

# INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Monday/Wednesday | 2:00-3:20 PM | Zoom University

why are people the way that they are?

why do they do the things that they do?

what can psychological science tell me about the world around me?

how can I use that knowledge to make the world a better place?

If these questions (especially the last two) keep you up at night, this is the perfect section of Intro Psych for you. Over the course of the semester, you'll grapple with these questions and learn how to think like budding scientists—a skill that will benefit you through college and beyond, regardless of your major or ultimate career path.

As an introduction to the scientific study of the human mind, we'll cover everything from the organization of our brain cells to the psychology of internet trolling, as well as the scientific methods that help researchers make psychological discoveries. (See the course calendar on the last page for a full listing of topics.) Throughout the semester, you will be highly encouraged to apply your knowledge of the material to your own lives, as well as the world around you.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM



**Professor:** Leslie Berntsen, Ph.D.

**Please call me:** Leslie or Dr./Prof. Berntsen (pronouns: she/her)

**How do you pronounce that?** Like the English words "burnt" and "sin"

**Ask me about:** Anything related to the class, real world applications of psychology, becoming a psych major, getting involved in research, graduate school and other psych-based careers, being a first-generation college student

**E-mail:**

**Office hours:** Mondays, 10:00-11:00 AM and 8:00-9:00 PM, and by appointment

**Make an appointment at:**

**Office:** My living room



**TA:** Cindy Chiang (she/her)

**Sections:** T, 8:00 AM; W, 8:00 AM

**E-mail:**

**Office hours:** Available on Blackboard



**TA:** Esthelle Ewusi Boisvert (she/her)

**Sections:** M, 8:00 AM; F, 10:00 AM

**E-mail:**

**Office hours:** Available on Blackboard



**TA:** Lucy Kim, Ph.D. (she/her)

**Sections:** F, 12:00 PM; F, 2:00 PM

**E-mail:**

**Office hours:** Available on Blackboard



**TA:** Narcis Marshall (she/her)

**Sections:** W, 4:00 PM; R, 8:00 AM

**E-mail:**

**Office hours:** Available on Blackboard

## COURSE FORMAT AND ORGANIZATION

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For lectures, we'll be using a flipped class format. This means that I'll give you pre-recorded lecture videos for you to watch on your own time. (Think of it like psychology podcast time.) In other words, you do not have to log in to Zoom twice a week just to hear me talk at you. Just make sure you watch the appropriate videos before the respective quiz is due (see the course calendar on the last page).

During our regularly scheduled lecture periods, I'll be hanging out on Zoom and you're more than welcome to pop in if you have questions or would just like to chat about the material. In other words, "lecture" attendance is not required; just consider it an extra opportunity that you can take advantage of whenever you like. Labs will meet synchronously (on Zoom) at their regularly scheduled time. (More details about labs on the following pages.)

It's going to be quite an adventure to fit the entire education you deserve into an abbreviated online semester, but hopefully this format will help you demonstrate all your newfound knowledge with as much support, flexibility, and one-on-one interaction as possible.

## COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

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**OPTIONAL:** Spielman, Rosie M. (2014). Psychology. OpenStax. Freely available at [openstax.org/details/books/psychology](https://openstax.org/details/books/psychology)

In the spirit of reducing everyone's burden, the textbook is not a required component of the course this semester. If you would like certain concepts explained in more detail or using different words, you're more than welcome to use the textbook as an additional reference, but you will not be held accountable for anything that is not included in the lecture videos.

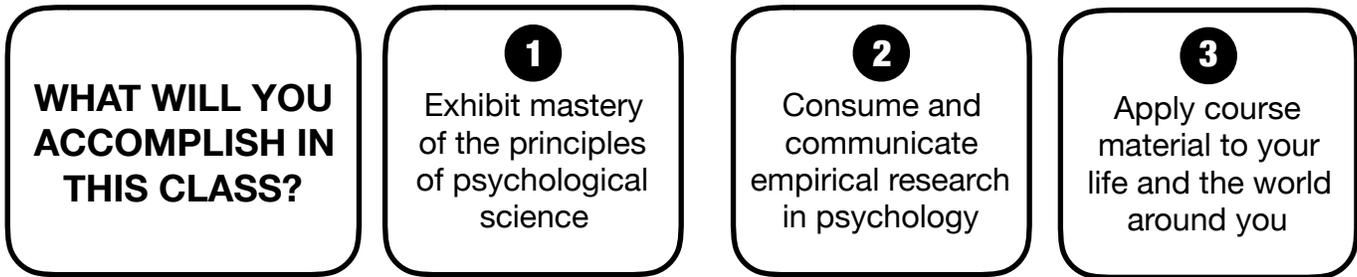
FYI, there is always more information in introductory psychology textbooks than could ever make it into a semester's worth of lectures. Mine will consist of the information that I think is the most important/useful/fun, but this textbook will be a great resource for those of you who need to study for the MCAT or Psych GRE at any point in the future



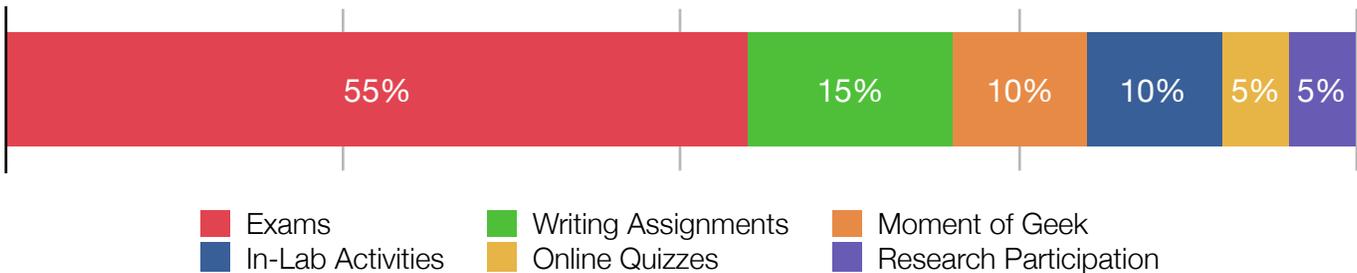
**Blackboard** (accessible through myUSC) is where you'll be able to find all the materials for this class: lecture slides and videos, a Google doc with all of the optional extra links from lectures, online quizzes and exams, assignment descriptions and rubrics, lab materials, etc.

**Piazza** (linked on Blackboard under "Course Logistics") is a Wiki-style website that your TAs and I will use to send announcements and reminders (via email blast). As a bonus, you can also use Piazza to crowdsource answers to any questions you may have about the class. Highly recommend using it to ask (and answer!) questions as you move through the material.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT



### How will your success be measured?



## LATE/MISSED WORK POLICY

Needless to say, there’s a lot going on. If you find that you’re having trouble keeping up with this class, please let me and/or your TA know as soon as you are able so that we can do what we can to help.

Due dates are important insofar as they help you spread out your workload and help us keep all the behind-the-scenes aspects of the course as organized as possible, so we trust that you’ll all keep up with them to the extent that you are able. Late work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis (including for all religious holidays), so please do reach out to me and/or your TA if you know you’ll need more time or are having trouble keeping up. (Please note: You do not need to perform trauma in asking for an extension; you just need to let us know (very broadly) that you need help and we will help.)

Otherwise, late assignments that have not been granted an extension will incur a penalty of 20% off of the maximum score for every day (or portion thereof) late, including non-class days and weekends.

**THE MORE YOU KNOW:** If life happens in such a way that you find yourself struggling to stay afloat in all of your classes, you can reach out to Campus Support & Intervention at (213) 821-4710. Among other services, they can send official notifications to your professors informing us (very broadly) that you're in need of support and flexibility.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### ONLINE QUIZZES

One non-cumulative online quiz will accompany each unit to help you check your understanding as we progress through the course. Quiz questions will be multiple-choice and your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the term. Quizzes will be made available on Blackboard immediately after the (first) lecture session devoted to Q&A/discussion on that topic, and should be completed within the next several days. (See the course calendar on the last page for a full list of due dates.)

For these online quizzes, you are free to use your notes and/or work together with a classmate. However, I highly recommend taking each quiz for the first time without any outside assistance to see how much (and what kinds of) information you retained from that unit. Then, when taking the quiz again, use your resources to help you answer the questions you got incorrect (and take note of the topics these questions addressed to help yourself identify areas of improvement). You may re-take each quiz as many times as you'd like. I will only count your highest (pre-due date) score for each quiz and there are no penalties for additional attempts.

### EXAMS

This course will have four equally weighted exams: **three non-cumulative short answer exams and one cumulative multiple choice final exam** that you'll have 48 hours to complete (for maximum flexibility). For all the exams, you are welcome to use your notes and work together with up to two peers to help you get on the right track, but the short answer responses you submit must be your own. In other words, directly copying from another source or one of your collaborators (or copying and changing every couple words) will be considered an act of academic dishonesty. Your single lowest exam grade out of the four will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the term.

**SAVE THE DATES:** September 22nd, October 15th, November 10th, November 17th

### WRITING

Writing assignments are your chance to independently reflect on the course material and relate what we are learning to your own life and the world around you. There will be one prompt for every major topic area we cover and you can choose **three writing assignments** to complete over the course of the semester. The only requirement is that you must complete (at least) one of the first six prompts and (at least) two of the first twelve prompts (to help you spread out your work). All prompts will be posted to Blackboard at the beginning of the term so you can plan ahead and select accordingly.

These 1.5-2 page (double-spaced) assignments will be due approximately one week after the "lecture" day that corresponds to the material at hand. (Specific due dates can be found on the course calendar on the last page and the full list of prompts.) They do not need to follow any specific format; just thoughtfully respond to your chosen prompts in a clear and organized manner. (See the rubric posted to Blackboard for more details.)

If you would like to complete more than three writing assignments (e.g., to make up for a late submission or a lower-than-expected grade), only your three highest scores will be counted. (Note: If you don't meet the due date distribution requirements specified above, you'll get a zero (that cannot be substituted) for the missing assignment(s).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### MOMENT OF GEEK

Starting the second week of labs (August 31st), the beginning of each lab section will be reserved for Moment of Geek: an opportunity to polish your presentation skills in an informal, supportive environment, learn how to communicate scientific research in an accessible manner, and most importantly, just geek out about something that fascinates you.

For this assignment, your job is to find an article in the popular press that summarizes the findings of a recent study in psychology or neuroscience, and then, in two minutes or less, share it with your classmates. Explain what the researchers studied, how they studied it, what they found, and why you think it's awesome. (Full assignment description available on Blackboard.)

Everyone will be responsible for completing **two Moment of Geek “presentations”** (to be scheduled in advance) over the course of the semester.

### LAB ACTIVITIES

Each week, lab sections will consist of Moment of Geek presentations, on-demand review of recent lecture material, and one or more interactive activities. To accompany the activities, you'll complete a short, self-contained assignment that will be due by the end of the class period. You'll receive full credit for each lab if you complete the assignment and thoughtfully participate; you'll receive half credit if you just complete the assignment.

In other words, unless you're scheduled for Moment of Geek that week, you don't need to do anything special to prepare for your lab section, nor will you have any lab-specific homework. You won't be able to make up missed labs by attending a different section, but your three lowest lab activity grades will be dropped at the end of the semester, so you can miss a few without penalty.

#### LABS BEGIN THE WEEK OF:

August 24th

#### NO LABS THE WEEKS OF:

September 7th  
November 2nd

### RESEARCH HOURS

For this class, the Department of Psychology requires that each student complete **five SONA research credits** over the course of the semester. More information on registering for SONA and signing up for studies will be provided in the first weeks of class and posted to Blackboard.

To receive your SONA points at the end of the semester, you must tell SONA to allocate your credits to [this specific lecture section of PSYC 100](#) (not my other section and not Prof. Farver's). If you don't do this (and we have to fix it for you by hand at the end of the semester), you'll only receive credit for 50% of the SONA studies that you completed.

If you would like to participate in a semester-long (virtual) service-learning experience through USC's [Joint Educational Project](#) or complete an alternative assignment (two additional writing assignments) instead of participating in research, you must make this choice (and email me/CC your TA to let us know) by September 4th.

## EXTRA CREDIT

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### SYLLABUS QUIZ

This syllabus is your friend! If you have a logistical question about this class (or even about all the campus resources available to you), the answer is very likely somewhere in this document. (I know it's a lot, but I wrote it all to help you, I promise.)

So, to preemptively reward all of you for your excellent syllabus-reading habits, each of you have the opportunity to earn one percentage point of extra credit (which will be added to your overall grade for the course at the end of the semester) by taking a very quick and laughably easy syllabus quiz on Blackboard (due the first week of class). But here's the catch: Every time you email me or your TA with a question that you have already answered for yourself by taking that quiz (e.g., "How many quiz grades get dropped?"), you will lose a quarter of that point.

Of course, we are more than happy to answer other (non-syllabus) questions via email and any/all questions "in-person" during class time or office hours, so you can absolutely ask us things! Just please also try to do your part to make sure the question hasn't already been answered for you before sending an email. (Pro-tip: You can always return to this syllabus quiz on Blackboard, and this document is also fully searchable 😊)

## GRADING POLICIES

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Final percentage scores will be rounded up/down to the nearest whole number from .50 and letter grades will be assigned according to the table below

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

We will not entertain individual appeals for "personalized rounding schemes" nor will we create "extra assignments" for anyone to attempt to raise their grade in the final weeks of the course. (Because it is a question on the syllabus quiz, each such request will be subject to a deduction from the "it's in the syllabus" extra credit point described above.)

**PRO-TIP:** There is absolutely no shame in needing or seeking help. If you become concerned about (or would simply like to improve) your performance in the class at any point, please reach out (to me or your TA) as soon as you can.

## TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

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Unless otherwise specified, assignments (e.g., online quizzes, writing assignments) should be completed or submitted through Blackboard by the start of "lecture" on the due date listed on the course calendar on the last page. To provide as much flexibility as possible (with respect to time zones and just in general), you can continue to submit assignments for full credit up to 24 hours after each listed due date/time. (And there's no need to let us know; the 24-hour window is an automatic blanket extension.)

For Moment of Geek, you need to submit your chosen article (also through Blackboard) at least 48 hours prior to the start of the lab session when you're scheduled to present.

## A NOTE ON COMMUNITY AND WELLNESS

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It is my goal to foster an environment of mutual respect in which everyone can feel comfortable voicing their opinions, sharing their stories, and learning about potentially heavy or personally relevant material. During your first lab session, you'll work together as a group to create community guidelines for your time together. If, at any point, you feel like information covered in this class triggers thoughts, feelings, or concerns that you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, your TA, Student Counseling Services, or the (free and anonymous) National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

### Student Counseling Services

Consultations: (213) 740-7711  
24/7 support: (213) 740-9355  
Location: ESHC 304

### National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255

## ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

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As an instructor, I strive to create an environment in which every student is given an equal opportunity to excel. If you are in need of certain accommodations (e.g., extra time on assessments, adaptive technology, class note-taker, etc.) due to any physical or mental health condition, please contact Disability Services and Programs (and let me know you have done so) as soon as possible. Remember that any information you share regarding accommodations is confidential and will not be shared with other students.

Once you provide me with an official accommodations letter from DSP, we can work together to ensure that your needs are met from that point forward. Please note that academic accommodations cannot be granted retroactively or by "working something out" personally with a professor without an approved accommodations letter.

Of course, if there is anything that your TAs or I can do to make our teaching more accessible and inclusive, please don't hesitate to let us know at any time.

### Disability Services and Programs

Hours: M-F, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM  
Location: GFS 120  
Phone: (213) 740-0776

### THE MORE YOU KNOW

Mental illnesses "count" for disability accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Please reach out to DSP if you feel you could benefit from accommodations.

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY: THE GOLDEN RULE

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There's no way that I, your TA, or any of your peers can know what you're doing behind your screen during "lectures" or labs. That being said, if you're voicing your opinion or sharing your story with a group of people, you'd probably want them to pay full attention to you. Please just be kind.

Because technology is critical to an online class, please let me and/or your TA know if you face difficulties accessing the material, "coming" to class, or keeping up with the requirements so we can do what we can to help.

## ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE, IDENTITY-BASED HARM, AND OTHER PERSONAL CRISES

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If you ask me, this is the single most important part of the syllabus and I need to know that people are aware of this information, so let's try something. If you have read this far, please email me (Dr. Leslie Berntsen) your favorite GIF of Olivia Benson (the fictional sex crimes detective from Law & Order: SVU). This is not a joke, and I am 100% serious. (You will lose half of your aforementioned syllabus quiz extra credit point if you do not do this.) Now, the important information...

If you experience sexual violence, identity-based harm, or any other personal crisis at any point during the semester, please don't hesitate to reach out to me and/or your TA so we can (1) help you get caught up in class, (2) put you in contact with the appropriate resources and services, and (3) answer questions to the extent that we are qualified to do so. But, if you'd rather not talk to your professor or TA about these issues, we completely understand. Here are some of those resources (all hyperlinked) that we would have ended up telling you about.

[Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention & Services](#)

[Student Counseling Services](#)

[Campus Support & Intervention](#)

[Title IX Office](#)

[Office of Equity & Diversity](#)

[Department of Public Safety](#)

[Asian Pacific American Student Services](#)

[Center for Black Cultural & Student Affairs](#)

[La CASA](#)

[LGBT Resource Center](#)

[Office of Religious Life](#)

And finally, for information about your legal rights under Title IX: [Know Your IX](#)

**THE MORE YOU KNOW:** Your TAs and I are required by both university policy and federal law to report all disclosures of sexual violence to the appropriate campus authorities. But, please know that I am qualified and more than willing to support survivors throughout the process. If you have general questions, please ask any time.

## ON BASIC NEEDS

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If you ever find yourself struggling to afford food and/or secure a safe and stable place to live and feel like such circumstances are impacting your performance in this class, please speak to me and/or your TA (if you feel comfortable) so that we can provide whatever resources and support we can. For additional information and support, you can also contact [Campus Support & Intervention](#) at (213) 821-4710.

**THE MORE YOU KNOW:** There is an [emergency food and toiletry pantry](#) located in Parkside Apartments #135.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES

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USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment that fosters general principles of academic honesty. These include respecting the intellectual property of others, submitting your own individual work unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and protecting your own academic work from misuse by others. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles and be aware of the possible sanctions, which are summarized in [Part B of SCampus](#).

For this class, specific examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: Falsifying lab attendance or completing an activity for someone who wasn't present during the lab section and submitting any graded material that has been written by another person (including yourself for a previous class) or lifted from the internet, either in part or in full. Remember that you are more than welcome to use your notes and collaborate with friends for pretty much every aspect of this course; you just need to make sure that the writing you ultimately submit (e.g., your exam responses and writing assignments) is entirely your own.

**PRO-TIP:** If any part of you feels even slightly tempted to engage in academic dishonesty for the sake of a better grade, come talk to me or your TA and we'll give you all sorts of tips and tricks to earn that grade you're hoping for.

If you cheat, you could be putting your entire degree in jeopardy. You are also guaranteed to lose all of my trust and make me very, very grumpy that I have to deal with it/you.

Do not cheat. That's all I got.

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

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CAMPUS OFFICE	SERVICES	PHONE	EMAIL
<a href="#"><u>Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity</u></a>	General help with college coursework, including study skill tips, test-taking strategies, and stress management	(213) 740-7884	kortschakcenter@usc.edu
<a href="#"><u>The Writing Center</u></a>	Specific help with writing, including free one-on-one consultations	(213) 740-3691	writing@usc.edu
<a href="#"><u>American Language Institute</u></a>	Credit-granting courses, one-on-one tutoring, and free informal conversation groups for English language learners	(213) 740-0079	askali@usc.edu
<a href="#"><u>Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice</u></a>	Lifestyle Redesign program to help foster time management, decrease procrastination, manage stress and anxiety, etc.	(323) 442-3340	otfp@med.usc.edu

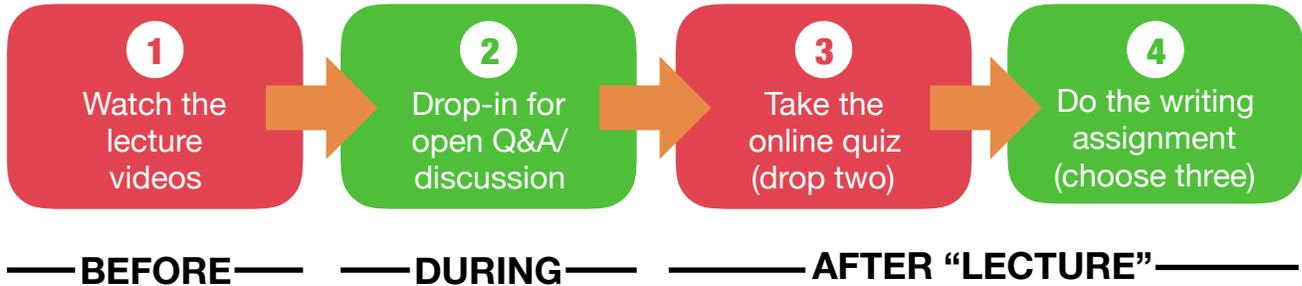
## COURSE SCHEDULE

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The course calendar on the next page details the topic scheduled for each drop-in Q&A/discussion session, as well as the due dates for all of your quizzes, writing assignments, and exams.

The flow chart below summarizes your tasks (and the order in which you should complete them) for each topic area. Ideally, you'll watch each week's lecture videos (linked in the Live Class Calendar on Blackboard) prior to the listed Q&A/discussion session (so that you'll be able to pop in if you have any questions or would like to chat).

If you have questions about an earlier topic on a later day, you're more than welcome to pop in, but anyone who has questions about that day's scheduled topic will get priority. You are also more than welcome to pop in to my other section (TR, 9:30-10:50 AM; I'll post both Zoom links to each Blackboard page) if you find that those times work better for you. (Their daily schedule is the same as yours, just one day ahead.) Even if you do that, you're still responsible for all the due dates you see on the next page, since this is the section you're officially enrolled in.



DAY	DATE	WHAT'S DUE?		COME TO "LECTURE" IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR WOULD JUST LIKE TO CHAT ABOUT:	TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS (optional)
		Quizzes (two dropped)	Writing (choose three)		
M	August 17 <sup>th</sup>			1A: History & Current State of Psychological Science	1
W	August 19 <sup>th</sup>	Syllabus XC		1B: Research Methods & Critical Thinking	2
M	August 24 <sup>th</sup>	#1A, #1B		2: Theories of Personality	11
W	August 26 <sup>th</sup>		#1	2: Theories of Personality	
M	August 31 <sup>st</sup>	#2		3: Introduction to Neuroscience	3
W	September 2 <sup>nd</sup>		#2	3: Introduction to Neuroscience	
M	September 7 <sup>th</sup>			<b>NO CLASS: Labor Day</b>	
W	September 9 <sup>th</sup>	#3	#3	4: Nature & Nurture	3
M	September 14 <sup>th</sup>	#4		4: Nature & Nurture	
W	September 16 <sup>th</sup>		#4	5: Developmental Psychology	9
M	September 21 <sup>st</sup>	#5		<b>EXAM #1 (Units 1-5; due by 2:00 PM on September 23<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	
W	September 23 <sup>rd</sup>		#5	6: Social Psychology	12
M	September 28 <sup>th</sup>	#6		6: Social Psychology	
W	September 30 <sup>th</sup>		#6	7: Emotions, Health, & Happiness	10, 14
M	October 5 <sup>th</sup>	#7		8: Motivation, Stress, & Illness	10, 14
W	October 7 <sup>th</sup>		#7, #8	9: Understanding Mental Illness	15
M	October 12 <sup>th</sup>	#8, #9		10: Treating Mental Illness	16
W	October 14 <sup>th</sup>		#9	<b>EXAM #2 (Units 6-10; due by 2:00 PM on October 16<sup>th</sup>)</b>	
M	October 19 <sup>th</sup>	#10		11: States of Consciousness	4
W	October 21 <sup>st</sup>		#10, #11	12: Sensation & Perception	5
M	October 26 <sup>th</sup>	#11, #12		13: Learning	6
W	October 28 <sup>th</sup>		#12	14: Memory	8
M	November 2 <sup>nd</sup>	#13, #14		15: Language & Cognition	7
W	November 4 <sup>th</sup>		#13, #14	16: Intelligence	7
M	November 9 <sup>th</sup>	#15, #16		<b>EXAM #3 (Units 11-16; due by 2:00 PM on November 11<sup>th</sup>)</b>	
W	November 11 <sup>th</sup>		#15, #16	Flex Day (Plans TBD)	
F	November 20 <sup>th</sup>			<b>FINAL EXAM (due by 2:00 PM on November 22<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	

**Reminder:** Online quizzes and writing assignments are due (to Blackboard) by the start of lecture (2:00 PM LA local time), with an automatic 24-hour blanket extension added to the quiz/writing assignment due dates listed above.