

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Monday/Wednesday | 8:30-9:50 AM | THH 201

why are people the way that they are?

why do they do the things that they do?

what can psychological science tell me about the world around me?

how can I use that knowledge to make the world a better place?

If these questions (especially the last two) keep you up at night, this is the perfect section of Intro Psych for you. Over the course of the semester, you'll grapple with these questions and learn how to think like budding scientists—a skill that will benefit you through college and beyond, regardless of your major or ultimate career path.

As an introduction to the scientific study of the human mind, we'll cover everything from the organization of our brain cells to the psychology of internet trolling, as well as the scientific methods that help researchers make psychological discoveries. (See the course calendar on the last page for a full listing of topics.) Throughout the semester, you will be highly encouraged to apply your knowledge of the material to your own lives, as well as the world around you.

INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM



Professor: Leslie Berntsen, Ph.D.

Please call me: Leslie or Dr./Prof. Berntsen (pronouns: she/her)

How do you pronounce that? Like the English words “burnt” and “sin”

Ask me about: Anything related to the class, real world applications of psychology, becoming a psych major, getting involved in research, graduate school and other psych-based careers, being a first-generation college student

E-mail: leslie.berntsen@usc.edu (expect a response within 24-48 hours)

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 AM-11:30 AM, and by appointment

Make an appointment at: leslie-bern.youcanbook.me

Office: SGM 903



TA: Cassie Gonzales (she/her)

Sections: M, 12:00 PM; W, 12:00 PM

E-mail: cwgonzal@usc.edu

Office hours: Available on Blackboard

Office: SGM 625



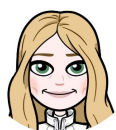
TA: Maddy Jalbert (she/her)

Sections: T: 10:00 AM; R: 12:00 PM

E-mail: mcjalber@usc.edu

Office hours: Available on Blackboard

Office: SGM 810



TA: Narcis Marshall (she/her)

Sections: T, 8:00 AM; R, 10:00 AM

E-mail: namarsha@usc.edu

Office hours: Available on Blackboard

Office: SGM 470



TA: Jackson P. Trager (he/him)

Sections: M: 10:00 AM; F: 8:00 AM

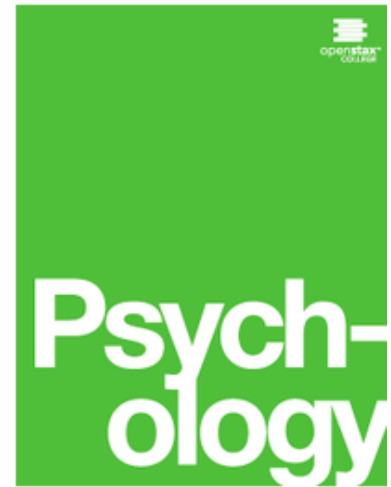
E-mail: jptrager@usc.edu

Office hours: Available on Blackboard

Office: HNB B27

COURSE MATERIALS

Spielman, Rosie M. (2014). Psychology. OpenStax.
 Available at openstax.org/details/books/psychology



Please note that the book is required for this course and is **freely available online**. (If you'd really like a hard copy, they're available on Amazon.) Lectures will consist of the portions of each unit that I think are the most fun to think about as a group or those that benefit from professional explanation, but there will be a non-negligible amount of material for which you will be independently responsible. (In other words, I will not be reciting the textbook to you during class and I promise you will need to read/internalize it in order to do as well as you hope in this course.)

Blackboard (accessible through myUSC) is where you'll be able to find all the materials for this class: lecture slides, assignment descriptions and rubrics, lab materials, etc.

Piazza (linked on Blackboard under "Course Logistics") is a Wiki-style website that your TAs and I will use to send announcements and reminders (via email blast). As a bonus, you can also use Piazza to crowdsource answers to any questions you may have about the class. Highly recommend using it to ask (and answer!) questions as you're studying for exams.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

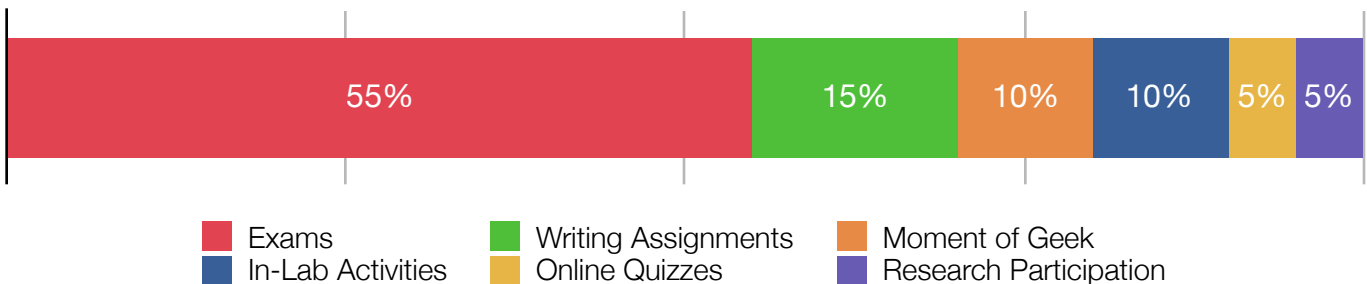
WHAT WILL YOU ACCOMPLISH IN THIS CLASS?

1
 Exhibit mastery of the principles of psychological science

2
 Consume and communicate empirical research in psychology

3
 Apply course material to your life and the world around you

How will your success be measured?



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ONLINE QUIZZES

At the end of every week, there will be an online, non-cumulative quiz covering both the lecture material and accompanying textbook pages from the previous two class days. There will be material in the textbook that will not be covered during lecture, as well as topics addressed during lecture that do not appear in the textbook. You will be responsible for the information from both sources.

Because these are unsupervised online quizzes, you are free to use your lecture notes and textbook and/or work together with a classmate. However, I highly recommend taking each quiz for the first time without any outside assistance to see how much (and what kinds of) information you retained from the previous week. Then, when taking the quiz again, use your resources to help you answer the questions you got incorrect (and take note of the topics these questions addressed to help yourself study for the respective exam). You may re-take each quiz as many times as you'd like. I will only count your highest score for each quiz and there are no penalties for additional attempts.

Quiz questions will be multiple-choice and your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the semester. Quizzes will be made available on Blackboard every Thursday, and must be completed by the beginning of class (8:30 AM) the following Monday (see the calendar on the last page for exceptions).

EXAMS

This course will have four equally weighted multiple-choice exams: **three non-cumulative midterms and one cumulative final exam**. I will provide answer sheets for all of these exams—please do not buy any of the versions stocked at the bookstore. Your single lowest exam grade out of the four will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the semester.

~SAVE THE DATES~

February 19th
March 30th
April 29th
May 11th

WRITING

Writing assignments are your chance to independently reflect on the course material and relate what we are learning to your own life and the world around you. There will be one prompt for every major topic area we cover and you can choose **three writing assignments** to complete over the course of the semester. The only requirement is that you must complete (at least) one of the first six prompts and (at least) two of the first twelve prompts. All prompts will be posted to Blackboard at the beginning of the term so you can plan ahead and select accordingly.

These 1.5-2 page (double-spaced) assignments will be due approximately one week after the corresponding material has been covered during class. (Specific due dates can be found on the course calendar on the last page and the full list of prompts.) For example, since we are scheduled to finish theories of personality on January 29th, the personality essay would be due by the beginning of class on February 5th.

If you would like to complete more than three writing assignments (e.g., to make up for a late submission or a lower-than-expected grade), only your three highest scores will be counted. (Note: If you don't meet the due date distribution requirements specified above, you'll get a zero (that cannot be substituted) for the missing assignment(s).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MOMENT OF GEEK

Starting the second week of labs (February 3rd), the beginning of each lab section will be reserved for Moment of Geek: an opportunity to polish your presentation skills in an informal, supportive environment, learn how to communicate scientific research in an accessible manner, and most importantly, just geek out about something that fascinates you.

For this assignment, your job is to find an article in the popular press that summarizes the findings of a recent study in psychology or neuroscience, and then, in two minutes or less, share it with your classmates. Explain what the researchers studied, how they studied it, what they found, and why you think it's awesome.

Everyone will be responsible for completing two **Moment of Geek "presentations"** (to be scheduled in advance) over the course of the semester.

LAB ACTIVITIES

Each week, lab sections will consist of Moment of Geek presentations, on-demand review of recent lecture material, and one or more interactive activities. To accompany the activities, you'll complete a short, self-contained assignment that will be due by the end of the class period and graded full/half/no credit for good faith effort.

In other words, unless you're scheduled for Moment of Geek that week, you don't need to do anything special to prepare for your lab section, nor will you have any lab-specific homework. You won't be able to make up missed labs by attending a different section, but your three lowest lab activity grades will be dropped at the end of the semester, so you can miss a few without penalty.

Labs will begin the week of January 27th and will only be held on full five-day weeks. There will be no labs on the weeks of February 17th or March 16th.

RESEARCH HOURS

For this class, the Department of Psychology requires that each student complete **five SONA research credits** over the course of the semester. More information on registering for SONA and signing up for studies will be provided in the first weeks of class and posted to Blackboard.

To receive your SONA points at the end of the semester, you must tell SONA to allocate your credits to this specific section of PSYC 100. If you don't do this (and we have to fix it for you by hand at the end of the semester), you'll only receive credit for 50% of the SONA studies that you completed.

If you would like to participate in a semester-long service-learning experience through USC's [Joint Educational Project](#) or complete an alternative assignment (two additional writing assignments) instead of participating in research, you must make this choice (and email me/CC your TA to let us know) by Friday, January 24th.

EXTRA CREDIT

SYLLABUS QUIZ

This syllabus is your friend! If you have a logistical question about this class (or even about all the campus resources available to you), the answer is very likely somewhere in this document. (I know it’s a lot, but I wrote it all to help you, I promise.)

So, to preemptively reward all of you for your excellent syllabus-reading habits, each of you have the opportunity to earn one percentage point of extra credit (which will be added to your final grade at the end of the semester) by taking a very quick and very easy syllabus quiz on Blackboard (due January 22nd). But here’s the catch: Every time you email me or your TA with a question that you have already answered for yourself by taking that quiz (e.g., “Do I need to buy my own answer sheets for the exams?”), you will lose a quarter of that point.

Of course, we are more than happy to answer other (non-syllabus) questions via email and any/all questions in-person before/after class or during office hours, so you can absolutely ask us things! Just please also try to do your part to make sure the question hasn’t already been answered for you before sending an email. (Pro-tip: You can always return to that quiz on Blackboard, and this document is also fully searchable 😊)

GRADING POLICIES

Final percentage scores will be rounded up/down to the nearest whole number from .50 and letter grades will be assigned according to the table on the right.

We will not entertain individual appeals for “personalized rounding schemes” nor will we create “extra assignments” for anyone to attempt to raise their grade in the final weeks of the course. (Because this is a question in the syllabus quiz, each such request will be subject to a deduction from the extra credit point described above.)

If you become concerned about (or would simply like to improve) your performance in the class at any point, please reach out as soon as you can. There is absolutely no shame in needing or seeking help, but remember that this assistance will be the most beneficial for you, grade-wise, if you are able to put any tips and tricks into practice as early in the course as possible.

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	< 60%

PRO-TIP: Ask (me or your TA) for help as soon as you think you need it!

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified, assignments (e.g., online quizzes, writing assignments) should be completed or submitted through Blackboard by the start of lecture (8:30 AM) on the due date listed on the course calendar on the last page. For Moment of Geek, you need to submit your chosen article (also through Blackboard) at least 48 hours prior to the start of the lab session when you’re scheduled to present.

LATE/MISSED WORK POLICY

Because dropped grades are built into the design of this course and because all due dates are provided at the beginning of the semester, extensions and makeup exams will only be granted under specific circumstances. Just come talk to me if any of these apply to you.

MISSING WORK FOR THESE REASONS?

Medical, personal, or family emergencies
 USC-sponsored extracurricular activities
 Religious holidays or other days of conscience

Just come talk to me!

If you know you will have an excused absence on the day of an exam, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make alternate arrangements. If unforeseen circumstances preclude you from attending class on an exam day, please email once you are able. Makeup exams should be taken as soon as possible so that everyone will be able to review their exams during lab sessions in a timely manner. If you know you will be absent on the day an assignment is due, you are still responsible for completing and submitting it on time.

Unexcused absences on exam days will result in no credit for the exam. (Remember you get one free drop out of the four exams.) Late assignments (that have not been granted an extension for one of the reasons listed above) will incur a penalty of 20% off of the maximum score for every day (or portion thereof) late, including non-class days and weekends.

THE MORE YOU KNOW: If life happens in such a way that you find yourself struggling to stay afloat in all of your classes, you can reach out to [Campus Support & Intervention](#) at (213) 821-4710. Among other services, they can send official notifications to your professors informing us (very broadly) that you're in need of support and flexibility.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

CAMPUS OFFICE	SERVICES	LOCATION	PHONE	EMAIL
Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity	General help with college coursework, including study skill tips, test-taking strategies, and stress management	STU 311	(213) 740-7884	kortschakcenter@usc.edu
The Writing Center	Specific help with writing, including free one-on-one consultations	THH 216	(213) 740-3691	writing@usc.edu
American Language Institute	Credit-granting courses, one-on-one tutoring, and free informal conversation groups for English language learners	PSD 106	(213) 740-0079	askali@usc.edu
Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice	Lifestyle Redesign program to help foster time management, decrease procrastination, manage stress and anxiety, etc.	ESHC 452	(323) 442-3340	otfp@med.usc.edu

A NOTE ON COMMUNITY AND WELLNESS

It is my goal to foster an environment of mutual respect in which everyone can feel comfortable voicing their opinions, sharing their stories, and learning about potentially heavy or personally relevant material. During your first lab session, you'll work together as a group to create community guidelines for your time together. If, at any point, you feel like information covered in this class triggers thoughts, feelings, or concerns that you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, your TA, Student Counseling Services, or the (free and anonymous) National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

Student Counseling Services

Consultations: (213) 740-7711
24/7 support: (213) 740-9355
Location: ESHC 304

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

As an instructor, I strive to create an environment in which every student is given an equal opportunity to excel. If you are in need of certain accommodations (e.g., extra time on assessments, adaptive technology, class note-taker, etc.) due to any physical or mental health condition, please contact Disability Services and Programs (and let me know you have done so) as soon as possible. Remember that any information you share regarding accommodations is confidential and will not be shared with other students.

Once you provide me with an official accommodations letter from DSP, we can work together to ensure that your needs are met from that point forward. Please note that academic accommodations cannot be granted retroactively or by "working something out" personally with a professor without an approved accommodations letter.

Of course, if there is anything that your TAs or I can do to make our teaching more accessible and inclusive, please don't hesitate to let us know at any time.

Disability Services and Programs

Hours: M-F, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Location: GFS 120
Phone: (213) 740-0776

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Mental illnesses "count" for disability accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Please reach out to DSP if you feel you could benefit from accommodations.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY: THE GOLDEN RULE

You are more than welcome to bring laptops, tablets, or any other assistive technology to class if it will help you take notes to the best of your ability. (Laptops can be borrowed from the Information Commons on the bottom floor of Leavey Library for up to four hours at a time.)

During structured discussions or in-class activities, your TAs and I will ask that non-essential technology be set aside to allow for full engagement. Please also note that we reserve the right to revoke your individual technology privileges at any time if you appear excessively/inappropriately distracted or if your technology use appears to be distracting those around you. If you were speaking to a group of people about something you genuinely care about, you'd probably want them to pay full attention to you. Please just be kind.

ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE, IDENTITY-BASED HARM, AND OTHER PERSONAL CRISES

If you ask me, this is the single most important part of the syllabus and I need to know that people are aware of this information, so let's try something. If you have read this far, please email me (Dr. Leslie Berntsen) your favorite GIF of Olivia Benson (the fictional sex crimes detective from Law & Order: SVU). This is not a joke, and I am 100% serious. (You will lose half of your aforementioned syllabus quiz extra credit point if you do not do this.) Now, the important information...

If you experience sexual violence, identity-based harm, or any other personal crisis at any point during the semester, please don't hesitate to reach out to me and/or your TA so we can (1) help you get caught up in class, (2) put you in contact with the appropriate resources and services, and (3) answer questions to the extent that we are qualified to do so. But, if you'd rather not talk to your professor or TA about these issues, we completely understand. Here are some of those resources (all hyperlinked) that we would have ended up telling you about.

[Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention & Services](#)

[Student Counseling Services](#)

[Campus Support & Intervention](#)

[Title IX Office](#)

[Office of Equity & Diversity](#)

[Department of Public Safety](#)

[Asian Pacific American Student Services](#)

[Center for Black Cultural & Student Affairs](#)

[La CASA](#)

[LGBT Resource Center](#)

[Office of Religious Life](#)

And finally, for information about your legal rights under Title IX: [Know Your IX](#)

THE MORE YOU KNOW: Your TAs and I are required by both university policy and federal law to report all disclosures of sexual violence to the appropriate campus authorities. But please know that I am qualified and more than willing to support survivors throughout the process. If you have general questions, please ask any time.

ON BASIC NEEDS

If you ever find yourself struggling to afford food and/or secure a safe and stable place to live and feel like such circumstances are impacting your performance in this class, please speak to me or your TA (if you feel comfortable) so that we can provide whatever resources and support we can. For additional information and support, you can also contact [Campus Support & Intervention](#) at (213) 821-4710.

THE MORE YOU KNOW: There is an [emergency food and toiletry pantry](#) located in Parkside Apartments #135.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment that fosters general principles of academic honesty. These include respecting the intellectual property of others, submitting your own individual work unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and protecting your own academic work from misuse by others. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles and be aware of the possible sanctions, which are summarized in [Part B of SCampus](#).

For this class, specific examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: conferring with another student, looking at someone else's paper, or using any outside source during in-class exams; submitting any graded material that has been written by another person (including yourself for a previous class) or lifted from the internet, either in part or in full; and falsifying lab attendance or completing an activity for someone who wasn't present during the lab section.

If you have any questions about these policies or academic dishonesty in general, your TAs and I would be more than happy to answer them, so please do ask.

PRO-TIP: If any part of you feels even slightly tempted to engage in academic dishonesty for the sake of a better grade, come talk to me or your TA and we will give you all sorts of tips and tricks to earn that grade you're hoping for.

If you cheat, you could be putting your entire degree in jeopardy.

Please do not do it. Please.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the information in the "Lecture Topics" column is a general guide to the organization of this course. We may spend longer than originally allotted on some topics, and we may finish earlier than expected when it comes to other topics.

For live updates on what has been covered on class on a given day (including slide/textbook page numbers), you can always check the "[Live Class Calendar](#)" [Google doc](#) (hyperlinked right here and also posted to Blackboard). Online quiz and exam questions will always reflect what we have covered, rather than what I expected to cover, meaning you can always check the live calendar doc to learn exactly what you'll be held accountable for.

Any major revisions to the schedule will be announced during class and posted to Piazza.

DAY	DATE	WHAT'S DUE?		LECTURE TOPIC	TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS
		Quizzes (two dropped)	Writing (choose three)		
M	January 13 th			Welcome and Introduction	
W	January 15 th			History (and Current State) of Psychological Science	1
M	January 20 th			NO CLASS: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	
W	January 22 nd	Syllabus XC	#1	Research Methods and Critical Thinking	2
M	January 27 th	#1		Theories of Personality	11
W	January 29 th			Theories of Personality	
M	February 3 rd	#2		Introduction to Neuroscience	3
W	February 5 th		#2	Introduction to Neuroscience	
M	February 10 th	#3		Nature and Nurture	3
W	February 12 th		#3	Nature and Nurture	
M	February 17 th			NO CLASS: President's Day	
W	February 19 th	#4	#4	EXAM #1 (Chapters 1-3, 11)	
M	February 24 th			Developmental Psychology	9
W	February 26 th			Developmental Psychology	
M	March 2 nd	#5		Social Psychology	12
W	March 4 th		#5	Social Psychology	
M	March 9 th	#6		Social Psychology	
W	March 11 th		#6	Emotions, Health, and Happiness	10,14
M	March 16 th			NO CLASS: Spring Break	
W	March 18 th			NO CLASS: Spring Break	
M	March 23 rd	#7	#7	Motivation, Stress, and Illness	10,14
W	March 25 th			Understanding Mental Illness	15
M	March 30 th	#8	#8	EXAM #2 (Chapters 9, 10, 12, 14)	
W	April 1 st			Understanding Mental Illness	
M	April 6 th	#9		Treating Mental Illness	16
W	April 8 th		#9	States of Consciousness	4
M	April 13 th	#10	#10	Sensation and Perception	5
W	April 15 th		#11	Learning	6
M	April 20 th	#11	#12	Memory	8
W	April 22 nd		#13	Language and Cognition	7
M	April 27 th		#14	Intelligence	7
W	April 29 th	#12	#15, #16	EXAM #3 (Chapters 4-8, 15-16)	
M	May 11 th			FINAL EXAM (11:00 AM – 1:00 PM)	

Reminder: Online quizzes and writing assignments are due (to Blackboard) by the start of lecture (8:30 AM).