



Introduction to Psychology

Fall 2025 PSY 210: 019

T & Th 8:30am-9:50am | Room: CKB223

Delivery Mode: Face-to-Face

Instructor: J. Victoria Laszlo, LCSW, LCADC

Email: JL2566@njit.edu

(Please use your NJIT email account and allow 24–48 hours for a response

I do not answer emails on weekends & late evenings - maybe)

Office Hours: ½ hour before each class or by appointment on Thursdays after class

(Zoom available by request)

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Description

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. This course provides an overview of the major psychological theories, concepts, and research methods, with applications to everyday life. Topics include biological bases of behavior, perception, cognition, learning, memory, lifespan development, personality, social behavior, psychological disorders, and approaches to therapy.

Course Goals

- Understand and compare major psychological theories and perspectives.
- Apply psychological concepts to real-life situations.
- Develop critical thinking skills for evaluating psychological research.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the scientific method and ethical considerations in psychology.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain and compare major theoretical perspectives.
- Identify key concepts and empirical findings in core areas of psychology.
- Distinguish between scientific and non-scientific approaches to understanding behavior.
- Apply psychological principles to personal, social, and professional contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, research methods, core empirical findings, and historic trends in psychology.
- Explain (including advantages and disadvantages) and compare major theoretical perspectives of psychology (e.g., behavioral, biological, cognitive, evolutionary, humanistic, psychodynamic and socio-cultural);

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following nine general domains: (1) biological bases of behavior and mental processes, (2) sensation and perception, (3) learning and memory (4) cognition, consciousness, (5) individual differences, psychometrics/measurement, personality, (6) social processes (including those related to socio-cultural and international dimensions), (7) developmental changes in behavior and mental processes that occur across the lifespan, (8) psychological disorders, and (9) emotion and motivation;
- Describe and demonstrate an understanding of applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling, forensic, community, organizational, school, health);
- Draw the distinction between scientific and non-scientific methods of understanding and analysis.
- Recognize and understand the impact of diversity on psychological research, theory and application, including (but not limited to): age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-economic status, disability, and sexual orientation.
- Understand and apply psychological principles to personal experience and social and organizational settings.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills and information competence as applied to psychological topics.

Required Materials :

Textbook:

Great news: your textbook for this class is available for **free** online!

[Psychology 2e from OpenStax](#), ISBN 978-1-975076-45-0

You have several options to obtain this book:

- [View online](#) (Links to an external site.)
- [Download a PDF](#) (Links to an external site.)

You can use whichever formats you want. Web view is recommended -- the responsive design works seamlessly on any device.

Technology:

Reliable internet access & Canvas account for assignments and exams. Please make sure that you can log in and access the site (<https://njit.instructure.com/>).

Course Format & Teaching Approach

This course is student-centered with an emphasis on active learning. Expect a mix of:

- Short lectures for core concepts
- Small group discussions
- Case studies and real-world applications
- Interactive activities and self-reflection
- Multimedia (videos, podcasts)
- Experiential exercises

How to Succeed in this Course

1. **Show up and be present.**
Your engagement is the #1 predictor of success — both in class and in life.
2. **Read smart, not just more.**
Focus on key concepts, big ideas, and patterns — don't get lost memorizing every detail.
3. **Start early, learn in chunks.**
Spreading study time over the week beats cramming every time.
4. **Use the 25/5 Method.**
Study for 25 minutes, take a 5-minute break — your brain needs recovery time to absorb.
5. **Create your own study guides.**
Summarize, make mind maps, or quiz yourself — teaching the material to yourself is gold.
6. **Connect it to your world.**
Find examples in your own life — when it's personal, you'll remember it.
7. **Think like a teacher.**
Explain a concept out loud as if you're teaching it to a friend (or even your pet).
8. **Ask questions.**
Curiosity drives learning. If something's unclear, chances are others are wondering too.
9. **Focus on the "why."**
Ask: What's the question? What's the evidence? What's the takeaway?
10. **Use visual tools.**
Concept maps, diagrams, and flowcharts help your brain see the big picture.
11. **Speak up if you're stuck.**
Don't wait until the end of the semester — email me or drop by early so we can strategize together.

💡 *This class is about more than memorizing facts — it's about training your mind to think critically, see connections, and apply psychology in the real world.*

Assessments & Grading

Exam I – 20%

Exam II – 20%

Exam III – 20%

Presentation Project – 10% [5-7 min presentation on topic you researched + 1 page handout]

Group Exercises/Debates – 10% [3 throughout semester]

Attendance & Participation – 20%

Grading Scale:

A = 90%+ | B+ = 85–89% | B = 80–84% | C+ = 75–79% | C = 70–74% | D = 60–69% | F < 60%

Course Requirements

- Participation: Required for in-class group work and discussions
- Exams: Three non-cumulative exams [20 MC questions & 5 short answer] (closed-book, in-person)
- Project: Independent topic exploration with in-class presentation [see topics at end of syllabus]

Typical Course Outline (subject to change as required to cover class material appropriately)

Course Schedule

Assignments Due

week 1

2-Sep Course orientation, syllabus review,
4-Sep * Chpt 1: Intro to Psychology

*read syllabus
*read chpt 1

week 2

9-Sep Chpt 2: Psych Research
11-Sep Chpt 2 ctd

*read chpt 2

week 3

16-Sep Chpt 3: Biopsychology
18-Sep Chpt 3 ctd

*read chpt 3

week 4

23-Sep Chpt 4: States of Consciousness
25-Sep Chpt 4 ctd

*read chpt 4

week 5

30-Sep Chpt 5: Sensation & Perception
2-Oct Wellness Day – NO Class

*read chpt 5

week 6

7-Oct Chpt 5 ctd
9-Oct Exam Chpts 1-5

study for exam

week 7

14-Oct Chpt 6: Learning
16-Oct Chpt 7: Thinking & Intelligence

*read chpt 6
*read chpt 7

week 8

21-Oct Chpt 8: Memory
23-Oct Chpt 8 ctd

week 9

28-Oct Chpt 9: Lifespan Development
30-Oct chpt 9 ctd

read chpt 9

week 10

4-Nov Chpt 10 Emotion & Motivation
6-Nov Chpt 10 ctd

read chpt 10

week 11

11-Nov Chpt 11 Personality
13-Nov Chpt 11 ctd

Read chpt 11

week 12

18-Nov	Exam Chpt 6-11	study
20-Nov	Chpt12 Social Psychology	read chpt 12
week 13		
25-Nov	Chpt 13 Industrial organizational Psych Chpt 14 Stress, Lifestyle& Health	read chpt 13
27-Nov		read chpt 14
week 14		
2-Dec	Chpt 15 Psychological Disorders	read chpt 15
4-Dec	Chpt 15 ctd	
week 15		
9-Dec	Chpt 16 Therapy & Treatment	read chpt 16
11-Dec	Last class - chpt 16ctd	
week 16		
	exam Chpts 12-16 Final Exam Week – As scheduled by NJIT Registrar	study

Policies

- Attendance: Required; excused absences require documentation
- Late Work: Not accepted without prior arrangement
- Academic Integrity: NJIT's Academic Integrity Code applies
Academic Integrity: The Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity policy can be found [here](#). Additional guidance on academic integrity can be found in this [Best Practices document](#). Please note that the academic integrity policy includes direct guidance on the [responsible use of AI](#). Furthermore, any actual or alleged violation of the University Policy on Academic Integrity should be formally processed through the Office of the Dean of Students. Faculty and instructional staff should be proactive in upholding academic integrity, but should not handle violations on their own. All syllabi must contain the following statement on academic integrity:
“Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the code of Academic Integrity policy that is found at: [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).”
Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Office of the Dean of Students. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at dos@njit.edu.”
- AI Tools Policy: Brainstorming allowed; generated work must be cited; course is structured in such a way as to avoid papers where AI is even needed
Generative AI: As we continue to navigate the evolving landscape of AI in education, all instructors are now required to include a statement in their course syllabi regarding the use of generative AI tools by students. It is essential that faculty clearly articulate their individual stance on whether and how these tools may be used within their courses. NJIT maintains the position that instructors have the discretion to set their own preferences, including whether generative AI is permitted at all, under what conditions it may be used, and for which specific assignments it is permissible or not. This measure is intended to ensure transparency and consistency in our academic expectations for students, while also empowering faculty to maintain the integrity of their courses in alignment with their educational objectives.

Instructors are encouraged to review the AI Guidelines for Instructors, which includes some starting points for [sample syllabus](#) language to be customized, as drafted by the [AI Teaching and Learning Working Group](#). In addition, NJIT has adopted the student guide, "[AI-U](#)" (updated for 2025) created by Elon University and the AAC&U. More information about this guide is also available on the [AI Teaching and Learning Working Group website](#). You are encouraged to share a link to this guide with your students either in Canvas or the course syllabus.

Late Work & Missed Exams

Life happens—if you anticipate a conflict with a due date, contact me as early as possible.

- Late assignments may incur a grade penalty unless arrangements are made in advance.
- Missed exams can only be made up with documentation of an emergency or prior approval.
- Consistent participation is key to mastering the material.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations must contact the NJIT Office of Accessibility Resources and Services as early as possible.

Academic Resources

NJIT offers many resources to help you succeed:

- **Learning and Writing Centers**: Tutoring for course content and writing skills.
- **Van Houten Library**: Research databases, books, and study spaces.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)**: Confidential mental health support.
- **Disability Support Services (DSS)**: Academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities.
- **IT Service Desk**: Help with Canvas, email, and tech issues.

Take advantage of these supports early—they're here for you.

How this Course Will Help You

Psychology is more than a subject—it's a lens for understanding yourself, others, and the world around you.

This course will help you:

- Recognize the psychological forces shaping daily life.
- Develop critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning.
- Apply psychological principles to improve communication, relationships, and well-being.
- Build skills useful across careers—from technology to healthcare to business.

By the end, you'll not only know the 'what' of psychology, but also the 'why' and 'how' that make it relevant.

Presentation Project – 5–7 Minute

Your Mission:

Choose **one topic** from the list below (organized by textbook chapters) or suggest your own, with my approval. Your job is to **teach us something fascinating** about psychology in a way that **anyone**—even someone who’s not into tech or psychology—can understand, enjoy, and remember.

Presentation Requirements

- **Length:** 5–7 minutes (practice to make sure you stay within time)
- **Slides:** 5–10 slides (PowerPoint, Google Slides, or similar)
- **Handout:** 1 page (maximum) with key points, examples, and resources
- **Audience Level:** Imagine you’re explaining this to an average person—no jargon, no complicated formulas without explanation.
- **Goal:** Spark curiosity and help us see why your topic matters in everyday life.
- **Engagement:** Use stories, real-world examples, visuals, or short demos.
- **Sources:** Use at least 2 credible sources (cite them at the end of your slides and on your handout).

Presentation Topics by Chapter

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Psychology

1. Humans + AI: Friend or Foe? – How understanding the way we think can make AI tools easier (and safer) to use.
2. Your Space, Your Mood – How your room, workspace, or campus design can boost (or kill) your motivation and focus.
3. Why We Do Weird Things – How psychology explains everyday habits, quirks, and decisions.

Chapter 2 – Psychological Research

1. Testing New Tech – How scientists measure whether new devices or apps actually help us—or distract us.
2. Does This Ad Work? – How companies test commercials, product designs, and even TikTok trends to win you over.
3. The Great Campus Sleep Experiment – Design a study to see how sleep (or lack of it) affects grades, focus, and mood.

Chapter 3 – Biopsychology

1. Mind Meets Machine – The science behind controlling devices with your brain.
2. Design for the Senses – How knowing how the brain processes sight, sound, and smell can improve product design.
3. Music and Your Brain – Why different songs can pump you up, calm you down, or make you emotional.

Chapter 4 – States of Consciousness

1. Screens vs. Sleep – How your phone or laptop might be messing with your body clock.
2. Work Smarter, Not Sleepier – How lighting, sound, and schedules can keep people alert.
3. Dreaming on Purpose – Can learning to control your dreams boost creativity?

Chapter 5 – Sensation and Perception

1. VR: Fooling the Brain – How virtual reality tricks your senses.
 2. Shops That Mess with Your Mind – How stores use lighting, music, and scent to get you to buy more.
 3. Optical Illusions – Why your brain “sees” things that aren’t really there.
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Chapter 6 – Learning

1. Leveling Up in Real Life – How game design tricks can make learning fun and addictive.
 2. Why You Love Certain Brands – How advertisers link emotions to products.
 3. Breaking Bad Habits – Using psychology to finally stop biting your nails, scrolling too much, or hitting snooze.
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Chapter 7 – Thinking and Intelligence

1. Humans vs. AI – Who wins at solving tricky problems?
 2. Creative Thinking – How inventors and designers come up with world-changing ideas.
 3. Brain Games – Do puzzles really make you smarter?
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Chapter 8 – Memory

1. Password Problems – Why we forget them and how to make them stick.
 2. Ad Recall – Why some slogans or jingles never leave your head.
 3. Study Hacks That Actually Work – Science-backed ways to remember more in less time.
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Chapter 9 – Lifespan Development

1. Tech and Kids – How screens affect learning and development.
 2. Design for Everyone – How to make products and spaces work for both kids and grandparents.
 3. College Life = Life Upgrade? – How these years shape your identity and independence.
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Chapter 10 – Emotion and Motivation

1. Wearables That Read Your Mood – How devices track stress, happiness, and focus.
 2. Workspaces That Motivate – How room design can make teams work better.
 3. The Science of Happiness – What really boosts your mood long-term.
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Chapter 11 – Personality

1. Does AI Have a Personality? – How computers can mimic human traits.
 2. Brand Personalities – How companies create an “identity” to connect with customers.
 3. Personality Tests – Which ones are science and which are just fun?
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Chapter 12 – Social Psychology

1. Why People Act Differently Online – The psychology of internet behavior.
 2. Persuasion Tricks in Marketing – How advertisers get you to say “yes.”
 3. Helping (or Not) on Campus – What makes someone step in during an emergency?
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Chapter 13 – Industrial-Organizational Psychology

1. Robots at Work – How automation changes jobs and workers.
 2. Productivity by Design – Office setups that make people more creative and focused.
 3. Loving Your Job – What makes work satisfying for young professionals.
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Chapter 14 – Stress, Lifestyle, and Health

1. Burnout in Tech Careers – Why it happens and how to prevent it.
2. Wellness at Work – How companies try to keep employees healthy.
3. Stress Relief That Works – Science-backed ways to chill out.

Chapter 15 – Psychological Disorders

1. Mental Health Apps – Do they actually help?
2. Work and Mental Health – How to make jobs supportive instead of stressful.
3. College Mental Health Crisis – Why so many students are struggling and what can help.

Chapter 16 – Therapy and Treatment

1. Virtual Reality Therapy – How VR is helping people overcome fears and trauma.
2. Spaces That Heal – How hospitals and therapy rooms are designed for recovery.
3. Finding the Right Therapist – Matching therapy styles to your needs.

Grading Rubric Presentation

Presentation – 20%

- The speaker delivers the material in a clear and understandable manner – 5 points possible
- The speaker uses tools appropriate for the presentation (PowerPoint, etc.) – 5 points possible
- The speaker is comfortable with the material (does not read word for word, can answer questions) – 5 pts
- The presentation is appropriate for a professional audience – 5 points possible

Content – 50%

- Information is from reliable scientific or clinical resources – 10 points possible
- Information is cited on slides in APA style, with a concluding “References” slide – 10 points possible
- Information is pertinent to college students & educators – 10 points possible
- Presentation is even-handed, describing pros and cons of competing philosophies or opinions – 10 points
- Information is skill-based and will enhance professional work of audience – 10 points possible
- The following can either add additional points or cost you points on the above content scores:
 - Both internal/personal and external/structural factors are mentioned
 - Ethical, legal, or other special considerations are mentioned
 - Content includes information about diversity
 - Opinions are clearly identified as such

Handouts – 30%

Handouts must include:

1. Main Points & Takeaways – 10 points
 - A clear, bullet-point summary of the *most important* ideas from your presentation (not a script).
 - Must be written so an average person with no tech or psychology background can understand it.
 - Use plain language, short sentences, and/or visuals.
2. Suggested Reading/Viewing/Listening List – 5 points
 - At least 2–3 *credible* resources for further learning (books, articles, videos, podcasts).
 - This should not be just your references—choose resources you’d recommend to a curious audience member.
3. Referral Resources & Links – 5 points
 - Where to go for more info: examples include interactive websites, games, simulations, apps, museums, research labs, or local events connected to your topic.
4. Additional Interesting Facts or Insights – 10 points
 - Extra tidbits, fun facts, statistics, or “wow” moments you didn’t have time to include in your slides.
 - These should add value and curiosity—something your audience will want to share with a friend.

Handout DOs:

- ✓ Use a clean, easy-to-read layout (headings, bullet points, white space)
- ✓ Include visuals, diagrams, or icons if they help understanding
- ✓ Make it appealing enough that someone would *want to keep it* after class

Handout DON'Ts:

- ✗ No walls of text
- ✗ No tiny font
- ✗ No direct copy-paste of your slides (slides and handout serve different purposes)