



## UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PRAGUE

**Course:** PSY100 General Psychology (3 US credits/6 ECTS)  
**Semester:** Spring 2024  
**Prerequisites:** none  
**Instructor:**  
**Contact:**

### 1. Catalogue Description

This course comprises historical and theoretical foundations as well as research theory and methods in psychology. Topics covered include rudimentary neuroscience, development, consciousness, learning, motivation, memory, intelligence, coping strategies, positive psychology, abnormal psychology, wellbeing and social influence.

### 2. Course Purpose

The primary focus of this course will be on gaining foundational knowledge of the primary topics within psychology while developing insight and skills for practical application. Students are encouraged to think critically about research and psychological concepts in order to improve their own lives and others' lives while establishing the groundwork for potentially influencing the field of psychology itself and even society as a whole.

### 3. Learning Outcomes

#### Knowledge gained

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

- Demonstrate critical thinking when discussing ideas
- Describe the primary principles underlying psychological experiments
- Describe the biological bases of human and nonhuman animal behavior

#### Skills gained

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

- Explain basic concepts in psychological thought
- Evaluate and apply theories and implications of seminal studies in psychology

### 4. Required and Optional Readings

Brookfield, S.D. (1987). *Developing critical thinkers: Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting*, 3-14. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press. (This article is available for students on e-learning.)  
 Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Fredrickson, B., Loftus, G.R., & Wagenaar (2009; 2014). *Atkinson & Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology* (16<sup>th</sup> edition), Hampshire Learning.

**This is available on Perlego. It is up to you to access this book before the class. We will be using it from the first day of class onwards.**

*The first few required chapters of the Introduction to Psychology book are posted on e-learning in case there is a delay in accessing Perlego. This will cover the first few weeks of the semester. Additionally, there are several hard copies on reserve at the library.*

*On the first day of class, we will discuss primary principles of studying psychology as well as the concept and practice of critical thinking as described in the article for the first week. (See article about critical thinking on the e-learning page for this course.) This skill is helpful for anyone, yet it is essential to have as a fundamental cognitive premise for openness towards learning as well as scientific and scholarly thinking.*

Each week, we will cover half to all of one chapter of the textbook for the assigned readings of the day. You will need to read the assigned portion of the textbook **before each class** in order to prepare for a quiz and/or discussion.

Do not underestimate the value of thoroughly reading and pondering the material. You will be surprised by how much you can learn and remember when you take the time to do this! ☺

**Additional Readings (Some of the readings that can be used for extra credit are in a folder at the top of the e-learning course page.)**

Three areas that are addressed, yet are not covered fully in the textbook can be quite beneficial for budding scientists/psychologists to understand and explore further. These topics are 1) biological & psychological evolution, 2) comparative psychology (study of the minds of nonhuman animals in addition to humans) and 3) numerical cognition. Below is a list of optional readings from these areas.

For *extra credit* (2 points – see more details below in extra credit section), you can choose to write a 1-2 page essay on one of these topics. If your resource of choice is a book (listed below, not the main textbook), you may write about one chapter (rather than the whole book).

Bekoff, M. (2007). *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy - and Why They Matter* (Jane Goodall, Foreword). New World Library: California, US.

Coyne, J. (2009). *Why Evolution is True*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

Darwin, C. (1859). *On the Origin of Species*. Revised edition edited by G. Beer. Oxford Classics, Oxford University Press (although any reprint should be fine - 2nd edition preferable).

Haun, D.B.M., Jordan, F.M., Vallortigara, G., & Clayton, N.S. (2010). Origins of spatial, temporal and numerical cognition: Insights from comparative psychology. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 14 (12), 552-560.

Hubbard, E., Diester, I., Cantlon, J.F., Ansari, D., van Opstal, F., & Troiani V. (2008). The evolution of numerical cognition: From number neurons to linguistic quantifiers. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 28 (46), 11819 –11824.

Mayr, E. (2002). *What Evolution Is*. Phoenix Press: London, UK.

Morell, V. (2013). *Animal Wise: How We Know Animals Think and Feel*. Random House: New York, US.

von Bayern, A.M.P., Heathcote, R.J.P., Rutz, C. & Kacelnik, A. (2009). The role of experience in problem solving and innovative tool use in crows. *Current Biology*, 19(22), 1965-1968. Elsevier, DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2009.10.037

## 5. Content of the Course (by week, page numbers to read are normally inclusive)

1. Scientific Research & Critical Thinking (Read critical thinking article on e-learning).
2. Critical Thinking ctd. and Foundational knowledge
3. The Nature of Psychology: Theory & Research  
Readings: Chapter 1, pp. 2-11 & 19-29.  
**Bring your proposed research question for the final paper.** (This will be clear to you after our first class. Once your topic and question are approved, you can start library-based researching for the final paper if you want a head start.)
4. Psychological Development Part 1. **Prepare to discuss assigned material from Chapter 3 (part 1).**  
Readings: Chapter 3, pp. 66-85.
5. Psychological Development Part 2. **Prepare to discuss assigned material from Chapter 3 (part 2). Quiz on Chapter 3.**  
Readings: Chapter 3, pp. 86-99 (inclusive).
6. Social Influence. Readings: All of Chapter 17, pp. 556-592 inclusive.
7. **Midterm Exam** (Based upon theories from Chapter 17.)
8. Emotions, Positive Psychology & Multiple Intelligences. **Discussion on assigned material from Chapters 11 and 12.**  
Readings: Chapter 11, pp. 401-410 & Chapter 12, 417-421, 425-426, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Read the following parts in Chapter 12, starting at the *Contemporary Theories* section, ending at *Genetics and Intelligence*, then starting again at *Emotional Intelligence* and ending at *General Learning Disability*.
9. Consciousness. **Quiz on Chapter 6.**  
Readings: All of Chapter 6, pp. 194-221.
10. Learning, Conditioning & Motivation.  
Readings: All of Chapter 7, pp.226-254 inclusive.
11. Memory. **Quiz and discussion on Chapter 8.**  
Readings: All of Chapter 8, pp. 260-303, inclusive.
12. Psychological Disorders and Wellbeing. **Prepare for discussion of the assigned material from Chapters 15 and 16.**  
Readings: Chapter 15, pp. 496-518 ending at *Disturbances of Thought and Attention* & Chapter 16, pp. 541-548, starting at *Techniques of Psychotherapy* and ending at *Biological Therapies* and 551-555, inclusive. *Mindfulness* and *Enhancing Mental Health*

pages are on e-learning (at the top where the syllabus is posted) since the 16th edition is different than earlier editions in relation to these topics.

13. Stress, Health and Coping. **Quiz and discussion on Chapter 14.**

Readings: All of Chapter 14, pp. 470-494, inclusive.

14. **Research papers are due. Presentations begin.**

15. **Final Exam. (Makeup classes will be provided on the Friday before the exam.)**

## 6. Course Requirements and Grading

This course will be graded on the basis of:

Overall Participation/Engagement	15%
Midterm (Multiple Choice/Essay)	20%
Quizzes (4 quizzes, 2 lowest grades dropped)	20%
Research Paper	20%
Presentation (based on research paper)	5%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>

Total 100%

**(See Extra Credit opportunities below.)**

**Overall Engagement in Class/Contribution to Discussions (15%)** Your participation is a valued component of this class, so please come to class prepared to discuss the material from the readings assigned for that week. You will be expected to actively engage with the material during class both as a listener and contributor to the discussions whether in-person or on Zoom (if online classes will be necessary).

**Midterm (Multiple Choice and Essay Questions) (20%)** In addition to answering multiple-choice questions, you will write a reflective essay (1-2 pages) which evaluates one psychological theory from the book (theories are listed on e-learning with guidelines) and relate it to one or more of your own experiences and observations in life. Please cite the book properly when discussing the theory that relates to your real-world example.\*

**Quizzes (20% the two lowest grades of four quizzes will be dropped)** For each week that there is a quiz, be prepared to answer questions from the assigned readings for the day. As mentioned before, do not underestimate the value of thoroughly reading and pondering the material. You will be surprised by how much you can learn and remember when you take the time to do this! 😊

### **Research Paper\* (20%) and Presentation (5%)**

Individually, or in groups of two or three, choose a topic in psychology to research. If group work is chosen, it should be a collaborative effort in which each student will focus on one aspect of the topic area and will write and present on that aspect, while keeping in mind the overall work of the group. The entire paper should be 4-6 pages in length (with 1-2 pages added for each collaborator) and the presentation should be a summary of the research paper, approximately 5-15 minutes in duration depending upon the number of participants (maximum three).

Upload via Turnitin. See further instructions in the guidelines to be posted on e-learning. If more than one student has written the paper, then only one person should upload it while including all names on the paper. You can specify which portions of the paper have been written by whom if you prefer the assessment to be segmented this way.

*\*Note: Written work must contain citations in APA format. Guidelines and resources for proper referencing will be given to you and links will be put on e-learning. Papers submitted without any citations/references will be considered plagiarism and receive an automatic F. Please ask me if you need clarification. Students will receive a detailed description of the assignment, as well as a grading rubric well before the essay or paper is due. Unexcused late work will be penalized one full letter grade (10 points) for each week late, unless an arrangement is discussed with the instructor beforehand. All work will be uploaded via Turnitin.*

### **Final Exam (Week 15) (20%)**

The material will be from course readings, discussions and class lectures. Review sheets with more details will be given before the exam.

### **Extra Credit (You can earn up to 5 additional points!)**

Students have two types of opportunities for extra credit on the overall grade for the course.

1) You can earn 1 extra credit point for each counseling center visit, **up to 3 extra credit** points. See the website below with a link for scheduling appointments: <https://www.unyp.cz/student-services/counseling-center>. There is also the option to have sessions through our counseling center online. See website for more information.

2) You can earn up to 2 extra credit points if you read one article or chapter (if your choice is a book – not the textbook) from the extra credit reading list on the syllabus and write a 1-2 page essay on it. As noted earlier in the syllabus, some of the readings that can be used for extra credit are in a folder at the top of the e-learning course page.

Thus, with the two types of opportunities combined you have the chance to gain a total of 5 extra credit points for the class, which can make a significant difference on your final grade!

Recap of potential extra credit points: 3 for participating in the counseling center and 2 for writing about one article or chapter from the additional reading selections: 3+2 = 5. See UNYP grading table below.

### **Grading Scale**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>	<b>Generally Accepted Meaning</b>	<b>Notes</b>
A	95-100	Outstanding work	x
A-	90-94		x
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above the average	x
B	83-86		x

B-	80-82		x
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work	x
C	73-76		x
C-	70-72		x
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average	Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
D	63-66		Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
D-	60-62		Credits for the course will not transfer to ESC
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course	No credits awarded

## 7. Key UNYP Policies and General Requirements

### Academic Honesty

- The university's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the **student honor code** or ask your instructor for clarification.
- For examinations: copying from your neighbor, speaking to another student, using a phone or anything similar will result in you failing the test or quiz. On written papers, properly note your sources with academic citations. Cutting and pasting from the Internet without accurately citing the source may be considered plagiarism. If you have questions about this, please ask the instructor. Students may be asked to verbally defend any written work with the instructor.

### Participation

- Under normal circumstances, students are expected to be present for each class session and participate in a positive way.
- Students are expected to engage in class fully prepared to discuss homework readings and projects.
- Students are expected to turn in homework assignments digitally via e-learning before midnight on the day they are due.
- Students are expected to leave their mobile phones switched off.
- Students may not use laptops for any reason other than taking notes. **Do not** surf the Web during class time. If you do, you will lose the privilege to use a laptop.
- In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor *in advance*.

### Attendance

It is your responsibility to show up to class on time. If you are late by more than 10 minutes you will be marked as absent for that hour. If you miss more than 12 (twelve) hours of class, you will automatically fail the entire course. Pay strict attention to this. Additionally, keep in mind that missing more than 9 hours may affect one's participation grade due to the substantial material and interaction missed. This class policy is standard UNYP policy.

## 8. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Students who complete the course will receive 6 ECTS credits, which are the equivalent of 3 American credits. (In other words, 2 ECTS credits equal 1 American credit hour.)

Further, 1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. Thus, a 6-credit ECTS course (equivalent to a 3-credit American course) will total 150-180 projected work hours. For this course, students are expected to spend time in the following course-related activities:

Class lectures and exams	45 hours
Reading class-related material	50 hours
Exam preparations	25 hours
Final paper & project preparation (including teamwork)	45 hours
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165 hours</b>

## **9. Technology Expectations**

Assignments, excluding those that are carried out exclusively in class, must be completed on a computer. It is assumed that students are familiar with the use of the internet and in particular with the gathering of data. This will be a necessary tool for carrying out some of the course assignments (e.g., research paper or class presentations).

Use of E-learning is also required.