



PSYC 341-01W, Learning Theories and Processes

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

Online - Asynchronous

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Will Whitham, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-11:00 AM; by appointment

Office: Henderson 302

University Email Address: will.whitham@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: 24-48 hours Monday-Friday, weekends and holidays may take longer than 48 hours.

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook(s) Required

All readings will be Open Educational Resources available for free in course software.

Course Description

In this course we will cover the fundamental theories and research conducted related to learning and motivation within psychology. We will cover both classic and modern psychological research. There is no textbook for this class. Instead we will read journal articles and book chapters each week. The purpose of the readings is to give you an understanding of (1) early research in learning and motivation, (2) modern research in learning and motivation, and (3) how research is conducted. Due to the breadth of the research that has been conducted in these areas within psychology it is impossible to cover every theoretical contribution. Therefore, I have selected what I believe to be key writings in the field.

This syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Develop an overview of the field of psychology by studying and reflecting on the topics.
2. Appreciate how psychologists take a scientific approach to understanding human behavior and thought.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

You need to be able to use the following.

- Microsoft Office or equivalent
- PDF
- myLeo/Desire2Learn (D2L)
- Searching the internet for texts
- Using Library resources

In addition, refer to the following: <https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources/essential-technological-skills/>

Instructional Methods

This is a web-based course. Each week you will be expected to complete required reading materials, and to complete assignments designed to encourage integration of the readings with previous and future readings and with applications to the real world.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Your attendance is a significant factor in student course grades. Start with attending our class and do the following basics.

- 1) Check and read class emails promptly for announcements, updates, clarifications, etc.
- 2) Take notes as you listen to lectures, read the assigned parts of the textbook to check if your listening comprehension matches with the textbook descriptions, and fill in the missing pieces.
- 3) Quiz yourself often. Can you define a concept in your own words? Can you answer 3 or 4 questions of the textbook practice questions correctly?
- 4) Review the materials on a regular basis.
- 5) Complete assigned coursework on time.
- 6) Please contact me when you have questions. The material is difficult, and no one learns everything perfectly the first time through. This class, and your time, is too important for you to spend time getting frustrated instead of learning

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

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C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Makeup exams and assignments

Life happens. If illness or other circumstance prevents your completion of assignments, make-ups may be permitted at my discretion. Email me as soon as possible, and be ready to provide relevant documentation if requested. There will be no make-up exams except as mandated by University policy for University-excused absences, religious holidays and major illnesses. Students should contact the professor prior to the scheduled exam if possible, or within 24 hours of missing the exam due to accident or illness. Due dates for exams are listed below on the schedule of topics.

If you are traveling and representing the university (e.g., band members, athletes, etc.) you need to request accommodations BEFORE the exam or assignment is due, not after.

If you encounter any technical problems when you take any timed tests or assignments online, take screenshots and email me immediately for potential makeup.

Assessments

Reading and lecture engagement: 60%

Weekly reading assignments and short recorded lectures from me will be hosted using the platform Perusall. You will be graded on your engagement with the readings or lectures. In practice opening the content, reading/watching to the end, and minimally engaging with it in any way (e.g., adding comments/highlights) should be sufficient for maximum points each week.

Term Project: 40%

By the end of the semester you will submit a project representative of your developing expertise in our course material. Formal instruction and a grading rubric will be provided during the semester. Projects always include a deliverable component, with common examples including a written term paper, a visual infographic, or a recorded presentation.

Research Participation via Sona

A goal of this class is to help you familiarize yourself with research methods. One way to obtain this goal is to have you participate in research studies. Participating in research studies contributes to students and faculty at East Texas A&M, your understanding of how research is conducted, and human knowledge in general. All students in this class will be required to participate in the psychology department's participant pool or complete alternative assignments.

Students must complete a total of 6 Sona credits. However, if you do not have any unexcused no-shows (i.e., you do not show up for a study or show up too late), you will

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be required to complete only 4 sona credits. Each week there are lab study schedules posted. Sign up in advance and show up on time.

When you first sign into the experiment management system (EMS), you will be asked to take a prescreen. The prescreen takes about 20 minutes to complete. If you complete the prescreen in the first two weeks of the semester, you will receive 0.5 free experiment credit. This can be combined with later experiments that are worth 0.5 credit.

An alternative to Sona research participation will be made available if you choose not to participate in research. The instructions and assigned articles can be found on D2L. If you choose to do the research alternative instead of the research studies, the article summaries will be due **December 4, 2026**.

Failure to complete the required number of credits will result in the reduction of your final grade by one letter grade. That is, if you have an “A” and do not complete the required credits, your final grade will be a “B.”

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments checklist</u>
1	Course Intro	☐ Week01 Video (Perusall)
2	Learning (terms)	
3	Learning (terms, cont)	☐ Week02-03 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week02-03 Reading (Perusall)
4	Learning - Why	☐ Week04 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week04 Reading (Perusall)
5	Associative Learning IRL	☐ Week05 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week05 Reading (Perusall)
6	Advanced Associative Learning	☐ Week06 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week06 Reading (Perusall)
7	Biological Approach to Learning	☐ Week07 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week07 Reading (Perusall)
8	Biological Approach to Learning (Applied) / Fall Break	
9	Biological Approach to Learning (Applied)	☐ Week08-09 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week08-09 Reading (Perusall)
10	Learning Language	☐ Week10 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week10 Reading (Perusall)
11	Learning in the Classroom	☐ Week11 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week11 Reading (Perusall)
12	Student Populations	☐ Week12 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week12 Reading (Perusall)
13	Motivation	☐ Week13 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week13 Reading (Perusall)
14	Motivation (applied)	☐ Week14 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week14 Reading (Perusall)
15	Metacognition / Thanksgiving Break 🦃	
16	Metacognition (cont)	☐ Week15-16 Lecture (Perusall) ☐ Week15-16 Reading (Perusall)
17	Peer Review Term Projects	

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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myLeo Online Learning Management System

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: *Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner.* Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, an ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

Typically, I will respond to your emails within 24 hours from Mon to Fri. It will take longer during the holidays and weekends. I can also meet with you via Zoom. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**Course Generative Text Policy**

Unless authorized by me, you are expected to complete all course assignments without assistance from any source, including artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Google AI, etc.

Course Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you are not allowed to submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Repeated class disruptions will be taken seriously and administrative action will be taken in cases of repeated violations.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. Violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, will result in a zero for the

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assignment or an F in the course at my discretion. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#)

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document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel