

Psychology 492: Advanced General (Capstone) Winter, 2018

Section 07: MWF 11:00 – 11:50 am, LOH 168

Section 08: MWF 12:00 – 12:50 pm, LOH 168

Instructor: Dr. Michael B. W. Wolfe
Office: ASH 2317
Phone: 331-2989
E-mail: wolfem@gvsu.edu
Office Hours: MWF 1:00 to 2:00 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 issue in mind. One of the threads that will run through this general issue is the relative extent to which theoretical vs. applied 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 related to 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. 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 on Blackboard by 8:00 am on the first day of the week in which we are discussing that article. There are multiple articles to read each week, and we do not discuss them in a predetermined order, so you should write questions and be prepared to discuss any of them at the beginning of each week. 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. In fact, we will frequently have each student read one of his or her questions to the class before we begin 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 90. The first set of questions will be due on Monday of the second week of class (January 15).

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. One week

before the exam I will hand out a set of essay questions. On the day of the exam you will write your answers in class to a subset of the questions that I will select.

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 applied 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 about 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 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.

ETS Major Field Test in Psychology (MFTP):

The Psychology Department was granted funds to administer the ETS Major Field Test in Psychology (MFTP) to every senior taking PSY 492 this academic year. This test gives our department a valuable opportunity to assess our students' knowledge of psychology and to compare it to that of students at other institutions. It will also permit us to do analyses of the effectiveness of our curricular requirements, including the major requirements and course prerequisites, in preparing our students broadly across different areas of psychology.

The MFTP is designed to assess the knowledge of psychology acquired by majors, regardless of whether or not they intend to do graduate work. The MFTP is thus different from the GRE Subject Test, which is targeted at the student population that plans to go to graduate school.

Completion of the MFTP is a requirement in this class. The requirement is solely for you to complete the exam. Participation or your score on the exam will not be used in calculating your grade for this class. However, **because the exam needs to be completed by every student, release of your final course grade will be contingent on completing the exam.** This means that if you have not completed the exam by the end of the semester, you will receive an incomplete for a grade. Your incomplete will be converted to a grade upon completion of the MFTP.

We will schedule several two-hour blocks of time near the end of the semester for students to take the exam. These time blocks will be arranged across the different instructors of PSY 492 so that any 492 student can take the exam during any of the sessions. More information about the session times and rooms will be given in class.

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. Remember that your grade will only be released upon completion of the MFTP, as described above.

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

Attendance and class participation	150
Written questions about readings	90
Exam	100
Group presentation and discussion	75
Paper	100

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

Tentative Schedule of Topics

Week of	Topic
1/8 - 1/12	Intro / opening discussion / psychology "pre test" Read this article before class Wednesday: http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2014/april-14/teach-your-students-to-be-better-consumers.html
1/15 - 1/19	Generalizability and Ecological validity Banaji & Crowder (1989) Neisser (1991) Hirsch (2002)
1/22 - 1/26	Memory Karpicke & Roediger (2008) Roediger & McDermott (1995) Lowry (1999)
1/29 - 2/2	Attention Cain, Leonard, Gabrieli, & Finn (2016) Drews, Yazdani, Godfrey, Cooper, & Strayer (2009) Boot, Simons, Stothart, & Stutts (2013)
2/5 - 2/9	Education Taylor & Rohrer (2010) Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, (2006) Finnigan & Corker (2016)
2/12 - 2/16	Education Weis & Cerankosky (2010) Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork (2008) Zapalska and Dabb (2002)
2/19 - 2/23	Law Correll, Hudson, Guillermo, & Ma (2014) Hasel & Kassin (2009) Wells and Bradfield (1998)
2/26 - 3/2	Beliefs Munro, (2010) Nyhan, Reifler, Richey, & Freed (2014) Wolfe & Williams (in press)
3/5 - 3/9	Spring Break - Have fun!
3/9	5:00 PM. - Drop deadline with grade "W"
3/12 - 3/16	Parenting in Same Sex Relationships Gates et al., (2012) Johnson et al., (2012) Patterson (2005) (through pg. 15 - read this first)

	Regnerus (2012) (read this second) Wright (2012)
3/19 - 3/23	Decision Making Iyengar, Wells, & Schwartz, (2006) Stewart, (2009) 3/23 - General discussion - generalizability and ecological validity
3/26 - 3/30	3/26 - Exam 3/28 and 3/30 - Presentation meetings (no regular class meetings)
4/2 - 4/6	4/2 and 4/4 - Presentation meetings (no regular class meetings) 4/6 - Presentation
4/9 - 4/13	Presentations
4/16 - 4/20	Presentations
	Paper due on last day of class (4/22)
Finals week	Section 07: Wednesday, Apr. 25 at 10:00 to 11:50 a.m. Section 08: Wednesday, Apr. 25 at 2:00 to 3:50 p.m. Note: There will be no final exam. We will use this time for a discussion of the course (attendance required).

Note: Questions are turned in on Blackboard by 8:00 am on the Monday of the week in which each article is listed.

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