

PSYCHOLOGY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

PSYC 100 Introduction to Psychology

(3 credits). Students will gain knowledge about the scientific method and learn how to apply it to answer a range of questions pertaining to psychological topics, including but not limited to the brain and behavior, sensation and perception, learning, etc. Students will understand scientific principles and theories by learning fundamental concepts in the field of psychology and identifying the importance of psychological principles in everyday life. In addition, students will critically evaluate scientifically collected data and solve problems using these data to answer questions about the natural world.

PSYC 105 Orientation to Psychology

(3 credits). Describes multiple issues intended for students who have recently begun or are seriously considering a psychology major. Focus is on American Psychological Association (APA) and program goals, career choices, critical skills and experiences required for entry into the workforce or graduate school, writing style requirements, and ethical expectations of the APA.

PSYC 131 Psychology of Adjustment and Well-being

(3 credits). Examines the personal and social meaning of psychological adjustment. There is an emphasis on growth and wellness, mindfulness, stress and coping concepts, and psychosocial competence in adulthood. Active participation in class and willingness to challenge one's preconceptions in order to consider alternative psychological points of view are required. It concerns the application of psychological concepts and research to stress and coping in everyday adult life, emphasizing coping skills and techniques.

PSYC 150 Applied Psychological Statistics

(3 credits). Introduces and applies fundamental statistical concepts, principles, and procedures to the analysis of data related to the behavioral sciences. Students learn computation, interpretation, and application of commonly used descriptive, correlational, and inferential statistical procedures as they relate to behavioral science research.

PSYC 202 Psychology of Human Sexuality

(3 credits). Provides a survey of scientific findings and contemporary perspectives in the area of human sexuality from a psychological perspective. The course covers the cultural, psychological, emotional, physiological, and developmental aspects of human sexuality, and the information needed to help students make responsible decisions concerning their own sexuality and sexual behavior.

PSYC 210 Child Development

(3 credits). Examines concepts and issues related to child development that occur from the prenatal period to the onset of adolescence. Summarizes major concepts, theories, research, and best practices in physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Considers the impact of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability on normative childhood development. Includes an examination of the research methods implemented to study child development. Prerequisite: 12 credits earned.

PSYC 211 Adolescent Development

(3 credits). Studies developmental, personal, and social issues confronting adolescents as they emerge from childhood and strive for adulthood. Examines development across this period from biological, psychological, and social perspectives. The diversity of influences on normative development, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and social institutions (including the school, family, and community settings) will be presented. The research methods utilized to develop the findings discussed in the course will be examined. Prerequisite: 12 credits earned.

PSYC 212 Lifespan Psychology

(3 credits). Examines theories, perspectives, and concepts related to normative physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development from conception through death, with emphasis on the role of a diverse array of people, contexts, and experiences. Students will examine the impact of culture, ethnicity, race, gender/gender expression, religion, age, social class, sexual orientation, and abilities on the major domains of development throughout the lifespan. The course also includes an examination of the research methods implemented to study human development.

PSYC 215 Psychology of Family Relations

(3 credits). Provides insights from both clinical and academic psychology by readings in such areas as sexual attitudes and behavior, dating, the psychological dynamics of the family as a unit, parent-child interactions, the effect of developmental events on the psychology of the family, mate selection, the institution of marriage and the various alternatives, single parenthood, and dual career marriage. Prerequisite: PSYC 100.

PSYC 217 Adult Development and Aging

(3 credits). Examines developmental, personal, and social issues confronting individuals moving from their early 20s into old age from biological, cognitive, and socioemotional perspectives. The diversity of influences on normative development, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, and social institutions (including the family, educational/workplace settings, and the community) will be presented. The research methods utilized to develop the findings discussed in the course will be examined. Prerequisite: 12 credits earned.

PSYC 218 Principles of Gerontology

(3 credits). Examines areas of growth and decline in the lives of adults in their 60s and older. The themes of successful aging and positive psychology are emphasized, along with cultural, lifestyle, gender-based and individual differences. The course explores family and intimate relationships, employment, retirement, civic engagement, life-long learning, cognitive functioning, and changes in personality and self-concept. The areas of coping, assistive technologies, financial assistance, housing assistance, involvement with a caregiver, and end-of-life decisions are explored. Prerequisite: 12 credits earned.

PSYC 221 Educational Psychology

(3 credits). Examines aspects of psychology related to the learning process and to the school as a social system. Among the topics considered are learning theories and their applications, the identification and evaluation of abilities and achievements, the impact of varied motivational strategies, characteristics of students and teachers, and general pedagogical approaches to lesson creation, classroom management, and assessment. Prerequisite: PSYC 210, PSYC 211, or PSYC 212.

PSYC 230 Social Psychology

(3 credits). Introduces the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and interact with others. Topics such as social perception and cognition, social influence, aggression, conformity, and relationships are explored and discussed. Students will learn about social psychological concepts, theories, and research. Students will also apply social psychological concepts to everyday life. Prerequisite: PSYC 100.

PSYC 242 Death and Dying

(3 credits). Surveys the psychological aspects of death and dying in our society. Topics include attitudes toward and preparation for death; the understanding of and care for terminally ill patients; funeral rituals; burial, mourning and grief practices; grief counseling suicide and euthanasia. Readings and classroom activities will be supplemented by students' self-exploration and writing on feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about death. Prerequisite: PSYC 100.

PSYC 245 Psychology of Leadership

(3 credits). Explores psychological approaches to leadership that focus on the traits, skills, and behaviors of, and interactions between, effective leaders and followers. Numerous models of leadership will be critically examined to determine advantages, limitations, and applications of each. Prerequisite: 15 credits earned.

PSYC 250 Research Methods in Psychology

(3 credits). Involves opportunities for students to interpret and design basic psychological research, improve their information literacy, and apply APA ethical standards. Topics covered include the scientific method, research approaches and designs, and ethical issues in psychological research. Prerequisite: PSYC 100.

PSYC 281 Brain and Behavior

(3 credits). Introduces students to basic anatomy and physiology of the central and peripheral nervous systems and links underlying neural control to particular behaviors. Students will demonstrate knowledge of neural anatomy, neural conduction, the sensory systems, and the motor hierarchy. Students will also focus on neural control of basic behaviors such as sensation, perception, movement, learning, thinking, memory, and sleeping plus neural models of psychological disorders. Prerequisite: PSYC 100.

PSYC 313 Industrial/Organizational Psychology

(3 credits). Introduces the science of human behavior applied to industrial and organizational settings. Students will learn the field's history, research methodologies, and fundamental theories, spread across areas of both industrial and organizational psychology, including legal context, assessment issues, selection, training and development, performance management, safety, job design, and organizational development. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 315 Forensic Psychology

(3 credits). Introduces the role of psychology in the legal system. Students will learn how psychological principles can be applied to the criminal justice system, including profiling, custody evaluations, competency evaluations, jury decision-making, and eyewitness testimony. Students will also learn about various careers in which forensic psychology can play a role, such as interrogation, trial consulting, and child custody evaluation. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 15 credits earned.

PSYC 319 Positive Psychology

(3 credits). Examines and applies current research in positive psychology. Specific attention will be paid to areas of human strength, happiness, resilience, hope, optimism, positive relationships, and flow. Student readings and written work will reinforce connections between theoretical/research derived concepts, with personal understanding of the current science. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 45 credits earned.

PSYC 320 Deviant Behavior

(3 credits). Provides an in-depth examination of the origins and causes of deviant behavior, with an emphasis on the interplay between societal influences and psychological motivations to engage in deviance, both criminal and non-criminal. Major areas include: criminal behavior, sexual deviations, prostitution, juvenile delinquency, suicide, obesity, and drug addiction. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 15 credits earned.

PSYC 321 Psychological Assessment

(3 credits). Introduces the theory and application of assessment of human behaviors in psychological settings, including clinical-counseling, rehabilitative, forensic, educational, and organizational. The course teaches students to be informed, ethical consumers and critical thinkers regarding the development and use of psychological tests and assessments. It will prepare students to critically evaluate assessment reports in a variety of areas and be a foundation for later graduate training. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and PSYC 150 or PSYC 250.

PSYC 330 Psychology of Gender

(3 credits). Examines the psychology of gender, including both theoretical perspectives and lived experience, while relying on sound research methodology. Some of the topics will include development of gender identity, gender-based stereotypes and biases, gender differences, gender equality and social justice, and the ways in which gender can influence work, relationships, reproduction, sexuality, mental and physical health, and experiences of violence. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 60 credits earned.

PSYC 331 Psychology of Race

(3 credits). Provides students with a critical understanding of the psychological factors that lead to prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Incorporating psychology race theory and current events, this course is designed to develop a critical awareness of racism and racial inequalities from a psychological perspective, explore psychological mechanisms that perpetuate racial oppression, analyze theories designed to reduce prejudice, and critically think about and analyze your personal perspective on race. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 60 credits earned.

PSYC 332 Psychology of Stress Management

(3 credits). Examines the historical psychosomatic and behavioral medicine stress research that explored the effect of human and animal stress reactions to health and disease outcomes. Students will apply theory to behavioral and cognitive approaches to identify demands, challenges and threats in an environment, and develop theoretically accurate approaches to address those stressors. Students will develop and be able demonstrate active and passive stress management protocols that are useful in counseling contexts or their own lives. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 335 Psychological Disorders

(3 credits). Introduces the history of psychological disorders and provides a scientific study of the assessment, symptoms, causes, and treatments of maladaptive behavior and psychological disorders defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This course addresses major theoretical models of psychopathology, focusing attention on empirically based methods used to modify, change, or prevent maladaptive thinking and behavior. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 336 Psychology of Personality

(3 credits). Introduces the field of personality psychology, including scientific and theoretical orientations to self and personality. The course emphasizes both the research methodologies used to examine and assess personality and the theoretical conclusions that have been reached from different perspectives. Students will engage in critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of both established and emerging personality theories, as well as the characteristics of a healthy personality and how that informs a wellness approach in psychology. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 337 Child Psychological Disorders

(3 credits). Examines theory, research, and evidence-based practices related to child psychological disorders. Surveys the prevalence, etiology, assessment/diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of neurodevelopmental disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, and internalizing disorders that affect children. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 340 Helping Skills

(3 credits). Provides students with the knowledge to develop effective helping and interpersonal skills for conducting counseling with adults. The primary emphasis of this course is on the following: 1) development of counseling skills through observing role-plays and peer practice, and 2) application of counseling skills to actual practice. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 341 Theories of Counseling

(3 credits). Provides students with knowledge and experiences in counseling with an emphasis on traditional counseling and psychotherapy theory and skills. The major modalities covered will include examples of Psychoanalytic, Person-centered, Humanistic, Systemic, Brief, and Behavioral, and Cognitive therapies. This course will present an eclectic approach to intervention strategies for dealing with psychological, emotional, relationship, and adjustment problems. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 45 credits earned.

PSYC 350 Research Lab in Psychology

(3 credits). Allows students to use their background in PSYC 150 and PSYC 250 to design and/or conduct empirical research with human participants. This course affords opportunities for students to improve their information literacy, apply APA ethical standards, and learn to write effectively in psychology. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, and PSYC 250.

PSYC 355 Health Psychology

(3 credits). Examines relationships that exist between our behavior, brain and body processes and our environment in the context of healthy behavior and disease. Topics discussed in the course include psychoneuroimmunology, gastrointestinal functioning, neuromuscular, and stress-disease links with cancer and cardiovascular disease. Research methods in health psychology, biological and environmental factors in health care behaviors, and Psychology of physical activity and exercise are also examined. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 30 credits earned.

PSYC 360 Cognitive Psychology

(3 credits). Covers research and theory related to human use of perception, attention, memory, language, and decision making as well as their uses in everyday life. Other topics may include mental imagery, creativity, and problem solving. Traditional research approaches to understanding human thinking are presented. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 60 credits earned.

PSYC 375 Psychology of Learning

(3 credits). Examines the theoretical and experimental basis of behavioral and cognitive learning in animal and human behavior. The course focuses on basic principles of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and social cognitive learning. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and 60 credits earned.

PSYC 376 Behavior Modification

(3 credits). Examines the current principles of learning and their application to the analysis of human behavior in therapeutic and institutional settings. The underlying theoretical concepts of behavior modification focus on operant conditioning, respondent conditioning, observational learning, and cognitive models. Additional emphasis will be placed on the experimental analysis of human behavior and applying the principles to improve quality of life. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, and PSYC 250.

PSYC 380 Behavioral Neuroscience

(3 credits). Examines the biological bases of behavior, emphasizing contemporary approaches to the study of the nervous system. Neural structure, function, and organization are considered in relation to sensory and motor function, learning and memory, sleep, emotions, and other behaviors. An overview of brain function will be presented, drawing on basic concepts in biological, physical, and behavioral sciences. Prerequisites: PSYC 100 and PSYC 250.

PSYC 406 Senior Seminar in Psychology

(3 credits). Explores an important contemporary topic in psychology taught in a seminar environment. Active student involvement includes scientific writing; presentation; and critical thinking about theory, empirical research design, implementation, and findings. The instructor teaching the course determines the topic area to be covered. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, PSYC 250, and 90 credits earned.

PSYC 412 Human Neuropsychology

(3 credits). Introduces students to the neuropsychological approach to understanding brain activity. Students will examine the organization and physiology of the nervous system as it relates to a variety of neurological, psychiatric, and psychological disorders with emphasis on disease etiology, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Prerequisites: PSYC 281 or PSYC 355 or PSYC 380.

PSYC 422 Drugs and Behavior

(3 credits). Introduces students to the physiological, psychological, and social effects of prescription, over the counter, and illegal drugs. Theories of addiction and methods of rehabilitation will be covered and the government agencies and laws which regulate the manufacture and distribution of drugs will also be considered. An emphasis will be placed on narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and marijuana. Prerequisites: PSYC 281 or PSYC 355 or PSYC 380.

PSYC 441 Theory and Practice of Academic Psychology

(3 credits). Explores pedagogical techniques and assessment methods using PSYC100 content and utilizes a seminar format classroom experience along with opportunities to work with students in PSYC100 through discussions, presentations, reviews, and tutoring. There is a strong emphasis on ethical and professional behaviors. As part of this capstone experience, students will prepare items (e.g., CV/resume, purpose statement, sample presentations, cover letter) to be included in a professional portfolio as preparation for employment or graduate work. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, PSYC 250, and PSYC 350, 60 credits earned, and permission of the instructor.

PSYC 493 Independent Study

(3 credits). Provides for the study of a topic via review and research of technical psychological literature and/or empirical manipulation of variables in the field or laboratory under supervision of a psychology faculty member. Independent study is initiated by the student to increase knowledge in a particular area of psychology. The topic is examined in an intensive manner with guidance by a faculty member who has special expertise in that field. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, PSYC 250, PSYC 350, permission of the instructor, and approval by the academic advisor, department chairperson, and dean.

PSYC 498 Psychology Internship

(3 to 15 credits). Provides practical experience and beginning professional skills to selected students. This is an internship that will focus on applied skills, community service, or research work in settings appropriate to the student's interests and curriculum, including mental health and other human service programs, hospitals, human resource offices, and industrial or governmental agencies. The goal is to relate theoretical learning to practical applications. Prerequisites: PSYC 100, PSYC 150, PSYC 250, 90 credits earned, and consent of the instructor.