

Psychology 60T

Introduction to the Psychology Major

Spring 2009

Course Description

This is a one unit, online course intended primarily for pre-psychology majors and relatively new psychology majors. The three main topics to be addressed are 1) what psychology is and is not, 2) how to make the most of your psychology major, and 3) graduate school and career options for psychology majors. This course counts toward the Line B (Basic Knowledge and Skills) requirement of the psychology major.

Your Instructor

Name: [Paul C. Price, Ph.D](#)

Office: Science II, Room 333

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:00 to 9:00. Tuesday, 11:00 to 1:00.

Phone: 278-2120

E-Mail: paulpri@csufresno.edu

During the semester, please do not send e-mail to my csufresno account. For general course related questions, use the *Ask Dr. Price* discussion board forum on Blackboard. For other messages, use the message system within Blackboard. See the policies on electronic communication with me below.

Computer Considerations

This course will be administered entirely through [Blackboard](#). It is essential, therefore, that you have or develop a good working knowledge of Blackboard. It is also essential that you have a reliable computer and Internet connection. In fact, [University policy](#) is that "Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation ... with all the recommended software." Also, it is presumed that students "have 24-hour access ... and the necessary communication links to the University's information resources." Necessary software includes Microsoft Word or a similar program that allows you to save documents in rich-text format (rtf), Adobe Acrobat Reader, and Apple's [QuickTime Player](#) and [iTunes](#).

Course Structure

Conceptually, the semester is organized into 15 weeks that generally begin on Monday and end the following Sunday. Of course, the first week is a short one that begins on a Wednesday. The last week of classes (technically, Week 16) is also a short week, for which there will be no new material; we will treat that entire week as "Dead Days." Week 8 is devoted to the midterm exam, which you must schedule and take at the Testing Center sometime during the week. The final exam works the same way, but during finals week.

For the rest of the weeks, there will be a general topic and some combination of the following assigned activities: a textbook reading, a PowerPoint lecture, one or more audio podcasts, and

two or three discussion board threads for you to contribute to. Contributing to the discussion board threads may also require that you first read over a Website, do a short online activity, or complete an exercise from the textbook.

In addition, throughout the semester you must attend four real-time psychology or career related activities. You will choose them from a list of approved activities, attend them, and complete a short reaction paper within a week of the activity. You will also complete two short writing assignments, both of which are due during the latter half of the semester.

Course Elements

Textbook

The textbook is *The Psychology Major's Handbook* (2nd ed.) by Tara L. Kuther. It is available at the Kennel Bookstore and elsewhere. This book is a mixture of factual information, advice, and self-awareness exercises. In general, the factual information will be tested on the exams, and the advice and self-awareness exercises will provide the basis many of the discussions.

PowerPoint Lectures

The PowerPoint lectures will be somewhat formal presentations on the week's main topic. These will be slide shows with audio narration and closed captions. The lectures will run as QuickTime movies, so you might want to [download the latest version of the QuickTime Player](#). In Blackboard, you can find the PowerPoint lectures in *Course Documents > PowerPoint Lectures*. Just click on the link for the lecture that you want to open and run.

Audio Podcasts

The audio podcasts will consist of informal commentary by me and interviews with interesting people. I hope also to make them available as written transcripts, so you can read them instead of listening to them if you want. The podcasts will run on iTunes, so you might want to [download the latest version of iTunes](#). In Blackboard, click on the *Podcasts* button. This will open iTunes and connect you iTunes U. From there you can download the assigned podcasts.

Real-Time Activities

The real-time activities will include meetings, conferences, talks, workshops, and job fairs—all of which are either psychology or career related and take place on campus. During the semester, you must attend four of these activities and, for each one, write a one-page reaction paper—worth four points—that you turn in within one week of the activity. In Blackboard, go to *Course Documents > Real-Time Activities* folder for the Official List of activities and a detailed handout on attending the activities and completing the reaction papers.

Discussion Board

The discussion board is where we “process” information from the textbook, PowerPoint lectures, podcasts, and real-time activities. There are six forums on the discussion board. Two are ungraded.

- *Ask Dr. Price* – For course related questions and comments (including general psychology and career questions) of interest to the entire class.

- *Free for All* – For anything else that anyone wants to discuss—course related or not—including socializing and fun.

The other four are graded forums that divide the class into four discussion groups.

- *Freudians* – For last names A-D.
- *Piagetians* – For last names E-H.
- *Rogerians* – For last names I-O.
- *Skinnerians* – For last names P-Z.

The graded forums are where you should look (depending on your last name) for the weekly discussion threads. Each week, I will start two or three new threads with different topics. At the end of the week, I will assign each student a weekly discussion grade on a 0-to-4 scale.

What I consider to be the basic weekly requirement—worth a score of 3—is three posts in response to at least two different prompts within your discussion group. The three posts must be done on three different days. Posts should generally be at least 100 words and written in a semi-formal style with proper grammar and spelling. At least one must be an original answer or comment, and at least one must be a thoughtful response to another student's post. Although disagreement and controversy are welcome, disrespectful (insulting, rude, threatening) posts are not. They will be deleted and will not count toward the requirement. (Repeated disrespectful posts will be considered “disruptive classroom behavior” and will be dealt with according to University policy; see below). The full grading rubric, then, is as follows.

- *4 Points* – Weekly posts meet the basic requirement above and are unusually insightful or helpful OR include an additional high quality post OR include several shorter but on-topic posts. The additional posts can be in a graded forum other than your own or an ungraded forum.
- *3 Points* – Weekly posts meet the basic requirement (see above).
- *2 Points* – Weekly posts fall just short of meeting the basic requirement (e.g., there are only two high quality posts, two of the three posts are on the same day, none of the posts is a response to another student's post).
- *1 Points* – Weekly posts fall far short of meeting the basic requirement (e.g., only one high-quality post, all three posts on the same day).
- *0 Points* – Weekly posts show little or no attempt to meet the basic requirement (e.g., one low-quality post).

In Blackboard, go to *Communications > Discussion Board* and click on the forum you want to participate in. You can then read all the posts that are there. In the ungraded forums, you can start new threads as well as respond to others' posts. In the graded forums, you can only post to the assigned discussion threads that have already been started by me.

Exams

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam, each worth 100 points. Both exams will include 30 to 50 multiple-choice items and three to five short-essay items. You will take the exams at the [Academic Testing Center](#), which is in Room 210 of the Family and Food Science Building (278-4137). You may take the midterm on any weekday during Week 8 of the semester (March 9th to 13th) and the final on any day during finals (May 18th to 21st). To take an exam, check the hours of the ATC (they are open only in the morning on some days and only in the afternoon on some days) and simply show up during an open time—they do not schedule appointments—with your student ID, a blue book for the short essays, and a pencil. They will provide a Scantron for the multiple-choice items.

Writing Assignments

After we cover the topic of writing in psychology during Week 9, there will be two short writing assignments—each graded on a 0-to-10 scale. The first will be a one page summary of a research article in psychology and will be due by the end of Week 11. The second will be a two page personal statement of the sort that is generally required when you apply to graduate school and will be due by the end of Week 14. Handouts with details on these assignments—along with links to turn them in via Turnitin.com—are on Blackboard in *Course Documents > Writing Assignments*.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on your scores on the discussions, exams, real-time activity reaction papers, and short writing assignments. For each of these categories, I will add up the points you earned and compute your percentage out of the points you could have earned. For example, if you earn 60 out of 64 points on the discussions, your percentage is $(60/64) \times 100 = 94$. If you earn 160 out of 200 points on the exams, your percentage is $(160/200) \times 100 = 80$. Finally, I will take a weighted average of the four percentage scores, where the discussions are worth 40%, the exams 30%, the real-time activities 20%, and the writing assignments 10%. This will give an overall weighted percentage score. If your percentage score is 89.5 or higher, you will get an A in the course. If it is 79.5 to 89.4, you will get a B. If it is 69.5 to 79.4, you will get a C. If it is 59.5 to 69.4, you will get a D. If it is lower than 59.5, you will get an F.

Workload

My expectation is that you will be able to do the assigned reading, watch the PowerPoint lecture, listen to the podcasts, and make your posts to the discussion board in about two hours per week. The real-time activities and writing assignments, and studying for exams, will boost the time commitment to between two and three hours per week.

Specific Course Policies

Late Work and Missed Exams

No late work of any kind will be accepted, period. Exams that are not taken during the scheduled period cannot be made up, period.

Computer Malfunctions and Ignorance

No extensions for any work will be given because of computer malfunctions or ignorance (e.g., “I didn’t know how to use the discussion board.”). Again, University policy is that every student is *required* to have a working computer and Internet connection. If your regular computer malfunctions, you need to get it fixed immediately or have a backup plan (e.g., using a friend’s computer) that you can put into action. If you do not know how to do something that you need to do with your computer, then you have to figure it out. Check the Blackboard or iTunes documentation, post to *Ask Dr. Price* or the *Free for All*, get help from your classmates and friends ... but *figure it out*. None of it is very difficult.

Communication

Telephone and In-Person Communication with Me. I discourage calling me on the telephone about things that can be dealt with easily online. However, you are welcome to call me at my

office in case of an emergency or to discuss anything that cannot be discussed easily online. You are also welcome—encouraged in fact—to stop by during my office hours or to make an appointment to see me at some other time.

Electronic Communication with Me. All course related electronic communication with me should be done through Blackboard. If you have a question that would be of interest to other students in the class, please post it in the *Ask Dr. Price* forum. If you have a personal message for me, use the Blackboard message system. Go to *Communications > Messaging*. If I have a personal message for you, I will generally use the Blackboard message system too, so be sure to check your inbox. I may occasionally send more urgent messages to your csufresno e-mail account, but I hope not to.

Electronic Communication with Classmates. In many cases, the best way to communicate with classmates will be to post to one of the forums. However, you may also use the Blackboard message system to send private messages to individual classmates or to groups of classmates (e.g., everyone in your discussion group). Of course, you may also choose to share your csufresno or other e-mail addresses (or phone numbers or whatever) with each other and communicate that way. You should report rude, threatening, or otherwise unwanted communication from a classmate to me immediately. It will be considered “disruptive classroom behavior” (see below) and will not be tolerated.

General University Policies

We will adhere to University policies on students with disabilities, the Honor Code, cheating and plagiarism, computers, disruptive classroom behavior, and copyright. [Read the full policies here.](#)

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Textbook
1	01/21 - 01/25	Course Intro	ch. 2
2	01/26 - 02/01	What is Psychology?	ch. 1
3	02/02 - 02/08	The Department of Psychology at CSUF	
4	02/09 - 02/15	Academic Integrity	
5	02/16 - 02/22	Careers Overview	ch. 7 (ch. 8 optional)
6	02/23 - 03/01	Being Proactive	ch. 3
7	03/02 - 03/08	Studying	ch. 4
8	03/09 - 03/15	Midterm Exam	
9	03/16 - 03/22	Writing in Psychology	chs. 5-6
10	03/23 - 03/29	Masters Degrees	ch. 9
11	03/30 - 04/05	Doctoral Degrees (Assignment 1 Due)	
--	04/06 - 04/12	SPRING BREAK	
12	04/13 - 04/19	Applying to Graduate School	ch. 10
13	04/20 - 04/26	The Social Dimension	
14	04/27 - 05/03	Pseudoscience (Assignment 2 Due)	
15	05/04 - 05/10	The Developing College Student	
--	05/11 - 05/17	None; Dead Days	
--	05/18 - 05/21	Final Exam	

Notes: Discussion board posts are due each week. Four real-time activities must also be attended, and a reaction paper written for each, during the semester.