

PSYC 290 - SOCIAL SCIENCE CAPSTONE COURSE
Tompkins Cortland Community College
Spring 2018, Room 281A, MW 1pm-2:15pm

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TOPIC: PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a required course for Liberal Arts - Social Science majors, and is meant to be taken during the final semester before graduation. This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to draw on a variety of perspectives, and methods from Psychology in application to a specific research. The course is conducted as a research and discussion seminar. The primary product of this course will be an in-depth research paper on a psychology topic of your choice.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: ENGL 101; PSYC 103; SOCI 101; at least one course from a history sequence (HSTY 101, 102, 201, or 202); or permission of the instructor.

SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS: 3

FORMAT: This course will be conducted as a seminar with students gathering and presenting information. There is a significant amount of reading and writing in this course. Timeliness of completed work is also important.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Presentation of research article (5%)

Annotated Bibliography (25%) - See separate handout.

Paper Outline w/sources (15%)

Research Paper Draft (20%)

Research Paper (25%)

Attendance and Participation (10%) - For a seminar to work successfully, all participants must attend class regularly, be fully prepared to discuss assigned reading material, make contributions based their own research, and collaborate with peers. Serious penalties will be given for undocumented absences.

ACCESS AND EQUITY SERVICES:

It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments to students with disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities, or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities

should contact Carolyn Boone, Coordinator of Access and Equity Services at (607) 844-8222 (ext. 4283) or clb@tompkinscortland.edu to discuss their particular need for academic adjustments. This material is available in alternative formats upon request.

Policy on Plagiarism. Please note the College policies on academic integrity in the College Catalog. Specifically “Any written work submitted by a student must be his or her own. If a student uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must cite the source by such means as a footnote”. (p.54) For this course, you will use APA style to cite and reference any ideas that are not your own. Be forewarned that all assignments you do must be your own work and any incidents of academic dishonesty will be sanctioned and the academic dean and provost of the college will be notified. Sanctions for academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in grade, elimination of grade, or failure for the course. For a more detailed description of the student code of conduct, potential sanctions for violating this code, and the appeal process, please refer to the College Catalog at http://www.tc3.edu/catalog/pp_ac_statement.asp and http://www.tc3.edu/catalog/pp_ac_violation.asp. In addition to reading this, you are expected to have read all the material on the library’s web page about academic integrity and plagiarism: http://www.tc3.edu/library/g_plagiarism.asp.

Guidelines for writing your Capstone research paper

Paper outline (15% of grade)

Write an outline of your paper identifying where each source will fit in. Do this by identifying the author(s) name, date, and page number(s) if appropriate, using APA style citations. We will cover our expectations for your outline in more depth right before you begin work on it.

Paper Draft (20% of grade) Write the best draft that you possibly can and get it in on time. What writing you do now, will save you time and effort later.

Final Paper (25% of grade)

**These guidelines were created by and are used with the permission
Dr. Carla Golden, Professor of Psychology at Ithaca College.**

They have been modified for the purposes of this course.

The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of your literature search and what you learned about the topic you chose to research.

Your paper should have an opening section (consisting of about two paragraphs) in which you present the question you originally chose to research and discuss how you broadened or narrowed the question as a result of the database search you conducted for relevant articles. This section will involve use of the first person (e.g., I wanted to know whether ...). You might note how difficult it was to find studies on your topic,

whether you had to change your topic as a result, whether there was only a small amount of research on your topic or many studies to choose from, whether there was a lot of recent research, or whether you had to resort to older studies to find ones that were relevant to what you were looking for, and/or whether there was anything that surprised you or struck you as particularly noteworthy about the search you undertook. One can learn a lot about the topic from just the database search process, and what we want to know in this section is what you learned about your topic from this process. This is also the place to talk about how the question you started out with (what you wanted to find out more about) changed as a function of the actual research studies you read. This section of the paper should be limited to one or two paragraphs.

The middle section of your paper should summarize and *synthesize* at least eight of the studies you found of your topic and the general conclusions that can be drawn from them. For each study, you'll want to note who the participants were, what question was addressed in the research, what if any relevant theories were used, what the hypotheses were, what was measured (how specifically they conducted the study to test the hypotheses), the major findings and, if applicable, whether these findings support the hypotheses and whether they support a specific theory. Obviously, you cannot go into the amount of detail that you did in your annotations; a rather brief overview of each study will have to suffice. However, be sure there is enough detail to answer the questions listed above. For example, you want to discuss the general information about the research methods and design used, but specific details of participant recruitment, test questions in a testing instrument, procedure, and statistical fine points should be left out, unless critical to the study and you feel it necessary to mention them.

How you synthesize the research in this section will very much depend on the particular studies you found. One basic format would be to present each study separately (in several paragraphs), and then at the end, relate them all to each other and draw some general conclusions. Another format would be to group the studies that are similar, and discuss them all together in one section, then contrast them with other studies that showed something different. So, you might group the studies that used similar procedures, or discuss those that were correlational separately from those studies that were experimental. Or you could discuss those with similar findings together, and contrast them with other studies which collectively revealed different results.

The concluding section of your paper should tell us what you learned overall from the process of preparing and writing this paper. In other words, what did you learn from reading and thinking about the research on your chosen topic? This section should be written in the first person, and could address some of the following: Do you feel you have an answer to the question you started out with, or has a different question been answered? What exactly have you learned about your original research question or topic? Here is an issue you should address: How is the research you report related to

culture? Even if the articles don't specifically mention culture, that doesn't mean it hasn't figured into the research, only that the researchers haven't explicitly addressed it. Culture can be lurking in the background, unacknowledged, even if the participants were middle class European Americans. Research using an all white sample doesn't mean culture is absent any more than the presence of participants from communities of color means that culture is explicitly present. Think about the unstated assumptions of the researchers, the materials and procedures that were used to conduct the research, the questions that were asked, and the interpretations that were offered. All of these may reflect cultural beliefs and values related to conflict even if not explicitly acknowledged.

Some important details

- You need to have smooth transitions between paragraphs and between sections of your paper.
- In the body of your paper, reference to research should also follow proper APA style, as in "Harris, Smith, and Jones (2004) reported that." Note that only last names are used. If you are discussing one particular study in a given paragraph, there is no need to provide the citation more than once in that paragraph, as long as it's clear that you're discussing the same study. For example, after the first mention of the study's authors, you can refer to them more generally, e.g., "The researchers identified participants who" or, "It was reported that". If you're discussing different articles within the same paragraph, it may be necessary to cite each study so it's clear which sentence(s) refer to which citations.
- Your paper should be carefully written, spell-checked, and proofread.
- Your paper should be at least 10 pages, double spaced, 10 or 12 pt font, not including the title and reference pages.
- Your paper must include citations and include an APA style list of references at the end.

Keep track of your grades here:

Assignment	Worth	Grade Earned
Presentation of research article	5%	
Annotated bibliography	25%	
Paper outline w/sources	15%	
Research paper draft	20%	
Research paper	25%	
Attendance & Participation	10%	
	100%	

To estimate how you are doing overall at any point in the class:

1. Add up the total points you have earned on each assignment.
2. Add up the total points you could have earned at that point.
3. Divide earned points by possible points.
4. Multiple by 100 and compute letter grade.

Grading Scale:

93.33-100.00% = A

90-93.32% = A-

86.67-89.99% = B+

83.33-86.66% = B

80-83.32% = B-

76.67-79.99% = C+

70-76.66% = C

66.67-69.99% = D+

63.33-66.66% = D

60-63.32% = D-

Below 60% = F

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS (subject to adjustment)

1/24 Course Outline & Introductions. Homework: think of one or two research questions or paper topics that may interest you.

1/29 Discussion/brainstorming on research topics.

1/31 Methods of research, reading research articles and writing an annotation (handout). Any remaining time will be spent working on focusing research topic and literature search.

- 2/5 Database search training with a librarian in class.
- 2/7 Brief progress reports on literature search and topics. In class literature search. By end of class all students should have at least one article for first annotation.
- 2/12 Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 2/14 Annotations number 1 & 2 due. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 2/19 Previous Annotations returned. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 2/21 Annotations number 3 & 4 due. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 2/26 Previous Annotations returned. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 2/28 Annotations number 5 & 6 due. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 3/5 Previous Annotations returned. Time for individual meetings and lit search.
- 3/7 Annotated bibliography due with all 8-10 sources. Paper outline assigned. Discussion of outlining process. Work on outline.
- 3/12 Work on outline development. Individual meetings with instructor.
- 3/14 Annotated bibliography returned. Individual meetings about outline & sources w/instructor.
- 3/19 & 3/21 NO CLASS: Spring Break
- 3/26 Individual meetings about outline & sources with instructor.
- 3/28 Paper outline due. Individual meetings as needed.
- 4/2 Paper writing day. Individual meetings as needed.
- 4/4 Paper writing day. Individual meetings.
- 4/9 First draft of paper is due.
- 4/11 REGISTRATION DAY (NO DAY CLASSES)
- 4/16 Paper drafts returned. Individual work on revisions.
- 4/18 Individual work on revisions.

4/23 Individual conferences as needed.

4/25 Individual conferences as needed.

4/30 Individual conferences as needed.

5/2 Final papers due.

5/7 Discussion of process and conclusions.

5/9 Final papers returned.

5/14 or 5/16 Final exam period. Class wrap-up & presentation of research articles.