

Psychology 102: General Psychology
TP/SS Campus
Spring 2015

PY 102 - General Psychology

Dr. Marya Levintova*

Monday, 5:30-8:10 pm

Room: Catherine F. Commons Room 113

Contact info: Phone: 301-247-0889 (mobile)

Email: marya.levintova@montgomerycollege.edu

*Office hours by appointment

Course Description

Introduction to the field and research methods of psychology, including such topics as biological bases of behavior, human development, perception, learning, psychological disorders and social behavior.

Course Objectives:

1. Knowledge of psychology: Students should be able to understand basic psychological concepts and terminology and be aware of major psychological theories and research.
2. Critical thinking about research: Students should be able to understand the basic principles of research and think critically about research.
3. Applying psychology to real life: Students should be able to use psychological concepts to explain or interpret human experience.
4. Personal development: Students should be able to learn about themselves in this course (this is not a requirement, but rather a hope!)

Required Texts

Hoffman, K (2012). Psychology in Action (10th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance/participation**: regular attendance is expected. Students who do not comply with the college attendance regulations may be dropped from the course. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a class, please send me an email regarding your absence. I need to receive your email no later than one day after the class. If you miss a mid-term or final exam, you will receive an F for that particular exam.
2. **Quizzes**: Three (3) pop-quizzes.
3. **Examinations**: there will be two (2) examinations (mid-term and final exam). Each exam will consist of 50 questions. All questions will be multiple-choice. **There will be NO make-up exams**, so you must take the exams on the dates scheduled. In cases of emergency, you must contact the instructor as soon as possible, **prior to the exam**; the instructor retains the right to require a written proof of the emergency. If you miss an exam without a reason (previously approved by the instructor in advance), you will receive an F (0 points) for that exam. **Requests for make-up exams submitted after the exam will not be granted under any conditions.**
4. **Written Assignment**: You will be required to write a review of a scientific article. See the instructions below.
5. **Study Aids**: you may use flash cards for quizzes and one-sided page of notes for mid-term and final.
6. **Final Exam**: final exam will be administered at assigned time during finals week (see final exam schedule)

Evaluation Criteria:

Course grades are based on the following assignments:

Mid-term:	50
Final:	50
Quizzes (3 total):	30
Class Participation	30
Paper	50
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Total Possible Points:	210

Final Grades are reflective of the individual student's points earned divided by total possible point

Grading Scale:

- A= 90%-100%
- B=80%-89%
- C=70%-79%
- D=60%-69%
- F=0-59%

Paper Assignment:

Purpose: To familiarize yourself with the research method of the discipline and assess critical thinking, writing, information literacy, and technological competency.

Overview: You will need to identify a relevant research question in the field of psychology, find a scientific, peer-reviewed journal article that addresses the relevant point, read the article and critically evaluate its methodology and results.

The Nitty-Gritty:

Step 1: Identify a relevant research question in the field of psychology

Step 2: Locate a peer-reviewed journal article that describes a scientific research study. The article must include a **methods** section and a **results** section (that is, it must describe an actual study, rather than being a theoretical or review article).

Step 3: Answer the following questions fully and completely, using complete and grammatically correct sentences. Be sure to explain your ideas fully and define your terms. NOTE: Writing "in your own words" means not using direct quotations from the article.

1. Citation in APA format: Provide a full citation of the peer-reviewed journal article you read, using APA format. [Hint: The library database will show you the full citation in APA format, using the "Cite" function.]
2. What was your research question, and how does this article relate to that research question? Describe the psychology research question you were researching for this assignment. How is the scholarly article you read relevant to this research question?
3. What is the hypothesis of the study? Describe the hypothesis (or hypotheses) of the study **in your own words**.
4. What did the researchers do? Describe the sample and methodology of the study **in your own words**. Be sure to identify what kind of research method was used (survey, experiment, correlational study), the variables that were measured in the study, and any other relevant aspects of the methodology. [Hint: The methodology is described in the section titled "Method." Explain the methodology of the study well enough that someone who hasn't read the article will know what the researchers did.]

5. What did the researchers find? Describe the main results of the study **in your own words**. [Hint: The results are described in the section titled “Results” and then often summarized again in the section titled “Discussion.”]
6. What do the results mean? Describe the main conclusions you would draw from this study **in your own words**. [Hint: The researchers’ conclusions are usually discussed in the section titled “Discussion.”]
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this study? **In your own words**, describe at least one strength and one weakness of the study, explaining **why** these are strengths and weaknesses.
8. How would you improve this study? If you were to do the study over again, describe what changes you would make and why these changes would improve the study.

The paper should be 3-4 pages in length. Double spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman, APA style. Points will be taken off if you do not follow the above guidelines. Points will also be taken off for grammar. If you need assistance with this paper please email me to set up a time to discuss, or check with me before/after class. This assignment is worth 50 points.

Extra Credit: You have the opportunity to participate in ONE (1) extra credit opportunity.

- 1.) Follow Montgomery College Psychology on Facebook, pick an article that is posted on the site, write a one page summary and a one-page response for 3 extra credit points. I do NOT require you to join Facebook if you are not already on. There are other opportunities for extra credit you can do that does not require you joining Facebook (see below).
- 2.) Attend Psychology Brown Bags (offered sporadically throughout semester) and write a one page summary and response/thoughts/reactions of the topic; 3 extra credit points.
- 3.) You can summarize a **STUDY** from a psychology journal article (an article from a psychological journal usually has an introduction, methods section, and discussion) of your choice (1 page) and write your critique of the study (1 page). A psychology related article from popular press (for example: the NY Times, Washington Post, CNN, etc.) is not from a psychological journal so will **NOT** be accepted. Literature reviews from Psychology Journals also will NOT be accepted (I want you to summarize and critique a psychological study). See the last 2 pages of the syllabus for a guide on how to summarize and critique an article. You do not need to address every question on the handout - 5 extra credit points.

The extra credit assignment is due **BEFORE the last lecture day of class** (no extra credit will be accepted after the last day of class). Extra Credit will not be accepted after the last lecture. In other words, it is due BEFORE the week of final exams. You may hand in extra credit anytime throughout the semester. Completing the extra credit assignment does not guarantee you get the extra credit points. **You can earn 3-5 points of extra credit depending on the assignment you complete.**

Grading Disputes: After you receive a grade, you have TWO weeks to resolve any disputes about your grade.

Other Issues:

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is defined in the Guide for Academic Integrity as cheating, fabrication, facilitation of academic dishonesty, and/or plagiarism. Students who engage in academic dishonesty on a test or assignment for this class will receive an F (0 points) for that exercise and may receive an F in this class. Please note that there will be NO warnings. Student Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook, which can be found at http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/pnp/#Chapter_4.

Statement of Religious Observances: Students will not be penalized because of observances of religious beliefs.

Please note that it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in writing within the first three weeks of classes regarding any absences for religious observances.

Statement of Disabilities: Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hour. In order to receive accommodations, a letter from Disability Support Services (CB122) will be needed. You can also call DSS at (301) 279.5058 or TDD for hearing impaired at (301) 294.9672. Any student who may need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation must identify to the Disability Support Services Office; guidelines for emergency evacuations are at: www.montgomerycollege.edu/dss/evacprocedures.htm.

Veteran's Services: If you are a veteran or on active or reserve status and you are interested in information regarding opportunities, programs, and/or services, please visit the Combat2College website at www.montgomerycollege.edu/combat2college

*****See Class Schedule on next page*****

Class Schedule

<u>Week/Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Chapter</u>
Week 1 January 26	Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods	1
Week 2 February 2	Neuroscience & Behavior	2
Week 3 February 9	Sensation and Perception	4
Week 4 February 16	States of Consciousness	5
Week 5 February 23	Learning	6
Week 6 March 2	Memory	7
Week 7 March 9	Mid-term exam	
Week 8 March 16	Spring Break – NO CLASS	
Week 9 March 23	Thinking, Language & Intelligence	8
Week 10 March 30	Lifespan Development	9 & 10
Week 11 April 6	Motivation & Emotion	12
Week 12 April 13	Personality	13 Paper Due
Week 13 April 20	Social Psychology	16
Week 14 April 27	Psychological Disorders	14
Week 15 May 4	Therapies	15 Extra Credit Due
Final Exam May 11, 2015 @ 5-7 pm	FINAL EXAM	

**This document is subject to revision throughout the semester.*

Additional help for your paper or extra credit assignment
Summarizing a Research Paper

Summarize the:

1. Introduction
 - a. What are the main points?
 - b. What are the hypotheses or research questions?
 - c. In other words, what is the point of the study?
2. Method
 - a. Who are the participants
 - b. What was the basic procedure?
3. Results
 - a. What were the general findings?
4. Discussion
 - a. What are the main points of the discussion?

Critiquing a Research Paper

Choose several questions that are relevant to your article. You do not need to answer all of the questions below, just choose a few.

Introduction Section:

Things you should look for when critiquing the introduction of a paper

1. The authors discussion of previous research:
 - a. What is a strength and a weakness of the authors' discussion of previous research. In other words, what did they do well in constructing a discussion what has already been done and what did they not do well?
 - b. Do the authors do a good job presenting the gaps in the previous research? Why or why not?
2. Rationale & objectives of the study:
 - a. Can you clearly articulate what the topic of interest is to the researchers and why they think it is important?
 - b. Have the authors convinced you that it is important (i.e. did they do a good job building their rationale)? Why or why not?
 - c. Can you clearly articulate the goals of the study?
3. Research Questions/Hypotheses:
 - a. Did the authors present research questions, hypotheses or both? Did you have to hunt for them?
 - b. Can you figure out how do these RQs/hypotheses relate to previous research?
 - c. Do the RQs/hypotheses address what's missing or inconsistent in the literature? Why or why not?

Methods Section:

Things you should look for when critiquing the methods section of a paper.

1. Research Design:
 - a. What type of design did the authors use? Can you figure it out?
 - b. Can you identify the strengths and limitations of this type of research design.
 - c. Was the design appropriate for answering the questions posed in the study? Why or why not?
2. Internal & external validity "bubbles:"
 - a. Internal Validity:
 - i. Were variables clearly defined and implemented? Why or why not?
 - ii. Were extraneous variables (i.e. those not of interest in the study) controlled? Why or why not?
 - iii. Based on their design, can the authors attribute their findings (e.g. changes in the dependent variable) to the independent variable? Why or why not?
 - b. External Validity:

- i. To what extent can the results be generalized?
- 3. Participants:
 - a. Were participants adequately sampled from the population?
 - b. How do the demographics & sampling of the participants (e.g., any sampling bias) affect the internal & external validity of the study?
 - c. If you are looking at a process/outcome study:
 - i. Were therapists trained to deliver skills competently?
 - ii. Were clients motivated for receiving help?
 - iii. Were clients and therapists in a therapeutic relationship?
- 4. Measures:
 - a. Did the measures have adequate validity (i.e. assess what they were supposed to assess) and reliability (i.e. assess the construct consistently)?
 - b. Were the measures from a number of perspectives (client, therapist, external judges) and types (self-report, observations) to reduce perspective bias?
- 5. Procedures:
 - a. Could you replicate this study given the description of the procedures?
 - b. Did the researchers conduct the study ethically? Why or why not?
 - c. If you are looking at a process/outcome study:
 - i. Was the helping interaction realistic in terms of naturally-occurring therapy?
- 6. What are some changes to the design of the study that the authors could have made and how that would affect the balance between internal/external validity.

Results and Discussion Section:

Things you should look for when critiquing the results/discussion section of a paper.

- 1. Results:
 - a. Could you understand what was done in the analyses?
 - b. Were appropriate analyses used to test the data? (Did the authors control for # of tests so as not to increase chance of Type 1 error?)
 - c. Did the authors present the results clearly (both in the text and visually via tables or graphs)?
 - d. Did authors have a table reporting means and standard deviations of variables?
 - e. Did the authors report effect size along with their results?
 - f. What is the practical significance of the authors' results?
- 2. Discussion:
 - a. Did the authors do a good job presenting the conclusions made from their results?
 - 1. Did the authors interpret beyond their results?
 - 2. Are there alternative explanations for the authors' findings? If so, what are they?
 - b. Did the authors do a good job putting the results of their study back into the context of previous research?
 - c. Did the authors spell out the implications of their results for counseling practice and theory?
 - 1. What other implications can you think of that the authors missed?
 - d. Did the authors discuss the limitations of their results adequately?
 - 1. What other limitations can you think of that the authors missed?
 - e. Did the authors provide feasible ideas for future research directions?
 - 1. What other ideas for future research can you think of?