Psychology 492: Advanced General (Capstone)  
Fall, 2014

Section 03: MWF 12:00 – 12:50pm, ASH 1302  
Section 04: MWF 2:00 – 2:50pm, ASH 2320

Instructor: Dr. Michael B. Wolfe  
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Phone: 331-2989  
E-mail: wolfem@gvsu.edu  
Office Hours: MW 1:00 to 1:50 or by appointment

Required texts:  
Journal articles available through PsycINFO or Blackboard.

Prerequisites:  
Senior standing

Course objectives:  
This course is designed to be a seminar-style course for psychology students who are near graduation. The seminar nature of the course means that you will read primary articles, mostly from psychology journals, and we will spend many of our class periods discussing the articles themselves, and the general issues that are raised by the articles. There will be little to no lecturing about the articles on my part, which is in contrast to what you might find in other psychology courses.

Throughout the semester, we will have a general focus on what psychology as a discipline has learned that has some practical value for the world outside psychology. In more technical language, we will be discussing the generalizability of research findings beyond the parameters of specific studies. We will examine several topics with this general question in mind. One of the threads that will run through this general question is the relative extent to which theoretical vs. practical lines of research lead us to learn something from psychology that might be useful for society.

Class periods during the first two-thirds of the semester (approximately) will consist of class discussion of the articles that we are reading and the issues they raise. In the last third of the semester, student groups will present research related to a specific topic within psychology, and discuss the extent to which the psychological research in that topic has generated conclusions that are useful. Each presentation will be followed by class discussion, led by the group that presented that day.

It will be critical in this class that you do the reading for each class period before class, and come to class prepared to discuss the reading for that day. Many of the points
in the class (described below) will be assigned so as to ensure that you do the reading and are prepared before class.

**Attendance and Participation:**
Attendance is mandatory, because seminar courses do not function unless students come to class consistently. Mandatory attendance includes discussions of readings as well as discussion of student presentations and readings assigned by student groups. I will pass around a roll sheet in order for me to keep track of who is in class. Your participation grade will be based both on attendance and on your level of participation in class. Attendance and participation will be combined into a single grade out of a possible 150 points.

For the participation part of the grade, you will be evaluated on the amount and thoughtfulness of your contributions to class discussion. There is not a particular type of comment I am looking for. What I look for is evidence that you have read the articles and thought carefully about them. If the article is empirical (describes experiments), you should be able to summarize the methods and results of the studies. For any article, you should think carefully about the main points and implications of the research discussed. You can feel free to ask me about your participation at any point.

**Written questions about readings:**
For each week’s topic, you will write two “deep questions” for each article we will be discussing that week. A deep question (compared to a surface question) is one that asks about an important or fundamental aspect of the article. Your questions should be substantive enough that they demonstrate that you read the article carefully and have thought about the implications of it. I will say more about what deep questions are in class. The questions for each article must be turned in during class on the first day of the week in which we discuss each set of articles. You should also keep in mind that your deep questions should be ones that you are willing to pose to the class for purposes of stimulating discussion.

Each set of questions will be assigned a grade of either plus, check, or zero. Each set of questions will be worth a total of 10 points. A plus will earn 10 points, a check will earn 6 points, and a zero will earn, well, zero points. Thus, the total possible points for the article summaries will be 100. **The first set of questions will be due on Friday of the first week of class (August 29).**

**Examination:**
There will be one exam given in this course, which will take place before we begin student presentations. The exam will consist of essay questions that are designed to assess your understanding of the articles and issues we have discussed.

You are expected to be present for the exam. A make-up exam will only be given in the case of an injury or illness, or if there is a death in the family. You must notify the instructor within 24 hours of the exam, and you must be prepared to provide
documentation regarding your situation. A make-up exam will be given as soon as possible after the exam, and may be essay or oral at the discretion of the instructor.

Paper:
Students will work in small groups on an issue within psychology. Your task will be to summarize several articles that relate to the issue, and analyze the articles in terms of their theoretical and practical contributions. Then, you will construct an argument about the extent to which psychological research in your chosen area has contributed something useful to some area of society. You may either conclude that psychology has or has not made a useful contribution, depending on the state of the research literature in your chosen area.

Fairly early in the semester, I will form the class into groups of two or three people each, depending on your topic preferences and meeting availability. The purpose of the group is to work together to share research articles and discuss the issues that arise within your topic. You will each write your own paper, however. The paper should be a maximum of 15 pages, and should provide an in-depth scholarly treatment of the issue you are discussing. More information about the paper will be provided in class. The paper will be due at the end of the semester, and will be worth 100 points.

Group presentation:
The group that you work with will present the research related to your issue and your conclusions. Your presentation should last about 20 minutes, with the remaining class time devoted to your group leading a discussion of the presentation, and the issue in general.

We will spend one class period discussing how to give a good research presentation, and I will say more about the presentation at that time. We will also have class time that is devoted to me meeting with each group individually to discuss your presentation and paper. The presentation will be worth 75 points.

Grading:
Your final grade for the course will be a combination of the scores on each of the sets of questions, class attendance and participation, the exam, your role in the group presentation, and the final paper.

Here are the number of points that will be assigned to each aspect of the course:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and class participation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written questions about readings</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation and discussion</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- 93 – 100%       A
90 – 92%   A-
87 – 89%  B+
83 – 86%  B
80 – 82%  B-
77 – 79%  C+
73 – 76%  C
70 – 72%  C-
67 – 69%  D+
60 – 66%  D
0 – 59%   F
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 8/25 – 8/29 | 8/25 – Intro  
8/27 - Opening discussion  
8/29 - Banaji and Crowder (1989); Neisser (1991) |
| 9/1 – 9/5  | Generalizability and Ecological validity  
9/3 - Meet in the new library, room LIB 002 Lab  
9/5 - Hirsch (2002)  
No class 9/1 (Labor Day) |
| 9/8 – 9/12 | Memory  
Goethals and Reckman (1973)  
Karpicke and Roediger (2008)  
LePort, et. al., (2012) |
| 9/15 – 9/19 | Education  
Lowry (1999)  
Weis & Cerankosky (2010) |
| 9/22 – 9/26 | Education  
Pashler, McDaniel, Roher, & Bjork (2010)  
Pong and Pallas (2001)  
Zapalska and Dabb (2002) |
| 9/29 – 10/3 | Attention  
Drews, Yazdani, Godfrey, Cooper, & Strayer (2009)  
Strayer, Drews, and Crouch (2006)  
Watson and Strayer (2010) |
| 10/6 – 10/10 | Law  
Loftus (1975)  
Wells and Bradfield (1998)  
Hasel & Kassin (2009) |
| 10/13 – 10/17 | Decision Making  
Stewart, (2009)  
10/15 – no class meeting (meet with your group)  
10/17 – no class meeting (mid-semester break) |
| 10/20 – 10/24 | Unconscious influences on behavior  
Helzer and Pizarro (2011)  
Rutchick, Slepian, and Ferris (2010)  
Williams and Bargh (2008)  
Li, Johnson, and Zaval (2011) |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>5:00 PM. – Drop deadline with grade “W”</td>
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| 10/27 – 10/31 | Parenting in Same Sex Relationships  
Johnson, et.al., (2012)  
Patterson (2005) (through pg. 15 - read this first)  
Regnerus (2012) (read this second)  
Wright (2012) |
| 11/3 – 11/7 | 11/3 - General discussion – generalizability and ecological validity  
10/5 - Exam  
11/7 – Presentation meetings (no regular class meeting) |
| 11/10 – 11/14 | Presentation meetings (no regular class meeting) |
| 11/17 – 11/21 | Presentations |
| 11/24 – 11/28 | 11/24 - Presentation  
No class 11/26 & 11/28 (Thanksgiving) |
| 12/1 – 12/5 | Presentations  
Paper due on last day of class (12/5) |
| Finals  
12/8 – 12/12 | Section 03 (12:00) Wednesday 12/11  at 2:00 to 3:50 p.m.  
Section 04 (2:00) Monday 12/9  at 2:00 to 3:50 p.m.  
Note: There will be no final exam. We will use this time for a discussion of what you got out of the course. |

Note: Questions are due in class on the first day of each week.
Psychology 492, Spring 2011: References


doi:10.1126/science.1128317


Regnerus, M. (2012). How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex
relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study. Social Science Research, 41, 752-770.


