

**Psyc 401: Big Issues in Psychology**  
**Spring 2026, M/W/F 10-10:50 (HHH 318) and 11-11:50 (HHH 308)**  
**April Bleske-Rechek, Professor of Psychology**

**April's Information**

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Drop-in hours in HHH 255: Mon. 3-3:50; Wed. 1-1:50; Thur. 10-10:50, and by appt.

**Readings**

The readings for this course will be available on Canvas. Some are lengthy; some are short and punchy. Materials related to your Capstone Project will also be available on Canvas.

**Course Overview**

In this course we will read and discuss primary literature – old and new – that revolves around enduring issues in psychology and psychological science. As a class, we will:

- read and discuss musings on what it means to be a scientist in psychology, the utility of the scientific filter, and the quality of science conducted in psychology;
- develop a knowledge of influential research in psychology, such as in the domains of social influence, cognitive biases, memory, discrimination, personal relationships, and mental health.
- apply knowledge of the discipline to discuss current issues relevant to the public interest. Depending on the semester, we can discuss issues such as sex and gender differences, mental health, educational initiatives, violence and crime, parenting, and happiness.

*In this course, I have the following basic expectations:*

- You will come to class each day having already completed the assigned reading, and you will come to class prepared to work with that material through a formal or informal reading check, class activity, interactive lecture, and/or small-group and large-group discussion.
- You will be an attentive, prepared, and engaged participant during our classroom interactions and discussions.
- You will work throughout the semester on your own Capstone Project, on a topic of your choosing.

Of course, my job is to facilitate your success in this course. In the pursuit of a broad and deep learning experience for all of us, I ask that we all follow some shared aims and principles of action. Please consider what those should be for us to put on record:

(from our first class day)
Treat others with respect
Take others on good faith
Show others you are listening and want to hear their perspective
(etc...)

## Course Goals

The UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education (LE) Core curriculum serves as a strong foundation for our academic programs. It has been developed to ensure that you acquire the *knowledge* and *skills* and *personal and social responsibility* that you will need to actively engage in your local community and in a global society.

In addition, the Psychology Department has adopted the APA Goals of the Undergraduate Psychology Major.

Below, I have listed the APA goals in their briefest form. Our course materials connect to each goal in at least one way and often several ways, and also to some of UWEC's Liberal Education core. For each goal, I have listed one or more outcomes that I think are relevant to our reading material and course activities.

Course Goal	Specific APA Outcomes	Relevant Course Activities and Assignments
APA: Goal 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology (This also falls under UWEC's LE Goal K2)	-- Characterize the nature of psychology as a scientific discipline -- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology	Our class activities and assignments should all work to develop our knowledge base in psychology: ➤ Course readings ➤ Class discussion of readings ➤ Reading checks and in-class written work ➤ Capstone project
APA: Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry & Critical Thinking (This also falls under UWEC's LE Goals S2 and S3)	-- Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for psychological claims -- Demonstrate skepticism and intellectual curiosity -- Distinguish the nature of designs that permit causal inferences from those that do not -- Recognize and defend against common fallacies in thinking -- Evaluate the quality of information, including differentiating empirical evidence from speculation and the probable from the improbable -- Use reasoning to recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals	➤ Many of the selected readings directly address critical thinking and research methods. ➤ Discussions will promote ability to evaluate the validity of claims made in the scientific and theoretical literature of psychology. ➤ Class discussions of primary readings will develop our skills in using evidence to reach conclusions and in recognizing sources of bias.
APA Goal 3: Ethical & Social Responsibility in a Diverse World	-- Respect individual differences in views and experiences and values -- Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors in self and others -- Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving societal problems	➤ Readings about biases in psychological research are designed to heighten recognition of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors in self and others. ➤ Course discussions of controversial topics and the capstone project are included to increase student tolerance of ambiguity and the complexity of psychological phenomena.
APA Goal 4: Communication (This also falls under UWEC's LE Goals S1, S2, and S3)	-- Read and accurately summarize the general scientific literature of psychology -- Interpret quantitative visual aids accurately, including showing vigilance about misuse or misrepresentation of quantitative information; -- Listen actively and with curiosity -- Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats	We will engage in many class activities to promote communication skills: ➤ Large- and small-group discussions ➤ Responding to reading questions that require summarizing, describing, and interpreting probabilistic trends and data
APA Goal 5: Professional Development	-- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of lifelong learning and personal flexibility to sustain personal and professional development as the nature of work evolves -- Tolerate ambiguity and realize that psychological explanations are often complex and tentative	Capstone project is designed to build knowledge and skills that are relevant to a specific path or vocational domain ➤ Content emphasizes scientific reasoning and evidence-based decision-making in any vocation ➤ Whether students are pursuing graduate study or employment, the emphasis is on lifelong learning for personal and professional development.

### **Important Dates Across Campus**

- Feb. 6: last day to drop with no record
- Mar. 16-20: Spring Break
- April 10: last day to withdraw from a class
- May 8: last day of class for the semester

### **Academic Honesty**

I always expect academic honesty, but particularly so for graduating seniors in their capstone course. Sample violations include (a) using student homework, papers, or ideas from previous semesters, unless approved by me; (b) asking for or giving information about the content of my quizzes (e.g., studying from an unauthorized file); (c) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism); or (d) using AI to generate any element of your work. **Using AI in this class qualifies as academic misconduct and I will treat it as such.** If you are concerned that an activity you or someone else is considering might fall into the dishonest category, ask me about it. I consider academic misconduct in this course as a serious offense, and I will pursue the strongest possible academic penalties for such behavior. The disciplinary procedures and penalties for academic misconduct are described in the UW-Eau Claire Student Services and Standards Handbook.

### **Phones and Electronic Devices**

Please keep your cell phones and electronic devices (other than those used specifically for notetaking) in your backpacks and out of sight during class. Please remove your headphones/air pods/ear buds BEFORE you come into the classroom and leave them off during class.

### **Students Requiring Special Accommodations**

If you are a student with a disability or issue that will require some form of accommodation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (2106 Centennial Hall, 836-5800) for requisite documentation. I will be happy to make the accommodations for you as possible, within the confines of the structure of our course.

### **Absences**

I will allot a “missing” rather than a “zero” to your first **two** unexcused absences in recognition of the fact that “life happens.” In other words, you have **TWO** “free passes” available to you. I suggest you protect them – that is, save them for when you really need them. Below is a table to show you reasons for missing class that require you to use a free pass, and reasons that are excused by the university. Work that you miss because of a university-excused absence must be made up in a timely manner.

<b>Reason for missing class</b>	<b>Plan to use a free pass</b>	<b>This is university-excused (no free pass required)</b>
Email from April telling you class is optional or cancelled		<b>X</b>
Class field trip with written notice from instructor (e.g., Marching Band trip, Crim J trip to Stanley Prison)		<b>X</b>
Varsity or Club sporting event with written notice from coach or athletic director		<b>X</b>
Conference attendance or presentation, with written notice from faculty lead (this includes CERCA, NCUR, etc.)		<b>X</b>
UWEC organization event (such as Forensics competition, mock trial, etc.) with written notice from leader		<b>X</b>
University event with explicit or implicit attendance required (e.g., meeting with the chancellor, RA duty)		<b>X</b>
Court-required attendance (e.g., jury duty)		<b>X</b>
Graduate school interview or job interview		<b>X</b>

Reason for missing class	Plan to use a free pass	This is university-excused (no free pass required)
Going to the ER/urgent care – note from attending doctor in Eau Claire required (this may also serve as first absence in next row)		X
Having an illness requiring a doctor visit – limit to TWO absences in a row. Note from attending doctor in Eau Claire required		X
Being sick with a virus (flu, cold, virus, pink eye etc.) – THIRD absence and beyond if there was a doctor’s note; any illness absence if no doctor’s note	X	
Sleeping through your alarm clock	X	
Going to a scheduled medical/therapy appointment (e.g., traveling home for a dentist appt.)	X	
Taking a friend/partner to the ER, doctor, airport, etc.	X	
Taking your pet to the vet	X	
Family event (funeral, parent or sibling care, wedding, send-off, sibling’s graduation, etc.)	X	
Getting stuck at home because of bad weather	X	
Car malfunction, car accident, etc.	X	
Getting scheduled at work despite asking for the time off	X	
Vacation, planned or unplanned	X	
Taking a mental health day	X	
Can’t find parking	X	

Everyone handles contagion and illness differently. In general, as with any illness, I suggest you not come to class if you are too ill to learn and have an illness that is serious and that you know is contagious. You also want to rest so you can get better quickly and not use up all your free passes! When you miss class, please remember that there is only one instructor and many students; I cannot re-create class for you. What I ask is that you do the following:

- ✓ Reach out to friends from class. When asked nicely, students are almost always willing to take notes for one another, grab an extra handout, catch each other up on any key ideas or announcements, etc.
- ✓ Remember that many of your class materials (lecture slide outlines) will be available on Canvas after class.
- ✓ You will still be expected to complete course readings, even if you cannot be in class. If you have an excused absence, you will still be expected to make up the work from class to the degree that it is possible (i.e., turn in any written work late).
- ✓ Send an email to me each class day you miss to alert me to your situation.

Getting ourselves to class each day, prepared and ready to work with one another and with the material, is perhaps the best way we can take advantage of the privilege we have to pursue higher education at a university full of faculty and other students who love learning. My expectation for the semester is that if you are not ill or in a forced quarantine, you will be in class to engage with me, one another, and the concepts and learning materials.

### **Course Grading**

Final course grades will be calculated based on points earned out of total points possible, and assigned (without rounding) as follows:

A	= 93.00% - 100%	B-	= 80.00% - 82.99%	D+	= 67.00% - 69.99%
A-	= 90.00% - 92.99%	C+	= 77.00% - 79.99%	D	= 63.00% - 66.99%
B+	= 87.00% - 89.99%	C	= 73.00% - 76.99%	D-	= 60.00% - 62.99%
B	= 83.00% - 86.99%	C-	= 70.00% - 72.99%	F	= 59.99 and below

### **Weekly activities and discussions (≈400 points)**

- For nearly every day for which there is assigned reading, there will be some type of activity to reinforce and extend the reading material. These activities will have varied forms: formal reading checks, informal reading checks (such as a written reflection), worksheets, interactive lecture/large-group Q&A. The work I ask you to do will vary in point value, generally around 10 points. Whatever we do, my primary ask is that you have prepared for class by engaging with the assigned reading. (Remember that if you miss class for a university-sanctioned event, you should expect my help in making up that work without penalty.)
- In preparation for daily class activities, I will sometimes (more toward the end of the semester) provide reading questions to go with the readings – particularly if the readings are complicated. These questions will take you through the readings and if there is a formal reading check, you can expect some of the reading questions to show up on the reading check, to reward you for using the reading questions. Because this is a 400-level senior seminar, I will most often not provide reading questions. The reading questions are not mandatory *unless noted on Canvas* but completing them will be helpful (if the reading questions are mandatory, I will have you turn them in and I will score them).
- During many class sessions, we will devote at least some of our time to interactive discussion. I look forward to getting your reactions and input as we try out different ways of hearing each other's perspectives and pursuing deeper inquiry into the topics. You will earn points for interacting with one another and being attentive during these sessions – but please don't worry about being required to offer a certain number of contributions or anything like that. If I structure our discussions well, then contributing and interacting with one another should happen organically. Of course, **if you are busy color-coding your calendar, checking your phone, doodling, whispering to others, or not displaying interest in contributing intellectually or in hearing what your student colleagues have to say, I will notice and likely ask you to leave or behave more respectfully in class.**
- I expect you to be a good citizen in class and to take charge of your learning. This means holding yourself accountable. It also includes participating actively in class discussion but not dominating it, doing your fair share in small-group interactions, and having a positive attitude toward learning.
- In the end, each week of classroom activities will be worth about 30 points. If you do the readings according to schedule, force yourself to answer reading questions or take notes on the reading, and come to class awake and excited about learning, there should be no problem.

### **The Individual Capstone Project (205 points)**

The individual capstone project will have several components:

- One meeting with me: 10 points
- Structured summaries (Annotated bibliography) of 12 readings/articles in total: 60 points
- Give (5 points) and receive (5 points) peer review: 10 points
- Other project development tasks: 20 points
- Your final product: 100 points

This is your “capstone course” for the major you have selected. Therefore, I want to give you an opportunity to delve into a topic that is of particular interest to you, in considerable depth. It is your capstone experience, so you should have the opportunity to make it what you want it to be, but given what has happened in previous semesters, I do have to set some boundaries. *The capstone project is your opportunity to engage SCIENTIFICALLY with a PSYCHOLOGICAL question of interest. The idea is that graduating seniors in a scientific discipline should be able to do this and not merely reflect on their personal experiences.* Specifically, your final product can take one of two primary forms: (1) a live, formal talk (presentation) limited to 15-20 minutes, or (2) a written document between 2,000 and 3,000 words, in the form of a traditional research paper, a grant proposal, a newspaper editorial or substack essay, a book review, or a research brief. Your final product must include visuals. I will clarify my expectations in our class discussions and provide examples on Canvas. The tasks and due dates are included in our course schedule below.

## ***Our Class as a Learning Community***

This class is part of a larger learning community in which excellence is achieved both individually and communally. In the spirit of achieving excellence, I ask that we remain civil, respectful, open-minded, and as unbiased as possible as we work to ensure that this course is educational and challenging for every student.

In keeping with the university's strategic goals of fostering a campus climate that is friendly to all, the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire encourages its students, faculty, staff, and administration to use non-sexist language in instances where sex is irrelevant, and to use non-gendered language in instances where gender is irrelevant. Please keep in mind, however, that because our material pertains to research on humans, sex and gender will frequently be relevant as they pertain to the content of this course. Thus, I want you to have the rationale for the words I use. As a scientist trained in evolutionary theory, I will use words in class that coincide with the following definitions (see also Geary, 2020 *Male, Female*; Kimura, 1999 *Sex and Cognition*; Soh, 2020 *The End of Gender*):

- **Biological Sex:** male or female; defined by gametes, which are mature reproductive cells. There are two types: sperm (male) and eggs/ova (female). There is no intermediate type; in many species and in all mammals, including humans, and for at least 1.2 billion years, these are the two types of cells required for sexual reproduction and the conception of a new organism. An individual's biological sex corresponds to one of two distinct types of evolved reproductive anatomy (i.e. ovaries or testes) that develop for the production of sperm or ova, regardless of their past, present, or future functionality. In humans, including transgender and non-binary individuals, this reproductive anatomy is unambiguously male or female over 99.98 percent of the time (explained in Sax, 2002: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12476264/>). Note: there are a variety of *intersex* conditions by which, due to genetic abnormality or atypical hormone exposure, an individual possesses reproductive or sexual anatomy that is atypical given their chromosomal combination; for example, an individual may have XX chromosomal makeup [i.e., generally ends up an egg-producer (female)], but due to abnormal levels of testosterone exposure in utero the individual may develop ambiguous genitalia; importantly, that testosterone exposure influences that individual's psychological development, as well. Intersex individuals are either (a) infertile or (b) produce either sperm or ova but not both. The bottom line is that for intersex individuals, gametes are not clearly aligned with what is observable [anatomy] or felt [psychology]. If you want to watch a video on the definition of sex (gametes) versus the processes of sex determination, watch this recent talk by evolutionary biologist Colin Wright: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4WV9xv62f4>.
- **Gender Identity:** how we feel in relation to our biological sex. In most cases, *but not all*, males identify as boys/men and females identify as girls/women. As of 2014, 6 in 1,000 (.6%) American adults identified as transgender (Arboleda et al., 2014); that number has increased substantially over the past decade for young people. In 2025, 2.7% of 18-24-year olds and 3.3% of 13-17-year olds identified as transgender.
- **Gender Expression:** Neither biological sex nor gender identity imposes requirements on gender expression, that is, the external manifestation of our gender identity, or how we express our gender, such as through clothing choices, activity choices, toy preferences, etc. For example, I am a female, I identify as a woman, and I have for my entire life been a bit of a tomboy – expressing myself in many contexts in ways that are more typical of males than of females.

Given these definitions and terms, here is how I will try to use them:

- As noted, the majority of individuals self-identify as either boy or girl, man or woman. Thus, when I discuss research on *adults* who have self-identified their biological sex or gender identity, I will refer to comparisons of “men” and “women.” In scientific studies that we will discuss, there were probably individuals who would have reported an alternative gender identity if they had been given the response option, or who did report an alternative gender identity, but the subsamples would not have been large enough to be included in the analyses.
- If I discuss research on sex differences in *non-human* animals, I will use the terms “males” and “females.”
- Likewise, if I am discussing research on *people of varying ages*, I will use a catch-all term of “males” and “females” rather than list out all the age-specific terms (for example, “boys” and “girls” and “male-identifying teens” and “female-identifying teens” and “male elderly” and “female elderly,” etc.).

**Psyc 401 Big Issues in Psychology: Spring 2026 Semester Schedule of Readings**

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 1: Psychology and Science</b>		
1/26	<i>Introductions to April, each other, and the course structure and requirements</i>	
1/28	<i>Capstone project requirements, tips, and resources</i>	
1/30	<i>The Case for Science</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ritchie, S. (2020). <i>Science Fictions</i> (Chapter 1: How science works). Henry Holt and Company.</li> </ul> <i>In-class discussion of scientific literacy</i>	Due on Canvas: Two topics, and at least two research questions for each topic (after one-hour lit review on each) (5 pts)
<b>Week 2: For the Weeks to Come: Learning Requires Discipline and Hard Work</b>		
2/2	<i>Desirable Difficulties for Learning 1: Retrieval</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karpicke, J. D., &amp; Blunt, J. R. (2011). Retrieval practice produces more learning than elaborative studying with concept mapping. <i>Science</i>, 331, 772-775.</li> <li>• Dunlosky, J. (2013, Fall). Strengthening the student toolbox: Study strategies to boost learning. <i>American Educator</i>, 12-21.</li> </ul>	
2/4	<i>Desirable Difficulties for Learning 2: Structure</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ariely, D., &amp; Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 13(3), 219-224.</li> </ul>	
2/6	<i>Desirable Difficulties for Learning 3: Interacting with Others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Podcast: Derek Thompson’s Plain English: America’s Epidemic of Solitude—and How to Fix It: <a href="#">‘The Anti-Social Century’: Ame - Plain English with Derek Thompson - Apple Podcasts</a></li> <li>• See also: Thompson, D. (2025, January 8). The antisocial century. <a href="#">The Atlantic</a>.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 1 article for first possible topic (5 pts)

<b>Week 3: Cognitive Biases Impede Good Science</b>		
<b>2/9</b>	<p><i>Thinking Scientifically is Not Natural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., Ruscio, J., &amp; Beyerstein, B. L. (2010). <i>The wide world of psychomythology: Introduction to 50 great myths of popular psychology</i>. Wiley-Blackwell.</li> <li>• Stewart-Williams, S. (2025). One bias to rule them all. <a href="https://open.substack.com/pub/stevestewartwilliams/p/one-bias-to-rule-them-all-98c?r=7ju1c&amp;utm_campaign=post&amp;utm_medium=email">https://open.substack.com/pub/stevestewartwilliams/p/one-bias-to-rule-them-all-98c?r=7ju1c&amp;utm_campaign=post&amp;utm_medium=email</a></li> </ul>	
<b>2/11</b>	<p><i>Conflating Correlation with Causation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bleske-Rechek, A., Gunseor, M. M., &amp; Maly, J. R. (2018). Does the language fit the evidence? Unwarranted causal language in psychological scientists' scholarly work. <i>The Behavior Therapist, 41</i>, 341-352.</li> </ul>	
<b>2/13</b>	<i>In-class practice with research design, correlation and causation</i>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 1 article for second possible topic (or for the first one if you have decided to go with the first one) (5 pts)
<b>Week 4: We are Blind to Our Biases</b>		
<b>2/16</b>	<p><i>Confirmation Bias and Hindsight Bias</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hastorf, A. H., &amp; Cantril, H. (1954). They saw a game: A case study. <i>The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 49</i>, 129-134.</li> <li>• Duke, A. (2018). <i>Thinking in bets: Making smarter decisions when you don't have all the facts</i> (Ch. 1). Portfolio.</li> </ul>	
<b>2/18</b>	<p><i>Science Reveals Our Biases</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ehrlinger, J., Gilovich, T., &amp; Ross, L. (2005). Peering into the bias blind spot: People's assessments of bias in themselves and others. <i>Personality &amp; Social Psychology Bulletin, 31</i>(5), 680-692.</li> </ul>	
<b>2/20</b>	No class – April out of town	Sometime this week have a meeting with April to discuss chosen topic and develop plan of attack (10 pts)

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 5: The Scientific Filter</b>		
2/23	<p><i>How We Do Science Part I: Replication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ritchie, S. (2020). <i>Science Fictions</i> (Chapter 2: The replication crisis). Henry Holt and Company.</li> </ul>	
2/25	<p><i>How We Do Science Part II: The Desire for Statistical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young, N. S., Ioannidis, J. P. A., &amp; Al-Ubaydli, O. (2008). Why current publication practices may distort science. <i>PLoS Medicine</i>, 5, 1418-1422.</li> <li>Simmons, J. P., Nelson, L. D., &amp; Simonsohn, U. (2011). False-positive psychology: Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 22(11), 1359-1366.</li> </ul>	
2/27	<p><i>How We Do Science Part III: From the Scientists to the Public</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DeVries et al. (2018). The cumulative effect of reporting and citation biases on the apparent efficacy of treatments: The case of depression. <i>Psychological Medicine</i>, 48, 2453-2455.</li> <li>(In class) Ben Goldacre on TED: <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_goldacre_what_doctors_don_t_know_about_the_drugs_they_prescribe">https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_goldacre_what_doctors_don_t_know_about_the_drugs_they_prescribe</a></li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 2 different articles for chosen topic (10 pts)
<b>Week 6: Mental Illness: Placebos and Pharmacological Treatments</b>		
3/2	<p><i>Placebo Effects In Medicine</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beecher, H. K. (1955). The powerful placebo. <i>JAMA</i>, 159(17), 1602-1606.</li> <li>Tilburt, J. C. et al. (2008). Prescribing “placebo treatments”: Results of national survey of US internists and rheumatologists. <i>BMJ</i>, 337(7678), 1097-1100.</li> <li>Bleske-Rechek, A., Paulich, K., &amp; Jorgensen, K. (2019). Therapeutic touch redux: Twenty years after the “Emily Event,” energy therapies live on through bad science. <i>Skeptic</i>, 24, 24-31.</li> </ul>	
3/4	<p><i>Expectancies and the Consequences of Breaking Blind</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirsch, I. (2019). Placebo effect in the treatment of depression and anxiety. <i>Frontiers in Psychiatry</i>, 10, 407.</li> <li>Rutherford, B. R., Wall, M. M., Glass, A., &amp; Stewart, J. W. (2014). The role of patient expectancy in placebo and nocebo effects in antidepressant trials. <i>The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry</i>, 75(10), 1040-1046.</li> </ul>	
3/6	<p><i>The Chemical Imbalance Hypothesis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moncrieff, J., Cooper, R. E., Stockman, T., Amendola, S., Hengartner, M. P., &amp; Horowitz, M. (2022). The serotonin theory of depression: A systematic umbrella review of the evidence. <i>Molecular Psychiatry</i>, 28, 3423-3256.</li> <li>Ang, B., Horowitz, M., &amp; Moncrieff, J. (2022). Is the chemical imbalance an ‘urban legend’? An exploration of the status of the serotonin theory of depression in the scientific literature. <i>SSM - Mental Health</i>, 2, 100098.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 2 different articles for chosen topic (10 pts)

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 7: Mental Illness: Non-Pharmacological Treatments and Prevention</b>		
3/9	<p><i>Psychological Therapies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chambless, D. L., &amp; Ollendick, T. H. (2001). Empirically supported psychological interventions: Controversies and evidence. <i>Annual Review Psychology, 52</i>, 685-716.</li> <li>Improving your skill of emotion regulation (with Shireen Rizvi), Clearer Thinking podcast (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5heVgNPRP7w">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5heVgNPRP7w</a>)</li> </ul>	
3/11	<p><i>Exercise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kandola, A., et al. (2020). Depressive symptoms and objectively measured physical activity and sedentary behavior throughout adolescence: A prospective cohort study. <i>Lancet Psychiatry</i>, online: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30034-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30034-1</a></li> <li>Noetel, M., et al. (2024). Effect of exercise for depression: Systematic review and network meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. <i>BMJ, 384</i>, e075847</li> </ul>	
3/13	<p><i>Play</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gray, P., Lancy, D. F., &amp; Bjorklund, D. F. (2023). Decline in independent activity as a cause of decline in children’s mental well-being: Summary of the evidence. <i>The Journal of Pediatrics, 260</i>. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2023.02.004">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2023.02.004</a></li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 2 different articles for chosen topic (10 pts)
<b>Week 8: Concepts of Illness</b>		
3/23	<p><i>Concept Creep</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haslam, N. (2016). Concept creep: Psychology’s expanding concepts of harm and pathology. <i>Psychological Inquiry, 27</i>, 1-17.</li> </ul>	
3/25	<p><i>Mixed Blessings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foulkes, L., &amp; Andrews, J. L. (2023). Are mental health awareness efforts contributing to the rise in mental health problems? A call to test the prevalence inflation hypothesis. <i>New Ideas in Psychology, 69</i>, 101010.</li> <li>Darby Saxbe on <i>Plain English</i>: <a href="https://www.theringer.com/2024/2/13/24071469/dark-side-of-the-internet-obsession-with-anxiety-mental-health-crisis">https://www.theringer.com/2024/2/13/24071469/dark-side-of-the-internet-obsession-with-anxiety-mental-health-crisis</a></li> </ul>	
3/27	<p><i>ADHD</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chaudhary, N., &amp; Swanapoel, A. (2023). Editorial perspective: What can we learn from hunter-gatherers about children’s mental health? An evolutionary perspective. <i>The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 64</i>, 1522-1525.</li> <li>Harrison, A. G., &amp; Armstrong, I. (2022). Accommodation decision-making for postsecondary students with ADHD: Treating the able as disabled. <i>Psychological Injury and Law, 15</i>, 367-384.</li> <li>Levinovitz, A. (2024, Sept. 25). Are colleges getting disability accommodations all wrong? <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 2 different articles for chosen topic (10 pts)

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 9: Program Evaluation</b>		
<b>3/30</b>	<i>Public Issues I</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McCord, J. (2003). Cures that harm: Unanticipated outcomes of crime prevention programs. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 587, 16-30.</li> </ul>	
<b>4/1</b>	<i>Public Issues II</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1971–2023 Long-Term Trend (LTT) Reading and Mathematics Assessments. <a href="https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/ltt/2023/">https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/ltt/2023/</a></li> <li>• Sanchez, E. I. (2023). <i>Evidence of grade inflation since 2010 in high school English, mathematics, social studies, and science courses</i>. ACT Research Report R2300.</li> <li>• Kahloon, I. (2025, Oct. 14). <a href="#">America is sliding toward illiteracy</a>. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</li> </ul>	
<b>4/3</b>	No class – April out of town	Due on Canvas: Structured summary of 2 different articles for chosen topic (10 pts)
<b>Week 10: Issues of Sex and Gender</b>		
<b>4/6</b>	<i>Gender Bias</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewart-Williams, S. (2023, Nov. 11). Fifty years of gender bias.</li> <li>• Stewart-Williams, S. (2025, May 10). The truth about sexism in science.</li> <li>• (Optional) Schaerer et al. (2023). On the trajectory of discrimination: A meta-analysis and forecasting survey capturing 44 years of field experiments on gender and hiring decisions. <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>, 179, 104280.</li> <li>• (Optional) Ceci, S. J., Kahn, S., &amp; Williams, W. M. (2023). Exploring gender bias in six key domains of academic science: An adversarial collaboration. <i>Psychological Science in the Public Interest</i>, 24, 15-73.</li> </ul>	
<b>4/8</b>	<i>Sex and Sexual Orientation: Mate Preferences</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walter, K. V., et al. (2020). Sex differences in mate preferences across 45 countries: A large-scale replication. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 31, 408-423.</li> <li>• Coventry, A. J., Mixner, S., Gelbart, B., Walter, K. V., Conroy-Beam, D., &amp; German, T. C. (2025). Deconfounding sex and sex of partner in mate-preference research. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 36, 116-129.</li> </ul>	
<b>4/10</b>	<i>Issues of Marriage and Family</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finkel et al. (2015). The suffocation model: Why marriage in America is becoming an all-or-nothing institution. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 24, 238-244.</li> <li>• Beck, J. (2017, Sept. 22). Love in the time of individualism. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Summary of three conceptual or empirical threads <i>shared</i> by multiple articles, and three conceptual or empirical threads that <i>differ</i> across multiple articles (10 pts)

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 11: Ingroup Bias</b>		
4/13	<p><i>Infant Origins of Ingroup Bias</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mahajan, N., &amp; Wynn, K. (2012). Origins of “us” versus “them”: Prelinguistic infants prefer similar others. <i>Cognition</i>, 124, 227-233.</li> <li>• Hamlin, J. K., Mahajan, N., Liberman, Z., &amp; Wynn, K. (2013). Not like me = bad: Infants prefer those who harm dissimilar others. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 4, 589-594.</li> </ul>	
4/15	<p><i>Discrimination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campbell, M. R., &amp; Brauer, M. (2021). Is discrimination widespread? Testing assumptions about bias on a university campus. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: General</i>, 150(4), 756-777.</li> </ul>	
4/17	<p><i>Politics and Morality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graham, J., Haidt, J., &amp; Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 96, 1029-1046.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Check in. What have you gotten done on your final product this week? (5 pts)
<b>Week 12: Political Tribes</b>		
4/20	<p><i>Politics and Bias</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ditto, P. H., et al. (2019). At least bias is bipartisan: A meta-analytic comparison of partisan bias in liberals and conservatives. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 14, 273-291.</li> </ul>	
4/22	<p><i>Political Diversity in the Academy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inbar, Y., &amp; Lammers, J. (2012). Political diversity in social and personality psychology. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 7(5), 496-503.</li> <li>• Brandt, M. J., Reyna, C., Chambers, J. R., Crawford, J. T., &amp; Wetherell, G. (2014). The ideological conflict hypothesis: Intolerance among both liberals and conservatives. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 23(1), 27-34.</li> </ul>	
4/24	<p><i>Capstone project work: Critical friends peer review</i></p>	In class: Peer review of a complete draft of capstone project (10 pts)

Date	Topic and Readings	Capstone Project
<b>Week 13: Happiness I</b>		
4/27	<p><i>The Experiencing vs Remembering Self</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kahneman, D., Krueger, A. B., Schkade, D., Schwarz, N., &amp; Stone, A. A. (2006). Would you be happier if you were richer? A focusing illusion. <i>Science</i>, 312, 1908-1910.</li> <li><i>Why Money Doesn't Buy Happiness in America</i>: Morgan Housel on Plain English with Derek Thompson (<a href="https://www.theringer.com/podcasts/plain-english-with-derek-thompson/2025/10/07/why-money-doesnt-buy-happiness-in-america">https://www.theringer.com/podcasts/plain-english-with-derek-thompson/2025/10/07/why-money-doesnt-buy-happiness-in-america</a>)</li> </ul>	
4/29	<p><i>Maximizing and Satisficing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iyengar, S. S., Wells, R. E., &amp; Schwartz, B. (2006). Doing better but feeling worse: Looking for the "best" job undermines satisfaction. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 17, 143-150.</li> </ul>	
5/1	<p><i>Using Time and Money Wisely</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., &amp; Norton, M. I. (2014). Prosocial spending and happiness: Using money to benefit others pays off. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 23(1), 41-47.</li> <li>Sandstrom, G. M., &amp; Dunn, E. W. (2014). Social interactions and well-being: The surprising power of weak ties. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>, 40(7), 910-922.</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas: Final Capstone Project (100 pts)
<b>Week 14: Happiness II</b>		
5/4	<p><i>Happy and Unhappy Relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driver, J., Tabares, A., Shapiro, A. F., &amp; Gottman, J. M. (2012). Couple interaction in happy and unhappy marriages: Gottman Laboratory Studies. In F. Walsh (Ed.), <i>Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity</i> (4th ed.); pp. 57-77. Guilford Press.</li> <li>Gottman, J. M., &amp; DeClaire, J. (2002). <i>The relationship cure: A 5 step guide to strengthening your marriage, family, and friendships</i> (Ch. 2). Three Rivers Press.</li> </ul>	
5/6	<p><i>Creating Happiness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sheldon, K. M., &amp; Lyubomirsky, S. (2021). Revisiting the sustainable happiness model and pie chart: Can happiness be successfully pursued? <i>The Journal of Positive Psychology</i>, 16(2), 145-154.</li> </ul>	
5/8	<p><i>The Good Life</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cronon, W. (1998). "Only connect..." The goals of a liberal education. <i>The American Scholar</i>, 67(4).</li> <li>Brooks, D. (2023, August 14). How America got mean. <i>The Atlantic</i>.</li> </ul>	