

PSY 311(01) - Controversial Issues in Psychology

Spring 2024 OL Synchronous

Zoom meeting on Tu & Th 9:30 to 11:45am

Instructor: Mihaela Friedlmeier, Ph.D.

616-331-2195 (Psych Dep)

E-mail: friedlmm@gvsu.edu

Please put “*Psych 311-01*” in the subject line of your email. I will do my best to respond to emails within 48 hours if they are received Monday-Friday. Send me a gentle reminder if you didn’t receive a reply after two days. “See” me during office hours if you have any questions/concerns that may require a lengthy response.

*This syllabus is subject to change. Changes (if any) will be announced on Blackboard or during Zoom meetings. **Students are responsible** for keeping informed of any such notices.

Zoom Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00-12:00. You can always reach me by email!

<https://gvsu-edu.zoom.us/j/9308966369?pwd=NVVZ2Z2tBbTR3a1RhcDJqakhmWVlYZz09>

Meeting ID: 930 896 6369

Passcode: 6CYPA5

*Use the same Zoom Meeting ID and passcode for the synchronous meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Class Attendance:

Attendance of online meetings is mandatory; however, you are allowed to miss one meeting without penalty. Participating in discussions and reading assigned materials before and after class are crucial to getting a good grade and learning something from this class. **Cameras must be turned on during Zoom meetings!!** Let me know via email ASAP if there are certain (technical) circumstances that prevent you from doing that. Dialogue with a black screen does not count as relevant contribution to course discussions!

Course Description:

This course aims to introduce you to a number of issues and controversies in psychology; it is also designed to teach critical thinking on a broader level. When confronted with contradictory information, differing opinions and points of view, it is necessary to have and work on improving your ability to comprehend and evaluate available sources and material. The use of such “critical thinking skills” can have a profound impact upon one’s life in terms of academic, professional, and personal success.

SWS Course: The GVSU handbook states: “*Courses that have received the SWS designation are not merely courses that require written assignments; they adhere to certain guidelines. Students turn in a total of at least 3,000 words of writing during the term. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of finished essays or reports or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of their papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time are devoted to writing instruction. For a three-credit course at least 1/3 of the final grade is based upon the writing assignments.*” It is GVSU policy that you must receive a grade of C or better in this course in order to get SWS credit. A C- will not do.

Course Objectives: This class does not merely address specific controversial issues, but is also designed to teach critical thinking on a broader level. The course is also an SWS course. Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

Objective 1: Identify areas of psychological controversy and evaluate supporting arguments based on empirical findings.

Objective 2: Demonstrate critical thinking skills (analyzing the arguments of other people and forming one's own reasoned judgment).

Objective 3: Research and express ideas clearly in a written and oral format

Class Format:

Classes will be a mixture of discussion and some lecture. You will be expected to read and write **extensively**. Only important points from the reading may be emphasized in lecture format. The readings for this class are often difficult and will require you to read the material twice or three times. Make sure you will allocate the necessary time for this, especially during a Spring semester! At many times, discussion will center on sensitive and complicated issues, which may involve deeply held beliefs and opinions. Feel free to disagree with and challenge each other's opinions and statements, but do so in a respectful way that focuses on the issues, not the individuals.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course, and you must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements and to receive important announcements and updates about course content.

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

Required Equipment (owned or accessible):

- • Reliable high-speed internet access
- • Computer with a sound card and speakers and operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (Windows 7 or above, OS 10.10 or above)
- • Computer microphone built in or external (most laptops have a microphone)
- • Computer camera - built in or external (most laptops have a camera)

Materials for class:

No textbooks are required. Reading material will be available in pdf or word files that can be downloaded from Blackboard.

Course Outcome Measures:

Your final grade will be based on the total number of points that you receive on two exams (one midterm and one final), one major paper, bi-weekly contributions to BB discussion board, and participation points.

Exams: Each exam consists of essay questions drawn **from lectures, readings, discussions, and videos**. Exams will be completed through Blackboard Ultra using LockDown Browser. Exams should only be taken using a desktop or laptop computer to avoid problems using LockDown Browser. At the beginning of the semester, you will have an opportunity to practice using LockDown Browser for extra credit. *It is highly recommended that you participate in this.*

Paper (more detailed instructions will be provided on Bb): this will be on a topic from the list provided by the instructor. You will be graded on the quality of your writing as well as the content of your arguments and the selected texts. We will spend a significant amount of class time covering content and format of the paper. You will be asked to submit the first part of the paper mid-semester.

A paper is penalized five percentage point for every day it is late (papers submitted after 11:59PM of the due date are already considered late papers). **No late work will be accepted one week after its due date!**

Questions/Observations Submission via BB Discussion Board: In order to facilitate our discussions, you are expected to write and submit on Bb three questions/observations/comments about the readings every time a set of readings has been assigned for that day. The questions/comments you compose should both (a) demonstrate that you have thought about the readings, and (b) be designed to stimulate potentially interesting discussion of the topics at hand. **Your questions will be submitted the day before the online meeting and will contribute to your participation points.** To receive full credit, you need to respond to contributions made by two other students (8 topics X 4 = 32 points max.).

Padlet Self-Presentation (deadline Friday, May 10) Quick instructions how to use Padlet:

1. Open <https://padlet.com/friedlmm/spring-2024-psy-311-96jwm8sdyu7wu62x>
2. Click on the plus sign under Self-Presentation students
3. It opens a new window . Click on the option “upload a file” on the left side, underneath “subject” in order to upload a picture you make already have on the computer. Lower in the box, under “write something incredible/fantastic”, insert your self-presentation.
4. When done, click on publish!

Additional Participation Points: Our first online class meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, **May 7th at 9:30.** Students can earn one point per topic by showing extra critical thinking initiative: finding information, correcting an argument or generally going above and beyond in terms of class participation or discussion of *relevant* material.

Grading Scale

	Points	Percentage	Final Grade
			A 94 - 100%
Midterm Exam	50		A- 90 – 93%
Final Exam	30		B+ 87- 89%
Final paper	65		B 84- 86%
Discussion Board Submissions (8 X 4)	32		B- 80 – 83%
			C+ 77 – 79%
Total	177		C 74- 76%
			C- 70 – 73%
			D+ 67- 69%
			D 60 - 66%
			F 59% and lower

** This is a tentative syllabus, including the grading scale

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades: All academic work will be done by the student to whom it was assigned. Anyone caught cheating (e.g., procuring, providing or accepting any materials which contain questions or answers to any exam or assignment, submitting work that has been previously graded) or plagiarizing (taking ideas or material from another source for either written or oral presentation without acknowledging the original source) will be dropped from the course, given an F, and referred to the University for further action. Cheating is a serious violation of academic integrity. For more information on academic honesty please see the GVSU student code <http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/section-4-academic-integrity-of-grades-and-scholarship-73.htm>

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>.

Additional Thoughts:

As you cover the readings for class, share your thoughts with others during class, complete your assignments, I urge you to pay attention to how you’ve come to hold the beliefs that you have. What sources of knowledge do

you use to support your beliefs? How do you respond to evidence or arguments that question a belief that you hold? What do you do when you recognize contradictions among some of your beliefs? When do you find that it makes sense to change a belief? These are all important questions to consider...

Tentative Class Schedule

	Topic	Readings
Week 1 May 7/9	Tu: Intro to course/syllabus discussion/+ Q & A: topics for the paper Th: Do adults repress childhood sexual abuse? Is the concept of repressed and recovered memories valid? Video “Divided Memories”	No readings Kluff & Loftus 104-122, Tavis, APA link
Week 2 May 14/16	Tu: Effective & beneficial parental discipline methods (spanking, time-out, etc.) Th: How to raise children with a “growth mindset”: does praising help?	Gershoff et al., 2010; Gershoff, 2013; + websites (add more) Henderlong & Lepper 774–795, Kohn 24-30, Dweck, 2015
Week 3 May 21/23	Tu: The Coddling of the American Mind (Mental Health) Th: The Coddling of the American Mind (Overparenting) Paper Rough draft, Part 1 due May 23	Greg Lukianoff & Jonathan Haidt
Week 4 May 28/30	Tu: Midterm Exam Th: Are fathers necessary? Nature-Nurture Perspective	add
Week 5 4/6	Tu: Nature/Nurture: Human Violence Documentary “Mind of a rampage killer” Th: Nature/Nurture: Should adolescents who commit serious offenses be tried and convicted as adults? Documentary, <i>When kids get life</i>	Caspi et al., 2002; Fergusson et al., 2011; Raine et al., 2010; Steinberg, 2009; Fischer et al.; Steinberg’s response, +
Week 6 11/13	Tu: Discussion Final Paper Draft Th: Critical thinking: Suggestions Final Paper due June 13	

Final Exam will be open online from Thursday June 13 until Tuesday June 18