Course Title

Introduction to Psychology

Course Number
PSYCH-UA.9001003

SAMPLE SYLLABUS – ACTUAL SYLLABUS MAY VARY

Instructor Contact Information
André Weinreich
aw111@nyu.edu

Course Details
Wednesdays, 1:30pm to 4:15pm
Location of class: NYUB Academic Center, Room tbc

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
Psychology is the scientific study of mind (e.g., experience) and behavior. Psychology is a popular topic for students, the public media, and a part of our everyday life. Psychology is an exciting field that addresses various questions: Why do people behave in the way they do? To what extent are we in control of our own actions? Can we manipulate behavior (e.g., consumption & public health)? What is the neural basis of experience, thought and behavior? What is the purpose and nature of consciousness? How can we define mental illness? How can we help mentally ill people?

Course Objective
The course provides students with a broad understanding of scientific psychology, including its historical development, dominant concepts (e.g., memory, emotion), major theories, perspectives (e.g., general, differential, developmental, interpersonal) and methods (e.g., experiments, observations), and may finally cumulate in more or less satisfying answers to some of the questions raised in the course description.
Assessment Components

Class Participation 10%
The 2 best out of 3 Tests 40% (20% each)
Class Presentation 20%
Final Exam 30%

Tests:
There will be three in-class tests (30 min each). Each test will be composed of multiple choice questions and cloze text. Your worst test score out of the 3 will be dropped. There will be a final exam (45 min) that will be cumulative and similar in structure to the tests.

Class Presentation:
Each student will present a paper in class.
Duration: 15 minutes.
The main point is to introduce students to reading, understanding and criticizing empirical research papers and to train presenting papers in a concise manner. The presentation should follow the structure of the paper, i.e., to include an introduction to the topic, explain the methods, and results, interpret and discuss. The presenting student will prepare 3-5 questions about the paper / topic / method to discuss in class. All students are expected to read the paper in advance in order to be able to participate in the discussion of the paper. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.
Grade Conversion
Your instructor may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-66</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 65</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Attendance Policy
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in NYU Berlin’s content courses that, unlike most courses at NYU NY, meet only once per week in a double-session for three hours. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please approach NYUB's Director or Wellness Counselor. Your professor or NYUB's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from the Director or Wellness Counselor. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Assistant Director for Academics, the Arts Coordinator, or the German Language Coordinator, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Three unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Furthermore, faculty is also entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival to class or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late for class counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Exams, tests, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Assistant Director for Academics; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent because of any religious observance should notify their instructor AND NYUB’s Academic Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Director or Assistant Director will re-schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday.

Late Submission of Work
(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the instructor or to the Assistant Director for Academics, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work, and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of the Director or Assistant Director), work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 weekdays following the session date fails and is given a zero.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

NYUB takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.
It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global's academic policies please see: [www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies](http://www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies)

**Required Text(s)**

Books can be bought at Saint Georges bookshop in Wörther Straße 27 near NYUB, where the books are pre-ordered for students. Students can re-sell their used books at the end of the semester to Saint Georges (with the exception of German language books). Additionally, one copy of each book is kept in the Reading Room of NYUB’s Academic Center, for you to read in the center but not to take out.

**NYU Berlin Library Catalogue:** All resources, that are available in the Reading Room of the Academic Center or St. Agnes, can be found using this link: [http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin](http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin)

**Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)**
Research papers will be made available online.

**Internet Research Guidelines**
To be discussed in class.

**Additional Required Equipment**
None.

**Week 1 – 3 Feb 2016**
**The Science of Psychology & Scientific Method**
Chapter 0 & 1 (1-47)
What is psychology? Why do we do scientific psychology at all? Concepts, focus, perspectives, naïve vs. scientific view; How do we get solid knowledge about the human mind and behavior? Scientific methods; data collection; planning an experiment; what is a theory? Why do we need probabilities and statistics? How can we describe data properly? Why do we need data at all? Observation vs. Experiment?

Excursion to Alexanderplatz

**Session 2 – 10 Feb 2016**
Brain, Body & Behavior
Chapter 3 (86-130)
Behavior has a biological basis. We are agents in a physical world. Our body, in particular our brain, is essential to the genesis and control of behavior. We will learn about this basis: Neurons, Locations, Neurotransmission. What areas are functionally involved in certain kinds of behavior, feelings, thought? What is a cortex? Is there an ancient brain? How does the brain communicate with the body?

**Session 3 – 17 Feb 2016**
Sensation & Perception (Chapter 4 & 5)

In order to learn and behave appropriately, the organism needs to be provided with perceptual input via the senses. What is the biological basis of these? How are certain inputs coded into the language of the nervous system? Is there perception without consciousness? What is the relation between objective and subjective intensity of perception? How can we selectively pay attention? Why do certain stimuli catch our attention?

**Session 4 – 24 Feb 2016**
1st part: Test 1 (30 min)  
2nd part: Consciousness (Chapter 6)

What is consciousness? Is there a neural basis for consciousness? How can we measure consciousness? What is the function of consciousness? How can drugs change your state of consciousness?

**Session 5 – 2 Mar 2016**
Learning & Memory (Chapters 7 & 8)

What is learning? How does the brain learn? Why do we need the concept of learning at all? What is emotional learning? Is there unconscious learning? What is a working memory? Why do we need the working memory? What is the long term memory? How can we measure, whether learning took place? How can we improve learning?

**Session 6 – 9 Mar 2016**
Emotion (Chapter 12)

What is an Emotion? What is the history of emotion? Are there emotions without feelings? Are emotions learned or innate? How do emotions help us to behave appropriately? What is emotion regulation?

**Session 7 – 16 Mar 2016**
Motivation: at the heart of psychology (Chapter 12)
What is motivation? Why do people do what they do? Motives and Drives. Motivation in relation to emotions. How can we measure motivational states? How can we manipulate behavior? How can we reach our goals?

Session 8 – 23 Mar 2016
1st part: Test 2
2nd part: Judgment & Decision making (Chapter 9, 348-365)
What is the role of heuristics in decision making? How do we attain a decision? What is the role of emotion in decision making? What are the implications for everyday life, public health and consumer neuroscience?

30 Mar 2016 – Spring Break - No Class

Session 9 – 6 Apr 2016
Developmental Psychology (Chapter 14)
How do human beings develop over the course of their life? Are there certain periods of time where children are especially sensitive to certain information (e.g., learning a language)? Can we predict later development and performance from certain estimates that have been gathered during childhood? Are older adults more depressed than younger adults? Can mental fitness be improved in older adults?

Excursion to the "Child Lab" of the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (S-Bahn station Adlershof, Rudower Chaussee 18, 12489 Berlin). Today's special guest: Dr. Gesa Schaadt is an expert in child development, language acquisition, and dyslexia. She will tell us about major perspectives of her work and about developmental psychology in general.

Session 10 – 13 Apr 2016
Social Cognition & Interpersonal Processes (Chapter 13)
We are agents in a social world. It is obvious, that social processes (perception, attribution, persuasion etc.) play an important role in our daily lives. What are these "social processes"? Do we behave differently when in the presence of others? Is there altruism? Why do we fall in love? How do people perceive us and how do we perceive them?

Session 11 – 20 Apr 2016
1st part: Test 3 (30 min)
2nd part: Personality & Interpersonal Differences: Theory & Diagnostics (Chapter 15)
What is personality? What is a trait? How can we describe personality? What is the relation between trait and behavior? How can we assess personality? Is intelligence a trait?
Session 12 – 27 Apr 2016
Extreme Deviations: Psychopathology (Chapter 16)

What are mental disorders? How do they relate to “normal” functioning? How can we objectively define mental disorders? What is vulnerability? Can everybody go crazy? What are the costs and benefits of diagnostics and labeling? Am I compulsive? What is neurosis and how does it relate to psychosis?

Session 13 – 4 May 2016
Treatment of Psychopathology (Chapter 17)

What is the history of treatment? How does this differ from modern approaches? Let’s talk vs. let’s take a pill: How efficient is “talking”? Are biomedical approaches superior?

Session 14 – 11 May 2016
Summary, Feedback, Outlook
Review for final exam

Session 15 – 18 May 2016
Final exam (45 min)

Classroom Etiquette
To be discussed in class.

Required Co-Curricular Activities
To be discussed in class.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
To be discussed in class.

Your Instructor
Dr. André Weinreich is a psychologist and currently working at the Dept. of General Psychology at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. In his work he investigates the role of emotions in behavioral regulation (decision making, judgment, consumption) and memory. He is also interested in the implicit measure of emotional and cognitive processes. In his work (neuro-) physiological measures play an important role. He also has a strong focus on application of psychological knowledge in marketing and health.