San José State University
Department of Psychology

Psychology 270
Seminar in Industrial/Organizational Psychology
Section 01 Fall 2012

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Office Hours: Mon 1:13 – 2:45 pm or by appointment
Class Days/Time: M W 4:30 – 5:45 pm
Classroom: DMH308

Course Description
I/O Psychology has two main sides: the 'I' and the 'O'. Psychology 271 focuses on the “I” side, and covers topics such as legal issues, job analysis, selection, and performance appraisals. This course introduces you to the “O” side: Organizational Psychology. The purpose of this class is to present you an in-depth introduction to the field of Organizational Psychology. Examples of the topics covered include social perceptions, work attitudes, organizational justice, psychological contracts, occupational stress, and leadership.

The class format will be a combination of lectures on scheduled topics, discussions of assigned readings, in-class activities, and presentations of group projects. The lectures are designed to place topics in perspective. The assigned readings will be discussed following the lectures, and they will supplement and expand on the perspectives I offer in class.

The group project is designed to improve your team work skills by giving you the opportunity to work with other students, as well as improve your understanding of organizational behavior principles by examining how these principles are applied to the workplace. The research proposal provides you with an opportunity to understand a topic of interest in depth and appreciate how psychologists use research to generate knowledge and/or solve problems.
Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives
The major goal of this course is to provide you with an opportunity to enhance your understanding of how psychology helps better understand our behavior in the workplace, both from a basic and an applied perspective.

Required Texts/Readings
Textbook
A reader will be provided to you.

Definition of a Credit Hour
Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150-minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week.

Library Liaison (Optional)
Bernd Becker (408) 808-2348 (bernd.becker@sjsu.edu) for library research questions.

Classroom Protocol
In an effort to create a classroom environment conducive to learning, I expect you to follow the following classroom etiquette:

• Be polite and respectful to other people in the class.
• Do not carry on conversations with others during class
• Please turn off your cell phone. Never take a call and start talking during class.
• Do not use electronic devices to check email, visit web sites, play games, or send instant messages. Doing so is a distraction to other students and the instructor and will result in expulsion from class.
• Do not work on any other course material during class, including studying for other exams.
• Do not sleep during class.

Dropping and Adding
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the
Assignments and Grading Policy
Your course grade will be based on your performance in the following categories of the coursework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three take-home exams</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied group project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summaries of empirical studies</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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**Total Point Possible** 400 pts

Your final grade will be calculated by summing your scores on the categories above and a letter grade will be assigned based on the following grading distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A- to A+</td>
<td>90% - 100%</td>
<td>D- to D+</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- to B+</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- to C+</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
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Exams
There will be three take-home exams and they will consist of essay questions. Exams are designed to measure your knowledge and understanding of the concepts. Your answers to exam questions should be the integration of all the materials from lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions.

Research proposal (due Monday, December 10th)
You will be asked to prepare a research proposal on a topic of your interest in the field of Organizational Psychology. This proposal needs to be done individually. Your research proposal should be an original proposal (i.e., not written for another class taken during the same semester). Your paper must be typed, double-spaced and in standard American Psychological Association (APA) format (refer to the Publication Manual for details, paying particular attention to Chapter 5) ("Manuscript Preparation and Sample Paper"). The paper should be 13-20 pages long, not including references. The paper should not exceed more than 20 pages long. This paper will fulfill the writing competency requirement for the Master’s degree (see Graduate Student Handbook or Graduate Studies website for details).
Late work will result in the reduction of 10 points for each day after the due date. To receive complete credit on your proposal, you must pay careful attention to grammar, spelling, sentence construction, etc. Spell and grammar checkers do not catch all errors – you must proofread it. Even better, have someone else proofread it. Papers that contain spelling and grammatical errors will result in point reduction.

Group project “In Search of Excellent Companies”
An important component of Industrial/Organizational Psychology is taking information gathered from research studies and applying it to workplace settings in order to improve the workplace. You will be divided into a small number of teams and each team will conduct an organizational assessment at a local organization (in a broader sense). The team will be responsible for all the tasks associated with conducting an organizational assessment. The main tasks are as follows: (1) conducting interviews with a small number of employees to address critical issues at the organization that are related to the topics covered in class, (2) analyzing their responses, (3) summarizing the findings, (4) presenting them to the organization (if so desired), (5) presenting them to the class, and (6) writing a summary of the project. When your team presents the group project to the class, I encourage the use of overheads, handouts, Powerpoint, or any other materials that may enhance the quality of your work team’s presentation.

Summaries of empirical studies
You will be asked to briefly summarize several assigned empirical articles (see Course Schedule). The major purposes of these assignments are to improve your ability to critically evaluate empirical studies reported in scholarly journals and to understand how others conduct research. In addition to written summaries, you will be expected to discuss your insights in class. A summary of an article should be single-spaced and about a half page long (at most one page long). Summary questions will be provided to you later. Each summary is 3 pts and the best 20 summaries will be counted toward your grade.

Class participation
Since this class uses a seminar format with assigned readings and classroom discussion, the quality of the class will depend, in part, how well each of you contributes to the work we do in the classroom. If we are to gain from our efforts, it is important that everyone comes to class prepared to actively participate. Each member of the class is expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class, and participate in classroom discussion on those readings. Therefore, your participation will be evaluated based on (a) the level of preparedness for class (e.g., read readings, be ready to discuss) and (b) the quality of participation (e.g., contribution to discussion, insight, questions to the discussion leader, not using too much of your own personal experience, not dominating a discussion). Assigned discussion leaders will facilitate class discussions.
**University Policies**

**Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

**SJSU Writing Center (Optional)**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.
Research Proposal (due Monday, December 10th)

The purpose of the research proposal is to have you explore a topic addressed in this course in greater detail, help you develop the ability to think critically, integrate materials from a variety of sources, and write clearly about theoretical and/or practical issues. Accordingly, this paper consists of the following major sections. The minimum length of the paper should be 13 pages long, including a title page.

The topic you choose must be related to Organizational Psychology and needs to be approved by me. A paragraph describing your topic is due in class on Wednesday, October 24th (or sooner if you already have one). Be aware that reviewing literature is time-consuming. It is a process: You need to identify the topic you are interested in. Once you identify it, you need to search for articles and this search could be ongoing. After you search enough articles, you need to read them and write a paper by integrating these articles. This whole process usually takes more than a month. Please do not even think that you could write a research proposal in two weeks. You need to start to think about your topic early in the semester and keep working on the proposal continuously throughout the semester.

Components of paper
1. Title page (1 page)

2. Introduction/Literature review (10 - 15 pages or more)
   a. The introduction serves to provide the rationale for your research, as well as to introduce the background information necessary for the reader to follow and believe your rationale.
   b. As you outline your introduction, you should consider the five objectives below (Creswell, 2003) and critically evaluate how well you are achieving each with your words, content, and organization.
      - **State and introduce the research problem** (2 – 3 pages)
        o Write an opening sentence that will stimulate the reader’s interest as well as convey an issue to which a broad audience can relate.
        o Consider numeric information for impact (like statistical information).
        o Clearly identify the research problem.
        o Indicate why the problem is important by citing references that justify the need
        o A brief overview of your study.
        o So by the end of the second or third page, readers will know what you are proposing to study.
      - **Review the studies that have addressed the problem/variables**
        o The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for research.
        o Find recent literature to summarize (e.g., last 10 years) unless an older study exists that is very relevant and/or heavily cited by others.
        o This section should summarize existing writings about your topic. Your paper should not be a series of ‘mini-book reports’ in which you discuss the series of articles one after another. Rather, you should focus on similarities (e.g., common findings, themes) and differences (e.g., conflicting findings, different focus) among the articles.
      - **Discuss the deficiencies and/or importance of these studies** (Gap analysis)
        o If possible, cite several deficiencies (or limitations) to make the case even stronger for your study.
        o Identify specifically the deficiencies of other studies (e.g., methodological flaws, overlooked variables).
        o Write about areas overlooked by past studies, including topics, significant
implications, etc.
   o Discuss how your proposed study will remedy these deficiencies and provide a unique contribution to the scholarly literature.
   o So, you are building a case for your study here.

- **Establish a solid rationale for the current hypothesis**
  o End your introduction with a statement of the purpose or intent of the study (i.e., what are you proposing to examine).
  o Use previous research and theories to support the rationale for your hypothesis and delineate them.

As you look over your outline (and later read your introduction), is there a logical progression of ideals and clear rationale for the proposed purpose (i.e., hypothesis and variable?)

3. **References (2 - 4 pages)**
   You should read a representative sample of articles, enough to allow you to feel that you have adequately covered your topic. In other words, there is no minimum or 'right' number of articles to read.

**When conducting a literature search on your topic of interest**

Tip: When doing a search, enter search terms such as “review,” “meta-analysis” to get current articles that summarize the literature on your topic of interest.

Tip: Always start with general terms and then narrow the topic depending on the number of studies that are returned.

Tip: Read the discussion section thoroughly, especially when they discuss ideas for future research.

Tip: Search databases such as *PsycInfo, ABInform, Social Sciences Index, Wilson, EBSCO.*

Tip: If you find that an article is cited many times in the literature, that means that the paper is important, so be sure to read that article and find other articles that cite it.

Tip: Take notes on the articles you think are relevant. When you summarize an article, include the following sections;
   a. Purpose of the study – what is the main objective of the study
   b. Construct definition – what are the definitions of the terms or theory being tested
   c. Hypothesis/es – what predictions are made?
   d. Method – who is the sample (age, gender, students/workers), sample size
   e. Procedure – what participants did?
   f. Measure – what measures/scales/instruments were used – list names of measures
   g. Results – what was found? Below each hypothesis, note whether the hypothesis was supported/partially supported/not supported.
   h. Discussion – what are the main conclusion drawn from the study
   i. Limitations – what are the weaknesses of the study
   j. Future research – what are some future research ideas
   k. Opinion – what is your opinion of the article – did you like it or not like it? Why or why not?
Tentative Grading Criteria For Research Proposal

1. Introduction (80% of grade)
   • Is a literature review comprehensive?
   • Are articles summarized in detail and integrated?
   • Is the literature evaluated?
   • Has the purpose or reason for conducting the proposed study been made explicit?
   • Are the research hypotheses explicitly stated and in a logical order?

2. References (10% of grade)
   • Have the references been presented in standard APA format?

3. Other general issues (10% of grade)
   • Do all aspects of the paper conform to APA formatting standard?
   • Are there grammatical/spelling errors?
Group Project
“In Search of Excellent Companies”

1. **Purpose:** Your team will choose one organization in any industry, examine its management practices, and report on results. The learning objectives for this project are:
   - Improve your understanding of organizational behavior practices and concepts through experience and observation with a real-life organization.
   - Improve your team facilitation skills by working with your group members on this project.
   - Improve your oral and written communication skills.

2. **Methods:** How do you collect information? I encourage you to collect information on the management practices of your chosen company from as many sources as you can. The following are some sources that you can use: business publications (e.g., *Business Week, Fortune, Wall Street Journal*), written documents available from the organization (e.g., mission statement), interviews about 10 workers and managers, questionnaires, and personal observations from on-site visits.

3. **What type of information should you collect?** The focus of the project is on organizational behavior concepts and practices. Each team will select five issues. The following page contains a list of issues that could be used by your team. Feel free to include the topics that are not covered by the list. The issues that your team will address need to be approved by me.

4. **Outputs:** Each team is responsible for producing a brief presentation (about 20 – 30 minutes) and a paper. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length, double spaced, and carefully proofread. The presentation will be graded on content, organization, and professionalism. Please note that each group member must present meaningful information.

The paper should include the following:

**Group part**
- **Cover page** with names of students and organization.
- Introduce the organization. Provide a brief overview of the organization (one to two paragraphs) describing the type of business, mission, values, size, structure, etc. Following, describe the methods your team used in collecting data (e.g., interview, survey questionnaire, # of participants, their demographic info).
- Address the issues (i.e., what questions were asked) and their results (how did people respond, both qualitative and quantitative responses)
- **Conclusion.** Is the company considered an excellent company by your team? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organization? What recommendations would you make for improvements for the organization in terms of its Organizational Psychology practices?

**Individual part (individually written)**
- What did you learn from this project? What issues among the Organizational Psychology practices struck you as most essential for organizational effectiveness? If you saw that the organization used Organizational Psychology theories we cover in class in the management of its employees, what are they and how were they used?
- **Attach the questionnaire** (interview questions)
Examples of organizational issues to be addressed

- Describe the management/organizational behavior practice of the firm, including management philosophy, corporate values, and mission statements.
- Describe how employees are rewarded. What motivational approaches are used?
- Are employees satisfied with their jobs and/or committed to the organization? What does the company do to make its employees satisfied or committed?
- Describe the style(s) of leadership.
- What types of power are there? What influence tactics do managers use?
- How are conflicts resolved?
- What strategies does the organization use to reduce stress among its employees?
- What strategies does the organization offer to its employees to balance family-and-work?
- What does the organization do, if any, to promote diversity among its employees?
- Are employees treated fairly in the company? What does the company do to make sure that its employees are treated fairly?
- Do employees engage in counterproductive behavior? Why do they engage in counterproductive behavior? How does the organization deal with such employees?
- Are employees engaged with their jobs? How do employees demonstrate that they are engaged? How does the company deal with the employees who are not engaged?
- Do employees feel that their psychological contracts are met? What do they do if their psychological contracts are not met or violated?

General suggestions:

1. Keep in mind that all members of the group will receive the same grade for the group project. I strongly encourage groups to work together on all activities. In particular, it is critical to check the quality of the paper before handing it in to me. However, it is just as important that the data collection efforts for an organization be done thoroughly and carefully.

2. Before collecting data from the organization, be sure to develop a careful plan to ensure that you are able to obtain all of the necessary information.

3. Communication is critical to the success of your project. If problems arise that are not discussed, it could affect the quality of your project. Also, don’t hesitate to share ideas or discuss differing points of view. This will increase your learning and will improve your project.

4. Remember that everyone in the group has something unique to offer. Try to help your group as effective as possible by understanding each person’s strengths and weaknesses.