Course and Contact Information

Instructor  Evan Palmer
Office Location  DMH 316
Telephone  408-924-5547
Email  evan.palmer@sjsu.edu
Office Hours  Tues/Thurs, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM, or by appointment
Class Days/Time  Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 – 10:15 AM
Classroom  Online, synchronous class
Prerequisites  Undergraduate major in psychology (or equivalent)

Course Description

Welcome to the General Seminar of the MA in Research and Experimental Psychology program. In this graduate course we will examine current psychological literature in selected fields which will lead to the development of a potential thesis topic by the student. In a larger sense though, this course is meant to lay the foundation for a successful graduate career, culminating in a thesis which contributes new knowledge to the discipline of psychology. Next steps for the student may be to pursue a PhD, or to use the skills and knowledge to pursue a career in another field. To this end, the course will focus on three broad goals: Have students…

1. … develop the analytical and critical thinking skills needed to understand and evaluate psychological research, broadly construed (theoretical reviews of the literature, experiments, correlational studies, studies which use multiple regression and path analyses techniques, longitudinal studies, meta-analyses).

2. … develop and deeply explore research interests, one of which may become the topic for his or her thesis.

3. … develop skills and knowledge of resources for future career paths (PhD or career pursuits)
The course is structured to develop skills needed for a successful graduate experience., but to get
the most out of this class – and graduate school in general – students should work to take control
and initiative in their own learning.

**Graduation Writing Assessment Requirements.** Note that this course satisfies SJSU’s
Graduation Writing Assessment Requirements (GWAR).

### Learning Outcomes (CLO)

*Learning Outcomes* (LOs) are specific, measurable goals and objectives that students have
demonstrated upon successful completion of the course. 280 is designed to address 2 levels of
*Learning Outcomes:*

**Psychology 280 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs).** These are outcomes for this
specific course.

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).** These outcomes refer to the broad goals of the
MA in Research and Experimental Psychology.

### Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Critically evaluate empirical research in psychology.** Students will be able to
evaluate the strengths of various types of study designs, critically evaluate the internal
and external validity of those studies, and come to sound and nuanced judgements about
the contribution of studies to psychological science. Study designs and statistical
techniques that will be discussed include observational, experimental, correlational
(simple correlations, multiple regression, path analyses), longitudinal, and meta-analytic
studies.

2. **Develop a plan for thesis completion, and in particular communicate a critical
assessment of the research in an area that may develop into their thesis topic.**
Students will develop a plan for completing their thesis, and make some steps toward
defining their thesis topic (i.e., literature review on an area of interest). Specific skills and
topics to be covered are: developing thesis ideas, establishing a thesis adviser, critically
assessing the state of research in their area(s) of interest, and communicating that
assessment in written (APA style literature review) and verbal (oral presentation)
presentations.

3. **Develop a plan and skills pursuing a PhD or a career.** Students will be able to
identify the steps in the PhD application process and resources to help them improve their
chances at being accepted to a PhD program (e.g., CV development, gaining research
experience, writing effective statements of purpose). Students will also be able to identify
the steps in pursuing a career and resources to help them reach their career aspirations
(e.g., resume development, networking, improving interviewing skills).
Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon successful completion of MA in Research and Experimental Psychology degree, students will have acquired the following:

1. **Knowledge Base.** Students completing the MA in Research and Experimental Psychology program will understand the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology (i.e., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological).

2. **Research Skills.** Graduates of our program will possess an advanced level of competence in research methods, statistical techniques, and technical writing skills.

3. **Career Enhancement.** Students completing the MA in Psychology program will achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master’s in psychology in the public or private sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Texts/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA Manual (Required)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Other Readings and Resources**

- All readings for the course will be posted on Canvas.
- **SJSU MA Psychology Student Handbook**
- **APA Style Tutorial**
- **Owl APA style resource**
- **SJSU Library: Psychology-specific tutorials, resources**

**Optional**


**Other technology requirements / equipment / material**

- Regular access to a computer and internet connection
Course Canvas site

The course Canvas site is an online resource supplement for this course. Use of this site and the information provided is **not** a substitute for attending lectures. The site will be updated regularly throughout the semester. This site contains:

- Discussion Board (Course Announcements, student questions)
- Links to webpages that will be of use to you throughout the course
- Handouts and articles
- Lecture slides (generally posted after lecture is presented)
- Assignment submission
- Rubrics and feedback for major assignments
- Grade roster

My intention is that the site will become an additional forum, outside of class, in which we can debate, discuss, and raise questions about the course material. **Check this site regularly for course announcements, articles, assignments, and other course materials.**

To access the Canvas site, log onto [http://one.sjsu.edu/](http://one.sjsu.edu/) and then click on “FA20: PSYC-280 Sec-01”

**Username = SJSU 9-digit ID**

**Password = your current SJSUOne password**

For additional information or help with logging in:

**Canvas Student Tutorial:** [http://ischool.sjsu.edu/canvas](http://ischool.sjsu.edu/canvas)

**Note:** clearing your browsing history may help if you have trouble logging into the site.

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Course Requirements and Assignments

**Readings & Discussions**

This seminar will primarily consist of student discussions of assigned readings. The success of any advanced seminar depends upon the active participation of its members. Students will be expected to have done the assigned readings prior to each class and be ready to participate.

**Assessment in this class will include**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation - Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation - Response Journals (5)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Exploration Papers (2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam: Evaluating Research</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review (final)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation – Discussion and Response Journals

Discussion. A major goal of this course is that students will develop the skills to evaluate, apply, and ultimately communicate their knowledge and insights about psychology. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions.

Much of the class is devoted to developing the skills to identify strengths and limitations of theoretical and empirical articles in psychology. To this end, students will be expected to participate in discussions of each day’s readings and may be asked to turn in a response journal for the readings. At minimum, students should be ready to discuss and comment on each article’s

- hypotheses and background theory leading to the hypotheses,
- manner in which the hypotheses were tested,
- understanding of the main results and whether they supported the hypotheses,
- evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the research design, and
- questions, comments, insights, applications, ideas for further research, and so forth.

Response Journals. To facilitate course discussion, students will be asked to complete Response Journals for selected course readings. These journals will focus on:

- questions about anything in the reading that needs to be clarified (e.g., how to understand the statistics in the results section.)
- evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the research design, and
- comments, insights, applications, and ideas for further research

Thesis Exploration Papers

Another major goal of this course is that students will develop ideas for their thesis. To this end, students will write 2 Thesis Exploration Papers (~ 2 pages, double-spaced, APA Style).

Thesis Adviser Research Program. One of the papers will review the research program of a potential thesis adviser. This paper will describe the faculty member’s research program (e.g., what research questions are being pursued, general methodology used, general findings). It will also describe one of the faculty member’s published articles related to the research program. Information for this paper will come from both interviewing the faculty member, as well as reading the empirical research.

Own Ideas. Two of the papers will explore an idea/topic/question by reviewing at least one literature/theoretical review, and at least one influential study conducted on the topic. The paper will include an assessment of 2 or more gaps in the research (i.e., potential next steps).

Exam: Evaluating Research

There will be one essay examination for this course. This exam will consist of 2 - 3 questions. The questions will integrate the main themes, theories, and empirical findings within each topic discussed in the seminar. The focus will be on evaluating the internal and external validity of studies that appear on the reading list or an outside reading provided by the instructor.

Literature Review

APA Style Literature Review. The major writing assignment for this course is a literature review (12 – 15 double spaced pages including title page, abstract [approximately 3000 words]; APA style 7th edition) on a topic that may evolve into your thesis. You will meet with the instructor over the course of the semester to develop your paper. This will include feedback on a draft of the paper. The paper will review what is known about a specific topic in psychology, evaluate the state of the literature, and
highlight 2 – 3 gaps in the research that may be filled through future research (i.e., your thesis?)

**Presentation**
Students will give a 10 - 15 minute presentation of their literature review. The bulk of the time will highlight main points form the literature review, but some time should be put aside for describing a potential study that would address a gap in the research, as well as discussion with classmates.

**Final Examination or Evaluation**
The culminating experience for the course will focus on:
- Discussion of a selected reading that will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the skills developed throughout the course.
- Student discussion and feedback on course and program learning outcomes

**Make-up Exams**
No extensions or make-up exams will be given except in cases of reasonable and documented academic reasons, emergencies, serious illness, or similar seriously disruptive events. *If such a circumstance should arise, please contact me as early as possible and be ready to provide documentation.*

**Late Assignments**
Assignments are due in-class on the day indicated on the course schedule. If due dates are changed, the new due date will be announced in lecture and posted on Canvas in a timely fashion.

- **Research Paper.** There will be a 10% penalty for each calendar day the research paper is turned in late. Research papers will be accepted up to 1 week after the due date. No other extension will be given except in cases of reasonable and documented academic reasons, emergencies, serious illness, or similar seriously disruptive events. *If such a circumstance should arise, please contact me as early as possible and be ready to provide documentation.*

- **Other Assignments.** Because written assignments are discussed in class, they cannot be turned in late. No other extensions will be given except in cases of reasonable and documented academic reasons, emergencies, serious illness, or similar seriously disruptive events. *If such a circumstance should arise, please contact me as early as possible and be ready to provide documentation.*

**Tentative Grade Determination**
Course grades will be based on the number of points accumulated throughout the semester. The table below summarizes the points and percentage of course grade associated with each course assignments. Rubrics for all major assignments can be found on the course Canvas shell. Final grades in this course will be assigned as indicated below.
Grading Scale:

- 96.5 – 100%  A plus
- 92.5 – 96.4%  A
- 89.5 – 92.4%  A minus
- 86.5 – 89.4%  B plus
- 82.5 – 86.5%  B
- 79.5 – 82.4%  B minus
- 76.5 – 79.4%  C plus
- 72.5 – 76.4%  C
- 69.5 – 72.4%  C minus
- 66.5 – 69.4%  D plus
- 62.5 – 66.4%  D
- 59.5 – 62.4%  D minus
- ≤ 59.4%  F

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**Classroom Protocol**

**Contacting Instructor**

1. **I will answer emails M - F, 9:00 - 5:00.** If you email me at night or on the weekends, I may not respond until the next weekday.

2. **Through Canvas mail function.** Best for private questions and comments.

3. **Through Canvas discussion board.** Best for questions about the course that need not remain private. Chances are others have the same questions you have.

4. **Through regular email.** evan.palmer@sjsu.edu

5. **Consider emails for this course as professional correspondence (see sample correspondence at the end of the syllabus).**
   a. **Subject Line** should include your class and a brief description of the issue (e.g., Subject: Psych 154: absence on 10-10-11).
   b. **Greetings** should be formal and use your instructor’s title (e.g., Dear Dr. Palmer or Professor Palmer)
   c. **Identify yourself** and the course/section you are in.
   d. **Issue or question** should be stated clearly, concisely, respectfully, and with attention paid to grammar, complete sentences, and so forth.
   e. **Expect replies within 1 - 3 days.** Polite follow-ups are encourage if you have not heard from me in a reasonable amount of time.

**Example email correspondence**
Subject: Psyc 154: Assignment due date question

Dear Professor Palmer (or Dr. Palmer),

My name is Maggie Jackson and I am in your T/Th 154 class. I am not sure when the Response Journal assignment is due because of conflicting information. The syllabus schedule says Nov. 5, but the assignment sheet itself says Nov 9. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,

Maggie

student id # 123456789

Regular attendance and participation is necessary to do well in the course.
Although the course has an online resource, this resource is not a substitute for attending class.

Late arrivals
If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so quietly and with a minimum of distraction.

Be respectful of others
Respect differing points of view offered by students. Independent discussions should not be happening when someone is addressing the class.

I expect you to come to class prepared
“Prepared” means you have completed the readings and any assignment before class starts, and written down any questions you had from the assignment. You should be as prepared as you expect your professor to be.

Communication
Use email!! Use office hours! Talk to me!!

Check the course Canvas site regularly
If I become ill, I will inform you the night before that I will be absent. Please email me before class if you will not be in class. Please set your spam controls to accept my email address.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/
Student Resources

Librarian: Psychology
The SJSU library has a librarian who specializes in psychology (and other social sciences), and this librarian can serve as a very valuable resource for helping you to develop research ideas and locating appropriate research materials. The library also has an abundance of resources for doing psychology research:

**Psychology Librarian Liaison:** Christa Bailey
408-808-2422
christa.bailey@sjsu.edu
http://libguides.sjsu.edu/psychology

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

ACCESS Success Center

The ACCESS Success Center is a resource for College of Social Sciences students, which includes psychology majors. This center provides mentoring, tutoring, and advising especially geared for social science majors. The center provides workshops and presentations on writing, statistics, graduate school applications, and so forth. Visit their webpage for more information, http://www.sjsu.edu/access/

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving
your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit the Peer Connections website for more information.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note:

You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

**SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit the Counseling Services website.
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<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>08/20</td>
<td>Introductions: Faculty, Students, MA Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>08/25</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>In-class sign-ups: Research Experience Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion Lead</td>
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<td>Final Presentation</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>08/27</td>
<td>MA degree, Thesis Overview</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create accounts on: LinkedIn, GoogleScholar, ResearchGate, and/or Orchid</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>09/01</td>
<td>Dissecting a Literature Review</td>
<td>Dissecting a Literature Review**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>09/03</td>
<td>Faculty Presentations I</td>
<td>Faculty article response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>09/08</td>
<td>Faculty Presentations II</td>
<td>Faculty article response</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>09/10</td>
<td>Faculty Presentations III</td>
<td>Faculty article response</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>09/15</td>
<td>Research Experience Presentation</td>
<td>Research Experience Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>09/17</td>
<td>2nd and 3rd year MA student visit</td>
<td>Research Experience Presentations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Understanding, Evaluating, Discussing the Science of Psychology**

**Thesis Development**

<p>| 5    | T   | 09/22| Thesis Idea Discussion                                               | Thesis Exploration Paper 1                                                      |
|      | Th  | 09/24| Science, Pseudo-science, and Conspiracy “Theories”                   | Response Journal                                                               |
| 6    | T   | 09/29| Discuss Aronson &amp; Mills (1959)                                       | Response Journal                                                               |
|      | Th  | 10/01| Discuss research in response to Aronson &amp; Mills (1959)              | Article Discussion                                                             |
| 7    | T   | 10/06| Discuss Buss, et al. (1992)                                         | Response Journal                                                               |
|      | Th  | 10/08| Discuss research in response to Buss, et al. (1992)                 | Article Discussion (TBD)                                                       |
| 8    | T   | 10/13| <strong>Library Tutorial</strong>                                                |                                                                                 |
|      | Th  | 10/15| Correlational Designs                                               | Response Journal                                                               |
|      |     |      | Construct Validity                                                 |                                                                                 |
| 9    | T   | 10/20| Correlational Designs, pt. 2                                        | Article Discussion (TBD)                                                       |
|      | Th  | 10/22| Meta-Analysis                                                       | Response Journal                                                               |
| 10   | T   | 10/27| Midterm Preparation                                                 | Thesis Exploration Paper 2                                                     |
|      | Th  | 10/29| Take-Home Midterm                                                  | <strong>Exam: Evaluating Research</strong> (take home exam due)                              |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>11/03</td>
<td>Concise Writing Exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>11/05</td>
<td>Concise Writing Exercise – Statements of Purpose</td>
<td>Revised MA statement of purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Applying to PhD programs</td>
<td>Research PhD programs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Applying to PhD programs</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Preparing for careers - Networking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Preparing for careers</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Presentations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DAY</th>
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<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>12/01</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>12/03</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>12/07</td>
<td>[no class]</td>
<td>Literature Review (final)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>12/09</td>
<td>7:15 – 9:30 AM</td>
<td>Culminating Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a tentative timeline. We may find ourselves spending more time on particular topics due to student interest, or the need to clarify further information presented.

** See due dates posted on Canvas. In general, assignments will be due 1 – 2 days prior to class so that I can review and make comments as needed.