

**Seminar: Introduction to Psychology**  
**Psych 102 - 3 (Fall 2014)**  
1 Credit

## Course Information

**Course Location:** Psychology Building, room 215B

**Meeting Time:** Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:00 pm

**Instructor:** Adam L. Putnam

**Office:** Psychology Building, room 333C

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11:00 - 12:00 and Thursday 1:00 - 2:00 (or by appointment).

**Phone:** 314.935.8731

**e-mail:** [adam.putnam@wustl.edu](mailto:adam.putnam@wustl.edu) (the best way to get in touch with me).

## Course Description and Goals

This course is a one-hour seminar focused on controversial issues in psychology. By the end of the semester you should have a thorough understanding of several important psychological issues, and how psychological researchers approach solving problems within their field and society at large. The issues we will discuss are there to provide a springboard for developing your own critical thinking skills. By the end of the semester you should be able to critically evaluate claims made by others and construct strong arguments of your own based on the facts presented in the reading. We will practice these skills with both oral and written formats in the form of class discussion and an essay. Critical thinking skills are perhaps THE most important thing for you to learn in college, and will serve you well for the rest of your life.

## Format Overview

Class meetings will typically involve discussions and group activities. This is a small, seminar-style course, which means that I expect each student to participate regularly during every class session. To participate, you will need to read the assignments carefully and think critically about the topics discussed. To help prepare for class, you will be asked to write questions and/or comments about each reading (more on this below). There are no exams in this course.

## Course Materials

**Primary Text:** Slife, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Taking sides: Clashing views on psychological issues* (18<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. ISBN = 978-0078139611 The textbook is available at the bookstore and online.

**Other Readings:** Other readings and handouts will be posted on the course website. These readings will be excerpts from other textbooks or primary source articles.

**Course Website:** The course website is on blackboard. Go to [bb.wustl.edu](http://bb.wustl.edu) and login with your wustl key. Then click the link for this class in the My Courses menu (Seminar: Introduction to Psychology).

## Evaluation

### **Class attendance and participation: 120 points (10 points/class)**

In seminars, learning occurs through discussions in class. Therefore, attendance and daily participation are critical to your success in this course. Each week you must (a) read the assigned material prior to class and (b) attend class prepared to discuss the issue for that week. Being late to class will result in your losing some points for participation that day.

One goal of this class is to learn what it means to participate in a college-level discussion course. This includes sharing your ideas with the class (but not over contributing!), and presenting your own views constructively. We will be discussing some sensitive topics, and it is likely that there will be some strong opinions that are different from your own. To that end, please be respectful of other people's views.

### **Discussion Questions: 120 points (10 points/class)**

Each week you must prepare and submit two questions about the reading to be discussed in class. Questions that you submit for class need to show that you have read the assigned material. Ideal questions are those that touch on alternative explanations of data, propose additional work that could be done to address the issue, or address the validity of arguments based on the evidence provided in the readings. Be clear and concise when constructing your questions. The questions at the end of each issue in the Slife text serve as a good model; however, you may not submit those questions for credit. Occasionally, I may require a different assignment than preparing discussion questions.

**Submit discussion questions via Blackboard by Noon the day before class.**

To submit discussion questions / comments:

1. Go to the course website on Blackboard.
2. Click on the "Reading Responses" under the toolbar at the left.
3. Click on the date of the class you are submitting.
4. Save your questions as a word document with your last name and the date of the class (e.g. Putnam Sep 2)
5. Click the "Browse My Computer" button, and upload your word document.
6. Once you are satisfied with your response, click "Submit."

### **Essay: 100 points (75 for first draft, 25 for revision)**

In this paper, you will construct a comprehensive analysis of a controversial issue in psychology. You can choose any topic that has not already been discussed in class and is not in the Taking Sides textbook. I will approve topics before the first paper submission. In the paper you should:

- (a) Identify the controversy.
- (b) Describe the positions taken by each side and provide at least two primary sources to support each side of the argument (four sources total). You must submit the title of your paper and your primary sources by October 30.
- (c) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each paper/argument.
- (d) Point to future directions of this controversy. Why is it important that research

continue in this area? (or not continue?) What types of studies would be informative to this controversy?

This paper should be 5-7 pages in length (double-spaced) and is due **November 13**. Because this is a formal writing assignment, points will be deducted for grammar and spelling errors. Please be sure to proofread your paper before turning it in.

I will return your paper before **Monday, December 1** along with comments about how to improve the paper. Additional points will be awarded for revising your paper based on my feedback. Your revision is due by midnight on **December 11**.

### **Total: 340 points**

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93–100%	B	83–86%	C	73–76%	D	63–66%
A-	90–92%	B-	80–82%	C-	70–72%	D-	60–62%
B+	87–89%	C+	77–79%	D+	67–69%	F	0–60%

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading**

See the table above for what constitutes an A, B, etc. If taking the course as pass/fail, you must earn a C- or better in order to pass. Please let me know before the second week of class if you are taking the course pass/fail.

You may not audit the course without prior written approval of the instructor.

### **Late Work and Missing Class**

You will be allowed only **one** late discussion question assignment for the semester. Late paper submissions (for the first or final draft) will lose 10 points per day that they are late.

You will be allowed to miss **one** class over the semester. In order to receive participation points for the missed class you must write a 2-page summary of the topic that was discussed that day. This assignment is due via email before the start of the next class (one week later). You must still submit discussion questions for the missed day to earn those points.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

To ensure an optimal learning environment, it is important to treat each other with mutual respect and honesty. I will work diligently to prepare for class, to respect everyone's contributions, to grade work in a fair and unbiased manner, and to return it to you in a timely fashion. In return, I expect that you will treat your classmates and me with respect. This includes showing up on time, turning off or silencing cell phones, and listening carefully to other people's ideas.

Since this course is focused on active discussion, please leave your laptops in your bag or in your room. Aside from creating additional physical barriers in the classroom, having access to a laptop makes it much easier to distract yourself (and others) in class.

### **Academic Honesty**

Please abide by Wash U's academic integrity policy. Basically, do not cheat, plagiarize, or steal. Consequences for academic dishonesty will result in zero points for the assignment and referral to the university's Academic Integrity Committee. You can find more information about the academic integrity policy on the course website or the link below.

<http://wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism can sometimes be tricky to understand, so I want to elaborate here. To plagiarize is defined as “to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one’s own: use another’s production without crediting the source” (<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm>) and is **not acceptable**. This means that all discussion questions and paper drafts should be your own work. Do not “collaborate” with other students when preparing either, as it is the expectation that the work you submit is your own. Collaboration when it is not approved is a form of cheating.

Do not copy sentences and ideas from books, articles, the internet, or other people and present them as your own. **This is also cheating**. If you incorporate ideas or information from outside sources (including a paraphrase of someone else’s ideas), you must cite those sources. If you have any questions about how to cite outside materials, please ask me.

### **Help with Class**

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about class, or if you just want to talk about psychology. Office hours are a great time to come in, or we can set up a different meeting time (just shoot me an email).

Students who need special learning accommodations should contact me as soon as possible; I will try my best to make accommodations as needed. Resources are also available at Cornerstone (935- 5970; <http://cornerstone.wustl.edu>; located in Gregg Hall on the South 40). Please inform me in advance of assignment due dates of any special accommodations that have been suggested by the Disability Resources Office.

A tentative course schedule is listed on the next page, although it may change. Any changes will be announced in class and updated on the course website. The due dates for the different essay components, however, are unlikely to change.

TS designates the *Taking Sides* book. All other readings are posted on Blackboard.

## Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Due Today</b>
1	August 28	Course Introduction	
2	Sep 4	Thinking Fast and Slow - Intuition and Biases	Kahneman, 2011 Gladwell, 2005 Arkes et al. 1981
3	Sep 11	Is American Psychological Research Generalizable to Other Cultures?	<i>TS</i> Issue 2.1 (pp 55-62) Roediger & McCabe, 2007 (pp. 22 - 36)
4	Sep 18	Should Neuroscience Research Be Used to Inform Public Policy?	<i>TS</i> Issue 2.3 (pp. 77-88) McCabe & Castel, 2008
5	Sep 25	Expertise and the 10,000 Hour Rule	Gladwell, 2008 Macnamara et al. (2014)
6	Oct 2	Are Repressed Memories Real?	Loftus TED talk Repressed Memories
7	Oct 9	Can Positive Psychology Make us Happier?	<i>TS</i> Issue 4.1 (pp. 115 - 128)
8	Oct 16	Are Today's Youth More Narcissistic Than Previous Generations?	Youth Narcissism
9	Oct 23	Is Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) a Real Disorder?	<i>TS</i> Issue 5.2 (pp. 158 - 171) Ways of Knowing
10	Oct 30	Facebook - Positive or Negative Effects?	Facebook Positive Effects Kramer et al. 2014 <b>Topic and Sources Due</b>
11	Nov 6	Can Psychotherapy Change Sexual Orientation	<i>TS</i> Issue 6.3 (pp. 215 - 226)
12	Nov 13	Are Violent Video Games Harmful to Children and Adolescents?	PBS Documentary <i>TS</i> Issue 3.1 (pp 91 - 100) <b>Paper 1st Submission Due</b>
13	Nov 20	Class Cancelled	
14	Nov 27	THANKSGIVING BREAK (no class)	
15	Dec 4	Topic Auction [class will vote on a topic]	
	Dec 11		<b>Paper Final Revision due</b>