

Note:

This is the Summer 2023 version of the syllabus. An updated version for 2024 will soon follow. The topic and most categories of activities will remain the same. However, the grade breakdown (e.g., this class will be for a letter grade, not pass/fail), specific assignments, and deadlines are subject to revision.

This class was formerly called “Asking and Answering Questions.”

Syllabus last updated 8.24.23

Psychological Investigation: Ideas to Action

HUM 100-2 | Summer 2023

COURSE ACCESS

Meeting time: Mondays through Thursdays 2:30pm-3:50pm

Location: University Hall 121

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Almaz Mesghina, Ph.D. (she/her/hers)

How to address me? Call me Professor Mesghina or Dr. Mesghina (mess-GIH-nuh)

Email: mesghina@northwestern.edu

Office hours: Mondays through Thursdays 1-2pm at **Swift Annex 120**

What are office hours? Office hours are set times that I reserve specifically to speak to you. Please take advantage of this time. At office hours, you are welcome to share any successes, concerns, confusions, questions, trials, and tribulations regarding the course content, upcoming assignments, your major, your career goals, your college experience ... the list goes on. You are also welcome to ask about my career, research, etc. My goal for this time is to get to know you and assist you in any way appropriate in my capacity as your instructor.

Teaching assistant: Cheyenne Bates (she/her/hers)

Email: cheyennebates2026@u.northwestern.edu

Office hours: Mondays through Thursdays 1-2pm at Swift 225

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

This section has been completed in collaboration with you, the students, regarding your expectations of each other as you collaborate on your group projects this summer.

- Dividing up tasks (equally) and taking time to organize the assignments
- Asking for help (from groupmates or teacher or peer advisers) and collaboration
 - o Be vocal about your needs, strengths, and weaknesses
 - o Accommodate others in the group to optimize group success
- Group members hold each other accountable
 - o Make your own due dates and stick to it
 - o Set up times to meet as a group
- Respect and listen to everyone’s opinion within the group
 - o Be kind, compassionate
- Be honest and effective with communication
- Refer to rubric

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychology is a fascinating field – our job is to study the *how* and *why* behind our everyday thoughts and behaviors. However, because human behavior is quite multifaceted and noisy, it is critically important for psychologists to know how to design research studies that are sound and scientific. In this course, we will learn how to (skeptically and confidently) read psychology research papers, generate testable research questions, and design our own research studies to test our questions. Our theme for the class and your research proposals will focus on one broad topic: use of social media and wellbeing.

Who should take this class? This class is not for someone who already has experience reading psychology research and designing psychology studies. When choosing your BRIDGE elective, you should consider taking a class that will challenge you to 1) improve skills you feel need more attention or 2) try subjects you would never have thought to try out before. Challenge and discomfort are inherently part of learning something new, and Bridge is a safe place to do this.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, we will be able to:

1. Develop a skeptical approach to reading research articles.
2. Synthesize many research papers to form one persuasive argument.
3. Formulate interesting, testable research questions that are informed by research.
4. Apply learned skills in research design to investigate a chosen phenomenon of interest pertaining to social media usage.
5. Translate and disseminate complex psychological jargon and statistics into accessible, everyday language via common academic modes of delivery (i.e., research papers and presentations are still made engaging and easy to understand).

HEALTH ACCOMMODATIONS

For the sake of our learning and because so much of class time will be spent collaborating on group projects, we all must attend class... except if you are feeling ill or otherwise believe you should not attend class for a health-related reason. **Please let me know if you will miss class.** I will accommodate COVID-related or health-related concerns to the best of my ability. Though class will not be recorded, I or the TA will 1) post any PowerPoints or other in-class materials to Canvas, 2) hold special Zoom office hours (if desired) for anyone that misses class, and 3) offer any virtual support/ alternate assignments as needed. I also ask that **group members support each other: Let your group members know if you must miss class and plan ahead for how you can continue contributing to groupwork virtually. Group members: be sure to inform your absent peers on what you did during class.** Know that I am generally quite flexible and understanding. Please communicate any anticipated difficulties (e.g., unattainable deadlines) to me in advance and as you see fit.

INCLUSIVE TEACHING STATEMENT

In this course, we will strive to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all students in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other identity—visible or not. As psychology researchers, we do the same, plus we will come to recognize the empirical and theoretical value of doing so.

Every single one of us has something to contribute to this class. My ultimate goal in teaching this course is to create an inclusive learning environment that incorporates *all* students' perspectives. Naturally, discussions in psychology courses can broach personal matters – I will try my best to be mindful of the verbal and electronic content I share during class, and I ask that you display a similar level of respect to your peers and myself. Lastly, I want to emphasize that this course is not intended to teach “correct” and “incorrect” ways of investigating psychological phenomena. Rather, the purpose of discussion is to teach us *how to argue scientifically*, by threading literature with our own experiences to help us scaffold our arguments, critique our intuitions, and develop sound theories of behavior.

If you have questions or concerns about the extent to which our classroom is inclusive, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

COURSE POLICIES, GRADING, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As this is a discussion-based and collaborative course, participation is a highly encouraged and graded component of class. Therefore, you must come prepared to engage in discussion by completing all assigned readings prior to each class meeting. In addition to your contributions during class, other forms of participation include your active contributions to groupwork. More details on these assignments are provided below.

Your performance in this class will be graded Pass/No Pass and will be determined on the following basis:

25% Participation

- 10% In-class and in-group discussion
- 10% In-class activities and homework
- 5% Peer evaluations

50% Group Research Proposal Write-up

- 5% Annotated bibliography
- 10% Draft 1
- 15% Draft 2
- 20% Final paper

25% Group Presentation

I. Participation (25%): Participation in this class will be evaluated both in terms of our contributions to the whole class and our contributions within our research groups. All participation grades are provided at the level of each student.

In-class and in-group discussion (10%): We will meet four times per week as a class. As this is an applied course with an emphasis on collaboration, it is expected that you will contribute to class discussion and come prepared to assist your group. Please prepare yourself for discussion and for your group's project by completing all assigned readings before each class period. **If you cannot attend class for any reason, please let me know in advance, because participation points necessitate your presence.**

In-class activities and homework (10%): Throughout the summer, we will have many in-class activities to further your understanding of the course topics. For instance, there might be worksheets and activities to help support your group projects. There are also out-of-class activities and responsibilities, like completing assigned readings and Annotations. All these exercises are ungraded, though I will regularly review answers to assess individual-level understanding, and will reach out to students who are consistently underperforming.

Peer evaluations (5%): As is the case in all research settings and classes, success in this course requires a collaborative environment. To ensure the success of all groups, we will evaluate our group members and ourselves on the extent to which we have contributed to our group projects. This will be done at the end of the class. However, if things are not going well before then, I encourage a conversation in office hours.

II. Group Research Proposal Write-up (50%): Your final paper will be a 10ish page APA style research paper in which you will summarize your group's research proposal. A detailed rubric will be provided.

Annotated Bibliography (5%): We will first write and submit an annotated bibliography, which will help you summarize all the research related to your topic.

Draft 1 (Literature Review) (10%): In the first draft, we will submit our literature reviews related to the topic we chose to explore. This will build heavily from the annotated bibliography.

Draft 2 (Draft 1 + Methods) (15%): In the second draft, you will incorporate feedback from Draft 1, plus add the methods section.

Final paper (Draft 2 + Abstract + Limitations) (20%): A complete draft of the final paper (incorporating feedback from Draft 2 plus adding abstract and limitations sections) will be due on **Thurs Aug 31st**.

III. Group Presentation (25%): During class on **Thurs Aug 31st**, we will present our final presentations. These will be roughly 15-minute presentations summarizing all aspects of your research proposal! Again, a detailed rubric will be provided later in the quarter.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This course schedule is subject to change. Know that I will push deadlines as needed to ensure we have enough time to finish major assignments. More details regarding assigned readings and in-class activities will be added to this syllabus soon.

Date	Topic	In-class activities & Assigned readings (complete before class)	Assignment Due (by start of class, unless specified)
Week 1: Reading			

Mon Aug 7	Welcomes + introduction	No readings <i>During class, we will:</i> –complete an interests survey –complete syllabus expectations –introduce the scientific method	
Tues Aug 8	How to read research	Jordan, C. H. & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), <i>The Self in Social Psychology</i> (pp. 461-470). Psychology Press. Skues, J., Williams, B., Oldmeadow, J., & Wise, L. (2016). The effects of boredom, loneliness, and distress tolerance on problem internet use among university students. <i>International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction</i> , 14, 167-180. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-015-9568-8 <i>During class, we will:</i> –review annotations –choose/narrow our research topics	Annotation practice #1
Wed Aug 9	Annotated bibliographies & accessing research	How to read sources critically. <i>Harvard guide</i> . (pp. 5-12) Przybylski, A. K. & Weinstein, N. (2012). Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality. <i>Journal of Social and Personal Relationships</i> , 30(3), 237-246. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407512453827 <i>During class, we will:</i> –review annotations –start annotated bibliographies –hold an accessing research workshop	Annotation practice #2
Thurs Aug 10	Work day	No readings <i>During class, we will:</i> –work on annotated bibliography	
Week 2: Questioning			
Mon Aug 14	Formulating a research question and hypothesis	No readings. <i>During class, we will:</i> –narrow our research question & hypothesis	Annotated bibliography (due 1:30 pm)
Tues Aug 15	Reference and citations	<i>Writing for Psychology: A guide for psychology concentrators</i> . Harvard College. - Academic Honesty in writing (pp. 22-23) - APA Format Guidelines (pp. 20-32) <i>During class, we will:</i>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –start outlining our literature review –discuss academic integrity + citation practices 	
Wed Aug 16	Writing literature reviews	<p><i>Writing for Psychology: A guide for psychology concentrators.</i> Harvard College.</p> <p>- Do's and Don'ts of Effective Writing in Psychology (pp. 24-29)</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –continue working on literature reviews 	
Thurs Aug 17	Work day	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –finalize literature reviews 	
Week 3: Designing			
Mon Aug 21	Designing your study	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Select the best designs for our projects 	Draft 1 (due 1:30 pm)
Tues Aug 22	Measurement	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Design survey questions, pick measures –Review validity, reliability 	
Wed Aug 23	Understanding data	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Do a brief, painless overview of statistics...in order to understand research papers & what constitutes “evidence” 	
Thurs Aug 24	Work day	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –work on draft 2 	
Week 4: Presenting			
Mon Aug 28	1:1 Consultations	<p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –meet 1:1 with groups to review Draft 2 and prepare for Final Draft 	Draft 2 (due 1:30 pm)
Tues Aug 29	Field trip	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –learn about other ways of doing research 	
Wed Aug 30	1:1 Consultations	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –meet 1:1 with groups to prepare for presentations and Final Draft 	
Thurs Aug 31	Presentations	<p>No readings.</p> <p><i>During class, we will:</i></p>	Presentation Final paper &

		-present our research!	Peer evaluations (all due 1:30pm)
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