other portion is being used to teach Jim new, more adaptive and appropriate behaviors. Given the success of this treatment for this particular disorder, you know it must be _____.

a. cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)
b. electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
c. prefrontal lobotomy
d. pharmacotherapy

Topic: Prejudice/Discrimination
Exam Question:
10). Prejudice is to _____ as discrimination is to _____.
   a. sexuality; race
   b. race; age
   c. attitude; action
   d. behavior; cognition
   e. age; sex
Appendix B

1. Claims/Assumptions/Evidence
   What is the primary claim being made by believers of the claim?
   What is one hidden assumption (not stated, but can be inferred) being made by the believers?
   What is one kind of evidence they use?
   What is one alternative, more plausible explanation, for their claims? That is, take the skeptics’ perspective and explain why people believe these things.

2. Pseudoscience
   Using the 5 criteria of pseudoscience in the textbook (p. 45 and Figure 2.4) discuss any TWO of the 5 criteria and how the views in the article are more pseudoscience than science.

3. Baloney Detection
   Using Shermer’s Baloney Detection Kit write how this article violates any three of Shermer’s ten baloney detection kit points
   (also posted on Chapter 2 Connect Homework Assignment)
Appendix C

Grading Guide for Psych 1 Assignment 1 (Pseudoscience)

Point Total: 100
Every 10 points = 1 letter grade

Overall:
• If they meet the basic criteria and the paper is OK (not great) writing style, then give it a B (80-89); this is the default grade;
• If they meet basic criteria, and it a well written, clear paper, then an A (>90)
• If they meet the criteria and it is very poorly written, then a C (70-79)
• If they don’t meet the criteria and it is written OK, then probably a C (70-79)
• Not every single criterion has to be met to “meet basic criteria” (e.g., if it’s not double spaced or 1 inch margins but all else is met, then it’s still “met basic criteria”)
• Deduct 5 points a day for late (March 14 = minus 5; March 15 = minus 10)
• NOTE: Turnitin GradeMark is not always right; e.g., It marks real words sometimes as misspelled etc. Right click and dismiss it

Criteria:
• Title page (name, title, date) (deduct 2 points)
• Has to have ALL THREE of the following sections (I told them to have these as headings; deduct 2 points or two if they are missing the headings)
  1. Claims/Assumptions/Evidence
     • What is the primary claim being made by believers of the claim?
     • What is one hidden assumption being made by the believers?
     • What is one kind of evidence they use?
     • What is one alternative, more plausible explanation, for their claims?
  2. Pseudoscience
     • Using the 5 criteria of pseudoscience in the textbook (p. 45 and Figure 2.4) discuss any TWO of the 5 criteria and how the views in the article are more pseudoscience than science.
•
  3. Baloney Detection
     • Using Shermer’s Baloney Detection Kit write how this article violates any three of Shermer’s ten baloney detection kit points
     • Has to be ONE of the links on the assignment; they can use other sources but are not required.
     • Format: Double spaced, 12pt font, 1 inch margins, header with page # (so if they turned it in in .rtf or .txt format they lose format points (deduct 2-4 points)
     • Two pages in length (not including title page and bibliography). If 1 ¾ or more count it. (deduct 4 points)
     • No quotes (not allowed) (deduct 2 points for each quote)
     • Bibliography on own page and in APA format (deduct 2-4 points)
### Table 1: Inter-rater Reliabilities of ISAs with Instructor (Round 1, 5 papers)

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**Note:** I = Instructor; # = ISA number (e.g., Corr I2 = inter-rater reliability between Instructor and ISA2)

### Table 2: Inter-rater Reliabilities of ISAs with Instructor (Round 2, 3 papers)

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**Note:** 1 I = Instructor; # = ISA number (e.g., Corr I2 = inter-rater reliability between Instructor and ISA2)

**Note2:** ISA1 is missing because she did not assess these 3 papers