

## **Introduction to Psychology Psych 1a Section 1 – Fall 2007**

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**Text:** Gleitman, H., Fridlund, A.J., & Resiberg, D. (2007). *Basic psychology* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). NY: Norton.

### **Course Description: *What is this course about?***

Psychology 1a (Introduction to Psychology) is an introduction to what many describe as the science of the mind and behavior, concerning it with how and why organisms do what they do. In some ways, it is like a tasting menu at a fancy restaurant – you get the opportunity to try various aspects of what is (in my humble opinion), the coolest scientific field and see which one or ones grab you. You will get a broad overview of behavioral neurosciences, sensation and perception, social psychology, developmental psychology, theories of personality, and clinical psychology (if we are lucky, we will also cover Health Psychology). Obviously, it is a prerequisite for all other psychology courses, as it gives you the opportunity to learn the basics in each of major branches of psychology that are active today. We will be taking a topical approach, examining many different perspectives on human behavior. To make the semester coherent, we will be emphasizing common themes that hold the various areas of psychology together as an academic discipline. This is a course about the *science* of the mind, the body, and behavior, rather than a course about ‘pop’ psychology.

### **Course Goals: *What can you gain from this course?***

- A basic understanding of how psychologists conduct research and evaluate their findings
- An understanding of basic psychological processes and how they are manifested in behavior by studying biological processes, sensation, perception, learning, cognition, language, consciousness, motivation, emotion, human development, personality, psychological disorders and treatment, and social cognition and influence.

- An understanding of contemporary and classical theoretical perspectives, concepts, and empirical findings central to psychology.
- An appreciation for psychological science that will allow you to become critical consumers
- The capacity to apply what we learn during class and in readings to everyday contexts
- Improved oral and written communication, and analytical skills through discussion, active learning exercises, and assignments.
- With the knowledge you gain, you may be better able to understand your own thoughts and behavior; but you may also be able to assist others better.

**Expectations:** One of the secrets to living a fulfilled and healthy life is *to show up and participate in the dance*. As such, I expect you to

- Attend class and participate in the in-class and out-of-class assignments and experiences
- Keep up with the assigned readings
- Ask questions and participate in class and in discussions
- Listen and learn from those around you
- Be respectful, constructive, prompt, and turn off your cell phones before class starts!
- Complete the activities on time
- Learn actively and monitor your learning process
- Meet with either your TA's or myself early if you have any questions or are having difficulties
- Be academically honest (see below)

In return, I will

- Come to class prepared
- Organize class time and your assignments to facilitate your learning
- Provide prompt feedback on your performance
- Provide various opportunities or learning
- Present information that the textbook doesn't cover
- Be actively engaged during class
- Provide diverse and meaningful methods of evaluating your learning
- Respect your ideas and input
- Be available outside of class
- Challenge you intellectually
- Provide opportunities to focus your exploration on specific topics that may interest you

**Evaluation:** Your grade will be based on class exams, research experience, and five written assignments (to be provided in detail later). Your grade will be on a standard grading scale out of a total of 400 points (A > 92.5%, A- 90-92, B+ 87.5-89.5%, B 82.5-87, B- 80-82%, C+ 77.5-79.5%, C 72.5-77%, C- 70-72, D+ 67.5-69.5%, D 62.5-69, D- 60-62%)

**Exams:** There will be three tests, each worth 100 points. All exams will be unit tests (**NO** cumulative exams). The format for each exam will include a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions (which may include some matching). Lecture, all in-class materials and discussions, and reading assignments will be covered. The **ONLY** excuses acceptable for missing a quiz are illness (documented by a note from a physician), funeral of close friend/relative (documented by a funeral notice or funeral bulletin), mandatory religious obligations or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities. If one of these difficulties occurs, you should immediately contact the office of Student Life, who will document the difficulties and take care of notifying your professors. If you must be away at the time of an examination, you may schedule an **early** exam. You will receive a review sheet (posted on Moodle) that serves as a general guide. Test questions will not be limited to this review sheet, but the short questions posed on the review sheet should help prepare you for the short-answer questions.

**Research Participation or Role-Playing Option:** There will be opportunities across the semester to participate in Research Projects (also called *Research Familiarization Requirement*). Students who choose not to participate in the Research Projects can fulfill this requirement by completing alternative writing assignments called Role-Playing options, which requires you to summarize what it would be like to be a participant in a published psychological experiment. This part of the course will be discussed on the first day of class. **All experiment questions should be referred to Jeongsook Yoon** ([yoenje@brandeis.edu](mailto:yoenje@brandeis.edu))

**Special Needs** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

**Academic Honesty:** You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

### **Tentative Course Schedule<sup>1</sup>**

<b><u>Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Topics</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
8/30	Welcome	Syllabus and supplements

<sup>1</sup> **Please Note:**

The content on this syllabus is tentative. The instructor maintains the right to make changes to the timing of the content as the course progresses. This need will be dictated by the interest of the class and the uncontrollable loquacity of the instructor. We will cover as much material as we can, but I will neither go so quickly that students are lost, nor so slowly that the lecture becomes unbearably repetitive. However, assignment and exam dates are inflexible.

<b><u>Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Topics</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
9/5	Introduction	Chapter 1
9/6	(contd.)	
9/10	Evolution and the Biological Roots of Behavior	Chapter 2
9/12	(contd.)	
9/13	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	
9/17	(contd.)	
9/19	The Brain and the Nervous System	Chapter 3
9/20	(contd.)	
9/24	(contd.)	
9/26	Sensation (Brandeis Thursday)	Chapter 4
9/27	Sukkot – no class	
10/1	(contd.)	Chapter 5
10/3	<b><u>Exam 1</u></b>	
10/4	Shimni Atzeret – no class	
10/8	Perception	
10/9	(contd.) Brandeis Thursday	
10/10	Learning	Chapter 6
10/11	(contd.)	
10/15	(contd.)	
10/17	Memory	Chapter 7
10/18	(contd.)	
10/22	Cognitive Development	Chapter 10
10/24	(contd.)	
10/25	Social Development	Chapter 11
10/29	(contd.)	
10/31	Social Cognition and Emotion	Chapter 12
11/1	(contd.)	
11/5	(contd.)	
11/7	<b><u>Exam 2</u></b>	
11/8	Social Influence and Relationships	Chapter 13
11/12	(contd.)	
11/14	(contd.)	
11/15	Personality	Chapter 15

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<b><u>Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Topics</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
11/19	(contd.)	
11/21	(contd.)	
11/22	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	
11/26	Psychopathology and Treatment of Mental Disorders	Chapter 16-17
11/28	(contd.)	
11/29	(contd.)	
11/2	(contd.)	
11/5	(contd.)	
11/6	Health	Tba

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**Third Exam** – Exam week – 12/12-12/19, 2007

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