

PSY 359: Foundations of Cyberpsychology

PSY 359, Sections 001 & HM1
Foundations of Cyberpsychology
3 credits, Fall 2024

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I. Course Description

PSY 359: Cyberpsychology is an introduction to the study of the effects of the Internet and cyberspace on the psychology of individuals and groups. Some topics covered include online identity, online relationships, personality types in cyberspace, transference to computers, addiction to computers and the Internet, regressive behavior in cyberspace, and online gender-switching. This course is conducted entirely online. The class is asynchronous, which means there are no specific hours or set times that we meet; rather, the work and lecture materials will be distributed in an organized manner and are to be completed by the listed deadlines.

II. Learning Outcomes

- Apply psychological theories and perspectives to research and analyze the ways in which we, as individuals and in groups, use contemporary internet-based information and communication technologies.
- Use social science to describe and convey the numerous ways in which online environments affect, guide, and shape human behavior.
- Display a satisfactory undergraduate-level understanding and awareness of key cyberpsychology introductory terms, ideas, and theories.
- Understand how statistical data can relate to and provide empirical evidence for making claims about the relationship between cyberpsychology and human behavior.
- Be able to think critically about issues in the field of cyberpsychology, contextualizing them in terms of existing psychology theory.

III. Textbook & Readings

There is one required textbook for this course:

- *The Psychology of the Internet*, 2nd Edition. Patricia Wallace. 2016. Cambridge University Press.

The textbook is available for purchase through the NJIT bookstore, although you are welcome to purchase copies of the text (whether new or used) from third party sellers (e.g., Amazon). **All readings are required and should be completed in tandem with lecture for which they are assigned.** Readings are meant to supplement class lectures and discussions. Thus, while I may not directly engage every concept covered in the readings, it is my expectation that you have completed the reading for every lecture.

IV. Attendance

The information presented in class is important and unique to each course session. Attendance and final grade are highly correlated; thus, students who attend class and are active in the class tend to do very well, while students who miss class tend to do

worse (especially as the total number of classes missed increases). Hence, students must be present at all classes. All excused absences must be validated by submitting a [Request for Absence Verification form](#), which is administered by the Office of the Dean of Students. After three unexcused absences, a student may receive a failing grade in the course.

V. Assessment

You will be assessed regularly throughout the semester using assignments (15%), short papers (20%), exams (30%) and a final exam at the end of the term (35%). The submission deadlines for assignments are listed on the Canvas course site and should be observed strictly. It is important that you stay on top of the assigned work and that you plan ahead.

Assignments (15%)

A range of assignments will be used to evaluate and assess your learning and understanding of course materials throughout the semester. The assignment criteria will be provided in advance via the Canvas course page. *In total, assignments will comprise 15% of your final grade in the course.*

Short Papers (20%)

You are required to write two short papers for this course. Papers should be at least 500 words in length, not including titles, headers, identifying information etc. Papers are graded using a rubric that will be provided alongside the short paper prompts. Papers that are not submitted will receive a “0.” *In total, your short paper submissions will comprise 20% of your final grade in the class.*

Presentation & In-Class Activity – Honors Students (HM1) Only

Each student enrolled in the honors section (i.e., HM1) of the course will prepare a presentation and an in-class activity related to one of the topics we will cover during the second half of the semester.

Exams (30%)

There will be three exams throughout the semester (in addition to the final exam). Exams will evaluate your understanding of course materials. Exams, although open-note and open-book, will be timed, so it is essential that you study and prepare in advance of attempting them. Exam attempts MAY NOT BE SUBMITTED LATE without PRIOR instructor approval. *In total, exams will comprise 30% of your final grade in the class.*

Final Exam (35%)

A final assessment in the form of a final exam will be used to evaluate your understanding of course materials at the conclusion of the course. *In total, the final exam will comprise 35% of your final grade in the course.*

VI. Assignment Deadlines

Regarding assignment deadlines: it will be common for me to indicate that a given assignment or quiz is “due by the end of the day” and/or “due by the end of the week.” For the purposes of this class, “end of the day” is 11:59 PM on the day being referenced (thus, “end of the day on Friday” means “by 11:59 PM on Friday”) and “end of the week” refers to Sunday for the week being referenced (for example, “end of Week #2” means “by Sunday, September 15”).

All deadlines are given in Eastern Time (five hours behind Coordinated Universal Time when in standard time, and four hours behind when observing daylight saving time). Thus, if you are traveling, it is up to you to ensure that you submit assignments on time (this may be especially germane for those of you who have out-of-town engagements, athletics, etc. planned throughout the semester).

VII. Grading Scale

The grade you receive in this course will be based on a tally of your scores on all assignments, quizzes, exams, etc. throughout the term. Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale:

Percent	Letter Grade
> 89.5	A
89.4 – 86.5	B+
86.4 – 79.5	B
79.4 – 75.5	C+
75.4 – 65.5	C
65.4 – 55.5	D
< 55.4	F

NOTE: As a general rule, I do not give extra credit. Nor do I respond to emails or questions that ask, “Is there anything I can do to get an A or to bump up my grade a few extra points?” Please do not send me emails of this nature, as I will not respond to them.

VIII. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Unless otherwise specified, students are expected to work without artificial intelligence (AI) assistance in order to better develop their skills in this content area. As such, AI usage is not permitted throughout this course under any circumstance unless specifically noted by the professor and stated within assignment instructions.

IX. Email Policy & Communication with Instructor

I will respond to emails as quickly as possible (usually no later than the next business day), but it's important that you understand my email policy so that you know when you can reasonably anticipate a reply. During non-holiday weekdays (Monday-Friday), it is my policy to check email at least twice daily: once in the morning/early afternoon (usually by or before 1:00 PM) and once in the late afternoon or early evening (usually by or before 6:00 PM). Thus, it may take several hours for me to reply to your email, depending on when you send it. *Please allow 24 hours before sending a second email regarding the same topic.*

If sending emails in the evening or during the late night: I *CANNOT* guarantee you a response before the next business day. Furthermore, you should *NOT* expect a response to emails sent over the weekend (from Friday evening through Sunday) until the following business day (usually Monday, unless Monday is a holiday). Thus, it will be unequivocally to your benefit to plan ahead and work accordingly!

X. Office Hours

I will hold office hours weekly on Thursdays from 1:00 until 3:00 PM or by appointment. My office location is 208E Cullimore Hall (i.e., inside the Office of the Dean of the College of Science & Liberal Arts).

XI. Fall 2024 Semester Schedule

WEEK	DATE	DAY	TOPIC
1	September 3	Tuesday	Course Introduction
	September 6	Friday	Course Introduction (continued)
2	September 10	Tuesday	The Internet in a Psychological Context
	September 13	Friday	The Psychology of Impression Formation
3	September 17	Tuesday	The Psychology of Impression Formation (continued)
	September 20	Friday	Group Dynamics on the Internet
4	September 24	Tuesday	Group Dynamics on the Internet (continued)
	September 27	Friday	The Psychology of Online Aggression
5	October 1	Tuesday	The Psychology of Online Aggression (continued)
	October 4	Friday	Exam #1 Review (via Canvas; no class meeting)
6	October 8	Tuesday	Exam #1
	October 11	Friday	The Psychology of Interpersonal Interaction
7	October 15	Tuesday	The Psychology of Interpersonal Interaction (continued)
	October 18	Friday	The Psychology of Prosocial Behavior (via Canvas; no class meeting)
8	October 22	Tuesday	The Psychology of Online Gaming
	October 25	Friday	The Psychology of Online Gaming (via Canvas; no class meeting)
9	October 29	Tuesday	Child Development and the Internet
	November 1	Friday	Child Development and the Internet (continued)
10	November 5	Tuesday	Exam #2 Review (in class; attendance is optional)
	November 8	Friday	Exam #2
11	November 12	Tuesday	Gender Issues and Sexuality on the Internet
	November 15	Friday	Gender Issues and Sexuality on the Internet (continued)
12	November 19	Tuesday	The Psychology of Online Privacy
	November 22	Friday	The Psychology of Online Privacy (continued)
13	November 26	Tuesday	Thanksgiving Recess (i.e., no class)
	November 29	Friday	
14	December 3	Tuesday	The Internet as a Time Suck
	December 6	Friday	Living Online – Course Conclusions; Exam #3 Review
15	December 10	Tuesday	Exam #3
	December 13	Friday	Reading Day #2 (i.e., no class)
16	December 16	Monday	Fall 2024 Final Exams Begin
	December 21	Saturday	Fall 2024 Final Exams End

XII. Boilerplate Provisions

[University Code on Academic Integrity](#)

The essential quality of this Policy is that each student shall demonstrate honesty and integrity in the completion of all assignments and in the participation of the learning process. Adherence to the University policy on Academic Integrity promotes the level of integrity required within the university and professional communities and assures students that their work is being judged fairly with the work of others. This Policy defines those behaviors which violate the principles of academic integrity, describes a range of appropriate sanctions for offenses, and identifies a method for promoting the principle of academic integrity on campus.

[Accessibility Resources & Service Accommodations](#)

The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services works in partnership with administrators, faculty and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and support services for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and visiting students with disabilities who have provided our office with medical documentation to receive services. We strive to promote an inclusive environment that encompasses advocacy and access to all campus resources.

Flexible Syllabus

This course syllabus is an orderly arranged procedure for structuring the learning process. However, it is open for alteration or change by mutual understanding and agreement, so long as the change is consistent with the stated course goals or objectives.

Helpful Links

[Office of Academic Advising \(OAA\)](#)

The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) was established in order to assist in the advisement of students who are undecided in their major, transitioning into another major at NJIT, and those students who need additional support to graduate successfully and in a timely manner. OAA is a place where students will get intentional and intrusive advising, by a supportive academic advisor that will enable them to grow developmentally and give them the motivation they need to complete their degree.

[The Writing Center](#)

The Writing Center, located on the ground floor of CKB, is a free resource which offers on-site tutoring. We provide one-on-one and group tutoring sessions to students from all disciplines, during the fall and spring semesters. During Center hours, tutors are available to work with students on any aspect of their writing, from generating ideas and developing arguments, to working through drafts to their completion and revising effectively.