PSY 10200 Psychology in the Modern World

Fall 2020 Learning Outcomes Assessment Report horizontal line

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| Date of report: | **January 27, 2021** |
| Course: | **Psychology in the Modern World [PSY 10200, 10101] Sections B2, B7, C5, C6, SEEK** |
| Materials used: | **Blackboard Rubric Statistics for 136 graded student essays (Fun Paper 3)** |
| Preliminary Assessment Team Members: | **Margot Goldblum, TA** |
| Secondary Assessment Team Members: | **Professor Robert Melara** |
| Coordination/ Oversight: | **Ana Vasovic** |

# Purpose and Justification

The purpose of this assessment is to identify and qualify strengths and challenges in students’ accomplishment of learning outcomes in PSY 102 using rubric data collected from Blackboard (Bb) for a single assignment, in this case, Fun Paper 3 (see Appendix 2). The topic of the assignment was to design a study examining the impact of an educational intervention for at-risk students. The assignment included required reading of a New York Times article on risk factors that contribute to college retention and graduation rates. Students were asked to identify key takeaways from the article in order to provide background information and evidence supporting the rationale for their study design choices.

# Course Overview

The course Psychology in the Modern World (PSY 10200, 10101) satisfies the Individual and Society requirement of the CUNY Pathways Common Core. Course description: “An introduction to the study of human development and learning, personality and motivation, sex differences, attitudes, aggressions, interpersonal attraction, behavior in groups and work settings, abnormal behavior and its treatment. Emphasis on the ways in which psychological theory and research can be applied to individual and social problems.” It is taught as a large lecture (300+ students) with recitation sections (up to 35 students each). It typically has ~20 sections (five of which are included in this report). The syllabus (see Appendix 1) included in this report was used in all course sections.

# Assessment Findings

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| Note: the results below are based on 136 graded student essays from five course sections and represent the percentage of students whose performance met each grading criterion. Each outcome graded on a 4-point scale. The benchmark for these outcomes was set to 2 (satisfactory); students who excelled in performance scored a 4 (very good).See Appendix 3 for detailed analyses. | | |
| ***Gen Ed Learning outcomes*** | ***Grading Rubric Alignment*** | ***Brief description of findings*** |
| Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments (benchmark: Thesis is clearly stated)  Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices. / Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises. | Clarity of Thesis Development | 96.3% met benchmark  71.3% excelled |
| Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments (benchmark: Follow appropriate essay structure)  Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions. | Clarity of Paper's Structure and Organization / | 96.3% met benchmark  82.4% excelled |
| Evaluate evidence and arguments critically and analytically.  Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of Psychology. | Thoroughness in Development of Evidence | 96.3% met benchmark 72.1% excelled |
| Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments (benchmark: appropriate language that conveys meaning and is grammatically correct | Good Mechanics and Style of Writing Use | 96.3% met benchmark 66.2% excelled |
| Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of Psychology. | Competence in Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis of Research Findings | 94.9% met benchmark 42.6% excelled |

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| *Briefly summarize overall findings by identifying strengths and challenges in students’ accomplishment of learning outcomes.* |
| The high percentage of students who met each learning outcome/grading criterion may have been due to their increased familiarity with the instructors’ expectations for this assignment, as students had previously completed two papers with similar formats and rubrics. This increase in familiarity was also bolstered by the highly structured assignment/ essay format.  **LO: Identify and apply the fundamental concepts of Psychology.**  The majority of students were able to demonstrate conceptual understanding of how to design a study, including stating a hypothesis, identifying target populations, population sampling, participant recruitment, experimental and control groups, operational definitions, statistical significance, and independent, dependent, and extraneous variables.  **LO: Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.**  Students successfully presented aspects of their study designs, such as participation recruitment and confidentiality, withholding treatment from control groups, and accounting for the unique needs of this population. Students considered the ethical implications and justified their choices.  **LO: Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices. / Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.**  In assessing the clarity of thesis development, students were required to articulate ethical treatment of human subjects when designing research studies. Students demonstrate a clear ability to meet this ethical standard.  **LO: Produce well-reasoned written arguments**.  Students evaluated the validity of hypotheses. They were able to defend the argument accurately, to use appropriate language in doing so, and to marshal evidence in support of their arguments.  **LO: Evaluate evidence and arguments critically and analytically.**  Students were able to synthesize evidence from multiple sources and, in particular, use quantitative evidence to reach logical conclusions. They presented assumptions and opposing arguments and used evidence to reach a clear conclusion on an issue.  Students’ greatest **struggle** was in determining appropriate quantitative analyses and in relating the results of those analyses to appropriate qualitative conclusions. An additional challenge for students was meeting the submission deadline. Only 75% of students in these five sections submitted the assignment. The impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic is likely a factor. |
| *How useful are the text and other resources assigned to this course?* |
| The following textbooks were used in class: Myers, D. G. & DeWall, C.N. (2018). *Psychology* (12th Edition). New York: Worth. The textbook is renowned for conveying difficult psychological concepts to introductory students in a clear and vivid manner. |
| **Already implemented “Closing-the-loop” efforts to improve student learning/success:**  *Since teaching this course, including this current semester, have you made changes in course content, course delivery or other pedagogy? If yes, please explain.* |
| Since devising the course in 2005, Dr. Melara has changed course content by developing structured term paper assignments and detailed rubrics for grading the papers and assessing learning outcomes. Since 2018, students also have been provided with the opportunity to revise term papers, benefiting from feedback from rubrics and attendance at Supplemental Instruction (SI) workshops where trained graduate students assist them in developing and improving term papers. |
| During the Fall 2020 semester, campus closure required course delivery to be made exclusively online through Zoom. Despite the inability to interact in person, the online platform provided opportunities for interactions between professor and student and among students. |
| *How exactly have the changes that you have implemented impacted student learning/student success? Please provide specific examples.* |
| By including SI workshops students have improved their term papers and, ultimately, their outcomes in the course. For example, the average course grade for those students who attended SI was 71.6%, whereas those who did not attend SI averaged 55.9%. Individuals who attended had a 93% Pass rate, whereas individuals who did not attend SI had a 77% pass rate. In a year-on-year comparison, in 2018, 86.2% of individuals passed PSY 102 with a grade of D or greater; in 2017 only 67% of individuals passed PSY 102 with a grade of D or greater. |
| **Future “Closing-the-loop” plans to improve student learning/success**  *Based on your assessment of student learning, what changes do you plan to implement at instructional level to improve student learning? Specify topics and pedagogical changes, if applicable.* |
| Additional training and support for quantitative skills would benefit students’ ability to reach learning outcomes in the course. |
| *Provide suggestions, if any, to be done on a departmental or institutional level to support student learning/success in this course.* |
| Ensuring sufficient enrollment availability in freshmen quantitative reasoning courses and completing this requirement during their first year at the college. Institutional support in the form of supplemental instruction has proven extremely effective in assisting students in meeting learning outcomes.   |  | | --- | | *Provide suggestions for improving the assessment strategy for this course?* | |

Future paper rubrics should include learning outcome benchmark descriptions that reflect the corresponding General Education learning outcomes. Additionally, the scores for each benchmark should be mapped to a set of items within the paper content grades (e.g., the Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis score should roughly correspond to the sum of the item scores from questions 3 and 4 calculated as a percentage of total possible points for those items). This methodology will ensure that learning outcome benchmarks will be consistently graded across sections, and provide students with additional valuable feedback on their work. Similarly, assignments will be reviewed to determine their connection to the General Education Learning outcomes and revised if needed.

Appendix I

**PSYCHOLOGY 10200, 10101 (Psychology in the Modern World)**

**Mondays & Wednesdays**

**(10:25 am - 11:15 am or 11:35 am -12:25 pm Online in Zoom)**

**Recitation Sections (various times online in Zoom)**

**Fall 2020**

**Instructor: Bob Melara**

**Introduction and Course Description**

I've designed this course to give you a basic understanding of each of the different fields that collectively make up the exciting science of psychology. One field is concerned with how the brain is organized; another with how children mature; still another with why people become anxious or depressed and how to help them. Psychology is concerned with each of these areas, and much more. In psychology we are interested in why people think and feel and act the way that they do. By the end of this course, you should have a good understanding of what psychologists study, and some of their most important research findings.

Because so many different fields are involved, I will divide the course into sections: neuroscience, child development, psychological disorders, and so forth. In class, I will survey what psychologists know about each field. This information is reinforced and expanded upon in the textbook and in weekly recitation sessions. To evaluate how well you understand the textbook material, in each homework assignment you will answer several questions from the weekly readings. Your grasp of each section also will be evaluated through each of three tests, which will cover several sections at once. None of the tests is cumulative, although the last exam is held during finals week. To involve you even more interactively with the material, I have created five in-class laboratories, covering each of five different sections of the course. You will have an opportunity to discuss the issues during weekly recitation sessions and be given a grade on your participation. I also have assigned three papers to develop your written expression of psychology. And I will test your attention to each day's lecture with a short daily check on comprehension.

**Course Objectives**

After taking PSY 102, you should be better able to:

1. apply critical thinking skills to research designs and practical problems in psychology.

2. understand basic and more advanced psychological theories, principles, and concepts in the areas of human development, social interaction, psychopathology, cognitive processes, and the biological bases of behavior.

3. evaluate hypotheses, research designs, research findings, and theories.

4. understand how statistical significance is used in research

5. understand the difference between actual science and pseudo-science so you can apply your understanding to reports about psychology you see or hear in the media.

6. apply psychological concepts and principles to understanding social and cultural phenomena.

7. communicate your ideas orally and in writing.

8. apply psychological concepts to you own life and experiences.

PSY 102 satisfies the Individual and Society general education requirement of the CUNY Pathways Common Core. The course also enhances proficiency in writing, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning. In exercising writing proficiency, you will have multiple experiences to communicate your ideas in writing and speaking, including at least 3500 words of writing in specific assignments. For information literacy, you will have multiple opportunities to critically and constructively analyze information from different areas of study. You will be required to find information in the library, on the Internet, and in other places, evaluating the reliability of this information. To enhance proficiency in quantitative reasoning, you will have multiple opportunities to evaluate critically quantitative information in graphic, tabular, and numeric forms.

This syllabus explains everything that you need to know about this course. It contains the grading policy, the attendance policy, the dishonesty policy, office hours, the course schedule, the homework schedule, the term paper schedule, the lab schedule, and the test schedule. Thus, make certain that you keep the syllabus in a safe place, so that you can refer to it throughout the semester; the syllabus also will be posted on the course's web site (see below).

**Required Text** — A version of the required textbook is available as an e-book bundle at the publisher’s website. The cost of the bundle is $69.99. For that price you receive six-month online versions of:

1. **Myers, D. G. & DeWall, C.N. (2018). *Psychology* (12th Edition). New York: Worth.**
2. *LaunchPad* homework software
3. iClicker *REEF* Polling

All three items are required. None is optional. The publisher link provides you with the best pricing. You will find specific information on ordering from the publisher website on *Blackboard*.

**Blackboard**

An electronic version of this syllabus, link to the publisher microsite, attendance updates, homework assignments, term paper assignments, test and quiz grades, announcements, and other pertinent information about this course will be communicated in this course through *Blackboard*. We use *Blackboard* to ensure privacy in notifying you of your grades and attendance. You will find *Blackboard* on the Login tab (right side of page) at this link: you must first register your CUNY Portal account using this address:

<http://www2.cuny.edu/>

Log in to *Blackboard* with your CUNY Login credentials (CUNYfirst Username@login.cuny.edu and CUNYfirst Password). There you will find a listing of all the CCNY courses for which you are currently enrolled. Click on the link for PSY 10200 to view the course material. If you have trouble logging onto *Blackboard*, or viewing the PSY 10200 link, visit the computer consultants in library’s Tech Center immediately. To stay connected in this course, you ideally would like to have access to *Blackboard* by the first week of the semester. So be sure that you are properly enrolled in the course and can log on to *Blackboard* without difficulty by then.

Each student enrolled in this course -- indeed, each student at the College -- has an institutional e-mail account. An e-mail address has been reserved for you for as long as you are associated with the City College of New York. Be sure to check this e-mail address often, or to forward messages from it to the e-mail address you commonly use (e.g., gmail). Use your e-mail address to communicate with me or with the teaching assistants at any time. My e-mail is listed at the end of the syllabus; your TA will provide you with his or her e-mail during recitation. (Avoid using the e-mail links in Blackboard). Someone will respond to your message promptly.

**Zoom links**

Most courses at CCNY, including PSY 10200, will be offered online in Fall 2020. We will conduct PSY 10200 using the Zoom online platform, so please download the free Zoom app (<https://zoom.us/download>) onto your electronic device (smart phone, laptop, tablet, etc.). On Blackboard you will find three Zoom links: (1) MW lecture link; (2) Friday recitation link; and (3) TA office hour link. Please logon to the MW lecture and Friday recitations each week using the links provided. Blackboard will also contain a list of teaching assistants’ office hours. You are free to contact *any* teaching assistant (TA) during his or her office hours using the TA office hour link.

**Clickers**

We take class attendance, quizzes, and tests in PSY 102 using iClicker *REEF* Polling, which you can download to your electronic device after purchasing the $69.99 bundle. You must remember to have whatever device you decide to use with you in the online class every day.

Important: You must purchase and download iClicker *REEF* Polling by the **first recitation section** (see Syllabus Schedule). Your TA will then assist you during recitation in creating your account and linking it with the course.

**Course Notes**

It is essential to have good notes on my lectures because the material presented during class will serve as a primary basis for the examinations. Most students find it easy to take notes on my lectures: I write every important concept out on your device screen (in Zoom), giving students plenty of opportunity to think about each concept and to summarize the important points in their notebooks. Notes for each lecture (albeit somewhat dated) are posted on *Blackboard*. Feel free to use the posted course notes to study from or to augment your own notes.

**Films**

As an aid in conveying psychological concepts to you, in class I frequently show short segments of video to provide real-world examples of the psychological concepts under discussion.

**Recitation Sections**

Each week your teaching assistant will lead an online recitation session. These sessions will allow you to consider the course material in greater detail and in smaller group settings than we are able to do in the large lecture classroom. Each recitation session will be devoted to a discussion of the course material, to the development of quantitative reasoning skills, to answering questions about the textbook readings, and to participating in fun learning activities (labs). The teaching assistants also will use these sessions to answer any questions that you might have about the material or the course, to provide details about the course requirements, or to review or take examinations. To get the most out of the recitations sessions it is a good idea to have your e-book handy at each meeting. Attendance will be taken at each recitation section at the beginning of class. So please do not arrive late or you will be marked absent.

**Class Attendance**

From years of teaching I am convinced that inconsistent class attendance by students is one of the primary reasons for poor learning in undergraduate courses. To help promote better learning in my classes, I always maintain a policy of **mandatory class attendance**. Beginning on **August 31st** students will be required to attend all classes (including all assigned weekly recitation sections) during the semester, to arrive on time, and to remain in the online classroom for the entire period. Students who fail to attend class when attendance is checked will be marked "absent." A teaching assistant will keep a record of absences and post them regularly as “+1” on *Blackboard*. It is the student's responsibility to know about the attendance policy and to keep up with his or her absences during the semester.

Attendance is checked in lecture by clicking “B” for BOB on iClicker *REEF* when class begins. Be sure that you arrive at the online lecture or recitation section on time. You can use the same device to both show attendance (on iClicker *REEF*) and attend the lecture (on Zoom).

Students will be excused from class only if (1) they have a valid reason, (2) they notify me before the class meets, and (3) they can supply their teaching assistant with some form of official documentation. Valid excuses always will require some form of documentation: Examples include a doctor's note, a parent's note, a police report, a coach's, trainer's, director's or ROTC officer's excuse, a bail bond, a ransom note, or a draft notice. You always must supply your teaching assistant with the original or a copy of your documentation, which the teaching assistants then will keep on file. Only students with approved documentation can be given an excused absence. Please give your excuse documentation to your teaching assistant within a week of your absence. Documents turned in after the week deadline, especially those turned in during the last few weeks of the semester, may not be accepted. It is your responsibility to ensure that all valid absences have been excused on *Blackboard* before the end of the semester.

\*\*\***Excuses will not be accepted after the final course grades have been set**. \*\*\*

A grade of “+1” on Blackboard beside the column identifying a lecture or homework means that you have been marked with an unexcused absence for that class period. (For an absence to be excused, your teaching assistant must change the “+1” to a “0”). Students are allowed **2 unexcused absences** without their grade being affected.

\*\*\***For EACH unexcused absence to lecture or recitation beyond 2, I will remove 2 percentage points from the student's final grade**. \*\*\*

This is in addition to any penalty you might incur from missing a quiz, homework, lab, or test. Admittedly, this is a heavy penalty. But students who come to class regularly have no need to worry about the penalty. As an extra incentive, I will award students who have incurred no unexcused absences during the semester 2-4 percentage points toward their final grade (I will decide on the exact percentage at the end of the semester).

If you accumulate more than **6 absences** during the course – **EITHER EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED** – you will be assigned a final grade of WU (CCNY policy), which has the same effect on your grade-point average as an F. Six absences are tantamount to missing two weeks of course material, the limit to earning a canonical grade in the course. During the first few weeks of the course, teaching assistants monitor absences carefully, as part of the College’s Enrollment Verification program. During this period, students who are registered for the course, but have never attended lecture or recitation, will receive a grade of WN\*, which has the same effect on your grade-point average as an F and which may harm your opportunities for receiving financial aid.

**Evaluation**

There will be 27 lecture quizzes (one each lecture), 12 homework assignments (approximately one each week), 5 laboratories, 3 term papers, and 3 tests during the semester. There also is an experiment participation requirement. Each quiz, homework, or test covers the material (lectures and/or readings) since the previous quiz, homework, or test. Each laboratory or term paper covers a current section of the course. There are no cumulative exams in this class. The third test will be given during finals week, but it will not be cumulative. I encourage as much class participation in lecture as I can get, but that will not be a quantitative determinant of your final grade.

**Fun Lecture Quizzes.** To ensure that students pay attention to and understand the material presented in each lecture, a quiz of approximately 5 multiple-choice questions using iClicker *REEF* will be given each class day beginning **August 31st**. All of the questions will be drawn from the lecture of the day. Question #1 will always involve clicking “B” for BOB at the beginning of the class. There will be no lecture quizzes given during recitation sessions. You will need to have your clicker software open during class to take the quiz.

Lecture quizzes are open note. You are allowed to use any material written in *your*notebook. You are allowed to work together with others in the class in answering the questions from the lecture quizzes although, of course, the final answers should always be your own. Quiz questions will appear on the shared Zoom screen and on your iClicker *REEF* screen. Questions will be given throughout the lecture period. No allowance will be given to students who arrive to class late and miss quiz questions. The quizzes can only be taken using iClicker REEF on your electronic device. If you miss all the quiz questions for a lecture, you will receive a grade of zero on the quiz.

Because of the very large size of this class, I will be unable to give makeup lecture quizzes, even if you have a legitimate excuse for missing one. To help deal with this problem, I will allow you to drop **the four lowest lecture quiz grades**. Thus, if you are unable to make class for a fun quiz, don't worry; the resulting grade of zero will be dropped. Of course, it's to your advantage to take as many fun lecture quizzes as you can.

Students who register for this class after the first week of classes naturally will miss one or more of the quizzes. Unfortunately, as there is no way to make up the missed quizzes, these quizzes will be counted toward the student's four quizzes to be dropped. Thus, those students who enter this course late should realize that they are at a grading disadvantage compared with students who entered at the beginning of the semester. Because of this problem, I will be reluctant to add students into the course after the second week of classes.

Results of each fun quiz will be posted on *Blackboard* within a week of the checkup*.* Please get into the habit of checking your grades on the Grade Center in *Blackboard* regularly.

**Fun Homeworks.** To ensure that you are keeping up with the textbook readings, that you are learning the concepts and terminology of psychology, and that you are ready to discuss the assigned material during the recitation section, a fun homework assignment will be given by your teaching assistant during most regular recitation sessions (including lab and exam days). The assignments will appear automatically each week on *LaunchPad*. You have one week to complete the homework. Each homework assignment will include a set of short-answer questions. Please answer the questions IN YOUR OWN WORDS (i.e., have your textbook closed when completing the homework) and submit it on *LaunchPad* before the deadline (i.e., midnight on the day of recitation). The teaching assistants will use the homework questions as the basis of discussion in the recitation section. Thus, you should be prepared to reiterate your homework answers during the recitation.

Because of the large size of this class, I am not able to create makeup homeworks for anyone who does not complete it on time, even if you have a legitimate excuse. To help deal with this problem, I will allow you to **drop your two lowest homework grades**. Thus, if you are unable to turn in a homework assignment for whatever reason, don't worry; the resulting grade of zero will be dropped. Nonetheless, I recommend that you complete as many of these assignments as possible. You can obtain a summary of your homework grades by clicking on the Grade Center in *Blackboard*.

**Fun Laboratories**. In my continuing efforts to provide students with both the practical and the enjoyable experience of psychology, five in-class fun laboratories will be held during five different recitation sessions throughout the semester (see *Topics and Course Schedule* for exact dates). The teaching assistants will conduct these laboratories in the regular online recitation sections. The laboratories aim to apply the material covered in recent lectures to real-life examples. In each laboratory, each student in the class will participate in some interesting activity or demonstration pertinent to a recent course topic.

You often will work in small groups. The teaching assistants then will summarize the data from all students. You will use the results of the activities to answer a series of questions, which will be distributed to you at the beginning of the lab. In answering some of the questions, it will be helpful to refer to your textbook, so I encourage you to have it handy each time a laboratory is held. You must complete the entire physical lab during class using iClicker *REEF*. You are allowed to work together with others in the class in answering the questions from the lab although, of course, the final answers should always be your own.

Because the laboratories are difficult to set up and to conduct, and usually involve group work, no makeups will be given to a student who is unable to attend class on a laboratory day, whether or not the student has a legitimate excuse. Nor will I be able to accept labs turned in late. To help deal with this problem, **I will allow you to drop your one lowest fun laboratory grade**. Thus, if you are unable to make class for one of the fun laboratories, don't worry; the resulting grade of zero will be dropped. Of course, it's to your educational advantage to participate in each of the fun laboratories.

**Fun Papers**. As important as it is for you to have mastered the concepts presented in class and in the textbook, it is just as important for you to think about those concepts critically and to express your thoughts in written form. Three structured papers have been developed to help achieve this goal. Each paper concerns an important current issue from one of the course topics. The structured format of the papers enables you to work step by step through the target problem. In this way, you have a framework to express your thoughts in an organized fashion. Your teaching assistant will discuss the details of the papers in the recitation sections. They also will be available during their office hours to provide help and feedback with writing your papers.

The due dates for the three papers are separated by roughly one-month intervals (see Syllabus Schedule for due dates)**.** Please use *Blackboard* to send your papers to your teaching assistant by 5:00 pm or before on these three dates. In order to do this, first log on to Blackboard and click on the link for PSY 10200. Then go to assignments → go to fun papers → click on the link corresponding to the paper you are working on (e.g., Fun Paper #1). Once there, scroll down to “Attach local file”, browse your computer for the finished paper, and add it. Then click submit, and you are done. If you accidentally uploaded the wrong paper, you must contact your teaching assistant immediately to release it. Late papers will be accepted, but an increasing penalty will be applied for each day late. Your paper is considered late if the final version has not been received by the 5:00 pm deadline. Feel free to ask your teaching assistant for confirmation of receipt; if you then do not receive confirmation from your teaching assistant, contact me immediately. **You may not drop any of the papers**. Thus, I recommend that you complete each paper well before the due date to avoid any unanticipated problems meeting the deadlines.

**Extra-credit option**: To encourage students to write better papers, both in terms of grammar and organization, we have devised an extra-credit opportunity for you. If you submit your paper online to the Rudin Writing Center to receive feedback from a tutor there, and then submit to your teaching assistant proof from the Writing Center that you went, your teaching assistant will add bonus points to your paper grade. If you visit the online Writing Center 2 or more days before the Monday deadline, you will receive a **5% bonus** on your paper. If you visit the online Writing Center on the Monday the paper is due, you will receive a **1% bonus**. Be sure to take advantage of this extra-credit option for each of the three papers. Only one bonus (5% or 1%) is given for each paper.

**Fun Tests**. Three full-period fun tests will be given in one-month intervals during the semester (see course schedule for dates). Each test will cover material since the previous test. Some of the questions may be drawn from previous quizzes; most will be new. **You may not drop any of the tests.** If you are not online in class for a test, and you have not been excused beforehand (see attendance policy above), a grade of zero will be recorded by your name for that test. Makeup tests will NOT be given automatically; you must have my prior okay. Results of each fun test will be available to you via *Blackboard* within a week after the test day.

Each of the three tests will include a set of 50 multiple-choice questions. To present and answer these questions, we will use *Blackboard*.

A review for each fun test will be given in special review sessions prior to that test. During the review sessions, the teaching assistants will go over sample questions, suggest areas of emphasis in studying, and answer each of your questions. Students who complete all homework questions before the review session will benefit most from attending the review.

**Psychology Experiment Participation**. As part of the requirements for PSY 102, students over 18 years old are asked to participate as subjects in 3 credit units (i.e., 3 hours) of ongoing research in the Department of Psychology using the *Subject Pool*, or to complete an equivalent number of written assignments (i.e., three 2-3 page papers). If you are not yet 18 years old, there are alternative Special Lecture assignments (live online lectures) also available on the *Subject Pool*. The logic behind the requirement is that students of psychological science should play an active role in different kinds of research conducted by psychologists. To fulfill this requirement, you will need to sign up for individual experiments on the *Subject Pool*, which usually are ready by the third week of classes, are scheduled throughout the semester, and are conducted until the last week of classes, but not during finals week. Hence, you need to complete your research participation, lecture participation, or alternative written assignments by **December 9th at 5:00 pm**.

To sign up for an experiment or lecture, use your browser to reach: <https://ccny.sona-systems.com/student_new_user.aspx> (be sure to copy and paste the link for the Subject Pool that appears on *Blackboard* into a new browser page). Once on the web site, register yourself into the subject pool by filling out the information requested. Please use the same name that appears on your Blackboard account. For User ID, please put the first part of your CCNY email address (the part before @citymail.cuny.edu). When choosing the Course, you will notice that there is a choice for every section of PSY 102. Please be sure to select the correct section, as you may not be credited properly if you do not. Once you click the Request Account button, an email will be sent to your CCNY email address with your user ID and password. Once you have received this email, and are able to log in to the website, you will first be required to fill out a brief demographic survey (you will only be asked to do this once). You can choose to sign up for a study by clicking on Study Sign-Up. Once you click here you will be shown a list of available studies for you to sign up, along with descriptions of the studies. Besides signing up for a study, the main page allows you to view the studies for which you have signed up and any credits you have received. Check within a couple of days after the experiment to ensure that you have been credited properly. In fact, your record on Subject Pool is how we verify that you have completed the 3-unit requirement. When you have participated in enough experiments to earn 3 credit units on Subject Pool, then you have successfully completed the requirement. You will only receive points for this assignment if you have completed the requirement; no partial points will be given. You also can click on My Profile to provide an alternate email address (if you would like any emails to be sent somewhere other than you CCNY email address) or change your password. If you have any problems, please contact [subjectpool.ccny@gmail.com](mailto:subjectpool.ccny@gmail.com).

Be sure to arrive at your appointments on time. For each experimental session, you will be asked to read and sign an informed consent document, stating that you agree to participate in the study. Be sure you receive a copy of the signed consent form. The experimenter then will test you in the study and credit you for your participation. You can withdraw from the experiment at any time. Don't forget to show up on time to any experiment you have signed up to participate in, or else be sure to cancel. If you fail to arrive on time for an experiment, you may be penalized by having to complete additional experimental hours. To avoid any penalty, you must cancel your participation in an experiment before the end of the experiment’s cancellation period (see the experiment’s description). To cancel an experiment, click My Schedule/Credits. If you have incurred penalties during the semester, to fulfill the participation requirement you will need to complete enough experimental hours beyond 3 hours to equal the total number of penalties. The Subject Pool also contains a number of Special Lecture opportunities for which all students are eligible and may receive subject pool credit, regardless of age.

*Alternative Written Assignment: Three Papers*. If you do not wish to take part in the research participation requirement, are younger than 18 years old, or cannot participate because of conflicts, you are allowed to substitute an alternative, written assignment of three 2-3 page papers (i.e., one paper for each research unit). This assignment is in addition to the three fun papers already required in the course. You also can use the alternative assignment to reach the 3-unit threshold if you have not completed enough experiments (e.g., 1 paper + 2 experimental hours = 3 research units). Each of the three papers in the alternative assignment will be a structured summary of a classic study in psychology, selected by me (the three studies are saved as pdfs in *Blackboard*). If you are interested in doing the alternative assignment, follow exactly the instructions for the structured summary, which are provided in *Blackboard*.

**Monitoring Course Progress**

As students transition from high school to college they sometimes find it difficult to manage their time well, either in terms of studying or completing assignments in a timely fashion. Poor time management and study skills can have a negative impact on grades, particularly in PSY 10200, where many different sorts of assignment are due on a regular basis throughout the semester. Indeed, most students who fail PSY 10200 do so simply because they do not keep up with the assignments or attendance. You can monitor your progress in the course by using Blackboard: In “My Grades” the column entitled *Final Grade* contains (roughly) your current grade in the course (not including any absence penalties you may have incurred or extra credit you may have completed). You can calculate your absences by summing the column *Total Absences*. You can calculate your extra credit by summing the column *Total Extra Credit*. Your precise current grade in the course is thus:

*Final Grade* + *Total Extra Credit* – 2 x *Total Absences*.

To help you keep up in the course, I encourage you to meet each week during regularly scheduled sessions with a supplemental instruction (SI) leader. In these sessions the SI leader will review and discuss the material and provide opportunities for you to enhance your course performance (e.g., revisions of term papers). It is our hope that SI will lower the high failure and course withdrawal rate in this course and at the College. Students who attend 3 SI sessions each month are allowed to rewrite that month’s fun paper for a higher grade. Please see your SI leader for details.

**Grading**

The educational philosophy underlying this course is a variant of the *mastery model*: Students are given many chances to ask and answer questions and to master the material in each part of the course. I have set criteria at each level of mastery that I believe are appropriate for the material in this course. So, all students whose performance exceeds the highest criterion are awarded the highest grade.

We will not use the *competition model* in this course, in which a fixed percentage of As, Bs, Cs, etc. are distributed to the students according to the normal curve. This means that there is no "curving" in this course on any quiz, paper, laboratory, or test, or on the final grade. Instead, in this course, grades on every assignment are determined according to a "straight" scale of scores:

**97-100% = A+ 77-79% = C+**

**95-96% = A 75-76% = C**

**90-94% = A- 70-74% = C-**

**87-89% = B+ 60-69% = D**

**85-86% = B <60% = F**

**80-84% = B-**

Decimal values are rounded to the nearest integer. Final grades are determined according to this straight scale. *Please do not ask me to change correct final scores, even if you find yourself only a fraction of a point below the next grade level (e.g., 89.4 stays a B).* Please be responsible for keeping abreast of your grades throughout the semester. Bring any grade problems to our attention immediately. Please do not wait until the final grades have been set to deal with grade problems, for it is much more difficult, and often impossible, to change grades after they have been sent to the registrar.

Quiz, homework, paper, laboratory, and test grades will be posted in a timely manner on *Blackboard*. Neither quizzes nor tests will be returned to students. You are free, however, to go over your quizzes, homeworks, papers, laboratories, or tests with the teaching assistants or me during office hours or recitation sections. Any requests for reconsideration of grading of any homework, reasoning exercise, laboratory, paper, quiz, or test ideally should be brought to my attention **within one week** of grading.

The contributions to the semester grade are:

Lecture Quizzes – 12% (23 total, 0.61% each)

Homeworks – 12% (10 total, 0.83% each)

Laboratories – 4% (4 total, 1% each)

Papers – 27% (3 total, 9% each)

Tests 39% – (3 total, 13% each)

Experiment Participation – 6% (All or None – no partial credit)

You are expected to take all fun tests online in class on the day that they are given. If you feel that you are inadequately prepared to take a fun test owing to unanticipated, extenuating circumstances completely beyond your control, you must make this known to me **prior to the time the test is given**. There will be no exceptions. An unexcused absence from a fun test results in a grade of zero being recorded.

**Extra Credit Option: Weekly Practice Questions**

PSY 10200 presents students with fascinating and thought-provoking material about the mind and human behavior. However, students new to psychology may find learning the many concepts and terms used in this field to be highly challenging and sometimes overwhelming, leading to poor grades in the course. Past experience has shown that many of these students benefit from more structured review of the material. To make regular review and rehearsal an integral feature of the course, I have devised an extra-credit option for you. Throughout each week of the semester, a set of practice questions can be accessed on-line for the current section of the course. Each set of questions will consist of 25 multiple choice questions, with each correct answer adding .02% to your final grade. The extra-credit questions for any given week will be available on-line using *Blackboard* beginning the previous Friday. *Your answers will need to be submitted by the following Friday at 5:00 pm*, at which time they will no longer be available. Grading is done automatically. You are not required to complete the extra-credit questions at one sitting, but you must save your answers before leaving the computer and must return to complete the questions before the Friday 5:00 deadline. For students who complete all 12 sets of questions, you can earn up to 6% of extra credit!

**Consultation**

My online office hours are Mondays 1:00-2:00. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://ccny.zoom.us/j/382619974>

(Meeting ID: 382 619 974). Or call in: +1 646 558 8656. If you need to meet for a more extended period, please see me to arrange an appointment. The easiest way to arrange an appointment (besides talking to me before or after class) is to write me an e-mail message. My e-mail address is: [rmelara@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:melara@psych.purdue.edu?subject=PSY%20120%20question). You also can contact me by telephone: 212-650-5716.

The TA/Course Coordinator of Psychology 102 is Ms. Stephanie Nuñez. She can answer any questions that you might have about the course and handle problems with clicker or subject pool registration. Her office hours are posted on *Blackboard*. Her e-mail address is: [tacoordinatorpsy102@gmail.com](mailto:tacoordinatorpsy102@gmail.com).

The teaching assistants will each hold regular office hours. The times and Zoom links of these office hours are posted on *Blackboard*. Please feel free to discuss any questions you may have with your teaching assistant through e-mail or during your regular recitation session.

# Academic Dishonesty

Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course in any guise. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, (1) plagiarism: using another's words, ideas, or paraphrases and implying that they are your own; (2) cheating: using hidden notes or examining another person's responses in order to answer questions on a checkup or test; (3) ringers: having another person fulfill your assignment (e.g., homework, reasoning exercise, laboratory, quiz, paper, or test). In this course, it is very important that you avoid plagiarism when completing your paper assignments. To help you in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please read the guide provided by CUNY’s provost, dean, and student affairs offices: <http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Policies/General/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf>.

One recurring issue of academic dishonesty concerns the term papers. Each of the questions asked of you in a term paper must be answered in your own words. You are not permitted to quote other sources. Moreover, when writing a term paper, you should have no contact with other sources, including the course textbook. The recommended approach is to read the textbook or other source material before completing the assignment, close it, and then write the paper without opening it again. In this way, all of the words will be yours. Also, do not work with other students when writing your papers and avoid using any sources on the web for completing your paper assignments.

If you are thinking of plagiarizing, you should be aware that the process of looking for plagiarism is an automatic one done through a program in Blackboard called *SafeAssign*, which checks all submitted materials against a very large source material database. The database includes the papers of other students in the class, both this semester and in previous semesters. Furthermore, each of the teaching assistants is constantly on the lookout for evidence of plagiarism. Any cases of academic dishonesty that a TA or I uncover on any assignment in this course will be dealt with strictly: **A faculty report on the dishonest student will be filed with the Office of the Academic Integrity Official; the student will be failed on the assignment and possibly also in the course**. Please consult CUNY's policy on academic integrity for further information:

<http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) provides a supportive environment for students with disabilities and can be helpful in arranging student accommodations, support services, and academic adjustments.  Please contact the office at disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu or visit their Zoom link during business office hours: https://ccny.zoom.us/s/116151245.  If after meeting with SDS it is determined that you would benefit from in-class accommodations, the office will ask you to bring me an Academic Adjustment Memo that specifies the nature of the accommodations.  I can work with you to ensure that these accommodations are met. For more information, visit this site: <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/accessability>

Appendix 2

PSY 102 — Psychology in the Modern World

Instructor: Bob Melara

Fall 2020

**FUN PAPER # 3**

**Due Date: Wednesday, November 18th, 2020, by 5 pm on \*\*Blackboard\*\***

Designing an At-Risk Prevention Study using Supplemental Instruction

Dr. Steph is worried about the many students who are at-risk of failing her introductory psychology course at City College. She knows that almost 60% of students drop out of City College and most never obtain a degree. And even though 1 in 6 CCNY graduates is a psychology major, her course has a very high dropout rate (second only to calculus). Thus, she wants to implement some intervention that will help at-risk students pass her course. She decides on a system of supplemental instruction, or SI, in which trained college graduates hold special weekly sessions to review course material and focus on problem areas. Dr. Steph wants to conduct a research study to evaluate the effectiveness for the at-risk students of SI in her course.

You have been hired as a consultant to submit a research proposal to Dr. Steph, taking all her concerns into consideration. She wants to compare students who utilize SI with those who don’t, but she’s worried that if she intentionally withholds SI from some students (say, in the control group) it may cause them to fail the course. Also, she’s not sure how to operationally define at-risk students or course success. She wants to ensure that at-risk students take advantage of SI, but many of them leave campus after class for outside work and so can’t attend the SI sessions. Also, some attend SI sessions less consistently than others. In fact, she’s found in the past that it’s actually the better students, and not the at-risk students, who tend to use SI, perhaps because poor students are reluctant to admit they have a learning problem. Finally, Dr. Steph thinks that if SI is made unavailable to some students (control group), they may seek help in other ways, such as paying more visits to their teaching assistants. She wants you to design the study, operationally defining the variables, and controlling for effects of (1) outside work, (2) TA visits, (3) reluctance of at-risk students to attend SI session, and (4) intentional withholding of SI in the control participants.

Your job is to write a research proposal with 4 headings: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Conclusions. Within each heading, answer each of the following questions. For the Introduction, you will need some background material found in this newspaper article: “Who Gets to Graduate”, written by Paul Tough, and published in the New York Times on May 15, 2014. It can be found at: <https://nyti.ms/2k6sruq>

**1. Introduction.**

1. Certain groups of students in college today are at much higher risk of course failure and drop out than others. Using data from “Who Gets to Graduate,” describe two big risk factors in college retention and graduation. **(4 pts.)**
2. Do SAT scores predict college graduation? How likely is a poor student with high SAT scores to graduate compared with a rich student with low SAT scores? (**4 pts.)**

**c.** Describe one intervention from the article used at universities to address college failure and dropout of at-risk students. **(4 pts.)**

**d.** What is the hypothesis being addressed in the study you are designing? **(2 pts.)**

**2. Method.**

This section should outline how you plan to go about doing your research.

1. **(i)** Describe the participants. Define the target population? How are participants selected and recruited for the study? Would you sample the target population randomly? Why or why not? **(6 pts.)**

**(ii)** How do you plan to address Dr. Steph’s concerns about the reluctance of at-risk students to participate? How many groups will you test? How many individuals will you test in each group? Would you use random assignment of participants to groups? Why or why not? **(6 pts)**

1. **(i)** Describe the details of the SI intervention used in the experimental group. What intervention (if any) would you give to the control participants? How would you address Dr. Steph’s concern about intentionally withholding treatment from the participants in the control group? **(6 pts.)**   
   **(ii)** How do you plan to control for the following three variables: (1) TA visits, (2) outside work, and (3) inconsistency of attendance in SI sessions**. (6 pts.)** Name two other variables that you would need to control in this study and describe how you would do that. **(6 pts.)**
2. How would you operationally define the dependent variable? Dr. Steph believes that attendance at SI sessions will have several beneficial effects. Describe three possible outcome measures. **(5 pts.)**
3. What is the independent variable? Name all of the control variables. **(3 pts.)**

**3. Results**

Below is a reproduction from an earlier version of the textbook (Myers 2006, p. 460). Here, a researcher wishes to compare how well daisies grow in two types of soils: poor soil and fertile soil. She hypothesizes that the average daisy grown in the fertile soil will be taller than the average daisy grown in the poor soil. The difference in average height between the daisies grown in poor soil and those grown in fertile soil is called the “difference between groups.” But even if she finds a big difference between groups it may not be statistically significant. That’s because to be statistically significant the difference between groups needs to be about twice as large (actually 1.96 times as large) as the “variation within group.” If a group of daisies are all raised in the same kind of soil (e.g., poor soil), some of the daisies in that group will grow a bit higher than others. This is the “variation within group.” If the variation within group is as big as the difference between groups then that difference is probably just due to chance.



A statistical test helps us decide whether the observed difference between two groups is real or simply due to chance.

1. Describe how you would perform a statistical test on the experiment you designed for Dr.

Steph. How would you calculate the difference between groups? **(2 pts.)**

1. How would you calculate the variation within groups? **(4 pts.)**
2. Define statistical significance. What would lead you to conclude that the difference between groups is statistically significant? (refer to the textbook to understand the concept of statistical significance). **(4 pts.)**

4. **Conclusions**

Dr. Steph is worried that making a large investment in an SI program will waste money if it fails to show a difference between the experimental and control groups. So, before launching a full-scale study, she decides to conduct a small pilot study in which she asks two at-risk students who visit her after class each day if they would volunteer for intensive SI help (experimental group) and compares their course performance to two other students selected at random (control group). Dr. Steph is overjoyed when she sees the results depicted in the figure below.

1. Would Dr. Steph be correct in concluding that after undergoing SI any at-risk student is at least as capable of passing her course as any student not at risk? Support your position. **(4 pts.)**
2. How is it possible that the at-risk pilot participants actually have much better course performance than the comparison pilot participants? **(4 pts.)**
3. Consider the counterclaim that SI had nothing to do with the difference between groups in the pilot study. Name three extraneous variables that may have been the real source of this difference? **(6 pts.)**
4. Give two recommendations for improving Dr. Steph’s pilot study. **(4 pts.)**



**A fifth of your grade will be based on the following**:

* 1. **Clarity of thesis development (4pts)**
  2. **Clarity of paper’s structure and organization (4pts)**
  3. **Thoroughness in development of evidence (4pts)**
  4. **Good mechanics (grammar, punctuation, usage) and style of writing (4pts)**
  5. **Competence in quantitative reasoning and analysis of research findings (4pts)**
* **Due by 5:00 pm on WEDNESDAY, November 18th, 2020. Late papers will not be accepted.**
* **All papers need to be submitted electronically using the Assignment tool on Blackboard to upload your paper. Click “Assignments” (on Tool Bar) -> Click link to “Fun Paper #3” -> Click “Attach Local File” -> Browse for your file -> Click “Submit.”**
* **With the exception of the instructed sentences, the entire paper must be in your own words, in essay format & type written (double spaced) using Microsoft Word in .doc format.**
* **Quoted, paraphrased or borrowed sentences or phrases are not allowed. These will be regarded as plagiarism, which will be penalized by *a zero* on the assignment and a report filed with the Office of the Academic Integrity Official.**
* **The paper should not exceed 4 pages.**