1INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY SYLLABUS
New York University, Spring 2020
PSYCH-UA.1 Section 012
Mon & Wed 3:30-4:45 pm

You can think of this syllabus as a contract: by continuing in this class, you are agreeing to abide by the guidelines of the syllabus. We have tried to make it as comprehensive as possible to address most of your questions. As such, please read the syllabus during the first week of class. If you find any errors, please let us know. If you are unable to accept the terms of the syllabus, we recommend dropping the course (see NYU calendar for deadlines).

Instructor: Dr. Jay Van Bavel (You can call me Dr. Jay, if you wish)
Position: Associate Professor of Psychology & Neural Science
Email: jay.vanbavel@nyu.edu
Class: Mondays and Wednesday 3:30-4:45 pm
Room: Cantor Film Center, 36 East 8th Street (CANT 200)
Office: Meyer Building, 6 Washington Place, room 506
Hours: Wednesday 2:30-3:20 pm or by appointment

Website: https://as.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/as/faculty/jay-van-bavel.html
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Head TA: V. Badaan
Position: PhD Candidate in Social Psychology
Email: vivienne.badaan@nyu.edu
Office: Meyer Building, 6 Washington Place, room 538
Hours: Tuesday 3:00-5:00PM or by appointment

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.
WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM
Recitation: All students are required to attend a weekly recitation section. For times and locations, see https://www.psych.nyu.edu/courses/ugspring20.html. Recitations will begin the second week of class and will cover material presented in the preceding course lectures.

Course Description
The goal of this course is to introduce you to the fascinating science of psychology. The field of psychology is incredibly broad, encompassing a wide variety of topics and perspectives, from evolution to morality. The common goal of all psychological science is to understand how the mind and brain interface with the external world to shape behavior. This course is designed to provide you with a basis for thinking about psychological questions and with an overview of the different specialized areas of psychology that you might choose to study in more depth in the future.

Reading Material
We will use a free online textbook available here: http://noba.to/94n6zbf2. The first time you enter the site, you will be prompted to create a free login. You can then read the individual chapters online or download each chapter or the entire book as a PDF. To make your life easier, I have created hyperlinks to all the readings on the syllabus (see below). The PDF of the entire book will be posted on the Classes site along with any additional readings. Visiting the textbook website will give you access to videos, practice questions, and other materials.

As with any course, I encourage you to read the assigned course reading before each lecture. That way, the material covered in lecture will serve as a review, and you will be in a much better position to ask informed questions and to seek clarification on any confusing aspects of the material. This is especially true in this course because the articles are often dense and contain complex source material. However, there is not a complete overlap between the book and the lectures and you are expected to know both for the exams. Here is a good argument against cutting class.

Website
The course Classes site will be used to post lecture slides, review sheets, course announcements, and student grades. Log in and you should see this course. If you do not, please let the Head TA know immediately. The slides are available to assist with your note taking, but much information will be covered in class that is not available on the outlines. I will aim to post the lecture slides at the start of each class (but they may not be posted earlier since I am often editing and improving the materials before class). Reading the available lecture slides is NOT a substitute for attending class.

Requirements and Assignments
Exams (90%)
Three midterm exams, each covering a different portion of the course materials (i.e., non-cumulative), will be given during the regular lecture time. Exams will consist of multiple choice and brief essay questions. Each exam will count for 30% of your final grade. There will also be an optional cumulative exam offered during the final exam period. You may choose to take this exam and substitute the score for your lowest score on one of the midterm exams. Or, if you miss an exam for approved reasons you will take the cumulative exam to replace the missing exam. Most students take this extra exam as many students want a bonus opportunity to increase their grade, but it is ultimately your choice if you wish to take it. Note that the bonus
cumulative exam cannot be rescheduled due to illness or any other reason— it is only offered once. Any requests for additional assignments or exam dates will be returned with a copy of this paragraph.

Test questions will aim to assess your understanding of the material and ability to apply it to new situations, rather than focusing on the memorization of facts or terms. Exams will cover both lecture and reading (with an emphasis on material that overlaps between the lecture and reading). In short, you are responsible for all the assigned lectures and readings. For this reason, attendance and note taking are essential. A review sheet— listing the concepts covered for each exam— will be posted on the NYU classes website. A good strategy is to review this sheet each week and make notes on the relevant concepts from lecture, readings, and recitations as the term progresses. However, if a class is cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen event, you will NOT be responsible for any lecture content we are unable to present.

We will use this google document to share note taking responsibilities. You can take turns taking notes and this will ensure you can see the notes if you miss a class due to illness. In the past, students made excellent notes and helped one another ensure the notes were complete and accurate. However, students must use it at their own risk since it will not be reviewed by the instructor or staff.

Recitation assignments (10%)
A brief essay question will be given during most recitation sections. These questions will provide practice for the questions that will appear on the exams. You must turn this assignment in during the recitation section to receive credit. We assume you will be busy, sick or have scheduling conflicts during the semester. To account for this, you may miss up to two writing assignments for any of these reasons without affecting your grade. Beyond these two days, there will be no make-ups, regardless of the reason for an absence. Therefore, you should save the two “freebie” assignments for times when you might be sick or need to miss class for another unavoidable reason. If you choose to miss two assignments early in the term, but then have to miss class later in the semester because of illness or another unexpected event, you will not be able to make-up any assignments. Any requests for additional extensions will be returned with a copy of this paragraph.

Research Participation
The field of psychology you are about to learn did not emerge from the mind of some deity or genius. Most of this knowledge has been generated through empirical studies and experiments— much of it done at universities like this one. Therefore, as a part of your education about psychology, it is important that you learn something about the scientific process by which this knowledge has been generated.

There are two ways for students in Introductory Psychology to satisfy the research requirement. One of the best ways to do this is to participate as a subject in experiments. If you choose this option we will ask that you put in a total of 7 hours as a subject in a variety of studies being conducted this fall semester by researchers in the Psychology Department. All of the studies that qualify for this option have been approved as minimal risk by NYU’s Institutional Review Board. The very first opportunity is the Psychology Battery Survey, which takes about 45 minutes to complete and counts toward an hour of experience. If you are under the age of 18, parental consent is required for all research participation.
You may be surprised to learn that NYU is one of the top research universities in the country, and our psychology department was recently ranked **6th in the world**. You have a very rare opportunity to learn from the very best psychological scientists and contribute something important to science by taking part in their research. Research participation provides an invaluable opportunity to see how research is done and gives you the chance to see whether you may be interested in conducting your own research in the future as a psychology major. It also helps researchers in the department learn more about basic psychological processes. I encourage you to get involved in research early and often.

A second way to satisfy the research requirement is to read three published research articles that report the details of empirical studies and to write a two page critique of each. If you decide to mix these options, each study and its critique would substitute for two hours of participation in NYU studies. A list of research articles you can read as well as guidelines for writing your two page critique will be posted on Classes by the head TA. If you wish to choose this option, you must notify the head TA and the coordinator of research subjects in the Psychology Department, Brenda Woodford (brenda.woodford@nyu.edu) by **April 3rd**, and the critiques must be handed in by email to the head TA by **May 11th**. No extensions are available for this paper.

You should complete your research requirements (whether it is participation in studies, read-write, or a mix of both) by the last day of classes, on **May 11th**. If you do not complete the research requirement or the alternate assignment, you will receive an **Incomplete** for the course. You will then need to complete the hours during a subsequent semester for your grade to be changed. If you are taking more than one psychology course that requires research participation, it is important to make sure that your research credits are assigned to the correct course. If your credits are not correctly assigned by the last day of classes, they will be lost.

At the first class session you will be briefed by the administrator of the subject pool, on the details of how you sign up and receive credit for these experiments by accessing the NYU Research Participation System: [http://nyu-psych.sona-systems.com/](http://nyu-psych.sona-systems.com/) You will log into the system using your NYU NetID (located on the back of your NYU ID card) as both your user ID and password. Studies will run throughout the semester.

I encourage you to complete your research participation early in the semester for two reasons: (1) Sometimes researchers post more studies at the start of the semester and it can be hard to complete your credits around your course schedule at the end of the semester, (2) Getting directly involved in research will give you first hand insights into the material and may help you get a better grade in the course.

Send questions about the research requirement, battery, or SONA to psych.subjects@nyu.edu

**Extra credit**

Many students are interested in improving their grade. It is not sufficient to simply say “you worked hard” to get extra credit since we assume that everyone worked hard. Instead, we are offering bonus credit to everyone: you can complete up to four additional hours of research participation for **extra credit** (1/4 a percentage point will be added to your total grade for each hour completed). If you complete all 4 hours you will get a full grade point (e.g., moving your final grade from a 86 to an 87 or a 70 to a 71). No other opportunities for extra credit exist and requests for additional credit will be returned with a copy of this paragraph.
Grading Scale

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<th>Minimum</th>
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<tr>
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<td>C-</td>
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Final grades will be rounded before they are submitted to NYU (e.g., if you have a final average of 86.5% it will be rounded up to a B+, but a 86.4% will be rounded to a B). We will not curve grades down, but reserve the right to curve them up if the average is very low.

Grading Accuracy

It is each student’s responsibility to monitor their grades online and report any discrepancies to the Head TA within one week of the contested assignment. You will be able to review your exams during recitations. If you believe that there is a mistake in the grading of an exam, please notify your recitation leader within one week. If your recitation leader believes that you have a valid point they will give your exam back to the grader for re-grading. Please note that the entire question will be re-graded, so it is possible for your grade to increase or decrease after the dispute is resolved. These disputes must also be resolved within one week of the contested assignment. I am assuming that each exam will have at least one mistake or ambiguously worded question, so I will build in a bonus question or two on each exam to make it up to the entire class (these serve as an opportunity to get bonus marks or compensate for a question you did not understand).

DO NOT wait until the end of the term to check your grade. All requests must be resolved throughout the term (within one week). Also please do not request any grade changes that are not based on clear factual errors. In the past, students have requested changes because they want to get into medical school, because they want to keep a scholarship, because their parents paid a lot of money in tuition, and many other reasons that have nothing to do with this course. It would be unfair and unethical to change your grade or offer you additional assignments that are not offered to all the other students. Please do not ask your instructor or the teaching staff to engage in unethical behavior and change your grade for any of these reasons. As such, any requests to contest grades one week after the grades have been posted or based on reasons that are unethical will be returned with a copy of this paragraph.

Make-up Exams

Make-up exams can only be arranged in advance and only if proper documentation of an acceptable reason for the absence is provided, like an official doctor’s note (e.g., a note that you’ve visited the Student Health Center is not sufficient unless the doctor can verify that you were too ill to take the exam). Please notify the Head TA that you need to arrange a make-up exam as soon as you know you have a conflict. All requests must be received prior to the start of the exam. Please note that you have to miss an exam and do not qualify for a make-up, you may take the optional final exam and use it as a substitute for the missed exam.

Academic Honesty

All work must be your own. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. All suspicions of academic dishonesty during exams or weekly recitation assignments will be reported to and adjudicated by the Associate Dean for Students. If a case of academic dishonesty is confirmed, it will result in a penalty that is at least as severe as receiving a 0 on the assignment or exam.
Academic dishonesty includes all forms of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): copying or paraphrasing from someone else’s work (another student, an online source, or a journal article), turning in someone else’s work as your own, or presenting someone else’s ideas (a student, online source, or scholar) as your own.

**Email Policy**

Who should you email for questions about the course? First you should read the syllabus before you send us an email. As such, we will not respond to any questions that are clearly addressed in the syllabus. If many students ask the same questions, we will assume that other people have the same question and send out an announcement rather than responding to dozens of emails. If your question is not covered by the syllabus, here is who you should email for different issues or questions:

1. **Recitation leader:** You should email your recitation leader about any relevant questions related to the recitation.
2. **Head TA:** You should email the Head TA about anything about the course (e.g., setting an appointment, medical absence from an exam, etc).
3. **Instructor:** You should email the instructor for any questions that cannot be resolved by the Recitation leader or the Head TA or to set up a meeting with the Instructor.

We will aim to respond to all emails **within 2 business days**. In a class this large, we receive several hundred emails. Simply include “INTRO PSYCH” in the subject line of your email. You do not need to email the Instructor or Head TA if you will miss a lecture. Simply get the lecture materials from NYU Classes and view the notes from the class google doc (see above).

**Laptop policy**

Some research has found that using laptops in class is associated with a lower final grade. There is also evidence that using a screen can harm the grades of the students beside and behind you because it serves as a distraction. To read more, see this [short article](https://www.nytimes.com/) in the NYTimes. But some evidence suggests there is no effect. In all, it may not be in your own best interest to bring your laptop or other computer devices to class since it’s likely to harm your grade. In fact, many professors who have read this research are banning laptops in class.

I have decided to allow laptops and other electronic devices in class. But if you plan to have anything on your computer screen other than course material, I am going to ask that you **sit in the back row**. This will ensure that you do not impair others around you. This will not impact how your grades or assignments are graded by the Head TA and teaching assistants, it is simply as a courtesy to your classmates. If you have a problem with someone using their laptop in class, please politely ask them to move to the back row. If they do not move, please report it to me and I will ask them to move. Likewise, if you need to take a phone call please discreetly leave class and you can return after you get off the call.

**Course Withdrawal**

To learn how to withdraw from this course go to this website:
www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/registration-records-and-graduation/registration/registration-schedules/session-dates-and-deadlines.html

**Commitment to Diversity and Constructive Disagreement**
This classroom environment supports a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives and respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas. The following principles will guide discussions:

- Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
- All backgrounds and viewpoints are welcome as long as they are respectful;
- Science is an evolving process and no ideas are immune from scrutiny in the classroom (including any ideas presented by the professor, Head TA, or recitation leaders);
- But please try to bring light, not heat to any discussion;
- Please allow time and space for other people to contribute to discussion;
- Reasonable people can differ on a number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;
- Because diverse perspectives and constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is encouraged;
- No harassment of staff or students will be tolerated;
- Finally, you will not be graded on your opinions during discussion.

Wellness Services
NYU offers a rigorous academic environment, devoted to scholarship, teaching, and learning. NYU’s approach to the health of our students is one of “wellness”: supporting students in all aspects of their lives in order to enable them to achieve academic success. However, the demands of academic life, coupled with work, family, community, and personal responsibilities can create a stressful environment for students. As such, NYU offers an extensive network of physical and mental health resources here as well as a 24/7 hotline (212-443-9999). Please use these resources if you need additional support outside the classroom (unfortunately our staff is not equipped to help with these issues, but we are happy to direct you to these resources when necessary).

Getting the Most Out of University
Since many of you are freshman, I thought it would be useful to share some resources for helping you get the most out of your time at NYU. First, life is going to be different at university compared to high school and it’s not always clear what is expected of you. I would recommend reading this short article about the rules of etiquette that are more common in university. Second, some people get far more out of their university experience than others. The wisest students move into a peer relationship with the institution rather than a consumer relationship with it. They seize leadership roles. They serve as research assistants. I strongly encourage you to read this article on how to get the most out of college. These are not required readings, but they may benefit you more than anything else you learn in this course.

If you enjoy this course and do decide to get more out of your university experience, you may want to get directly involved in conducting research. Therefore, I wanted to send a quick set of tips to help you find a volunteer position in a psychology lab. It’s fairly simple:

1. Go to the psychology department website. Look at the faculty research interests, if you find someone doing interesting work go to their website or lab website.
2. As you learn more about psychology, you will also get a sense of which topics excite you and then you can look for faculty studying those topics.
3. Email a few faculty members doing interesting work. Keep your email to two paragraphs (one on your own background and one on the research topics that interest you). Attach your resume/CV.
4. If you don't hear back in two weeks, send it out to a few more faculty members.
5. You can also reach out to faculty in Psychiatry or Applied Psychology if you want to get more clinical or field experience.

If you truly fall in love with psychology and want to learn more, I have collected a list of **podcasts** you can listen to in your daily life to learn more about the field (My favorites include Hidden Brain, You Are Not So Smart, and the Happiness Lab). And if you get inspired and want to complete a PhD, I wrote this [article](http://nautil.us/issue/48/chaos/are-you-a-self_interrupter) offering tips on how to get into graduate school. It will give you some advice about how to prepare yourself for the next step in the field of science.

Since many of you are Freshman, I have collected a bunch of other short essays to help you get the most out of your university experience. Feel free to read these or not. It’s up to you:

- [http://nautil.us/issue/48/chaos/are-you-a-self_interrupter](http://nautil.us/issue/48/chaos/are-you-a-self_interrupter)
- [https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Distracted-Classroom-Is/239785/](https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Distracted-Classroom-Is/239785/)
- [https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087](https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087)
- [https://t.co/RFj68eMRik](https://t.co/RFj68eMRik)
- [http://www.slate.com/articles/life/education/2014/10/class_participation_in_the_college_classroom_how_to_get_the_most_out_of.single.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/life/education/2014/10/class_participation_in_the_college_classroom_how_to_get_the_most_out_of.single.html)
- [http://www.slate.com/articles/life/education/2016/08/the_one_thing_college_students_should_never_say_to_a_professor.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/life/education/2016/08/the_one_thing_college_students_should_never_say_to_a_professor.html)
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<td>Sensation &amp; Perception</td>
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<td>History of mental illness &amp; Therapeutic Orientations</td>
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May 6  
Review

May 11  
EXAM #3

May 15  
FINAL EXAM (2:00-3:50PM)