

## General Psychology: LSOC-211-001 (Fall 2017)

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- Course Meetings:** Tuesdays, 4:00pm – 5:50pm, 136 Mass Ave. (Room 301)  
Thursdays, 10:00am – 10:50am, 150 Mass Ave. (Room 126)
- Course Website:** <http://ol.berklee.edu> (OL)
- Professor:** Pooja K. Agarwal, Ph.D., [pagarwal@berklee.edu](mailto:pagarwal@berklee.edu), (314) 443-7848  
Email and/or messages via the course website are preferred
- Chair:** Dr. Simone Pilon, [spilon@berklee.edu](mailto:spilon@berklee.edu), 7 Haviland, (617) 747-6329
- Office Hours:** Thursdays, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, 7 Haviland (Room 318) or by appointment

### Course Description

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Why do humans behave the way they do? How do humans think, learn, and communicate? How do YOU think, learn, and communicate? Whether our behaviors are intentional or automatic, every single action we make is influenced by our upbringing, our experiences, our culture, and the world around us.

Psychology is the scientific field of examining and discovering how humans “work.” Through interactive quizzes, brief videos, and group presentations, students will develop a rich understanding of what, why, and how we behave the way we do. For instance, do humans always make rational choices? Why do experts get stage fright? Why is it hard to learn some things and easy to forget other things? How do our five senses deceive us? After this course, students will be better equipped to understand their own behavior, the behavior of others, and how to harness the power of psychological science in the world around us.

### Learning Objectives

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*By the end of this course, students should be able to:*

- Identify, articulate, and analyze major themes in the field of psychology
- Write and speak about how human behavior is shaped by biological, social, and cultural backgrounds and experiences
- Critique and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research studies
- Apply essential findings from psychological science in everyday life

*By the end of this course, students should know:*

- Basic terminology and research topics in the field of psychological science
- Fundamental concepts and theories about human behavior
- How psychological evidence is acquired through the use of the scientific method

## Course Materials

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Each student will be required to read **one** book from the list below. Students will **not** read all four books. **Please wait** to purchase a book until I have assigned each student the book they are required to read in this course. Students do **not** need to buy all four books (unless you'd like to). These books are available at the Berklee Bookstore, library reserve, and Amazon.

- Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To (\$8.80)
- Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning (\$21.30)
- The Scent of Desire: Discovering Our Enigmatic Sense of Smell (\$14.97)
- Thinking, Fast and Slow (\$9.60)

*Optional Readings:* An [optional electronic textbook](#) and supplementary readings are available on the course website. Please take advantage of these valuable resources.

*Course Website* (<http://ol.berklee.edu/>): The course website should have everything we need to guide us throughout the course, including the syllabus, schedule, announcements, readings, assignment instructions, etc. The website also has a grade book that will help us keep track of progress throughout the course. **Check OL regularly.**

*Email:* I will periodically email students with important information related to class. The excuse "I don't check my email" is not valid. **Check your email regularly.**

## Course Expectations & Assignments

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*Readings:* Students are expected to complete readings from the assigned book and optional readings **before** attending class. Optional readings will be announced throughout the semester and posted on the course website.

*Attendance:* Students are **required** to attend class. See below for Berklee's official attendance policy. All absences are treated equal because they equally affect your learning and participation. In other words, there will be **no** discrimination between "excused" vs. "unexcused" absences, but I do appreciate advanced notice.

Make up quizzes, assignments, and presentations will **not** be offered nor accepted. Absent students are responsible for catching up on missed material. If you are absent, I strongly suggest you 1) Download PowerPoint slides from OL, 2) Talk with a classmate about what you missed, and 3) Stop by my office hours. Because I cannot recreate what students miss during an absence, emailing me with the question, "What did I miss?" is not a productive strategy for catching up. Any absences when we collaborate on group projects in class will **severely** affect your participation grade because it directly impacts your classmates' learning. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to be in frequent contact with your group.

*Participation:* Students are **required** to participate in our course. Active participation and involvement in our class will make the experience more worthwhile for you, me, and the class as a whole. We all have a broad range of backgrounds, so everyone will benefit from sharing stories, experiences, and questions that relate to the topics we cover. There are **many ways you can participate** in this course, both in class and outside of class.

Here are examples of how you can participate and contribute in our course:

- Speak up during class discussions. Quality counts here, not quantity. This is your opportunity to demonstrate that you are thinking critically and comprehending course material. Be sure you allow time for others to contribute to our discussions, too.
- Demonstrate your willingness and interest in course activities. Our semester together is more fun if you are present, focused, and alert in class.
- Contribute during your group research projects and presentations. Often, one or two students shoulder the burden for everyone else in the group. No one likes this when it happens. Carry some of the weight by collaborating fully with your group.
- When you are done reading this syllabus, please email me the title, artist, and link for your favorite song. Don't tell your classmates about this activity – it's more fun if you keep it a secret. I listen to the same artists over and over, so I appreciate your help in expanding my musical tastes. We benefit most when we learn from each other.
- Attend my office hours. I love discussing course topics, answering questions, getting to know you, and learning about Berklee. I'm new and I appreciate your help.
- Email me with reflections about course readings and topics, and/or questions about assignments, grades, etc. Demonstrate that you are "on top of your game" and mindful of our course throughout the semester.

As a reminder, if you are not in class, you cannot participate, therefore **all absences** will negatively impact the participation portion of your grade. Attendance is required.

*Quizzes:* Weekly quizzes (we'll be calling them "retrieval practices"), each worth 2.5% of your final grade, will be administered at the **beginning** of class (i.e., show up on time!). Quizzes may cover previous course topics and/or topics from the readings to be discussed in class (i.e., anything is fair game). Make up quizzes will **not** be offered nor accepted. You may be thinking, "Weekly quizzes, seriously?" Yes, seriously. There is a wealth of research by psychological scientists (including yours truly) that demonstrates that thinking about and retrieving information is a powerful strategy for enhancing learning. We'll learn more about this research by cognitive scientists in class. We do not have a midterm or a final exam.

*Science Brief Video:* When we are passionate about something, we become experts at it – we know it, inside and out. Our expertise can make it difficult to explain something effectively. You'll learn about this "curse of expertise" in class. As psychological scientists in training, you will be explaining a complex and fascinating research topic from our class to a broad audience (e.g., your mother, a friend, a stranger on the street). Students will record a video explaining a key concept from psychology, which must be 2 to 3 minutes in length (no shorter or longer). Students will develop a video topic, hook, and script throughout the semester. Students from my other classes will watch our videos, and vice versa.

*Group Research Project:* In order to excel as students and in life, we must learn to work together to reach a common goal. Students will participate in group research projects to synthesize and share knowledge about psychological science. Students will collaborate in their book groups during class and outside of class to design an experiment related to their book, conduct the experiment in real life, and present their project and results in class.

## Grade Information

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More details about assignments and specific grading criteria will be provided in class. All assignments are due **no later than one hour after class on Thursday**, unless otherwise discussed in class. Course assignments will comprise students' final grades as follows:

Participation	Up to 100 points  (25% of final grade)	Participation will be evaluated by the instructor, the student, and peers. Students will rate their own participation throughout the semester and group participation will also be evaluated. See above for a list of opportunities to participate in this course.  You must be present in class to participate, particularly during group projects. <b>Attendance is required.</b>
"Retrieval Practices" (Quizzes)	Up to 100 points  (25% of final grade)	Each quiz is worth 10 points (i.e., 10 points out of 400 total points, or 2.5% of your final grade). Your top 10 quiz grades will be included in the final grade calculation for a total of 100 points. Approximately 4 quiz grades will be <b>dropped</b> . This provides you with wiggle room for low grades and absences. Make up or late quizzes will not be offered nor accepted.
Science Brief Video	Up to 100 points  (25% of final grade)	Science Brief topics, hooks, and scripts must be submitted by the deadlines listed below. These deadlines provide the opportunity for feedback during the semester, which will likely increase your grade. Completed Science Brief videos should be turned in no later than the deadline listed below.  Late Science Briefs can be submitted until the last day of class, but you will lose <b>25 points</b> if it is late.
Group Research Project	Up to 100 points  (25% of final grade)	You are required to submit your Group Research question, hypothesis, design, procedure, results, conclusion, and materials no later than the deadlines listed below.  Late Group Research projects and presentations will not be accepted.
Total	Up to 400 points	See the letter grade information below.

## Grade Information (continued)

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*Letter Grades:* Rounded percentages reflect the number of points accrued during the semester divided by 400 total points possible. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

93 – 100%	A	77 – 79%	C+
90 – 92%	A-	73 – 76%	C
87 – 89%	B+	70 – 72%	C-
83 – 86%	B	60 – 69%	D
80 – 82%	B-	< 60%	F

*Grade Appeals:* If you feel strongly that a grade is inaccurate, you may submit an appeal. An appeal form is available on the course website. Appeals must be submitted within one week of the particular grade. I will review your appeal and we will discuss it during my office hours or by appointment. I will not debate grades or points in class. As a reminder, make up quizzes and/or assignments will **not** be accepted and zero points cannot be appealed.

## Limiting Distractions & Facilitating Learning

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In order to facilitate learning for everyone in our course, **please limit distractions** during class. Distractions can be fun, but they can also be... distracting. Let's be respectful of everyone's purpose for being in class and do the following:

- Arrive on time and don't pack up early. We will start promptly at the beginning of the hour and end class on time.
- Limit eating during class because yummy smells are distracting.
- Limit side conversations that are not related to class and use your "inside" voice.
- Keep all electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc.) **turned off and out of sight** for the duration of class. Here are some strategies on how to accomplish this:
  - Put your cell phone on vibrate or silent.
  - Put your cell phone face down on your desk.
  - Close your laptop lid slightly, enough that we can see your face.
  - Doodle, tie your shoelaces, take a deep breath, or make a to do list.
  - Step out of the room if you need to use an electronic device.

*Why* should we limit distractions by limiting our use of electronic devices?

1. Psychology research has demonstrated that taking notes by hand is more effective for long-term learning than taking notes on a laptop. I will post PowerPoint slides after class on the course website, so you don't need to copy text off the slides.
2. When you check e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, etc., this distracts not only you, but everyone around you. We can't help but be curious about what you're doing.
3. Our class is interactive and discussion-based. It's hard for us to interact when you're hiding behind a laptop screen or taking notes electronically.

## Student Responsibilities

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### *Berklee Attendance Policy:*

Berklee recognizes that its students will be presented with professional opportunities, such as job interviews, auditions for professional positions or graduate school, and exceptional performance opportunities (including those sponsored by Berklee). Students hoping to take advantage of such opportunities are not excused from course assignments or deadlines, and are required to discuss the ramifications of any related absences with their course instructors *in advance*.

**Attendance is required** in all classes, private lessons, instrumental labs, and ensembles, beginning with the first scheduled meeting. Absences must be addressed directly with the course instructor to determine impact on student progress and/or overall grade. Classes, labs, and ensembles start promptly on the hour and end at ten minutes before the hour. Late arrival is both unprofessional and disruptive.

### *Berklee Academic Honesty Policy:*

Berklee College of Music insists on academic honesty. Unless the assignment explicitly is a group project, all of the work in this class must be your own. The source of all information in any written assignment must be cited properly, whether it is a quotation, paraphrase, summary, idea, concept, statistic, picture, or anything else you get from any source other than your own immediate knowledge—including the Internet. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, including parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles at the end of an essay is not sufficient.

Plagiarism—not giving proper credit to a source and thereby passing off someone else's material or idea as your own—is a type of intellectual theft and deceit and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the assignment or course, and possible dismissal from the College. It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by the rules governing plagiarism, fraud, and cheating found in the College Bulletin under the section "Honesty in Academic Work and in Scholarly and Professional Practice." If you have any questions about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please talk with a reference librarian, ask a teacher, or refer to a writing handbook.

Helpful websites that discuss types of plagiarism and how it can be avoided include:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/3/33/>

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Documentation.html>

<http://nmsu.libguides.com/plagiarism>

In my class, consequences for academic dishonesty can include zero points for the assignment and/or failure of the course. **Please talk with me** if you are feeling stressed, confused, nervous, or tempted to cheat. (I've been there, too. Let's chat.)

## Additional Information

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### *Berklee Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Policies:*

Diversity and Inclusion are integral to the mission of Berklee College of Music simply because diversity and inclusion are integral to music itself. Innovators from diverse backgrounds and cultures have created the music studied here. An essential part of a Berklee education is gaining an appreciation of the rich variety and interdependence of the cultural traditions from which the music they study originates.

We must be a community in which every member's voice is valued and respected. A diverse, inclusive work and learning environment is essential to maintaining our role as a leader in contemporary music education. It is imperative that we take specific steps to attract and retain the widest array of talented musicians and provide an environment that supports and nurtures their creative process. The fulfillment of our mission—to educate, train, and develop students to excel in music as a career—will be demonstrated in their influence both on the future of music and on the larger culture.

We view diversity holistically, understanding that the definition is constantly evolving. Our definition of diversity includes race, color, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, age, and sexual orientation. We also know that a diversity of ideas, approaches, disciplines, and learning and musical styles are essential to inclusion and equity. The integration of myriad cultural values and perspectives into what we do at all levels, from teaching to decision-making, is critical.

Many challenges lie ahead in all areas. We believe that increased diversity will support our strategic objective of attracting the highest-quality students, faculty, and staff to Berklee. To accomplish this, we must create a welcoming and supportive multicultural atmosphere for all members of our community. This focus is not the work of any one individual or office—it is the work of everyone. In this spirit, we will encourage a campus-wide climate of respect, openness, and awareness that celebrates and values our diversity. To learn more about the Office for Diversity and Inclusion please visit [berklee.edu/diversity](http://berklee.edu/diversity).

Berklee is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for everyone. Berklee's new Equity Policy defines the expectations and policies regarding appropriate conduct by all members of the Berklee community. It can be found on pages 37-52 of the 2016-17 handbook and also at [berklee.edu/equity](http://berklee.edu/equity).

### *Support Services* ([berklee.edu/student-support](http://berklee.edu/student-support)):

- Academic Advising, 939 Boylston (Room 242), [berklee.edu/academic-advising](http://berklee.edu/academic-advising)
- Center for Liberal Arts Tutoring, 7 Haviland (Room 110), [berklee.edu/liberal-arts-tutoring](http://berklee.edu/liberal-arts-tutoring)
- Counseling Services, 54 Fenway, [berklee.edu/counseling](http://berklee.edu/counseling)
- International Student Services, 939 Boylston (Room 242), <http://berklee.edu/international-student-services>

## Course Schedule

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change. Students are responsible for learning about any changes if they miss class.

		<i>Assigned Reading Due <b>TUESDAY</b> before class</i>				<i>Due <b>THURSDAY</b></i>
<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Choke</i>	<i>Make it Stick</i>	<i>Scent</i>	<i>Thinking</i>	
1	Sept. 5-7	No Reading				Google Form
2	Sept. 12-14	Look Through Four Books and Online Textbook				Book Preferences
3	Sept. 19-21	Introduction & Chapter 1	Preface & Chapter 1	Preface & Chapter 1	Introduction & Chapters 1-4	
4	Sept. 26-28	Chapter 2	Chapter 2	Chapter 2	Chapters 5-9	
5	Oct. 3-5	Chapter 3	Chapter 3	Chapter 3	Chapters 10-13	Science Brief Topic & Hook
6	Oct. 10-12	Chapter 4	Chapter 4	Chapter 4	Chapters 14-18	Group Question & Hypothesis
7	Oct. 17-19	Chapter 5	Chapter 5	Chapter 5	Chapters 19-21	Science Brief Script

		<i>Assigned Reading Due <b>TUESDAY</b> before class</i>				<i>Due <b>THURSDAY</b></i>
<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Choke</i>	<i>Make it Stick</i>	<i>Scent</i>	<i>Thinking</i>	
8	Oct. 24-26	Chapter 6	Chapter 6	Chapter 6	Chapters 22-24	Group Design & Procedure
9	Oct. 31 and Nov. 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 7	Chapter 7	Chapters 25-29	Science Brief Videos
10	Nov. 7-9	Chapter 8	Chapter 8, Pages 200 – 225	Chapter 8	Chapters 30-34	Group Results
11	Nov. 16	No Reading or Deadline (We don't have class on Nov. 14, but we <b>do</b> have class on Nov. 16)				
12	Nov. 21	No Reading or Deadline (We <b>do</b> have class on Nov. 21, but we don't have class on Nov. 23)				
13	Nov. 28-30	Chapter 9 & Epilogue	Chapter 8, Pages 225 – 253	Reading on OL	Chapters 35-38 & Conclusion	Group Conclusion
14	Dec. 5-7	No Reading				Group Presentations!
15	Dec. 12-14	No Reading				Group Materials