

SUMMER 2018 | CUE 219 | 10:30-11:45

PSYCHOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

amy.nusbaum@wsu.edu

|

Johnson Tower 217

Required materials: "Pseudoscience and Extraordinary Claims of the Paranormal: A Critical Thinker's Toolkit" by Smith

This book is available as an ebook through the WSU libraries.

I would like to acknowledge that this course takes place on the traditional land of the Palus (Palouse) people.

To learn more, please visit: <http://www.fourdir.com/palouse.htm>

COURSE GOALS

GOAL #1: To think like a social scientist.

Psychology is a science that relies on experimental methodology. This course will explore a nature of skepticism and how psychologists use the scientific method to answer interesting questions about human behavior and mental processing. You will learn about critical aspects of research methodology, as well as learn how to apply your psychological thinking to other scientific problems.

GOAL #2: To understand how thinking can go wrong.

This course will also explore the psychological elements that make humans fallible thinkers, and at times, less than ideal scientists. You will learn how cognitive shortcuts, problems estimating the probability of events, and a strong desire for control and predictability often leave us vulnerable to faulty arguments and false claims. This course will reveal how looking carefully at "how we think" and how we "do science" are important aspects of scientific literacy and critical thinking.

GOAL #3: To be a critical consumer and evaluator of information.

You will be able to accurately distinguish between topics considered legitimately "scientific" by the psychological community and those that fail to meet the standards of science (i.e., pseudoscience). By learning how to recognize the strategies pseudoscientific claims use to present themselves as legitimate science, you will be able to debunk common myths and misconceptions made about psychology in the popular press.

*"somewhere, something incredible is waiting
to be known."*

- carl sagan

LEARNING GOALS

University learning goal	Psychology goal	Student learning outcomes	This will be evaluated by
Critical & creative thinking	The use of critical & creative thinking in evaluating & applying psych information.	Use reasoning, skepticism, & evidence to recognize, develop, evaluate, &/or defend/criticize a claim or argument. Critically evaluate published psychology research literature.	Quizzes Unessays
Scientific literacy	The understanding & ethical application of the statistical analyses & research methods used in psychology.	Explain the scientific method & understand how this method is used. Distinguish science from pseudoscience.	Unessays Psych in the World Quizzes
Information literacy	The effective, ethical, & responsible use of info & technology.	Locate and choose relevant references from appropriate sources.	In-class activities
Successful communication	Successful comm. in a variety of formats.	Use professional writing conventions correctly & effectively express ideas.	Unessays Psych in the World
Depth, Breadth, & Integration of Learning	Personal & career development.	Develop skills and knowledge relevant to pursuing their selected career goals.	Unessays In-class activities

BEST WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR LEARNING

FOR YOU

- 1) Come to class prepared by reading the book and/or preparing for any class activities.
- 2) Always be present in class, both physically and mentally. Sitting idly by in class will not be helpful for either of us, nor is playing on your phone/laptop.
- 3) Be an active participant in the course. This means asking and answering questions in class and sending emails when questions arise outside of class time.
- 4) Be respectful to both your classmates and me. Psychology is a discipline where we discuss differing viewpoints, and being respectful of others and their views is a must. Students who are disrespectful to their classmates or to me will be asked to leave.
- 5) Do your own work. There is no wiggle room here - plagiarism/cheating will not be tolerated.

FOR ME

- 1) Come to class prepared each and every day.
- 2) Be enthusiastic about course material and my role in helping you learn.
- 3) Understand that I cannot know everything. When questions arise that I don't know the answer to, I will find the answer for the next class period and get back to you.
- 4) Create a course atmosphere conducive to learning for all by respecting my students and their views.
- 5) Have fun!

HOW WE CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

technology

You are all adults, and I trust that you can successfully manage the distractions associated with technology in the classroom. On some days, we will do group work in class that requires an Internet-connected device. With that said, I do expect professional use of these technologies. If you are found using your laptop/phone for non-class activities that are distracting to others, I will first ask you to refrain from doing so. If this becomes a recurring issue, I will move to banning these items in the classroom. When emailing me, you can expect a response within 48 hours M-F, and within 72 hours after Friday at 2 pm. I will typically be much quicker than this, but may sometimes need the full time.

classroom environment

Privacy and confidentiality: There may be times when class members share personal experiences and beliefs. Because we all benefit from hearing each other's perspectives, we must be respectful of those who feel comfortable in sharing this personal information. Therefore, we will have an understood policy that nothing shared in class can be divulged outside of the class. While you may discuss general issues with others, you cannot share any information that may identify another member of the class.

Risk taking: To learn from each other I am going to ask you to step out of your comfort zone. We may be expressing ideas that others do not agree with, or listening to ideas that challenge our own beliefs or preconceptions. Be willing to listen to one another and prepared to be respectfully challenged when controversial issues arise.

Respect: Every individual's perspective is valued and considered legitimate for that person. Being open to other perspectives is important to academic and personal growth. All comments should be made with the desire to educate, not hurt. You can express disagreement with an issue or idea, but be aware of HOW you express yourself. Also, express WHY you disagree - this continues the learning process for all of us.

HOW I CAN HELP YOU SUCCEED

basic needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I can.

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability (even if it is temporary) and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor (<http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>). All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. If you have already contacted the Access Center and have the appropriate documentation, please contact me immediately so that we can discuss the accommodations I need to be aware of when preparing your exams and/or writing assignments.

accommodations

Psychology classes often present information that is related to a student's life experiences. If there is a class topic and/or discussion that is uncomfortable for you, there are several resources available to you. On-campus resources include Counseling and Psychological Services (335-4511; <http://counsel.wsu.edu/>) and the Psychology Clinic (335-3587; <http://psychologyclinic.wsu.edu/>); an excellent community resource is Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse (332-4357; <http://atvp.org/>).

resources

RULES AND REGULATIONS

University instructors have the authority to intervene in all situations where students are suspected of academic dishonesty. In such instances, responsible instructors retain the authority to assign grades to students considering, from an academic standpoint, the nature of the student action. All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or knowingly facilitating academic dishonesty, are strictly prohibited. You may find definitions of academic dishonesty, including cheating at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=504-26-202>. If you are caught engaging in academic dishonesty, you will fail the course and your case will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. This includes such infractions as using clickers during a class period to get points for another student.

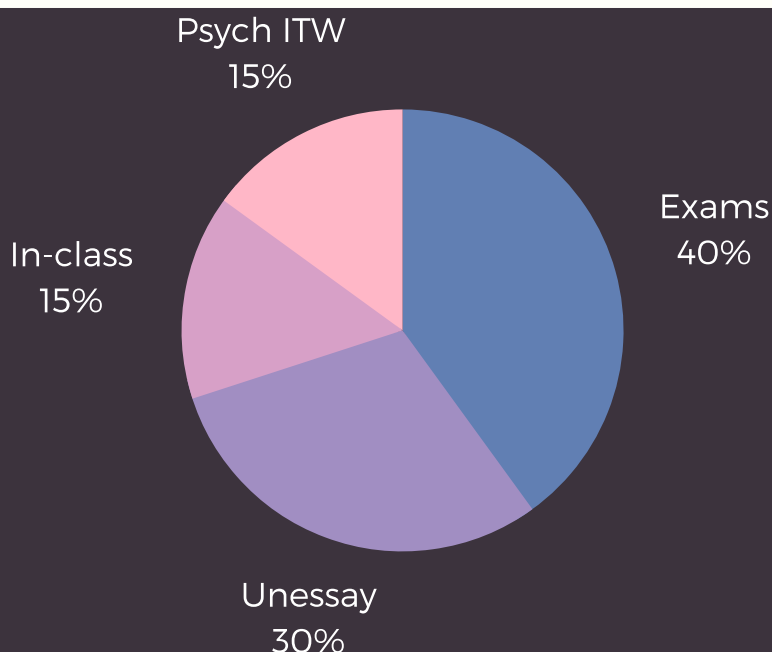
In addition, please be advised about the university's policy regarding commercial note-taking services: "Selling class notes through commercial note taking services, without the written advance permission of the course instructor, could be viewed as copyright infringement and/or an academic integrity violation, WAC 504-26-010 (3) (a,b,c,i). Further, the use of University electronic resources (e.g., [Blackboard]) for commercial purposes, including advertising to other students to buy notes, is a violation of WSU's computer abuses and theft policy (WAC 504-26-218), a violation of WSU's Electronic Communication policy (EP 4), and also violates the terms of use for the [Blackboard] software program."

(<http://academicintegrity.wsu.edu/resources/commercial-note-taking-services/>)

Classroom and campus safety are of paramount importance at Washington State University, and are the shared responsibility of the entire campus population. WSU urges students to follow the "Alert, Assess, Act" protocol for all types of emergencies, and the "Run, Hide, Fight" response for an active shooter incident at <http://police.wsu.edu/activeshooter.html>. Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI's Run, Hide, Fight video and visit the safety portal [\[https://faculty.wsu.edu/classroomsafety/\]](https://faculty.wsu.edu/classroomsafety/).

campus safety plan

If you experience a challenge, crisis, or emergency at some point during the semester and you wish to request that I adjust any course policies or procedures, please communicate with myself or the Dean of Students and have them contact me regarding the situation and the requested accommodations.



**HOW YOUR
SUCCESS IS
MEASURED IN
THE CLASS**



HOW YOUR SUCCESS IS MEASURED IN CLASS

There will be four exams in this class, each worth 40 points, for a total of 40% of your grade. Make-up quizzes will be allowed only if I deem your absence excusable. There are three general reasons why an absence may be considered excusable: 1) participation in a school-sanctioned event; 2) an extended or short-term illness that is severe enough to prevent you from attending class; and 3) a death in the family. Note that make-up quizzes must be taken within three days of the scheduled quiz. If you let me know at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the quiz and it is an excused absence, no penalty will be applied. If you let me know within 24 hours before or after the quiz, there will be a four point deduction, but you will be allowed to take the quiz. Notifications made after 12 hours of an exam will not be considered and will result in a 0 on the quiz. There will be no make-ups for make-up exams. That is, if you have an approved reason to make-up an exam and then miss that time, you will receive a 0.

quizzes

One of the hopes for this course is that you will be able to take what you learn and apply it to your everyday life. However, your everyday life does not consist of writing essays and annotated bibliographies. This is where the unessay comes in. The goal of your unessay is to take a common psychological myth (you will be provided with a list) and create some sort of product you could give to a family member or friend who believes that myth to convince them of the truth. Your end product could be almost anything - a comic, a podcast, a painting. You can choose almost anything you want and use your personal strengths. It just cannot be a standard essay. There are multiple components to this project: 1) Select a topic (5 points); 2) Create an outline of your information and the plan for your end product (20 points); 3) Present the information you have gathered to your classmates and I (35 points); 4) Turn in the final product (60 points). In total, the unessay is worth 30% of your grade. More information about each stage of the unessay is posted on Blackboard.

unessay

In a world of unprecedented access to information, it has become difficult to sort through it all and evaluate what is accurate and what is not. The goal of these assignments is to help you develop that skill. Three times throughout the semester (20 points each, for a total of 60 points), you will find a popular press article that discusses some aspect of psychological science. This could be something you find on Facebook, in the Daily Evergreen, in a magazine, etc. Your job will then be to critically examine the article. What is the source? Who is it trying to convince, and what message are they trying to send? Your job on these is to think like a critical social scientist. A full rubric is available in Blackboard and will be turned in with the assignments.

psych in the world

Class participation will be worth 60 points, or 15% of your grade. How you earn these points will vary from day-to-day, but may include group activities, discussions, or reflections on course readings, among other things. The *only* way to earn these points is to be present in class. However, there will be at least five extra participation points available, leaving you some wiggle room in case of absence. Note that you cannot earn more than 60 points.

class participation

Exam 1: 40 points
Exam 2: 40 points
Exam 3: 40 points
Exam 4: 40 points
In class: 60 points

Psych ITW 1: 20 points
Psych ITW 2: 20 points
Psych ITW 3: 20 points
Unessay topic: 5 points
Unessay outline: 20 points

Unessay presentation: 35 points
Unessay final: 60 points

TOTAL: 400 points