

# General Psychology – PSY 110

## Broome Community College

**Instructor: Dr. Bill Altman**

Office: 011A Titchener Hall

Phone: 607-778-5216

Fax: 607-778-5394

Office hours: Wednesdays 2:30 - 5:00 PM, Thursdays 8:30 - 11:00 AM, and by appointment.

E-mail: [altmanws@sunybroome.edu](mailto:altmanws@sunybroome.edu)

Website: <http://williamaltman.info>

Mailbox: Located in 210 Titchener Hall

**Course Description:**

Definition and description of psychology. Topics may include functions of neural system, sensation and perception, learning, memory, motivation, emotion, conflict and frustration, personality, social psychology, methods and statistical applications, history and fields of psychology.

**Behavioral Objectives:**

Through your work in this course, you will demonstrate:

- knowledge of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends in psychology;
- the ability to describe behavioral phenomena and the theories that attempt to explain them;
- an understanding of the basic research methods used in psychology and an ability to approach and solve problems from these perspectives;
- critical thinking about science, especially popular reports of psychological research;
- the ability to communicate effectively about psychological issues; and
- the ability to apply psychological concepts to a variety of real world settings.

**Class Meetings:**

Class meetings will be organized discussions, following the agenda below. I expect them to branch out on various tangents within the broad limits of each topic area, as class interest dictates. We'll also engage in a number of in-class experiments and demonstrations. As a result, attendance is extremely important so that you can participate in the demonstrations and fully understand the concepts covered. If you miss a class, you are responsible for all information discussed, materials provided, and announcements made. In-class activities cannot be made up. If you miss a scheduled examination due to extraordinary circumstances (illness, etc.), you may arrange a make-up by appointment. If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a scheduled examination, please see me to arrange an alternate exam BEFORE your absence. All exams must be made up within one week of the original test date. If you require testing or learning accommodations, please alert me as soon as possible.

**Textbook and other readings:**

Our textbook is *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Richard A. Griggs (2014), published by Worth Publishers (ISBN: 1-4292-9890-1). I may recommend other readings during the course of the semester. Copies of the textbook are on reserve at the College Library. Read the assigned work for a chapter before that unit is discussed in class.

Formal writing in this class will conform to the style set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. This is available for your use at the SUNY Broome Community College Writing Center. If you plan a career in psychology you may wish to purchase a copy, but this isn't required. A shorter, less expensive but useful reference is the *Pocket Guide to APA Style*, by Robert Perrin (ISBN: 0495912638).

**Classroom Etiquette:**

Please observe the following, so everyone will have the best chance to participate and excel,:

1. You are welcome to bring food or drinks to class, but please do not bring things that will cause distractions, such as strong-smelling cheeses or foods that create a lot of noise.
2. Electronic communications devices (e.g., cell phones) must be turned off. The only exception is if you must monitor a child or medical situation. In such cases, please let me know at the beginning of class, set your phone to vibrate rather than ring, and sit near the door so that you can leave to receive your call.
3. Video and audio recording of the class are not permitted.

SUNY Broome Community College is committed to creating a civil learning environment. Find more information at [https://www.sunybroome.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=32369ca4-996f-45ab-ae14-b37fc7dc5d16&groupId=39972](https://www.sunybroome.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=32369ca4-996f-45ab-ae14-b37fc7dc5d16&groupId=39972).

**Assignments:**

## Examinations

There will be four unit examinations. These will cover material from the textbook and lectures.

## Research Assignments

This class incorporates experiments in psychophysiology (the ways in which the mind and body interact). You'll design, carry out, and report on the results of one in-class experiment. Formal writing for the course will be a series of individual and group papers based on your experiment. These are described in detail on the class [website](#).

## In Class Writing Exercises (ICWE)

At the beginning of each class you will either take a short quiz or write a short response to a quotation or other information I present. This *advance organizer* helps center your thoughts on the topics of the day. At the end of each class you'll write a short reaction to the day's discussion. You can also use this as an opportunity to write any questions about the topic, or to comment on the class. The ICWE at the end of class helps you to solidify your learning, gives me an opportunity to evaluate how well you're getting the course material, and indicates how I might improve my teaching on particular topics to help students better understand them.

**Evaluation:**

Grades in this course are based on your accomplishments. There is no curve. Common expectations of collegiate level work will be applied to all evaluations.

Final grades will be computed as follows:

Best 3 of 4 Unit Examinations	60%	(3 at 20 % each)
Thesis Statement and Hypothesis	5%	
Formal Research Proposal	10%	
Final Experimental Research Paper	20%	
In-Class Writing Exercises (ICWE)	5%	(Average of daily exercises)

Plagiarism, cheating, or other violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated, and will be treated harshly. One of the most difficult topics for many students to understand is that of plagiarism. You can learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>. They even provide a quick quiz, so you can be sure you understand the concepts involved. You'll find the SUNY Broome Community College Academic Honesty Policy at [https://www.sunybroome.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?p\\_l\\_id=142779&folderId=142906&name=DLFE-762.pdf](https://www.sunybroome.edu/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=142779&folderId=142906&name=DLFE-762.pdf)

If you have any questions about your progress in the course, your grade, particular concepts, or any other concerns, I'll be happy to meet with you during office hours, or by appointment. You can get more information about your rights as a student at <https://www.sunybroome.edu/student-academic-appeals-procedure>

**Extra Credit:**

There are several ways in which you can earn extra credit toward your final grade in this course:

- write an analysis of a film with regard to specific psychological issues or concepts;
- write an abstract of an article from a current issue of a refereed psychology journal; or
- other possibilities may be announced in class or via email, so be sure to watch your email for special opportunities.

You may do as many as three extra credit projects. If you choose to do more than one, you must choose at least two different kinds of projects.

Each project will raise your final course grade by 1 point on a scale of 100. Thus, if you do three projects, your final grade rises by 3 points. For example, if you do three projects, your final course grade might rise from 88 to 91, translating into a rise in the final course grade from B+ to A-. Extra credit is only available if you already have a passing grade in the course. If you are failing, no extra credit will be counted.

**Other Resources:**

I encourage you to make the most of the college's wide range of resources to enhance your understanding of the course material, time management abilities, study skills, and writing skills. For example, you may work with tutors (some of whom have taken this class, and know exactly what to do to succeed) at the [Learning Assistance Center](#) to improve your understanding of course concepts, or hone your test-taking skills.

I highly recommend consulting with the staff at the [Writing Center](#). These professionals can help you formulate ideas for your papers, and may provide guidance for subsequent drafts. Meeting with them as you start your projects (*before you begin writing*) can save you a lot of time and effort at later stages, and help you produce better papers in the end.

Check out the [Writing Tools](#) and the [Research Projects](#) sections of my website. You'll find examples of good and bad papers, tools to help you organize your thoughts, and links to other helpful resources. I invite you to see me during office hours for help with course work, writing, or other concerns.

You may form your own study groups, to provide peer review and study support on a more frequent basis. A major advantage of such a group is that by having a set meeting time every week you encourage each other to complete your work in a timely fashion and to higher standards of quality. You may use the class mailing list to organize study groups.

I've provided a private wiki (accessed from my website or at: <http://bccgeneralpsych.pbworks.com>). In the past, students have used the wiki to share notes and to provide study assistance for each other.

SUNY Broome Community College is committed to learning environments that are inclusive of and accessible to students with disabilities. Any student who requires reasonable academic accommodations or use of auxiliary aids in class should contact the Accessibility Resources Office at [ARO@sunybroome.edu](mailto:ARO@sunybroome.edu) or call 607-778-5150. Please note that in order to receive accommodations in this course, a student must present a valid Campus Accessibility Plan and discuss individual needs with the instructor in a timely manner.

**Nota bene:** I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time. All changes will be announced in class or via the course mailing list.

**General Psychology**  
**Directions for In-Class Laboratory/Research Projects**  
**Using the Biopac MP40**

1. Choose a topic area for your research project.
2. Thesis Statement and Hypothesis Paper (This is an individual assignment.)  
Articulate a research question based on the topic area you have chosen, and a specific hypothesis for which you later will design a formal research project. You'll need to find 10 sources in the research literature to complete this paper.
3. Formal Research Proposal (This is an individual assignment.)  
Write a formal proposal for your research project. This will combine information from your first paper with a design for an experiment to test your hypothesis.
4. Constitute your research teams, and select an experiment from among those proposed by your group members.
5. Use the Biopac MP40 to test your hypothesis. (This is a group assignment. And, it's the really fun part!)
6. Analyze your results. (No worries, I'll help with this part.)
7. Experimental Research Final Report: write up your results as a formal research poster. (This is a group assignment.)

Be sure to use APA style for all papers. Karen Pitcher at the Library and I have provided a template to make this easier. You'll find it at [http://www.williamaltman.info/Paper%20Writing%20Stuff/APA\\_Template.doc](http://www.williamaltman.info/Paper%20Writing%20Stuff/APA_Template.doc). In addition, I have provided a set of poster templates at [http://www.williamaltman.info/Courses/PSY\\_110/PSY\\_110\\_Research%20Assignments.html](http://www.williamaltman.info/Courses/PSY_110/PSY_110_Research%20Assignments.html).

Students often find that an advance critique is a tremendous help in writing and editing their papers, and that it makes a big difference with regard to the grade their papers will actually earn. If you'd like me to critique your papers before the due dates, please bring hardcopy to my office hours.

In addition, many students have reported that using the grading rubrics available on my website to grade their own papers before turning them in has helped them to improve their papers a lot. This has resulted in better papers, and of course, in higher grades. Based on their experience, I strongly urge you to use this strategy.

It is important to hand in your work on time. Papers handed in after their due dates will lose 10 points per day (this INCLUDES weekend days) from their final grade. Papers over one week late will not be accepted and will earn zero (0) points.