American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Arts and Humanities
Course#: PSYC500
Course Title: Orientation to Graduate Learning in Psychology
3 Credit Hours
8 Weeks

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Course Description (Catalog)

This course orients and prepares students for entry into advanced level study of psychology. It provides an overview of the field and guides students in the development, honing and application of critical thinking, research and writing skills necessary for successful completion of the Master of Arts in Psychology graduate degree. *This course must be taken during the student's first term.*

Course Scope

This course orients students to the University, their graduate program, the University learning system, essential resources such as the APUS Online Library, and the general field of psychology. It is designed to support academic progress and preparation for successful completion of the graduate program.

Course Objectives

Graduate learners successfully completing this course will:

1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology.
2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool
3. Examine career opportunities in psychology
4. Assess methods of developing and pursuing threads of investigative inquiry related to the discipline of psychology
5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research
6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work

Course Delivery Method

This 8-week graduate course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments include Discussion Forum questions accomplished in groups through a threaded discussion forum and assignments completed and graded individually.

Course Materials

Required texts:

Slife, B. (2011). *Taking sides: Clashing views on controversial psychological issues (17th ed.).* McGraw-Hill/Dushkin

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American psychological association (6th ed.).* American Psychological Association.

Evaluation Procedures

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS
Students engaging in graduate studies are held to rigorous standards. Graduate students are expected to exhibit advanced level critical thinking, ability to synthesize multiple sources of information, high caliber writing skills and academic integrity in all course activities. With the exception of forum posts and any other assignments so designated by the course instructor, assignment submissions completed in a narrative essay or composition format may not be written in first or second person ("I" or "you"). All writing must follow the citation and reference rules established by *the American Psychological Association* (APA), must be in size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font, double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides of the page and must include a cover page with the following centered vertically and horizontally: Student Name, Date of Submission, Assignment Title, Course Number and Name, and Professor Name. With the occasional exception of necessary brief quotes of specific statistical research findings or terminology used to describe research models or psychological constructs, in which case the author and publication still must be properly source credited and the quoted materials must be used very sparingly (one or two sentences per assignment) and placed inside quotation marks, all written work must be paraphrased (summarized in the student's own words) with proper source citations (See APA guidelines document in the classroom Resources folder).

When reporting on what one reads in any published source, including the course text, providing the source(s) used is required. Failure to do so in both the body of and in a References list attached to the end of the assignment submission and to properly quote very sparingly used verbatim content constitutes plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism, regardless of intent, will result in an assignment score of zero with no option for revision and resubmission for the first incident and course failure for any additional incidents. The website http://owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ is an excellent, easy to understand resource for APA style formatting and source citation. APA formatting guides are also included in the classroom Resources folder.

Scholarly, peer-reviewed journals must be used for assignment completion. Unless instructed to do so for specific assignments, students may not use commercial websites as the basis for completion of course work. Encyclopedia websites, such as Wikipedia or Encarta, dictionaries, About.com and other article summary sites, blogs or opinion slanted news media outlets may not be used for any writing assignment.

TIMELY SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS
All students are expected to submit classroom assignments by posted due dates and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. Should a student need additional time to complete an assignment he or she must contact the course professor before the due date so the situation can be reviewed and a resolution determined. Not all delayed assignment requests will be approved; leisure trips to areas without Internet access, wanting more personal time with family, forgetting assignments and leaving needed course materials at home or at the office cannot be considered valid reasons for missing course work. Unavoidable and non-negotiable military or civilian work assignments and health emergencies are generally considered valid reasons. Requests must be submitted for each potential delay need. Delayed work submission permission can only be granted one week at a time. Blanket permission for late work cannot be given and work may not be completed early to accommodate anticipated absences later in the term. The University has an extension system and a set of policies articulated in the APUS Student Handbook for managing unavoidable coursework extension needs. Routine submission of late assignments will result in significant points deducted from the final course grade.

COURSEWORK
FORUMS: Due Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8
Weekly dialogs with classmates will be based on engagement with assigned course readings and/or related multi-media and will take place in the online classroom on threaded Forums. A set of topical instructions for each dialog will be posted on its respective Forum weekly by the professor. While designed to promote lively discourse within a community of fellow learners, the dialogs are academic in nature and require a scholarly orientation, with students supporting their perspectives with source citations both in the post body and references at the end formatted in APA style.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE SUMMARY: Due Week 2
Students will complete a review of an evidence-based, peer-reviewed journal article on an important issue in psychology selected from among pre-approved topics.

WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS DO: Due Weeks 3 and 5
During Weeks 3 and 5, students will select 3 professional psychology sub-specialties from a list provided by the professor and submit an investigative report paper covering required information obtained from the American Psychological Association website and one other web source related to the sub-specialties selected .

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Due Week 4
Students will complete a published Literature Review Paper on a topic in psychology that is related to a selected classmate article summary posted on the Week 2 Forum. An annotated bibliography of the 6 to 8 articles used for this paper is due at the end of Week 4 or the course term.

LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER: Due Week 7

Students will complete a Literature Review Paper 10 to 12 pages in length and focused on a topic in psychology that is related to a selected classmate article summary posted on the Week 2 Forum. This paper will include summaries and critiques of the 6 to 8 articles annotated in the Annotated Bibliography assignment.

NOTE: Developing the skills applied in completion of the above assignments and the formation of a learning community are essential for success in the Master of Arts in Psychology program. Support in the form of guidance and grading feedback is offered in this orientation course with the expectation that students will carry skills forward and apply them to future program courses in which require engaging in rigorous learning experiences and meeting high standards of writing.

Distribution of Course Points

Course Requirements	Points	Percent
Forums (6 @ 40pts ea.)	240	24%
Article Summary	160	16%
Annotated Bibliography	100	10%
What Psychologists Do Assignments (2 X @ pts ea.)	200	20%
Literature Review Paper	300	30%
Total	1000	100%

Grading Scale: Click this link to view the APUS grading scale.

8 Week Course Outline

Week	Course Learning Objectives	Assignments
	Course Learning Objectives 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 3. Examine career opportunities in psychology 4. Assess methods of developing and pursuing threads of investigative inquiry related to the discipline of psychology 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	**Assignments**
1	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 1** 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 4. Assess effective methods of developing and pursuing threads of investigative inquiry related to the discipline of psychology	Week 1 Forum

	5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	
2	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 2** 1. Analyze issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 3. Examine career opportunities in psychology 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	PEER-REVIEW ARTICLE SUMMARY Week 2 Forum
3	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 3** 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 3. Examine career opportunities in psychology 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS DO Paper 1 Week 3 Forum
4	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 4** 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
5	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 5** 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 3. Examine career opportunities in psychology 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS DO Paper 2 Week 5 Forum
6	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 6** 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	Week 6 Forum

7	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 7** 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER
8	**Course Learning Objectives Met in Week 8** 1. Analyze key issues in the larger field of psychology. 2. Investigate the holdings of the University Online Library relevant to the program of study as a research and course-related learning tool 3. Examine career opportunities in psychology 5. Apply sound discipline related methods of gathering, critiquing and writing about peer reviewed research 6. Apply APA style and writing skills appropriate for graduate level work	Week 8 Forum

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Policies

The following policies are detailed in the APUS Student Handbook. *Students are responsible for having knowledge of and complying with both course and University policies.*

Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism

Withdrawal/Drop Policy

Course Extension Policy

Disability Accommodations

Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES
The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and to faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to orc@apus.edu.

Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan: The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.

Electronic Books: You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.

Electronic Journals: The University provides access to tens of thousands of journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

Turnitin.com is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.

Selected Bibliography

Degelman, D., & Harris, M. L. (2006). *APA style essentials.* Retrieved January 3, 2011 from,

http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796

University of Washington (2004). *Writing a psychology literature review*. Retrieved January 3, 2011 from

http://depts.washington.edu/psywc/handouts/pdf/litrev.pdf