**PERU STATE COLLEGE**
**PSYC 121 INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**
**Syllabus Fall 2010**

**Instructor:** James R. Nevitt, Ph.D.
**Office Hours:** 8:30 - 9:30 AM and 3:15 - 4:15 PM Mondays through Thursdays; Fridays 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM By appointment only!
My office is Rm. 243 T.J. Majors Building.

**Office Telephone:** (402) 872-2293; I can usually respond back within 24 hours if you call. Response time is much faster via e-mail.

**Email Address:** Jnevitt@oakmail.peru.edu

**Required Textbook:** *Psychology: An Introduction* by Benjamin B. Lahey, 10th Edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing

**Course Meets:** 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays

**Credit**: Three (3) hours credit

**Course Description and Objectives**
This course is a general introduction to contemporary psychology, focusing on basic concepts, principles, terminology, trends in psychological research, and the application of this knowledge.

**Objectives include:**

A. Teach basic psychology terminology.
B. Discuss the topic of science as common to all disciplines, including psychology.
C. Teach an understanding of important psychology concepts.
D. Expose students to traditional areas of study within psychology.
**E.** Empower the student to explore/utilize electronic library resources to research areas of interest in the field of psychology.

**Prerequisite:** None

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

A. Demonstrate your mastery of basic psychology terminology.

B. Express your knowledge, in writing, of the method of scientific inquiry as it applies to psychology.
C. Express in writing your mastery of important psychology concepts and their applications.
D. Utilize the electronic library/internet to find articles appropriate for your psychology interests and summarize these in a brief research paper.
E. Demonstrate your knowledge of traditional areas of study within the field of psychology.

**Expectations**

1. Open your minds to the materials presented. Assume ownership of this course.

2. I will try to make materials in each session something of "significance" to you. I'm asking each of you to meet me halfway.

3. I want you to be proactive learners. I want you to be involved in the class discussions, ask questions and be current with the weekly readings. Come to class with the expectation that my sessions can be more like "events" than traditional lectures. Half of this experience is up to you. My foundation for each session is a PowerPoint presentation. They are NOT the session itself! Anyone can simple read and/or study a PowerPoint presentation.

The PowerPoint presentations will be posted in the hybrid shell for this class. I will assume that you have already read the textbook assignment. The PowerPoint presentations and text readings serve as a point of departure. At the midpoint of each session I will ask a "What if..." question. These are designed to provoke thought and stir the fires of imagination. If you don't already have a good understanding of the facts and/or status quo, the second part of the session will "leave you in the dust". Once again, read the assignments in the text, read the materials in the course document section...be a proactive learner.

4. Take quizzes when they are offered**.** They will be offered every two to three weeks. If you cannot be present during a quiz, please notify me in advance (at least 24 hours). I will schedule a make-up quiz if you are able to take the quiz before the next class session. If a student does not notify me in advance, the opportunity to make up a quiz is lost. There are few exceptions to this in my course (medical emergency, natural disaster...you probably get the picture). Simply "oversleeping the exam" or "I forgot we were having an exam" are NOT valid exceptions.

## Student Evaluation

**Quizzes**

There will be five quizzes during the semester. Each will cover two to three chapters in your textbook. Each quiz will be worth 50 points. The last quiz, during final exam week will worth 100 points, will be a comprehensive and will cover previous chapters and

session materials as well as the last two chapters of text readings for the semester. Students need to make certain they are prepared at the time they commit themselves to take the weekly quiz. Each quiz will be timed. You will have approximately 60 minutes to take a quiz. On the final exam you will be permitted two hours. Quizzes will only be offered once.

Consistency is the key here. Students will earn points through homework assignments, quizzes, attendance and participation during class sessions. The student will be evaluated weekly. Neglecting to turn in homework, missing a quiz without a valid reason can result in zero points for that particular week. These points cannot be made up by turning in late assignments or responding in class twice as often during the next week!

Students will be expected to have opinions relating to their subjects and readings. Student opinion doesn't have to agree with the opinion of the instructor or other students. This will not be a point of evaluation. I will expect students, should they assert opinions in writing or verbally, to be able to back-up the opinions with reading and/or researched materials.

**Research Paper**

A five page research paper utilizing electronic and conventional library resources will be required for the grade of "A". The paper must be written in APA style. There are many other styles of writing reports and term papers. However, APA style is the most frequently used writing style in the fields of psychology, counseling, criminal justice, sociology, social work, and many other areas in social sciences and business. I will not read a paper that is submitted in a style other than APA writing style. A useful overview for those that need assistance or information concerning APA style can be found at www.apastyle.org. Additionally, tips on how to write in APA style may be found at www.apastyle.org/styletips.html.

The research paper is a requirement for the grade of "A". It is a mandatory assignment for those students that expect to receive a grade of "A". Simply writing the paper does not insure this grade, however. The student must earn a 90% or better of the total number of points offered on quizzes, homework, attendance and participation in class. The instructor does not regard the paper as simply an exercise in writing. It is a chance to learn about APA style (for those who don't yet know it) and an opportunity to research a special area of interest.

I will provide a set of guidelines to follow during the first week of this course. Hopefully they will simplify the requirements of assignment.

Without a research paper the highest grade a student may earn is "B", even if a student's overall score is 90% or higher. The research paper experience is directed towards those who are serious about becoming psychology majors as term papers written in APA style will be standard requirements in most future coursework.

The topic selection will be decided by the student and instructor via e-mail or face-to-face meetings prior to the fourth week of class. Students must indicate that they intend to write a research paper prior to week four. A contract will be provided during the first week of class. Students will turn in the contract, which specifies topic and will include an outline of items to be discussed. The instructor will call for these contacts at the end of week four. No term papers will read, evaluated or considered for a grade in PSYC 121 without prior approval by the instructor. The term paper is due at the end of week fourteen. The paper must relate to the course topics in some logical and personally meaningful way.

Your Final Grade

The total number of points possible this semester can be seen below:

5 Quizzes @ 50 points each.....250 points
4 Homework assignments @ 20 points each….....80 points
Participation and attendance…..……50 points
Final Exam……..……100 points
Research Paper …….50 points

Total 530 points

Reminder - The Research Paper is also a requirement for the grade of "A". The topic and outline must be approved by instructor via e-mail or face-to-face prior to week four.

Your final grade will be based on a straight percentage of the points earned to the total possible. The scale used for grading is:

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| 100-90% | A |
| 89-80% | B |
| 79-70% | C |
| 69-60% | D |
| Below 60% | F |

**Academic Honesty:**

Academic honesty and the submission of your own work is expected, required and designed to assist you in developing your ability to perform. Unless otherwise directed, students are expected to do their own work on assignments and exams. Academic dishonesty will result in actions according to the college's disciplinary policy.

Academic misconduct is a serious offense at PSC because it diminishes the quality of the scholarship and learning experience for everyone on campus. An act of academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and classroom disruption, (e.g. cell phones) may to lead to penalties such as a reduction in grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Incomplete Coursework:**

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, instructors record the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed a majority of the course's major requirements. Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the student and faculty signature.
The Incomplete Grade Completion Contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. If students agree to complete required work prior to the normal deadline for making up an incomplete – the end of the subsequent semester – this date must appear in the contract. The division chair, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete coursework must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless Faculty Senate approves an extension, if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an "F". Students who have filed an application for graduation are not eligible with a grade of Incomplete.

## Electronic Support Site for This Course:

Most of the resources that I expect students to read, aside from their textbooks, will be placed on a website and the student will be able to access it via BlackBoard. I hope to use it daily in this course. If you have questions about the specific materials relating to comprehension of these, please contact me.

If the issues are technical (e.g. "I cannot find the site." or "The site doesn't seem to be working correctly") please contact the BlackBoard/Online staff:

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| **Email** | bbtechsupport@peru.edu |
| **Office Location** | **If you have difficulty accessing your Blackboard account or are experiencing technical difficulties within Blackboard, please contact the Blackboard Support Team at the e-mail address listed above. Phone numbers are also listed on the PSC website.** |

**Notes**
**For technical difficulties and emergency situations after 5:00 P.M. and on weekends, e-mail Blackboard technical support at BBTechSupport@peru.edu or call 1-402-274-8530.**

## Class Conduct:

Students are expected AND required to be courteous to others in the class, including the professor. Any student engaged in a disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the class. Disruptive behaviors include (but are not limited to): arriving to class late, talking with a

classmate while others are talking (including the professor), wearing headphones/listening to music, reading or working on materials other than those specifically dealing with the class. Finally, students are asked to turn off cell phones and beepers or (at least) to switch them to vibrating mode for the duration of class.

**Accommodation Statement:**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (public law 93-112) Section 504, provides that "no otherwise qualified disabled individual the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any special circumstances that would affect his/her ability to compete equally in the college environment. Learning disabilities must be appropriately documented. While students are encouraged to self-identify at the earliest possible time, students may not know of choose to self- identify, but can still receive services at any time once they self-disclose and document. Students should contact the office of Student Support Services, Vice President for Student Affairs or the Director of Admissions for further advisement. Students with special needs are encouraged to make them known to the instructor.

**A Final Word:**

Like a good mattress, these policies are firm, but not rock-hard. I am aware that some individual circumstances may arise warranting a change in some of these procedures or policies, but you should not count on that being the case. If you have any questions regarding where you stand in the course, then I strongly recommend that you come and talk to me. I want to emphasize the importance of consulting with me as soon as possible should any difficulties arise in your life that might interfere with your performance in the course. Waiting until the last two weeks of class or when final grades are distributed to talk to me is altogether too late!

The instructor reserves the right to modify any aspect of the course syllabus or content to enhance student learning. Any modifications will be communicated to students in advance. A tentative course schedule will be printed separately.