

Psy 100: Introduction to Psychology (Spring 2008)

When students enter my classroom, I invite them to join me in an exploration of how and why we think, feel, and act the way we do. The central goal in my class is for students to think scientifically about issues related to human behavior. Topics in my course range from child development and personality to psychological disorders, and from the biological basis of behavior and learning to the social nature of human beings. My lectures include vivid examples, specific demonstrations, and recent developments in the field. For instance, I bring in an actual human brain for the students to handle; I teach how the heat-producing chemicals of chili peppers can be used to treat chronic pain; and I condition students to salivate when they hear the word “Pavlov.” Key pedagogical features of this course include:

- *Thought-Provoking Questions (TPQ)*: Each week students turn in a series of original questions, based on the day’s readings, which promote thought and discussion. Before each of the four exams, I distribute a subset of their questions to the whole class, and in small groups the students tackle these questions, debate potential answers, and learn from one another.
- *The Outside World Project*: Each student gives a brief lecture to the class about something they observe in the “outside world.” This assignment requires students to evaluate relevant empirical research and to question how the media and popular culture communicate psychological findings.

Psy 360: Psychology of Gender (Spring 2008)

In this class, students explore contemporary scholarship concerning gender as a biologically-based, yet inherently psychological construct. The aim is to understand how gender acts as a situational variable to influence our experiences in a number of contexts. I emphasize variability within sex and gender categories, including issues associated with culture, race, gender identity and sexual orientation. Confronting these issues both intellectually and personally, students gain a better understanding of and appreciation for variation or diversity in their own and others’ lives. I teach students to develop an empirical approach to the often controversial and emotionally-charged issues related to gender. This class consists mostly of discussion, small group work, and debate. Central features of this course also include:

- *Student-Led Discussions*: Each student has the opportunity to be a discussion leader on one class day. As discussion leader, the student distributes an outline of the readings, gives classmates a brief quiz, and leads the class through a discussion of the readings. Leading discussions can be challenging, but my students thrive as they take ownership over the class material.
- *A Novel Research Project*: My students’ final project is to carry out collaborative research (in groups of 2 or 3) involving the creation of a testable hypothesis, experimental materials, and an application for research modeled after the IRB application used on our campus. They then collect and analyze their data and present a poster of their group’s findings.

Psy 370: Clinical Psychology (Spring 2008)

Students in my clinical psychology class learn what it means to be a scientist practitioner, pursuing the interconnected goals of planning, conducting, and evaluating therapy. They learn how one goes about meeting a client for the first time, making a diagnosis, initiating therapy, and being an active participant in facilitating therapeutic change. I also teach specific issues such as the ethics of clinical practice, treatment adherence, relapse prevention, and treatment termination. To illustrate these ideas I focus on specific psychological disorders, ranging from depression and bipolar disorder, to anxiety, eating, personality, and alcohol use disorders. Central features of this course also include:

- *Guest Speakers and Vivid Case Material*: To bring to life the realities of clinical decision-making, I invite guest speakers to class. These speakers are clinicians having diverse backgrounds, theoretical approaches, and clientele. I also bring in a number of case examples from my own clinical practice and from educational videos portraying real client-therapist interactions.
- *The Case Study Project*: Clinical psychology involves theory, research, and practice, and it is through the case study project that my students have the opportunity to try out (in a controlled setting) clinical practice. Before the semester begins, each student studies an autobiography of a

person who has a psychological disorder and creates a persona (e.g., symptoms, life history) similar to the character s/he read about. Each individual is paired up with another student, and each pair schedules a weekly “therapy session” outside of class, trading off in the role of therapist and client and putting into practice the therapeutic techniques they are learning. I provide guidance throughout the semester, teaching the students how to conduct a comprehensive diagnostic interview, plan for treatment, apply empirically supported therapeutic techniques, write weekly session notes, and participate in case presentations. Feedback from graduates who have pursued careers in social services suggests that this semester-long project made them feel they had a significant head-start when they began their professional work.

Psy 270: Health Psychology*

Health psychology emphasizes how psychological, social, and biological factors interact with and determine the success people have in health maintenance, coping with stress and pain, seeking treatment, and recovering from serious illness. Central features of this course also include:

- *A Question of Health:* This assignment was constructed with the assistance of colleagues (especially University of Puget Sound biology professor, Joyce Tamashiro) from the Pacific NW Information Literacy Institute. My goal with this assignment is for students to become more critical consumers of health information and more savvy users of information they find in the popular press, on the internet, and in scientific journals. Each student investigates a question related to human health (found in the popular press) and determines the availability of scientific evidence pertaining to the issue, culminating with a paper and a class presentation.
- *The Behavior Change Project:* For this project students choose one of their own health behaviors that they would like to change (e.g., sleeping only 5 hours a night, skipping breakfast regularly, not exercising, smoking). After choosing a target behavior, they come up with a plan for behavior change, and chart their progress in modifying the behavior. Ultimately, students develop an appreciation for how challenging it can be to change a health behavior.

Psy 460: Community Psychology*

Whereas the traditional focus of applied psychology has been the study of individuals, community psychology encompasses the understanding of groups, as well as the design and evaluation of programs aimed at preventing distress, building competencies, and promoting social change. My primary goals in this “capstone” course primarily for seniors are to enhance students’ understanding of the complex relationships between people and their environments, and to help students design interventions intended to address problems at a community level. Central features of this course also include:

- *The Field Work Project:* With assistance from an Oregon Civic Solutions curriculum revision grant, my students now spend time volunteering at a community agency specializing in issues related to hunger and/or homelessness. The directors of many of these agencies come to my class to present their organizations’ approach to providing services.
- *Community Lab:* Community psychology is dedicated to the idea of ecological validity (i.e., getting out into the community and seeing how things “really” are). The Community Lab is a forum for students to apply the concepts they learn to real-life settings. I divide the class into four lab groups, each of which investigates a relevant problem for students at Lewis and Clark College. Throughout the term various assignments help the students focus their projects, including a literature review, interviews with stakeholders and professionals, data collection, and the design of an intervention to help solve the problem. The project culminates with a formal, campus-wide presentation of findings to administrators, staff, faculty, and students.

Tracking ID: Detw2069

**Dr. Detweiler-Bedell was on parental leave for the Fall 2007 semester. In an emailed consultation with Senior Awards Program Coordinator, John R. Holtz, she was given permission to include descriptions of the courses that would have otherwise appeared in her 2007-2008 teaching schedule. The descriptions above reflect her experiences with Health Psychology and Community Psychology in the 2006-2007 academic year.*