

San José State University
Psychology
PSYCH 001, Intro Psych, Section 1, Winter 2026

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Christine Ma-Kellams
Email:	christine.ma-kellams@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	T 1-3 on Zoom: https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/88407052838
Class Days/Time:	Online (Canvas) asynchronously
Classroom:	On Canvas
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE-D1

Course Format: Online

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on my faculty web page on <https://sjsu.instructure.com/>. You are responsible for regularly checking (3x week) with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu> to learn of any updates.

Course Description

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. The content focuses on the exploration of major psychological theories and concepts, methods, and research findings in psychology. Topics include the biological bases of behavior; perception, cognition and consciousness, learning, memory, emotion, motivation, development, personality, social psychology, psychological disorders and therapeutic approaches to treatment, and applied psychology.

Course Goals

Why do good people sometimes make bad decisions? How different are men and women, really? What makes us fundamentally different from robots (or zombies)? This course tries to answer these questions and many others, providing a comprehensive overview of the scientific study of the most interesting topic in the world—you. It explores topics such as perception, consciousness, learning, memory, decision-making, religion, persuasion, love, and dreams. We will look at how we can know the mind of others (and ourselves), how they differ across people, how they are wired-up in the brain, what happens when they break down, and what happens when they function in extraordinary ways.

Class will include video lectures, online class demos and small-group activities.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO) and the assignments related to them:

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

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

-Understand the biological basis of behavior, including those related to reproduction, survival, sensation/perception, and neuroscience, which are all topics covered in lecture/exams.

2. Intellectual and Practical Skills

-Exercise critical thinking and synthesis of theories/ideas, which will be tested on exams as well as measured on the papers and in-class activities.

3. Personal and Social Responsibility

-Understand the principles and ethics behind research methodology, as well as how psychological research can be used to unpack problems like stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, which will be covered in lecture/exams.

4. Integrative Learning

-Read and report on psychological findings in an applied context (i.e., in a popular psychology book written by a psychologist for a lay audience)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following.

CLO 1: Identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation.

-This is addressed and will be tested based on in the following lecture topics: Reproduction, Survival, Memory, Emotion & Motivation, Consciousness, Decision-Making, Cognitive Development, Individual Differences, and Social Cognition. In these lectures, we will discuss processes including but not limited to socialization, learning, perception vs. sensation, development, aggression, prosociality, evolutionary psychology, cultural differences, and implicit vs. explicit attitudes. It is primarily covered the book chapters 5, 6, 8-10, 13.

CLO 2: Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

-This is primarily covered and will be tested based on the lectures: Consciousness, Psychopathology, and Social Cognition. In these lectures, we will discuss issues including but not limited to the history of psychology, including the role of culture in shaping psychological theories, group differences in IQ and the explanations for them, historical perspectives and cultural variation in psychopathology. It is also primarily covered in the book chapters 1, 5, and 13.

CLO 3: Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

-This is primarily covered and will be tested based on the lectures: Reproduction, Consciousness, Social Cognition, and the in-class demonstration on Measuring Your Subconscious. In these lectures, we will discuss issues like evolutionary forces and natural selection, gender differences, situational and cultural moderators of gender differences, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, cognitive and social development, and attitudes. It is also primarily covered in the book chapters 9, 10, and 13.

CLO 4: Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

-This is primarily covered and will be tested based on the lectures, specially in the following topics: Psychological Science, Memory, Learning, Decision Making, Individual Differences, Social Cognition, as well as the in-class demonstration on The Curse of Knowledge and The Endowment Effect. In these lectures and demonstrations, we will discuss issues like research methods, inferences, generalizability, biases and fallacies, heuristics, personality, and a variety of modern day issues like police brutality, abuse,

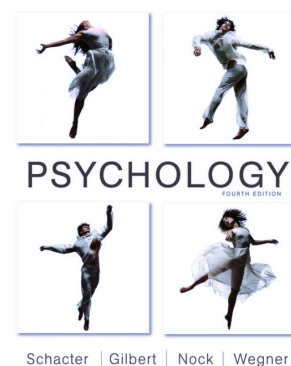
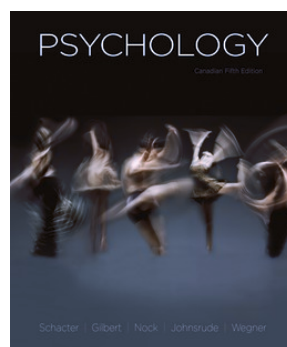
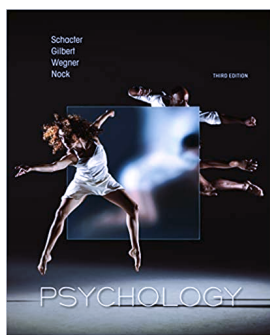
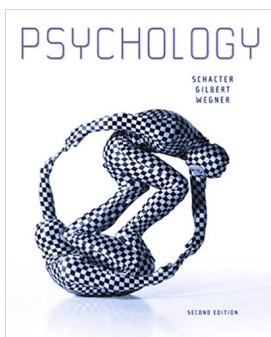
racial achievement gaps, communication, consumer behavior, and the use of eyewitness testimony in the criminal justice system, to name a few. It is also primarily covered in book chapters 1, 5, 6, 9, 10.

CLO 5: Recognize the interactions of social institutions, culture, and environment with the behavior of individuals

-This is primarily covered and will be tested based on the lectures: Reproduction, Survival, Memory, Learning, Emotion & Motivation, Consciousness, Sleep & Dreams, Cognitive Development, Psychopathology. In these lectures, we will discuss issues like historical and cultural shifts in mating and aggression, forensic psychology, learning strategies, emotion regulation, implicit attitudes, the content and explanations for dreams, and group differences in psychopathology. It is also primarily covered in book chapters 5-11, 13, 14, 15.

Textbook

Schacter, D., Gilbert, D., & Wegner, D. (2017). *Psychology* (4th edition*). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.



*Previous editions are also fine to use. **Here's the different editions of the textbook look like (any of these would work):**

what

Course Requirements and Assignments

Activities

In-class activities are an important part of this class and attending class requires active participation. Activities are meant as a space for you to apply the theories and findings from the psychology of prejudice to the real world.

Attendance

All lectures are video recorded and posted on Canvas. They're essential for doing well in this class. Please don't fall behind.

Course Readings

Readings should be done before each class. Useful discussions follow only when everyone has completed the readings thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Online assignments/demos/activities: We will do a variety of hands-on activities online that will demonstrate the topics covered in lecture, including: a mating game, a conditioning activity, measuring your subconscious, demonstrating the endowment effect and the curse of knowledge. Participation in these online activities will each contribute evenly to your class participation grade.

Exams: All midterm exams are noncumulative; however, the final exam is cumulative. Prior to each exam, there will be a review session; please prepare ahead of time and ask questions. Exam material will come from lectures, in-class activities, and assigned readings. All exams are open book, open note, contain 40 multiple choice questions, and timed (75 minutes).

Final Paper: Your final paper will entail you writing an essay about a popular book written by a psychologist on a psychological topic. To help you stay on track for your Final Paper, you will be asked to turn in

- a) A proposed abstract summarizing your paper topic (a 1/2 page explanation of the book you chose and reference(s)) prior to turning your completed project
- b) A final draft (4-5 pages—1500 words minimum— summarizing the 3 major ideas and a minimum of 1 psychological study in support of each idea, along with references in APA style).
- c) An option to rewrite your paper based on feedback you received on the final draft.

****ALL written assignments need to use 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final exam will be due on the last day of class.

Grading Information

Grading

Assignment	Grade
Activities/Assignments:	
Participation in activities	10 pts
Exams:	
Midterm #1	40 pts
Midterm #2	40 pts
Midterm #3	40 pts
Final Exam	40 pts
Research Project:	
Final Paper Topic + references	10 pts
Final Paper	20 pts

Determination of Grades

Grade	Points	Percentage
A plus	960 to 1000	96 to 100%
A	930 to 959	93 to 95%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 829</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

Classroom Protocol

Late assignments

An assignment turned in after the due date (and time) will receive a 10% penalty per day late. If you do not take the exam by the deadline, you will receive a zero on it. There are no exceptions to this rule except for emergencies with official documentation (e.g., doctor's note). Note the deadlines in the class syllabus and plan accordingly.

Academic Honesty

You are held to the highest standard of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, using AI to write your papers, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. You may never use the ideas or work of another person or AI without proper citation (i.e. noting the name and source according to APA style). The work you turn in for all assignments should always be your own. I am interested in your original ideas, as well as your ability to properly cite others' ideas. Keep in mind that plagiarism does not necessarily have to be intentional to be serious. When in doubt, cite!

Contact

I check my email on a daily basis Monday-Friday and should respond to most queries within 24 hours. Please feel free to approach me before/after class, or make an appointment for office hours.

Accessibility

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations should talk with me by the end of the second week of the term. University Policies (Required)

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>". **Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.**

In the following pages, you will find an outline of the topics and readings we will be covering. Please note that the syllabus may be updated during the semester to reflect changes in course readings, shifts in lecture topics, etc. You will be notified each time a change takes place.

Month	Date	LECTURE TOPIC (Activity)	Assignment/Reading
DEC	22	Psychological science (Intro Survey)	Ch. 1-2
	23	Reproduction (Mating Game)	Ch. 13
JAN	2	Survival & Neuroscience (Golden Balls)	Ch. 3
	3	Sensation & Perception (Illusions)	Ch. 4
		Review Midterm #1	Midterm #1 due
	5	Memory Learning	Ch. 7
	6	Emotion (Getting conditioned)	Ch. 8
	7	Consciousness & sleep (Turn in abstract/references for paper topic)	Ch. 5 Final paper topic & summary due
	8	Decision Making (Measuring the subconscious)	Ch. 9
	9	Review for Midterm #2 Midterm #2	Midterm #2 due
	12	Psychopathology (The Endowment Effect)	Ch. 10
	13	Cognitive Development & Individual differences (Final paper)	Ch. 15 Final paper due
	14	Review for midterm #3 Midterm #3	Ch. 11 Midterm #3 due
	15	Social Cognition The Curse of Knowledge/Wrap Up	Ch. 12
	16	Final exam	