This is a writing proficiency (W) course. A grade of C- or better certifies writing proficiency for majors.

PSYC 401W Prerequisites: Completion of GE Written Communication (A2) requirement, PSYC 101, PSYC 261, PSYC 364, and four additional courses in the major.

Students may take any section of PSYC 401W as long as prerequisites have been met.
This capstone course focuses on how social and developmental psychologists study close personal relationships. In particular, students will learn the nature of several major types of close relationships as they occur at different points in the life cycle (i.e., parent/child, friendships, romantic). In addition, the course reviews the process of ending relationships, as well as the psychological implications for individuals when relationships end. Classic and contemporary readings are assigned that cover a broad range of theoretical and empirical issues related to the study of close relationships. The purpose of this capstone is two-fold. First, the course is designed to help students develop scientific thinking skills within the context of the research area known as “relationship science.” Second, the course is also intended to give students the opportunity to apply psychological principles of close relationships to one’s own life and to the larger world around us.
This capstone course focuses on microaggression theories including examining questions such as: What is it? Who participates in microaggression? Why does it occur? What can we learn from this? and How does it apply to me and my community?

Adapted from Dr. Derald Wing Sue:

...they are everyday slights, put downs, and insults. They can be intentional and unintentional; Sometimes people aren't even aware they are being offensive. A microaggression can be targeted toward any marginalized group based on race, gender, sexuality, and disability. (Sue et al., 2007)

Students will participate in critical inquiry through empirical research, formal and informal writing, presentations, and discussions. The learning process aims to develop and hone student skills in scientific writing (APA), critical thinking, collaborative work ethics, civil discourse, oral presentation, and leadership responsibilities - a capstone course.
Self-Control & Impulsivity

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Johnson
#5165 PSYC 401W-03 SEM
Tues/Thurs 3:30-4:45pm in Modoc Hall 220

See class schedule for full details

Why do we choose to spend our money now instead of saving it for retirement? Why do we distract ourselves with cell phones while driving, despite the dangers of doing so? Why do we, as a society, continue to depend on fossil fuels that satisfy our immediate energy needs yet pollute the environment in the long run?

This senior seminar course will attempt to answer these important questions by examining self-control and impulsivity from a behavioral perspective. Students enrolled in this course will contact theoretical, conceptual, and empirical foundations of the science of decision-making through seminal and contemporary readings in the area. In particular, the course will highlight nonhuman and human research investigating the neurobiological, pharmacological, environmental, economic, and social determinants of choice. Students taking this course will gain an appreciation for basic behavioral science and its capacity to inform treatments to improve self-control in at-risk populations.
Most of us want to be successful, happy, and fulfilled – that is, to experience our lives as worth living. But for many of us in the modern world, life is not that easy to sort out, and what makes life meaningful differs from person to person. Seminar participants will examine both historical and contemporary ideas about meaning and purpose. Drawing on core domains of psychology such as personality, social psychology, developmental, abnormal, cognition and others, we’ll consider how a sense of meaning emerges from relationships, careers, a sense of wonder, and even the mundane routines of our daily lives. Participants will investigate why meaning is such an important issue in psychology, explore how our experience of meaning (or the lack thereof) affects our behaviors, moods, and relationships, and understand how meaning and purpose enhances our own lives and the lives of those around us.
"That we do not discover reality but rather invent it is quite shocking for many people. And the shocking part about it - according to the concept of radical constructivism - is that the only thing we can ever know about the real reality (if it even exists) is what it is not. It is only with the collapse of our constructions of reality that we first discover that the world is not the way we imagine."

- Paul Watzlawick

This course is designed to introduce and address the issues and practical applications of understanding "group and individual" psychology from a "post-modern and post-structural" perspective. Inherently, and by design, it will provide an alternative view to "modern" or "conventional" psychological principles as they relate to groups and individuals. As such, the course will offer a counter-view of understanding and working with the "self" and with "groups." This course will assist students in:

1. Locating their respective practices within a set of principles that situate the individual and group within a post-modern/post-structural understanding of the human experience.

2. Acquiring knowledge of the difference between post-modern, post-structural and modernist perspectives;

3. Fostering the acquisition of post-structural and post-modern methodologies as they pertain to group and individual work via journal work;

4. Acquiring an understanding of one's development and how stories come to employ the individual toward particular identities;

5. Observing the insidious nature of "western" psychology's influence here and throughout the world;

6. Unmasking the DSM and providing an alternative perspective in understanding individual and group "troublings."
The Psychology of Music

Instructor: Dr. Richard Tafalla
#5168 PSYC 401W-06 SEM
Asynchronous Online Course
Entirely Internet Based
See class schedule for full details

“It is probable that the progenitors of man, either the males or females or both sexes before acquiring the power of expressing mutual love in articulate speech, endeavored to charm each other with musical notes and rhythm (Darwin, 1871/1874).”

Music is fundamental to human existence. Scientists argue that we probably “sang” before we spoke. The human brain has evolved to both appreciate, and generate music. Music is represented in the brain across a wide and varied range of functions, and regions. Indeed, cognitive/social functions can be understood through music.

Psychological connections to music are endless including brain functioning, social development, and music related dysfunction. Music is an important part of our physical environment and facilitates our interface with the environment. Of course, music appreciation, and development are all psychological processes as well, and this course will focus on these processes. This course will not cover all aspects of Music Psychology, but will introduce the student to the field, and offer an opportunity to develop a more advance understanding of some aspect of the field.