PSYC 401W
Capstone in Psychology
Spring 2022

- 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.
A new branch of psychology called Positive Psychology began around 2000, with a call for psychological science to become as concerned with human strengths as it had traditionally been with human weaknesses. One of its founders, Martin Seligman, defined Positive Psychology as “the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.” We now know, from almost two decades of research that positive emotions, character strengths, and good social relationships can serve as protective buffers against the adversities of life.

In this senior seminar, we will examine Positive Psychology research on topics such as resilience, courage, subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction, gratitude, empathy, forgiveness, mindfulness, humor, creativity, and wisdom. The main emphasis of our seminar discussions, presentations, and written assignments will be on the scholarly findings and their real-world applications to health, relationships, and societal institutions (schools, workplaces, communities, etc.).

见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.
Ecopsychology, the intersection of psychology, ecology, and spirituality, has emerged to address specific issues connected to the relationships humans have with nonhuman worlds. According to the International Community for Ecopsychology, the focus here is to examine “the synergistic relation between personal health and well-being and the health and well-being of our home, the Earth.”

This course is intended to offer a culminating experience that will challenge you to apply what you have learned as a student of psychology. Utilizing a well established and growing body of empirical evidence, we will explore how human thought, emotion and behavior is interconnected to such issues as sustainability, global climate change, and the ensuing moral and ethical obligations that arise. You will be encouraged to think critically in this course and express your ideas via seminar discussions (synchronous on Zoom) and writing assignments.

Ecopsychology
Instructor: Dr. Mary Dolan

#4669 PSYC 401W-04
Days/Time: Tues/Thurs 12:30pm-1:45pm
Room: MODC 217

OR

#4673 PSYC 401W-08
Days/Time: Mon/Wed 4:00pm-5:15pm
Room: MODC 217

See Class Schedule for full details
This course is designed to teach students about the power of visualization as tools with which to think—to reason, problem solve, and persuade.

Consider this: Students study graphs, charts, timelines, and formulae to learn concepts in school; executives make graphics presentations to corporate boards to win high stakes contracts; engineers examine schematics to build bridges and design cars; medical students use metaphorical interactive visualization tools to learn delicate surgical procedures; advertisers rely on pictures and photos to persuade consumers to buy products; litigators convince jurors with visual displays to win cases. In our own experience, we all know that visualizations are ubiquitous across social and news media—on Facebook, Snapchat, CNN, Breitbart, the New York Times, and Fox News. The question is how do these visualizations operate to teach, persuade, and influence people to think in particular ways? That is, how do viewers process visualization, and what do psychologists know that can be used to leverage users’ media decisions. This course is aimed at providing students with an understanding of the way the human mind processes visualizations and the principles for designing them to meet commercial and educational goals.
All of us want our lives to have purpose and meaning. We want to be successful, happy, and fulfilled, and to experience our lives as worth living. But for most people, life is not easy to sort out, and what makes life meaningful differs from person to person. Seminar participants will examine contemporary research on meaning and purpose. We'll draw on the core domains of psychology, such as personality, social psychology, developmental psychology, behavioral and cognitive psychology. Together, we'll consider how the need for meaning affects relationships, careers, and our daily lives, and how people can best make their way in the modern world.
"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