



Course Name: Introduction to Psychology

Course Number: PSYC 110 A

Course Term: Spring 2025

Meeting time/location: in person; Tuesdays & Thursday from 8-9:30 AM in ETC 227

Instructor Information & Course Communication

Instructor: Jill M. Swirsky, PhD

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Office: Holy Family Hall #319

Office hours: Virtually Mondays 9-12 ([sign up here](#) to schedule an appointment!)

The best way to contact me is via email (jswirsky@holyfamilly.edu), please include the course name (PSYC 110) in the subject line. I typically respond quickly to emails on weekdays between the hours of 8 AM and 4 PM. This means that if you send me an email at night or on a weekend, I will likely not respond until the next business day. I expect proper email etiquette, which includes a professional salutation. For example, “Hi professor” or “Hello Dr. S.” are fine, “hey” or “yo” ... not so much. Please review the “[Emailing professors: Etiquette and guidelines](#)” for more information and helpful tips. If you send me an email with poor etiquette, I will bounce it back and ask you to revise :).

To meet with me, please [sign up here](#). You will be asked why you want to meet and to note your preference about meeting online or in person although this will be subject to my availability (my Monday office hours are typically held via WebEx). If you aren’t free during my office hours, that’s totally fine! I am always happy to meet with you - to arrange a meeting outside of my office hours, please email me a list of SEVERAL days/times that work for you, and I will confirm with a meeting time and/or link.

Instructional Methods

This is an in-person course that meets live on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While some material will be posted on Canvas, you are expected to attend all classes unless otherwise notified in the course schedule/by the instructor.

Mission Statement

Holy Family University, a ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, offers education in the liberal arts and professions through graduate, undergraduate, and non-degree programs. As a Catholic University, Holy Family seeks direction and inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, affirms the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and witnesses to the dignity of each person and the oneness of the human family. Holy Family University educates students to assume lifelong responsibilities towards God, society, and self. The core values are Family, Integrity, Learning, Service & Responsibility, Respect, and Vision. This course addresses the following core values:

Value	Skill	Assignment/Assessment
Family	Collaboration Interpersonal Communication Listening	Engagement and participation Module posts
Integrity	Self awareness	Engagement and participation Module posts
Vision	Creativity Problem solving	Topic paper

	Resourcefulness	
Service and Responsibility	Compassion Accountability	Engagement and participation Module posts Academic honesty assignment
Respect	Openness Empathy Etiquette Cultural Sensitivity Professional Communication	Engagement and participation Module posts
Learning	Critical Thinking Curiosity Study Skills Self Reflection	Exams Module posts Welcome/Ending posts

Course Details

Course Description

An introduction to the study of human behavior. Explores the origins of psychology as well as the major subfields within the domain, including the history of psychology, research methods, biological psychology, social psychology, stress coping, psychological disorders, treatment of psychological disorders, learning, emotion, motivation, & human development.

Course Materials

Required Textbook: Weiten, W. (2021). *Psychology: Themes and Variations* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.

**Additional materials for course topics may be posted on the Canvas website for the course. These sources may include, but are not limited to, scholarly journal articles, news articles, or videos.

Course Prerequisites or Co-Requisites

None

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Method
Describe the basic concepts represented in the general content domains of psychology.	Exams, Topic paper, Question submission, Engagement & participation
Describe the basic theories represented in the general content domains of psychology.	Exams, Topic paper, Question submission, Engagement & participation
Explain how psychological principles are applied in work, education, and real-world situations.	Exams, Topic paper, Question submission, Engagement & participation
Use scientific evidence to synthesize current research in the field.	Exams, Topic paper, Question submission, Engagement & participation
Identify the hypothesis, independent and dependent variables, and research design of an empirical study of psychological concepts.	Exams, Topic paper, Question submission, Engagement & participation

Course Technology Requirements

The syllabus assignment descriptions, and related rubrics are posted on our course Canvas page. I use Canvas regularly to post important documents, assignments, rubrics, grades, respond to discussion board questions, as well as to make announcements. It is your responsibility to check the course's Canvas site frequently, in addition to your Holy Family email. If you are new to Canvas, here is a helpful link: [Canvas at Holy Family University](#). If you need assistance from the [Holy Family Help Desk](#) you can contact them at helpdesk@holyfamilly.edu or by phone at 267-341-3402. Unless

otherwise specified, all assignments MUST be submitted to the Canvas via the appropriate submission portals (in other words, not as a comment attachment) so they can go through the TurnItIn plagiarism checker. Submissions must be in a format that Canvas accepts (e.g., pdf, doc) - NOT .pages files. Assignments submitted via email, as a Canvas attachment, or in a format that Canvas cannot open will not be accepted. If I have to ask you to resubmit something, it will be treated as late. Some videos posted via Canvas will require the use of speakers.

Canvas will not send you an email that announcements have been posted or that you have received a message in your inbox, unless you tell Canvas to do so. In the settings section of Canvas you can change your preferences as to what types of correspondence you would like to receive. I STRONGLY suggest you update your settings to notify you by e-mail when there is a new announcement or when a grade has been posted. See [here](#) for information on how to update notifications.

Ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities, have access to instructional materials is paramount to their success; therefore, all materials in this course have been reviewed and evaluated for accessibility. When possible, course materials are available in a digital format in Canvas, and students may download accessible versions of files via a tool called Ally. To learn more about accessing accessible versions of files, check out the short video Ally: [Student View](#). In general, students using assistive technologies should be able to access all course materials; however, if you do encounter a barrier, please contact me/your instructor as soon as possible so that the problem can be remediated.

The following specific technology is necessary for this course:

- If you have a slower internet connection, you may find this course challenging/frustrating due to the slowness of the technology. Please see the Student On-Demand page within this course to see if you have a [supported web browser](#) and meet the basic computer specifications.
- If you don't have [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) installed on your computer, please download it for free.
- The use of Microsoft Office (i.e., Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Students can gain access to these materials by visiting the following websites: [Materials for Microsoft Office 365](#) or [Google Suite](#)
- The Canvas App is not a requirement, but it helps students stay current from anywhere in the world.
 - o Android User's Guide to [Download](#)
 - o IOS User's Guide to [Download](#)

Grading Policies

HFU Grading Scale

The letter grades are accrued in association with respective items all work toward your total grade for the course. The letter grades and the grade point average are listed below:

A	94 – 100%	4.0
A-	90 – 93%	3.7
B+	87 – 89%	3.3
B	83 – 86%	3.0
B-	80 – 82%	2.7
C+	77 – 79%	2.3
C	70 – 76%	2.0
D+	65 – 69%	1.5
D	60 – 64%	1.0
F	59% and below	0.0

All grades will be posted on Canvas. Final letter grades will be assigned using the Holy Family University grading scale as listed in the University Catalog. Your grade in this course will be determined by the following criteria:

Assignment	% of grade
1. Exams (4)	30

2. Topic paper (1)	10
3. Module posts (weekly)	25
4. Engagement & participation (weekly)	25
5. Academic Honesty Assignment (1)	5
6. Welcome/Ending posts	5
7. SONA	completion only
Total Points	100

Assignments

*****An important note about assignments:** All assignments must be submitted via the appropriate Canvas submission portal and must be in .doc or .docx format. Rubrics and instructions for each assignment are available on our course Canvas page. I try to return graded assignments within one week. ***

Welcome/Ending Posts

During the first and last weeks of the course you will participate in a discussion board. The welcome post asks you to introduce yourself and the ending post will ask you to reflect back on the course as a whole.

Cumulative Exams

There will be 4 cumulative exams (see the course schedule for dates). Anything in the assigned chapter, lecture, or in-class activities is fair game to show up on an exam! Exams will be completed on Canvas and we will NOT have class on exam days. On the day of the exam, the exam opens at 8 AM and is available until 11:59 PM that evening. You can complete the exam at any point during that day. Exams must be completed in one sitting and you will have 50 minutes from the time you begin. Each exam can only be completed once. Exams are open books/notes but should be completed independently. **I do not allow make-ups unless we have discussed it before the day of the exam!!** Be proactive, look ahead, and communicate with me if you anticipate a problem. Send me a picture of an otter by the last day of class for 1 point of extra credit.

Academic Honesty Assignment

Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is very serious. This assignment was designed to make sure you understand when and how to give credit to your sources. It must be completed for you to pass this course!

Discussion Forums

Each week you will submit a clarification question on a topic that you struggled with from that chapter OR a question that extends the material beyond what we discussed in class. In addition to submitting your own question, you will also comment on TWO of your classmates' posts answering their questions. The lowest score will get dropped at the end of the semester (in other words, you get a "freebie" week to miss the post without it impacting your grade). See Canvas for details, examples, and rubric.

Engagement and participation

This class is partially lecture based, but we will do a lot of activities and group discussions. This means that to get the most out of the material, you must not only **attend** class... but actively **engage!** Each week (beginning week 2) you can earn up to 5 points for participation and engagement. I will post grades every week so you will know where you stand. Engagement & participation points cannot be made up. I realize that some people are shy and don't like talking in class, but engagement is part of college and real-life. If this is something you struggle with, come see me! I have lots of tips and tricks for making it a little easier to speak up. The lowest score will get dropped at the end of the semester (in other words, you get a "freebie" week to be absent/not participate without it impacting your grade). The grading system is as follows:

0 points = absent both days (including "excused absences" unless there are extenuating circumstances that we've discussed ahead of time)

1 point = absent one day, no engagement the second day

2 points = present both days, no engagement either day

3 points = present one day, engagement one day

4 points = present both days, engagement one day
5 points = present both days, engagement both days

Topic Paper

Over the course of the semester, you will write a one 5-page paper connecting something from the material with a fictional example (book, movie, show, video game, etc.) portraying adolescence in the media. For example, during the week on development, you might write about parenting style in Harry Potter characters. I created a [google sheet](#) to sign up for a topic. Papers are due on the Sunday evening of the week you choose. In other words, the week you sign up will determine the deadline. **This assignment will not appear on your Canvas calendar – it is up to you to note the deadline!!!** See Canvas for a rubric, sample papers, and additional information.

SONA Research Participation (not graded)

This semester, each student will be required to participate in either a research study or complete an alternative research article-based assignment. Your participation will occur via Holy Family University's SONA Research Participation System. SONA is an online research participation system that is used by faculty at Holy Family University to conduct research. Approximately 3 to 4 weeks into the semester each student will receive an email from the SONA coordinator that will provide your username and password. Additional information about the SONA system is also available in the SONA handout (available via Canvas).

At different points in the semester studies that you are able to participate in will become available. **It is your responsibility to check the SONA website to sign-up for studies.** On the SONA website you can view study descriptions, schedule appointments, check on previously scheduled appointments, cancel appointments, contact the researcher in charge of a study, monitor the credit you have earned, and transfer credits from one course to another. Study sign-ups will occur on a first come first served basis. That is, at various points in the semester there may not be a study currently running, a study may have completed data collection, or all of the time-slots for a given study may be filled. If there are no available time slots, it is expected that students would complete the alternative assignment via SONA.

The SONA system will close for participation on **April 18**. You are required to complete your participation by this date. **Students who do not complete one of the research requirements will receive an Incomplete until the research requirement has been fulfilled. If you do not receive a passing grade in this class, you will need to complete the research requirement again when you retake the course.** If you have any questions about the SONA system or your participation status you can email Dr. Kimberly Dash-Yee (SONA coordinator) at kdasch-yee@holyfamily.edu. More details are available on Canvas, as well as the [Holy Family University SONA website](#).

Policies & Services

General Policies

[Holy Family University's Course Catalogs and Policy Handbooks](#) | [Title IX](#)

Academic Integrity & Responsibilities

At Holy Family University, academic integrity is fundamental to our mission. It refers to students' responsibility and honesty when fulfilling their scholarly duties. Academic integrity is crucial to fostering a community of scholars built on trust, mutual respect, cooperation, and the advancement of learning. You can review the Student Code of Conduct and Procedures located in Holy Family University's Course Catalog and Policy Handbooks link located above. Violations of the University's standards in any form (including but not limited to plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Responsibility for knowing and understanding the University's position and policies on academic integrity rests with each student.

At its core, academic integrity suggests that your assignments represent your own work. You are welcome and encouraged to talk with classmates or with me about course material as you study. Any resources used to complete an assignment (e.g., journals, books, or other media), must be properly cited. Academic integrity means you will not falsify data, submit work from other courses for credit in this course (known as self-plagiarism), submit someone else's work and pass it off as your own, or misrepresent your own work in any way. AI may be used to support your work, but all writing should be solely your own. I reserve the right to refuse credit when an assignment violates the academic integrity policy,

as well as to refer any suspected violations to the University Disciplinary Committee.

Office of Accessibility Services

The Office of Accessibility Services at Holy Family University provides housing, dietary, and academic accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with documented disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have questions regarding disability services, we encourage you to call the office by calling 267-341-3388 or emailing Accessibility Services. Students must schedule a session with us before applying for services. To do this, please email [Accessibility Services](#) to let us know you are interested and the Director of Accessibility Services will follow up shortly. The prospective or current student should send this email; Its content will be secure and private. We want you to have a positive experience at Holy Family University. In case you have a concern regarding services, we encourage you to communicate with the Director of the Office of Accessibility Services to resolve the situation. If you would like to appeal a decision or have a grievance, please follow the grievance procedures policy for Non-Academic Disputes in the Holy Family Student Handbook which is available above.

Continuity of Instruction in Event of Emergency

Holy Family University offers a web-based service that uses voice messaging, text messaging, email, and RSS feeds to send important messages to the campus community. The service is subscription-based and requires Holy Family University community members to opt in. [Emergency Notification System](#) | [Emergency University Housing](#) | [Emergency Preparedness Protocols](#)

Tiger Tutoring

The Tiger Tutoring center (formerly known as the Center for Academic Enhancement; CAE) offers an array of diverse services, at no cost, designed to serve the learning needs of students at all levels of achievement. Tutors help students improve the skills they need to achieve greater academic success through encouraging students to take full advantage of the learning experience. Tutors are available as in-person and online sessions. Tiger Tutoring is in the Center for Teaching and Learning, on the 2nd floor of the Library. To schedule an appointment you can go to holyfamilly.mywconline.com, or contact the tutoring center via email (cae@holyfamilly.edu - preferred) or phone (267-341-3326).

Late Assignments

It is your responsibility to complete all work by the deadline. This includes being mindful of the time stamp: 11:59 PM means 11:59 PM - not 12:00 AM or 12:01 AM. Having computer or Internet difficulties before an assignment is due is not a valid excuse for turning in an assignment late. I understand that you are humans, and are balancing a mountain of other expectations and responsibilities, but part of that responsibility involves learning how to handle situations when they come up. If this happens, please email me BEFORE an assignment is due to request an extension - it's much easier for me to be flexible and accommodating before the deadline passes. I do not typically accept late assignments unless we've discussed them ahead of time.

Class Attendance and Lateness Policy

I take attendance in every class via a sign in sheet. You must sign in each class to earn credit for attending and you may not sign in anyone other than yourself. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time. Arriving more than 15 minutes after class begins will be marked as late; lateness is disrespectful and disruptive to me and to the class. It is your responsibility to inform me ahead of time of potential issues, to provide documentation if requested, and to get notes on missed material from your classmates. Missing class for any reason counts as an absence; I do not differentiate between excused or unexcused absences/lateness. If you know that you are likely to be repeatedly late to class, or to miss a lot of classes, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me in advance. I understand that some absences are more "legitimate" than others; however, at the end of the day, missed class is missed class. After a certain point, you'll have missed too much content to be able to master the material.... even if your reasons for being absent were legitimate.

Any student with 8 or more absences may automatically fail the course, regardless of any other work completed. Two latenesses counts as an absence - so for example if you are absent 7 times and late twice, or absent 6 times and late 4 times, that would also meet the criteria to retake the course.

Extra Credit

I may choose to offer extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. If so, they will be posted on Canvas.

Consideration, Professionalism, & Respect

You are expected to treat your fellow classmates in a professional and respectful manner. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion or point of view. It is acceptable, even encouraged, to disagree with each other or with me, but not to attack or degrade someone for their opinion or point of view. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate language, rude remarks and insulting comments, none of which will be tolerated. Students are expected to handle themselves in a professional manner at all times. If I feel that a statement made in class or on the discussion board is disrespectful and/or derogatory, you will be contacted via email and given a warning for the first offense. Subsequent disrespectful and/or derogatory comments will be subject to progressive sanctions, such as failing the given assignment. Some of the topics that we cover may be uncomfortable, or may ask you to challenge your own points of view. Others in the class may differ in religious/cultural background, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or gender expression. You may hear things you disagree with. That's ok - that's actually great! One of the goals of science is to develop and present sound arguments based on scientific reasoning and empirical evidence (and *not* personal opinion). Feel free to respectfully disagree and to argue with and challenge each other (and me!). The key word is "respectfully."

Course Schedule

The course schedule is subject to change at my discretion. If so, you will be notified by e-mail and an updated schedule will be posted on Canvas. You are expected to come to each class having read/viewed all the material for that week! **All assignments are due Sundays at 11:59 PM unless otherwise noted.** See [here](#) for the Academic Calendar.

Module	Dates	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1	Jan 16	Introduction to Course History, Areas, & Themes	Chapter 1; Post 1 Etiquette & guidelines Welcome Post
2	Jan 21/23	Psychological Research	Chapter 2; Post 2 Sign up for paper topic Academic Honesty assignment
3	Jan 28/30	Biological Psychology	Chapter 3; Post 3
	Feb 4/6	Exam 1 Review Exam 1 available 8:00 AM - 11:59 PM	
4	Feb 11/13	Learning & Behavior	Chapter 6, Post 4
5	Feb 18/20	Psychology of Gender	A child called X , NOBA chapter Growing up Trans Post 5
6	Feb 25/27	Human Development	Chapter 10, Post 6
	March 4/6	No class - Spring Break	
	March 11/13	Exam 2 Review Exam 2 available 8:00 AM - 11:59 PM	
7	March 18/20	Memory	Chapter 7; Post 7
8	March 25/27	Emotion & Motivation	Chapter 9; Post 8
9	April 1/3	Social Psychology	Chapter 12; Post 9
	April 8/10	Exam 3 Review Exam 3 available 8:00 AM - 11:59 PM	
10	April 15/17	Stress, Health, & Coping	Chapter 13; Post 10 SONA due
11	April 22/24	Psychological Disorders & Treatment	Chapter 14 & 15, Post 11
	April 29/May 1	Exam 4 Review Exam 4 available 8:00 AM - 11:59 PM	
Finals	TBD		Ending post (5/7)