

PSYC 3135 – Psychological Thinking (Revised Syllabus – 9/22/08)
University of Houston – Clear Lake
Fall 2008
Thursday 1:00-3:50pm
Bayou 2104

Instructor: Dr. Robert A. Bartsch
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Office Hours: Monday 3:30-4:30, Thursday 4:00-5:00, or by appointment

Textbook:

Bassham, G., Irwin, W., Nardone, H., & Wallace, J. M. (2008). *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction* (3rd Ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill

Goals of course:

- 1) Improve critical thinking skills
- 2) Learn how to read and summarize psychological journal articles
- 3) Learn how psychologists do and present research
- 4) Examine how the public interacts with psychological findings
- 5) Learn APA Style

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. This includes sources taken from the internet.

Disabilities:

If you have a disability and need a special accommodation, consult first the Coordinator of Health Disabilities Services in the Student Services Classroom Building, telephone 281-283-2627, and then discuss the accommodation with me. This must be done before the first exam (October 2nd).

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 which means having an overall passing grade before the drop deadline on October 27th. A grade contract must be completed. Please contact Ann Hinojosa for Incomplete contracts.

Changes in Syllabus:

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

Updated Tentative Schedule (9/22)

- 8/28 Why Study Psychological Thinking?
- 9/4 What jobs are available to psychology majors? How do I find information?
Read Chapter 12
- 9/11 Class Canceled – Hurricane Evacuation
- 9/18 Class Canceled – Hurricane Recovery
- 9/25 What is APA Style?
Literature Search assignment due
- 10/2 How do I read a scientific article?
APA Style assignment due
- 10/9** How do I write a scientific paper?
Read Chapters 4 and 13
Reading assignment due
Receive take-home exam
- Week of 10/9-10/16 – Take-home exam**
- 10/16 **Take-home exam due in class**
What are the basics of critical thinking?
Read Chapters 1, 2, and 3
- 10/23 What are some common fallacies in thinking?
Read Chapters 5, 6, and 8
- 10/30 What is the scientific method?
Read Chapter 11
- 10/31 (1-4pm) Working on assignments**
Fallacy assignment due at 4:00pm
- 11/6 How do psychologists do research?
Article summary due
- 11/7 (1-4pm) Working on assignments**
- 11/13 What is the difference between science and pseudoscience?
Read Chapters 14 and 15
Article summary due

11/20 Exam 2

11/27 Thanksgiving – No Class

12/4 What does the media have to say about psychology?
Media assignment due

12/11 What have we learned about some common beliefs?
Common belief assignment due

Assignments:

Unless otherwise told or other arrangements have been made:

- All assignments and summaries should be typed and double-spaced
- **If you think that you will have a late paper, please complete the Late Assignment Form. Any penalties for late assignments will be made on a case-by-case basis. Late penalties without the form will be 1 point per day. I will try to be very flexible on late assignments given issues surrounding the hurricane.**
- Exams and any reports must be done on that day unless other arrangements have been made.

I am willing to look over papers before they are due.

Assignment	Points	When assignment given	When due
Literature Search	20	Sept 4 th	Sept 25 th
APA Assignment	20	Sept 25 th	Oct 2 nd
Reading Assignment	20	Oct 2 nd	Oct 9 th
Exam 1	60	study guide on Oct 2 nd	Oct 16 th
Fallacy Assignment	40	Oct 16 th	Oct 31 st
1 st Article Summary	10	Oct 23 rd	Nov 6 th
2 nd Article Summary	10	Oct 23 rd	Nov 13 th
Exam 2	60	study guide on Nov 13 th	Nov 20 th
Media Report	20	in syllabus	Dec 4 th
Common Belief Report	40	in syllabus	Dec 11 th
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Total	300 points		

Grading scale:

280 and above	A	220-229	C
270-279	A-	210-219	C-
260-269	B+	200-209	D+
250-259	B	190-199	D
240-249	B-	180-189	D-
230-239	C+	Less than 180	F

Extra Credit:

You may earn up to 10 points of extra credit for this class. Extra credit may be earned in one of three ways.

A) Read and summarize additional psychological articles. Talk to me if you want to do this. Each summary will be about 1 page typed double-spaced in length. You may include a critique if you want. These will be due on December 4th. You will receive up to 3 points for each summary.

B) Participate in research studies as a volunteer. This activity may not be available. I will announce any opportunities available to the class. You will receive 2 points for each hour credit you earn. You must have participated by December 4th.

C) Other opportunities for extra credit may be announced. It is not guaranteed that there will be any.

Media Report: The goal of this paper is to determine if a popular media source correctly 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 *Newsweek* and news websites such as www.cnn.com or www.chron.com. You cannot use psychology magazines (e.g., *Psychology Today*) for this assignment and the articles must be no more than 2 years old. Each student must have a different media article.

B) I must approve each of the articles listed. To get your article approved submit your idea to the WebCT discussion board, and I will approve it or give reasons for not approving it. On the discussion board cite the article that you found and briefly describe the finding. I recommend that you complete this step by October 9th.

C) Find the scientific article that the media article mentions. Oftentimes the media article mentions 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 from Interlibrary Loan which takes time to do.

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

E) Write a short (1-3 page) paper to the class about your findings. The report will include the following

i) a brief summary of the journal article

ii) a brief summary of the media article

iii) a detailed evaluation of whether the media article accurately portrayed the journal article

iv) you do not have to cite either the journal article or the magazine article

v) include a cover page in APA style

vi) Turn in your paper, and the copies of both the journal and media article on November 20th.

F) Be prepared to talk about it in class on November 20th.

Common Belief Report: This project is designed for you to demonstrate your skills in critically examining a piece of pop psychology. For this project do the following:

A) Get one of the following:

- i) a popular belief or saying that relates to psychology (e.g., Absence makes the heart grow fonder)
- ii) a belief from a pop psychology book (e.g., *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*)

B) I must approve of your idea (just like the media psychology report). Submit your idea to the WebCT discussion board. I will approve it or not. I recommend that you complete this step by October 9th.

C) Find at least four primary scientific sources that provide evidence either for or against the saying.

D) Write an APA style paper (include title page and reference page but not an abstract) which synthesizes your findings. The paper will include the following

i) what the belief is

ii) whether the belief is supported or not

iii) a synthesis of your primary sources (2-3 pages)

iv) an APA style cover page and an APA style reference page. You do not need an abstract.

E) Turn in your primary sources and the paper on December 4th. Bring your materials to class and be ready to discuss your findings.