

PSYC 490.01: Senior Seminar in Psychology

Fall 2016

Mon & Wed 2:40 – 4:30 p.m. GH 198

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Office Hours: Thurs 12:00 – 1:00 or by appointment

PURPOSE

Senior Seminar is designed to be the culminating or capstone course for your Psychology major. It is in Senior Seminar that you have the opportunity to use to the fullest the knowledge and skills that you have gained in previous courses, especially psychology laboratory and upper level courses. Your skills in doing research, in analyzing and synthesizing ideas and information, and in presenting the ideas and information in written and oral form, will all be exercised and reinforced in Senior Seminar. In addition, you will be required to learn and use different organizational strategies to facilitate staying on task and completing the requirements of this course.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to provide a capstone experience that allows you to deeply engage with a singularly-focused psychology-related topic and apply your understanding of the scientific method. You will be engaging in critical synthesis and analysis of primary sources to produce a well-written and extensive literature review (**typically 30 to 35 pages of text**, excluding title, abstract, and references). The assignments in this course will allow you to sharpen and strengthen your skills in organization, information literacy, critical thinking, analysis, writing, and oral communication. Engagement in this course will also help you develop techniques of critical evaluation both of your own work and that of others.

At the completion of this Senior Seminar course, you should be able to:

1. Generate evidence-based arguments related to behavior and mental processes
2. Integrate theoretical perspectives into an investigation of psychological processes
3. Interpret the results of empirical investigations of psychological processes, including placing them in the context of current literature
4. Create critical analyses of problems related to behavior and mental processes
5. Integrate appropriate and varied sources in the construction of an argument in psychology
6. Construct effective oral articulation of ideas in psychology
7. Construct effective written articulation of ideas in psychology

REQUIRED TEXTS

Galvan, J. L. (2013). *Writing Literature Reviews (5th edition)*. Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing. (Available for rent from Amazon, used from other sellers at Amazon, and used/new from SMCM bookstore.) Price ranges from ~\$35 used; ~\$80 new.

***Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)*. (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.**

ASSIGNMENTS (Details will be described in specific handouts for each of the following)

Developmental Assignments

- a. Information Literacy. Early in the semester we will meet with a librarian who will provide advanced training for searching the literature.
- b. Writing Literature Reviews workbook assignments. To help you develop key skills, we will use the Galvan workbook and related assignments to assist you in developing the skills needed to write your literature review.
- c. Writing Center visits. You are **required to visit** the Writing Center **three times** this semester for help with your Senior Seminar work. Specifics regarding this will be detailed in relevant assignments.

Final Paper-Related Assignments

This is the single most important aspect of the course, and you will begin work on this very early in the semester. Separate handouts will be provided for each of these assignments.

- d. Selection of topic and preparation of topic statement and references. Very early in the semester, you will write a topic statement between 250 and 350 words that includes appropriate references, describing what your topic is and what the purpose/thesis of your literature review will be. You may earn five extra credit points by having your topic statement reviewed before submitting it by a tutor at the Writing Center.
- e. Annotated bibliographies. Once you have chosen your topic, you will begin identifying and collecting relevant source materials, and will be submitting annotated bibliographies as you develop your complete set of references.
- f. Sentence outline. A sentence outline will permit me to see your thinking on the organization of your paper and assess how well your sources cover the subtopics of your review.
- g. Two “rough drafts”. Allowing me to see extensive “work in progress” will be helpful to both of us. I will be holding individual conferences throughout the semester in order to ensure you are making progress on your paper. These “rough drafts” are expected to be your current “best work” and will be held to the same academic standards as for any written assignment (i.e., APA format throughout, well-written grammatically and structurally, conforms to all academic standards concerning misconduct/plagiarism). Plagiarism on any rough draft will result in a **grade of zero on your final paper** (as these are assumed to be sections of your final paper). If you have questions about or concerns that you may be plagiarizing, please meet with me in person to discuss this before submitting your rough drafts.
- h. References. You are required to submit all your references electronically and/or in hard copy with your final paper.

Oral presentation. During the last two weeks of class and possibly the final exam period, students will give formal public presentations (30 minutes) on their literature reviews.

Other Graded Work:

- i. Unscheduled pop quizzes on assigned readings. It is essential that you do the assigned readings for class. I may occasionally use pop quizzes if I am considered that students are not doing these readings.

- j. [Attendance, tardiness, and participation.](#) Attendance and participation are critical aspects of this course. Throughout the semester there will be multiple opportunities to give and receive informal feedback about the assignments related to the paper. Your participation in these experiences will contribute to my assessment of your participation efforts. You are allowed two unexcused absences. [Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction in your final grade.](#) You are expected to be on time for class; two tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence in calculating your final grade.
- k. [Written critiques of papers authored by other students and prepared questions for the oral presentations.](#) During the last phase of the course, each student will write formal critiques for two of the papers and come to class prepared to ask two questions of the presenter.

OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENT:

Exposure to a professional presentation in the field is a great experience to help you model your own presentations. Therefore, all students enrolled in PSYC 490 are **required** to attend at least one pre-approved psychology related lecture during the semester and submit a written reflection to me within one week of lecture attendance. See handout. **Failure to complete this requirement will result in a 1/3 final grade reduction.**

SOME ADVICE

Most of you are registered for this course because you are scheduled to graduate in May 2017. Thus, you should treat this course as a MUST HAVE for you to achieve an important life goal. Because the majority of the work for this course is self-directed, it might sometimes be tempting to ignore it in favor of a lab report that is due or an exam that must be taken. I urge you to manage your time so that you can complete the assignments for this course not only promptly but well. You should plan to spend **10-12 hours per week outside of classroom time** on this course, if you want to do well.

Related to the first item, it is critical that you get an early start on your final paper and manage your time well. If you look at the course outline that follows, you will notice that there are multiple occasions when you will have the class period available to work on your paper. In particular, there are [four rounds of individual conferences](#) over the course of the semester. For those conferences, you are responsible for keeping your own appointment with me at the scheduled time, but class will not be held on the days when I am holding these conferences. I urge you to exercise good self-direction and self-discipline by devoting those 110-minute blocks of time to working on your assignments for this class and in making progress on writing your final literature review.

Unfortunately, every semester at least one or more students **FAILS THIS COURSE**. There are four primary reasons this occurs:

- A student fails to submit assignments that ultimately make the difference between a passing (C- or better) and failing grade (D+ or less). Although many assignments do not have many points, these often add up to making a difference in the end.
- A student does not continually work on the senior seminar paper and fails to produce a paper sufficiently in depth to earn a passing grade (or the paper falls short of the 7500 word minimum).
- A student does not read the references as he/she obtains them and postpones this until it is too late to realize they are not appropriate for the literature review.
- A student engages in plagiarism (the most egregious of all and may require an Academic Judicial Board hearing).

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL -- I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS.

Throughout the semester, you have several assignments that are due on a specific date at a specific time. You **MUST adhere to these deadlines** or you will receive **a grade of zero** for anything not submitted on time. Not being in class on a day when an assignment is distributed, does not give you an excuse for failing to submit on time. It is your responsibility to obtain assignments missed.

By this time in your academic career, you should have learned 1) the importance of managing multiple tasks, 2) the challenge of dealing with unexpected “crises” (power outages, printers without paper, illnesses, email outages, etc.), and 3) the potential negative consequences to your grades for failing to submit assignments on time. As college graduates, one aspect of being prepared for any career is learning to take all deadlines and expectations seriously (jobs are tough to obtain & keep in our current economic climate). Thus, this policy is derived partially from my belief that college should help to prepare you for the world of work.

Because you are **given ample time to finish** ALL the assignments in this course (due dates are on the syllabus), **there is no excuse acceptable for failing to submit anything on time**. You do not want to fail to graduate or have to retake this course simply because you could not manage getting assignments submitted on time.

Cell Phones, Laptops, Texting: It is expected that all students will turn off their phone once class begins. **Phones must be in your backpacks or on the floor (not on the desktops or in your pockets)**. I expect all students to refrain from texting during class. I find this behavior to be exceptionally rude and will not tolerate it! If I catch you texting in class, your participation points will be reduced as a consequence. Repeated texting will result in a reduction of your final grade (penalty will depend upon the extent of this infraction but could be as much as a letter grade or more).

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS AND FINAL GRADES

Final grades for Senior Seminar are calculated on the basis of the following point system (which may change slightly if I add or delete assignments):

Developmental Assignments (100 points):	
Library Worksheet	5 points
Assignments & Pop Quizzes	65 points
Writing Center Visits	30 points
Literature Review & Related Assignments (300 points):	
Topic Statement	10 points
Annotated Bibliography #1, #2, #3	45 points
Sentence Outline	25 points
Rough Draft #1 & Rough Draft #2	50 points
Final Paper	250 points
References	10 points
Public Presentation (60 points):	
Power Point Presentation	10 points
Oral Presentation	50 points
Other (50 points):	
Critiques + Questions (2 @ 25 points each)	50 points

Participation – points are deducted from your final total based upon failures to actively participate in class and during participatory activities (e.g., peer reviews).

TOTAL	600 points
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In order to successfully complete the course you must turn in a final paper, give a public presentation, AND earn at least 70%. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

Grade	% Range	Grade	% Range
A	93% and Above	C	73% - 78%
A-	90% - 92%	C-	70% - 72%
B+	88% - 89%	D+	68% - 69%
B	83% - 87%	D	63% - 67%
B-	80% - 82%	D-	60 - 62%
C+	78% - 79%	F	Below 60%

Grading Policy: This course is graded on a percentage system. Letter grades will not be given on individual assignments. Points earned over the semester simply will be summed and course grades assigned according to the percentage scale noted above. There will be no grade “curving” or “bumping” – not even if you are 1 point away from the next letter grade. You are not in competition with your classmates for grades; you will receive the grade you earn, regardless of the performance of the rest of your classmates. Effort is valued and important and naturally impacts performance. However, grades will reflect the level of mastery and proficiency (which is neither guaranteed nor equivalent to effort).

COURSE OUTLINE

(This outline and the assignments may be modified as needed to fulfill instructional needs.)

	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
Week 1	8/29	Introductions and course overview – preparing for the work ahead	
	8/31	What does a literature review look like? How can you use it as a model for your paper?	Read Ch. 1 and 2 in Galvan Read Stanton & Campbell review Assignment #1 due
Week 2	9/5	Labor Day – No Class	
	9/7	Writing the Topic Statement Identifying your topic of interest	Read Ch. 4 in Galvan Possible quiz on reading Read Livingstone & Smith review Assignment #2 due
Week 3	9/12	Library Research – meet in LIB112	Read Ch. 3 in Galvan
	9/14	Plagiarism, APA style, and more Analyzing literature (identifying gaps, limitations, and important concepts/constructs)	Information Literacy Assignment due Read handouts on evaluating research (Patten)
Week 4	9/19	Analyzing research articles Peer review of topic statements	Read Ch. 5 and 6 in Galvan Assignment #3 due Bring four copies of your topic statement
	9/21	No Class - Individual conferences to discuss topic statements	
Week 5	9/26	No Class - Individual conferences to discuss topic statements	
	9/28	Organizing your lit review Annotated bibliographies	Read Ch. 7 in Galvan Readings on Annotated Bibliographies
Week 6	10/3	Outlining your paper APA Writing	Annotated Bibliography #1 due Read Ch. 3 in APA Manual (possible quiz)
	10/5	Using tables to summarize Peer review of tables	Assignment # 4 due by 9 am so I can make copies for class
Week 7	10/10	Reading Day – No Class	
	10/12	Synthesis & Analysis Senior Exam in Methods & Stats (SEMS)	Annotated Bibliography #2 due Read Ch. 8 in Galvan. TBA

Week 8	10/17	Identifying gaps, limitations	Assignment #5 due Review handouts on evaluating research (Patten)
	10/19	TBA	Sentence Outlines & Annotated Bibliography #3 due via email by 2:40 p.m.
Week 9	10/24 – 10/26	No class - Individual conferences to discuss outlines	
Week 10	10/31	Peer Review of rough draft #1	Rough Draft #1 due to me via email by 8 a.m.
	11/2	No Class – Individual Conferences to discuss Rough Draft #1	
Week 11	11/7 & 11/9	No Class – Work on Rough Draft #2	
	11/11	This is a Friday	Rough Draft #2 due by noon via email
Week 12	11/14 – 11/16	TBA/Indiv Conferences to discuss Rough Draft #2	
Week 13	11/21- 11/25	Thanksgiving Break – No Class	
Week 14	11/28 – 11/30	No Class - Use this week to prepare for your oral presentations	Final paper & references due by 8:00 a.m. on April 18th
Week 15	12/5 - 12/7	Oral Presentations	
Dec 14	2-4:15 pm	Oral Presentations	

Changes to Course Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as necessary. You are responsible for all changes to the syllabus and for all information presented during class about these changes, *regardless of whether or not you attend class*. Changes to the syllabus will typically occur only after considerable advanced notice from the instructor.

ADA STATEMENT

It is college policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities as well as being in compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability for which a Letter of Accommodations has been developed with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services please make an appointment with me as early as possible in order to discuss those accommodations. If you have a documented disability and have not met with the Coordinator of Disability Support Services, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Services, Glendening Hall, Suite 230, (240) 895-3153 as early as possible for a confidential review of supporting documentation.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All work for the course should be your own individual work. Any violation of this principle constitutes academic misconduct. Early in the semester, we will spend some time talking about plagiarism and how to avoid it. In addition to this discussion, you should read the college policy on academic misconduct, which can be found at http://www.smcm.edu/academicservices/policies/policies_misconduct.html. **In this course, any academic misconduct will result, at minimum, in a zero grade on the assignment in question.**

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center offers free consultations for student writers at all levels and in all disciplines. No matter where you are in the writing process (generating ideas, drafting, revising or proofreading), the peer tutors can assist you. These tutors are friendly students and also excellent writers with special training as writing consultants. They are specially trained to coach you and help you become a better writer. I encourage you to use the Writing Center as much as possible. You can make a one-time or weekly appointment with the Center by visiting their website, www.smcm.edu/writingcenter, and clicking 'Schedule an Appointment.' At the same website, you can find helpful resources on many writing-related topics.

ORAL EXPRESSION CENTER

The Speaking Center, as part of the Writing Center, is located in the Library Annex. The Speaking Center offers free consultations in oral expression for students at all levels and in all disciplines. No matter what your speaking task is (formal or informal) and no matter where you are in the process (generating ideas, planning, drafting, revising or practicing a speech), the Writing Center peer tutors can assist you. These tutors are friendly students with special training not only as writing consultants but also as oral expression consultants. As with your written work, they will not grade or correct your presentation; instead, they coach you and help you become a better speaker. Or, if you prefer to practice a presentation without a peer tutor present, one of the tutors can help you record your presentation for you to review on your own. You can make a one-time or weekly appointment with the Center by visiting their website, www.smcm.edu/writingcenter, and clicking "Schedule an Appointment."

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT

Beginning in spring 2011, all Senior Seminar and St. Mary's Project students majoring in psychology have been required to take a "senior examination" (SEMS) to help us assess the quality of the psychology major. This will not require any studying on your part, or any work outside of class, and it will not affect your grade in the course. Additional information will be provided later in the semester.

EXTRA CREDIT

You can earn up to 5 extra credit points in this course by participating in research in the psychology department. The procedures for this are the same as they have been in previous courses where this applies.

FINAL GRADES

No grade changes will be made following submission of final grades, except in the case of an error in the recording of points or in the computation of total points. **Please retain all returned assignments until you have confirmed that your final grade** has been computed and submitted accurately. If you believe your final grade has been reported in error, it will be your responsibility to provide these graded assignments as evidence.