

**PSYC 3135 - Psychological Thinking
Fall 2013
University of Houston – Clear Lake
Sugar Land Campus
Monday 7:00-9:50pm**



Instructor information:

Dr. Robert A. Bartsch

Email: Bartsch@uhcl.edu

Phone: 281-283-3327

Office Hours: 4:30-6:30 (Sugar Land, George 110), Tuesday 1:30-3:30 (Clear Lake, Bayou 2617)

Black Board check: minimum of Tuesday and Thursday afternoons

Applied Critical Thinking Statement:

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student's ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), one model of critical thinking involves thinking for a *purpose*, asking *questions*, using *information*, applying *concepts*, drawing *inferences and conclusions*, identifying *assumptions*, anticipating *implications and consequences*, and recognizing *points of view*. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include *clarity*, *accuracy*, *precision*, *relevance*, *depth*, *breadth*, *logic*, *significance*, and *fairness*.

Student Learning Objectives

- 1) Raise significant questions relevant to the discipline of psychology.
- 2) Accurately utilize the concepts of critical thinking and the scientific method.
- 3) Accurately understand concepts related to a study's measurement, causality, generalizability, and statistical validity.
- 4) Use relevant information to create literature searches
- 5) Use relevant information to understand journal articles
- 6) Make accurate inferences as to whether articles presented to the public match original research.
- 7) Generate clear implications based on literature to real world situations.
- 8) Improve clarity, accuracy, precision, and relevance in written and oral **communication**.

Course Description

In this course, *Psychological Thinking*, we examine the psychologist's point of view in regards to understanding research and society. To accomplish this task we will examine how psychologists use the fundamental concepts of critical thinking and scientific method to understand the world around them

and conduct research. There will be several tasks that help meet our goals. First, we will learn about the logic of critical thinking and the scientific method. Our goal is to develop a clear, deep understanding of both of these items. Then we will concentrate more on the process and concepts related to psychological thinking. To help practice psychological thinking, we will do a literature search and create a clear, accurate, and relevant literature review with implications to you as students. We will also examine a broad range of popular myths in psychology and the logical problems with those beliefs. We will also compare a media report of psychological research and determine if it accurately represents the original research. Throughout the class we will make reports in written and oral form demonstrating your ability to create a clear, accurate, precise, and relevant presentation. By the end of the class we should be able to describe what is meant by psychological thinking.

Required Books:

How to Think Straight About Psychology by Keith Stanovich - 10th Ed. (0-205-9142-8) – Note: I don't recommend using an earlier edition; however, given that much of the information is the same, you could use one keeping in mind you do you are still responsible for the material in the 10th edition.

50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology by Scott Lillienfeld et al. (ISBN - 9781405131124)

Recommended Book:

You should also have access to the APA Publication Manual (6th Edition) as you will write some assignments in APA style.

Tentative Class Schedule

8/26	What is Psychological Thinking?
9/2	Labor Day – No Class Black Board Check and Submit Interesting Conclusions Due
9/9	What is critical thinking? Read <i>Critical Thinking: Concepts & Tools</i> Division of Popular Myths
9/16	How do we use critical thinking in psychology?
9/23	How do we use the scientific method in psychology? Read Stanovich Ch 2 and 8
9/30	How do we learn what's been studied in psychology? Read Stanovich Ch 1, 4, and 12
10/7	What information can we get from a psychology article? Review of APA Style Example of how to give media reports Read articles given on September 30th

10/7 cont.	Approval of Article for Media Report Due to Black Board Approval of Groups and Topics for Learning and Instruction Assignment Due to Black Board
10/14	Midterm
10/21	How do we measure concepts? Read Stanovich – Ch 3 Literature Search Assignment Due Myth Reports 1- 10
10/28	How do we investigate causal connections? Read Stanovich – Ch 5, 6, and 9 Myth Reports 11-20
11/4	How do we generalize findings? Read Stanovich – Ch 7 Myth Reports 21-30
11/11	How do we use statistics to make conclusions? Stanovich – Ch 10 and 11 Myth Reports 31-40 Draft of Learning and Instruction Paper Due Note: Last Day to Drop Class
11/18	What is psychology's relation to the media? Media Conference Media Report and Poster Due
11/25	What else do we need to know? Myth Reports 41-50
12/2	Learning and Instruction Paper Due and Presentation Note: All Extra Credit Due before December 2nd
12/9	Final Exam

Assignments

Midterm – 20%

October 14th in class

Student Learning Objectives – 2, 4, 5

The midterm exam will cover the topics of

- Elements of critical thinking including the scientific method
- Reading and understanding psychological research
- Conducting Literature reviews

These topics will be based primarily on information covered in class and chapters from the book. The exam will be closed book, notes, and other people. Questions may be multiple choice, short answer, or brief essay. You will not need a blue book or scantron for the exam.

Final Exam – 25%

December 9th in class

Student Learning Objectives – 1, 2, 3, 7, 8

During the final exam, you will be tested over the following

- Your knowledge of all 50 myths (whether reported on in class or not). You need to know when the myth is and is not accurate.
- Information about measurement, causality, generalizability and statistical conclusions.
- A summary on how psychologists think

The exam will be closed book, notes, and other people. Questions may be multiple choice, short answer, or essay. There will likely be one essay relating to how psychologists think. You will not need a blue book or scantron for the exam.

Literature Search Assignment – 5%

Due October 21st in class

Student Learning Objectives – 4

You will be asked to find relevant academic literature on a specific topic assigned during class on September 30th. Your literature review will include at least 15 sources cited in APA style.

Media Report – 15% (Paper 10%, Poster 5%)

Due November 18th in class

(Note: Approval due October 7th)

Student Learning Objectives- 3, 5, 6, 8

The goal of this assignment is to determine if a popular media source accurately and precisely reported an empirical psychological finding. The following steps will help you complete this assignment.

A) Find a written media article from a popular media source that mentions a psychological study. Past students have had success with popular magazines such as *Time* and news websites such as www.cnn.com and popular blogs. You cannot use psychology magazines (e.g., *Psychology Today*) for this assignment and the media article must be no more than five years old. Each student must have a different media article.

B) Find the scientific article that the media article mentions. Oftentimes the media article states the journal and date of publication. If the article does not do this, you may want to choose another media article. You may have to retrieve the article which may take time.

C) I must approve each of the articles listed. To get your article approved **submit your idea to the Black Board Discussion Board**, and I will approve it or give reasons for not approving it. On the discussion board (1) cite the media article that you found and (2) cite the journal article it refers to. If you can attach a link to the media article, great! This is due by **October 7th**.

D) Read both articles and determine how accurately the media article represents the journal article.

E) Write a short (2-3 pages of text) paper about your findings. The report will include the following subsections.

- i) a brief summary of the media article
- ii) a brief summary of the journal article
- iii) a detailed evaluation of whether the media article accurately portrayed the journal article

You do not have to cite either the journal article or the magazine article as long as it is clear in your paper what you are referring to. You should have an APA style title page and the paper should be in APA style. You do not need an abstract.

F) Turn in your paper and the copies of both the journal and media article in class on **November 18th**.

G) **Create a poster** no larger than 48"x36" summarizing your paper. The poster may be a tri-fold or a single sheet. You should supply enough information in the poster so you do not have to present for people to understand its contents. The poster should be able to be scanned more easily than your essay. Your poster will include the following

- i) what the media article said about the journal article
- ii) what the journal article actually stated
- iii) whether the media article accurately portrayed the journal article

The poster should clearly communicate your findings. The poster does not need any graphics. The poster does not need to be in APA style. The poster is due in class on **November 18th**.

Oral and written report on *Popular Myths* – 10%

Due in class and on Black Board during October/November depending on Myth #.

Student Learning Objectives – 2, 3, 8

In this assignment you will present information to your classmates about some popular psychology myths stated in your 50 Myths textbook.

A) On **September 9th** we will divide the 50 myths listed in the book. Each student will take two myths (although this may change depending on the size of the class).

B) You will take turns presenting information about myths. For each myth you report, you will need to describe the following. The report will be both oral and written. In each you need to describe the following:

- i) When the myth is and is not correct?
- ii) What does current research state about the issue?
- iii) Why some people believe the myth?

You will present your report orally to the class on your assigned day. The report should not take more than 5 minutes. **Before the next class** you will upload your report to the Black Board coursesite in the Myth Reports section so that others may look at and review your work. This written report needs to only

state when the myth is and is not correct. Do not copy directly from the 50 Myths book without using quotation marks. That is plagiarism. You do not have to cite the 50 Myths book because I know where you are getting your material.

Learning and Instruction Assignment – 25% (5% for draft, 15% for final version, and 5% for report)

Idea for report due October 7th

Draft due on November 11th

Final paper and presentation due on December 2nd

Student Learning Objectives – 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

In this assignment you will work as an individual or a group and report on an area of literature relating to college student learning and instruction. Examples of topics could include the use of student response systems in class, student metacognition, study strategies, use of PowerPoint, etc. In the report you will practice your literature review skills, synthesizing academic literature, and communication in written and oral form.

A) Determine whether you will work as an individual or in a group. Groups may be up to three people. Generally, group members will receive the same grade and groups cannot be altered once selected. Choose group members carefully! Also, determine the topic of your report. The area should relate to student learning in higher education. No group can do a report on the same area. **Turn in your group membership and the topic** for your report to the Black Board Discussion site, which is **due October 7th**.

B) For the report you will need at least 10 academic sources, and at least five sources should be primary research.

C) Write a summary of the literature in that area in APA style. The paper should be approximately 3-6 pages of text and additional pages for cover sheet and reference section. You do not need an abstract. The paper should include the following sections:

- i) a synthesis of the literature
- ii) a discussion of what instructors can do to improve their teaching based on the research
- iii) a discussion of what students can do to improve their learning based on the research

D) A complete draft of the paper is due on **November 11th** and is worth 5% of the course grade. The final paper is due on **December 2nd** and is worth 15% of the course grade. These papers are due to Black Board.

E) **On December 2nd** reports will be made to the class and will be worth 5% of the course grade. Report length will depend on the number of groups. Probably reports will be 10 minutes in length. Each report should include a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi). You will upload the presentation to Black Board for viewing after the class, and it will be part of the grade.

Extra credit

To increase your grade by up to 3% you can do additional activities. Additional activities may be presented throughout class. You may do any activity only once. All extra credit is due by **December 2nd** although some activities have earlier deadlines.

1) Black Board check and Submit Interesting Conclusions - **Before September 2nd** you should be on Black Board and submit to the Discussion Board direct links or copies of information about two conclusions you have found in the world that are interesting to you. A conclusion is something that makes a statement based on some type of evidence. These conclusions can be from news, entertainment, sports, or anything else. These examples may then be used during the semester. You will receive up to 1% added to your final course grade.

2) You may do an additional myth assignment from the myths not picked for reports. Only one person may do a report on a myth and the report **must be done according to the schedule**. Sign up for this extra credit activity on the Black Board Discussion site after we assign reports in class. You will receive up to 1% added to your final course grade.

3) In the Myths book at the end of each section are additional myths and realities. For one of them, find an empirical article that addresses the myth/reality and write a one-page summary of the article and how it relates to the myth. Turn in your summary and a copy of the empirical research. You will receive up to 2% added to your final course grade.

4) You can do additional work on any of the myths by finding empirical research which adds to the information presented in the text. Note, this information should not restate what is found in the text or generally agree with it. Rather it has to add an important something to discussion. Examples include new research which supports the myth, research which shows under what conditions the myth exists (that is not already covered in the text). Turn in the new empirical research and a 1 page summary of the research and what it adds to the text. It is likely a difficult assignment. You may want to check with me before attempting it. You will receive up to 2% added to your final course grade.

Grading Scale:

A	93.4% and above	C	73.4-76.6%
A-	90.0-93.3%	C-	70.0-73.3%
B+	86.7-89.9%	D+	66.7-69.9%
B	83.4-86.6%	D	63.4-66.6%
B-	80.0-83.3%	D-	60.0-63.3%
C+	76.7-79.9%	F	less than 60.0%

Black Board

This course uses Black Board to help organize the class. Please let me know if there is a problem with how Black Board functions. If you are affected by Black Board troubles, please let me know. **If you are unable to turn something in, please let me know immediately through bartsch@uhcl.edu and attach the items you wanted to turn in.** You may have to turn them in later through Black Board, but I need a record of what you had at the time it is due. If many people are affected, I will post something in the announcements. You are responsible for your own computer connection. Please do not wait until the last second before turning in items.

Incompletes

A grade of "I" is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that you have made satisfactory progress before the drop deadline.

Absences and Late Work

If you are absent, you are responsible for getting the notes from class and being ready for the next class period. To get an excused absence or a delay in submitting materials you need to let me know as soon as possible about the medical, family, or work issue. If I classify the absence as excused, then on a case-by-case basis I can inform you what work you can still complete and when it is due. Please note that some activities may not be made up even with an excused absence.

Academic Honesty Policy

All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UHCL catalog for the Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism, that is, using work without citations, or using a created production without crediting the source, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. The typical penalty for the first academic honesty violation is a zero on the assignment.

Students are responsible for everything appearing on assignments with their name on it, **including group work**. Students are strongly encouraged to thoroughly check all work for academic honesty issues before submitting their assignment.

Disabilities

If you have a disability and need a special accommodation, consult first the Coordinator of Health Disabilities Services, SSB 1.301, 281-283-2648, and then discuss the accommodation with me. This discussion needs to be done before the due date on any activity receiving an accommodation.

6 Drop Rule Limitation

Students who entered college for the first time in Fall 2007 or later should be aware of the course drop limitation imposed by the Texas Legislature. Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does not affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session will count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit www.uhcl.edu/records for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester/session.

Changes in Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make appropriate changes in the syllabus. It is your responsibility as a student to keep updated on course information, even if you are absent.

Use of Class Products in Assessment

The University of Houston–Clear Lake may use your work in this class to generate assessment data. Any works used will be used only for educational purposes.