

3 Ss:

Syllabus, Structure, & Support

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Outline

1. **Introduction**
2. Syllabus: What is a Student Centered Syllabus?
3. Structure: Creating structure in an unstructured time
4. Support: How do I ensure that the students are supported from the beginning?



Q&A Norms

The **chat** is open to broadcast ideas or resources to all participants

There is a moderator monitoring the **Q&A**

If you have suggestions that you want to share with the group, please send them to Q&A. We will pause during the presentation to include your suggestions.

We are collecting resources to share (e.g., learning objectives, syllabus text passages, assignment descriptions) at the end of the conference



Assumptions about student learning

- For students to acquire knowledge, they need to be **actively engaged**
 - Entertaining lectures or curated videos are not enough
 - Students need **active study time on task**
- Students struggle to know what information to study / how to study
 - The time on task needs to be **structured**
- There is a lot of **competition** for student's time
 - Assignments need to be **required and graded** to ensure that they are prioritized

Psychologists using psychological principles to teach psychology



Realities about remote instruction

- For many of us, this will be an adventure in ‘rapid prototyping’
 - We will anticipate what we can ... and adjust if we need to
- In addition to delivering content, we need to build **trust** and **rapport**
 - Students can trust us to deliver these courses
 - Students can trust us to assess their learning fairly
 - Students can trust us to err on the side of compassion
- Students might struggle to persist in remote instruction
 - Remind them of their educational goals
 - Provide multiple ways to learn and demonstrate learning



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Student Centered Syllabus

Essential Components

- Learning objectives - **what** will the students learn?
- Assignment descriptions - **how** will the students demonstrate their learning?
- Schedule - **when** will the class meet and the assignments be due?

Tone

- inclusive, clear, trust building, passionate, excited...



INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2020 | PSYC 001



[https://ucr.zoom.us/
my/annieditta](https://ucr.zoom.us/my/annieditta)



TuTh
9:30-10:50am



Annie S. Ditta, Ph.D.



annied@ucr.edu



Student Meeting Hour:
Weds. 10-11am

WHAT IS THIS CLASS?

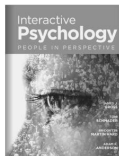
An introduction to psychology as an experimental science. Emphasizes topics in cognitive (including learning, memory, sensation, perception), comparative, and physiological psychology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to...

- ✓ Understand that psychology is a science.
- ✓ Recognize how psychology impacts everyday life.
- ✓ Discuss the fundamental elements of research design.
- ✓ Develop critical thinking skills with regard to understanding research.
- ✓ Know the basic history of psychology and how history informs current study.
- ✓ Recognize how psychology applies to your future career.

REQUIRED MATERIALS



Interactive Psychology: People in Perspective
Gross, Schmader, Hard, & Anderson

ISBN: 978-0-393-42831-5



Includes:

InQuizitive for Interactive Psychology

Course syllabus subject to change; please check Canvas to make sure you have the most updated version

Version	Date	Changes
2.0	8/13/20	Exam details updated; Mohan's OH fixed; E/C corrected
1.0	8/3/20	Initial release



Learning objectives/outcomes

Learning: change in knowledge due to experience



Learning objectives/outcomes

Focus on specific,
well-defined goals.

Student-centered: not about what
the professor will do or what the
class as a whole will accomplish.

Learning objective: clear statement of what the learner should be
able to do by the end of the course/unit

Outcomes should be measurable actions
that indicate mastery.
Good verbs: differentiate, explain, assess
Avoid: understand, believe, know

Should be attainable within
the scope of the course and
supported by instruction.



Learning objectives/outcomes

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Recognize, explain, and make connections in cognitive psychology;
- Assess the tools that cognitive psychologists use;
- Explain the methods (what did they do?), results, and conclusions (what does this tell us about how the mind works) in cognitive psychology;
- Evaluate the empirical evidence for claims about cognitive processes;
- Apply theories and findings to real-world situations.

Unit Learning Objectives

Week 8: Language

8.1 Use evidence to explain how the human mind achieves constant audio stream, including detecting phonemes and

8.2 Describe how experience affects the mental lexicon, in vocabulary development.

8.3 Differentiate between syntax and semantics, including studies, and explain how we use multiple sources of information.

8.4 Analyze evidence regarding linguistic relativity, and how it relates to the weak-Whorfianism.

8.5 Demonstrate how principles of language processing apply to real-world situations.

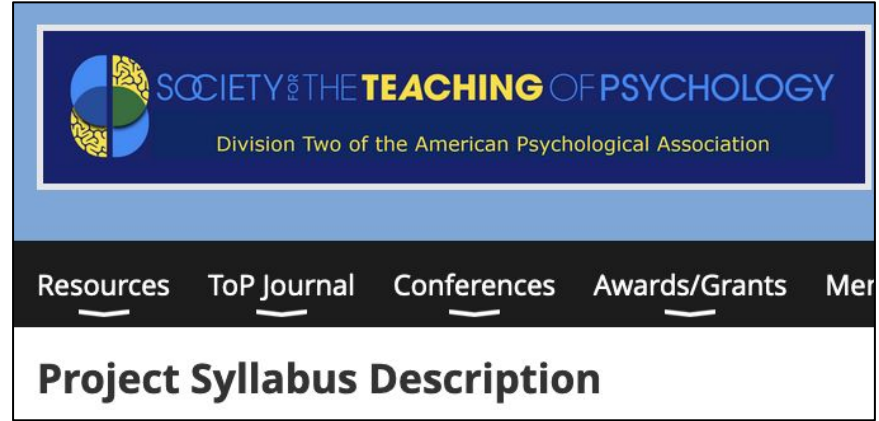


Project Syllabus

You don't have to start from a blank page

Project Syllabus is a psychology syllabus library

<http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php>



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2. Syllabus: What is a Student Centered Syllabus? ✓
3. **Structure: Creating structure in an unstructured time**
 - **Schedule**
 - **Assignments**
 - **Academic Honesty**
 - **Grading Flexibility**
4. Support: How do I ensure that the students are supported from the beginning?



Schedule

- Contact hours (3 hours effort per unit per week)
- Embrace your **scheduled class time**
 - Clearly communicate about any (optional or required) synchronous events
 - Ensure that students will be able to take exams during scheduled class time and scheduled final exam time
- Embrace a **consistent** and **predictable** weekly schedule.
 - Choose a due time and be consistent
 - 11:59pm was chosen by IT programmers, not instructors
 - Choose a time when technical support and office hours are available?
- Minimize procrastination but allow for flexibility



Assignments and Exams

- Reduce reliance on high stakes exams
 - Multiple smaller assignments (frequent feedback on low-stakes assessments)
- Transparency about expectations
 - Students need clarity on how their work will be evaluated
- Maintain academic honesty
 - Embrace open-book + open-notes (not open-people)
 - Ensuring that the questions are not “CTRL+F able”
 - Online proctoring is not a viable solution for many situations

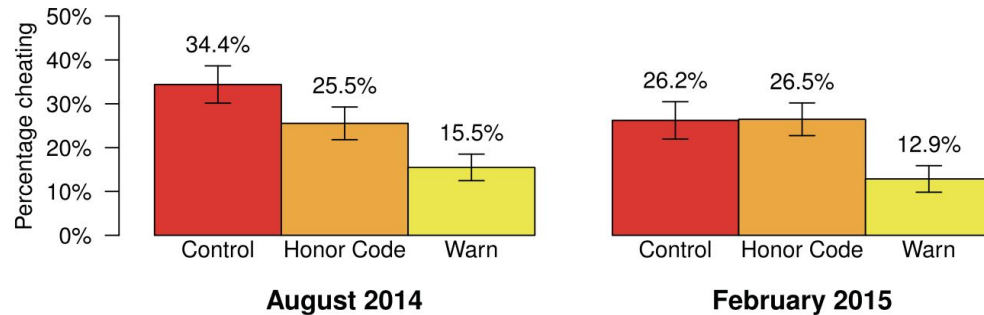


Academic Honesty

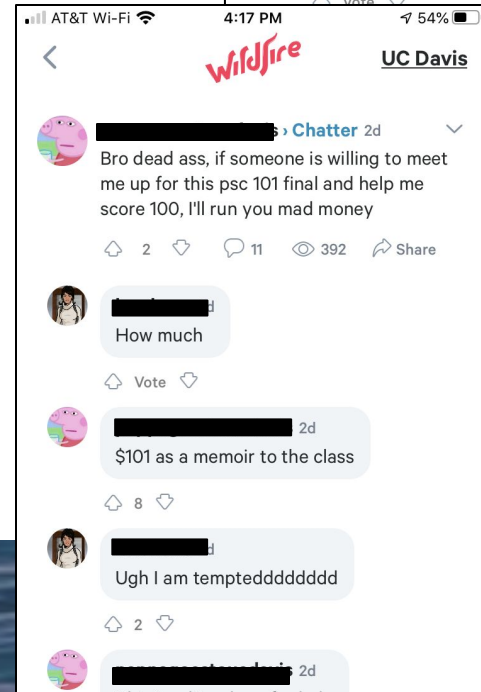
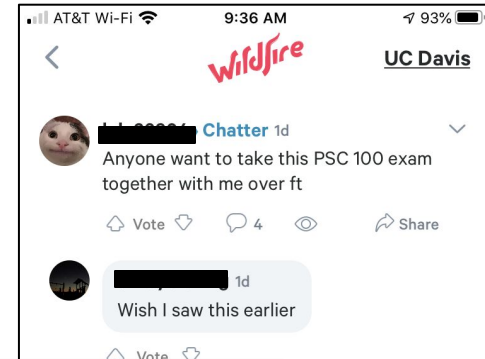
Corrigan-Gibbs et al. (2015):

How to encourage honesty before an exam?

Reminding students of consequences of cheating more effective than affirming the honor code.



of visiting other websites or taking help from other people during the exam.



Grading Flexibility

- Empower students to cope with adversity
 - Students need to have enough control over their work and their grade to make decisions and adjust if their priorities shift
- Empower students to embrace the struggle of learning
 - They can make mistakes on formative assessments without hurting their grade
- Avoid needing to make individual exceptions
- Ensure that students are being graded on all (most) of the material
- Communicate the accommodations you have already made



Examples of flexibility in grading structures

- Drop the lowest
 - There are more assignments/exams available than students need to complete

Considerations

- Easy to do in most LMS
- Familiar to many students
- Be careful to assess on all material
- Doesn't reward consistent performance

- Emergency button
 - Guaranteed extension on one assignment

Considerations

- Empowered decision making
- Have plan for tracking



Examples of flexibility in grading structures

- Choose your own adventure
 - There are more points available in the formative assignments than students can use
- Improvement boost
 - Reward improvement

Considerations

- Shifts grading mentality (earning points not losing points)
- Opportunity for self-motivated engagement

Considerations

- Maintains student engagement
- Will they 'game the system'?



Q&A

Are there comments or suggestions?

How do you **create structure** in unstructured times?



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4. **Support: How do I ensure that the students are supported from the beginning?**
 - **Crisis management**
 - **Study skills**
 - **Time management**



Crisis Management Strategies

- Know your campus resources for distressed and distressing students and be ready to provide them or contact them
 - Basic Needs
 - Counseling and Psychological Services
 - CARE advocates
- Avoid engaging in a dual relationship
 - As an instructor, your job is to deliver a course and assess student learning
 - Maintain focus on the instructor-student relationship



Study Skills

- Provide resources
 - e.g., Learning Scientists
- Direct instruction about effective learning
 - Work into first week of instruction (e.g., review papers)
 - Reflection activity

Meaningful learning requires active, effortful processing.



Effective study strategies require active, effortful processing, NOT verbatim repetition or shallow processing.



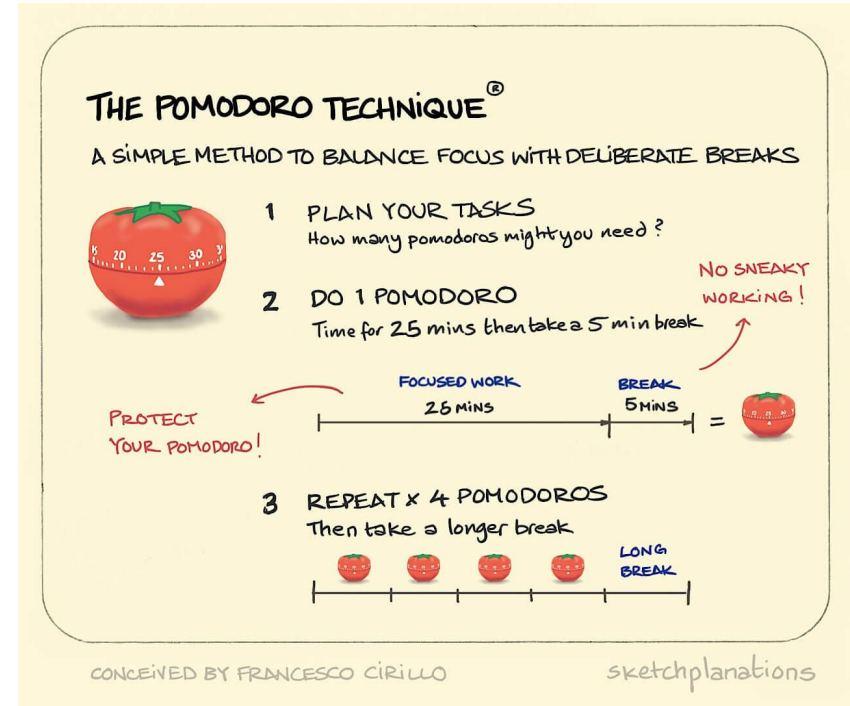
Examples of effective study strategies:

- Self-explanation
- Self-testing
- Explaining to others
- Concept mapping



Time Management

- Explicitly help your students to create a plan to manage their time
 - Point out that engaged studying is hard and tiring work
 - Set realistic expectations of attention span
- Nudge better decisions



Nudge students to make better decisions

- What are the barriers to student engagement?
 - They value their education, so what prevents good study habits?
- Gerald and Brady (2019)
 - What if a barrier is inertia / rash / lazy decisions?
 - Issue: 51% attendance
 - Research question: Is low attendance due to rash decisions?

“I held the discussion section synchronously, but made attendance optional. I recorded it for students who couldn’t attend. By the second week, no students attended. It wasn’t really a discussion section, was it?”

-UC Prof



Nudge students to make better decisions

Got an upfront commitment from students about their participation in this class

- Had students **choose** from two attendance policies:
 - “Optional attendance” reward for consistent attendance (+2%)
 - “Mandatory attendance” reward for consistent attendance (+3%) but penalty for frequent absences (-1.5%)
- Explained the **reasoning**:
 - Cognition: You will learn this material better (and earn a higher grade) if you **engage consistently**
 - Behavioral economics: Humans intend to make good decisions but are struck by emotional thought processes or **inertia** in the moment and act against their own best interest
- **Commitment** for the semester

Gerald and Brady (2019)



Nudge students to make better decisions

Results

- 85% of students selected the mandatory attendance policy
- Attendance improved
- No difference in course grades
- Student attitude
 - 95% said they were satisfied with their choice
 - 86% liked having a choice

“I went to class more than I would have and being in class helped me understand the material”

Policy	Attendance Rate
Previous Term	51%
Optional	71%
Mandatory	92%

Limitations

- Self-selection into mandatory or optional group

Gerald and Brady (2019)



How can we nudge student decisions in remote + 2020?

Giving students a choice between grading criteria allows students who anticipate interruptions to have more control over their grade

Explanation + committing to a choice might reduce rash decisions

Decide your target engagement

- Live lecture attendance
- Engagement with recorded content

Consider adding flexibility

- Opt-in topic-by-topic?
- Student self-evaluation of their weekly engagement
(see details from Albada)



Q&A

Are there comments or suggestions?

How do you **ensure that students are supported from the beginning?**



Takeaways

- Framing your learning objectives will clarify your instructional goals
- Incorporate multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning
- Find a balance between flexibility and accountability
- Students will appreciate advice on how to learn
- We are in this together - faculty are the link between students and campus support



Resources and References

Project Syllabus <http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php>

Burdina, M., & Sasser, S. L. (2018). [Syllabus and economics: Reasoning with Generation “Why”](#). *The Journal of Economic Education* 49:1, pages 38-45.

Gerald, J., & Brady, B. (2019). Time to Make Your Mandatory-Attendance Policy Optional? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Slattery, J. M., & Carlson, J. F. (2005). Preparing An Effective Syllabus: Current Best Practices, *College Teaching*, 53:4, 159-164, DOI: [10.3200/CTCH.53.4.159-164](https://doi.org/10.3200/CTCH.53.4.159-164)



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Piazza Poster/Video Session

You should have received an email invitation to join our Piazza page! We encourage you to view the posters/video during the break and write follow up questions.

The screenshot displays the Piazza website interface for the UCPSYCHConference. The top navigation bar includes links for LIVE Q&A, Drafts, posters, and videos. Below this, there are tabs for Unread, Updated, Unresolved, and Following. A search bar is present with the text "Search or add a post...".

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column lists several posters and videos, each with a title, a brief description, and a time. The right column shows the abstract of a selected poster, titled "Abstract: With online instruction, student engagement is even more of a challenge. Students feel disconnected from their peers, instructors, and mate watching pre-recorded lectures. In addition, quizzes and exams are difficult to equitably administer remotely. That is why projects might be a assessment, especially ones that promotes turning course concepts and theories into tangible practice and learning. As an example of this, developed for my summer course on The Science of Mindfulness, as well as ideas and suggestions for similar adaptations."

Below the abstract, there is a section for "followup discussions" with a "Start a new followup discussion" button. The discussion area includes a rich text editor with various formatting options (bold, italic, underline, link, etc.) and a "Report" button.

The bottom of the interface shows a "post" button and a "preview" button.

