

PSY-100-B02 Introduction to Psychology — Fall 2026 Syllabus

St. Joseph's University · Brooklyn · Fall 2026

PSY-100-B02 · Introduction to Psychology — Syllabus

Monday & Wednesday, 1:40–3:05 PM · Touhy Hall 214 · Prof. Michael Magee, Ph.D.

Course & Instructor Information

Class meetings Mon & Wed, 1:40–3:05 PM, Touhy Hall Room 214

First meeting Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Professor Michael Magee, Ph.D. — Office: Lorenzo Hall, top floor

Office hours By appointment (in person or Zoom)

Email mwmagee@sjny.edu

Feedback [Anonymous feedback form](#)

Nothing to buy. This course has no textbook to purchase. Our course text is the free companion website, CoolPsychology.com/psy100 — every lecture has a companion page there, and it is where your readings, self-checks, and deeper dives live. Additional free readings (OpenStax and NOBA modules) are provided digitally. Bookmark the site now; we will use it all semester.

Course Description

A broad introduction to the methodology, concepts and major content areas of psychology designed to provide the student with a scientific basis for understanding human behavior.

Course Objectives

- To provide students interested in pursuing psychology further with the foundation needed for more advanced courses.
- To help students gain a greater understanding of their own and others' thoughts, behaviors, and experiences.
- To confidently understand the rationale underlying basic research designs and techniques.
- To develop a sincere appreciation for research ethics.
- To develop scientific literacy skills and get you thinking like a psychologist!

Assessments & Grading

Your final grade is based on the following weights:

- 10% Class Engagement & Participation
- 15% Canvas Quizzes (average; lowest 2 dropped)
- 45% Three In-Class Exams (average)
- 30% The Everyday Psychologist — Observational Research Project (proposal 5% + check-in 5% + presentation 20%)

There may also be extra credit opportunities, including research participation and attending the undergraduate research symposium (spring semester), at the discretion of your professor.

Class Engagement & Participation (10%)

Active participation and professional conduct are essential for a productive learning environment. Your citizenship grade is maintained by arriving on time, adhering to the no-digital-devices policy (including removing earbuds and hats), and remaining alert with heads off desks. You are permitted three absences; each additional absence reduces your final course grade by 2%. Any absence during scheduled presentations incurs an additional 1% deduction. Two instances of tardiness — arriving after attendance is taken — equal one absence.

Canvas Quizzes (15% — lowest 2 scores dropped)

To make sure you are keeping up with the material, after we complete each unit you will take a short (10–12 items), *timed*, multiple-choice quiz on Canvas. There will be about 15 of these quizzes throughout the semester. You are allowed to take each quiz twice; if you do, you get the average of the two scores, and you must wait at least 15 minutes between attempts. The idea is to get you reviewing the material so that you ace your exams. These quizzes are open-book but have a significant, challenging time limit — *review the material first*. Please do **not** take quizzes from your phone (they frequently glitch). Quizzes are deadline dependent; pay attention to the deadlines. **No make-ups for missed quizzes.** Zeroes will destroy your average. Stay vigilant.

Exams (45% — the average of 3 exams)

The average of three major exams is 45% of your final grade. Exams are given **in class, on paper, closed-book**. You will record your answers on a machine-scored answer sheet provided with the exam. Exams are mostly multiple choice but may also contain matching, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer items. Everything covered in class, in the assigned readings, and on the companion website is fair game. The exam is timed to the class period, so fluency matters: you must internalize the concepts, not just recognize them. No devices, no notes, no neighbors — just you and what you know. Prepare accordingly and you will be fine.

The Everyday Psychologist — Observational Research Project (30%)

Psychology is everywhere, and in this project you become the instrument. You will conduct a simple observational study: pick a testable research question about everyday behavior (a bank of starter questions is provided — door-holding etiquette, elevator interactions, library study patterns, and more), nail down your operational definitions *before* you start, then spend 60–90 minutes unobtrusively observing a public setting while keeping a systematic tally or log. Observations are anonymous and ethical: no photos, no audio, no identifying information — just observable behavior. Then you will find one peer-reviewed article that connects to your question — even tangentially — and bring the two together in a presentation.

The project has three graded parts:

- **Proposal (5%), due Mon 10/5:** one page — your research question, setting, operational definitions, and a sketch of your tally sheet.
- **Data & article check-in (5%), due Mon 11/16:** a photo or scan of your raw tally sheet/log, plus the citation of your peer-reviewed article.
- **Presentation (20%):** a strictly timed 5–6 minute talk with slides — your question and why you chose it, your method, your results (a simple chart or counts), how the published study connects to what you saw, and your limitations — followed by brief questions from the class. Presentations run in two groups: Group 1 on Mon 12/14, Group 2 during our finals-week session.

A detailed rubric is forthcoming. Choose a setting or behavior that genuinely interests you — you will be a better observer for it.

Grading Scheme

Final letter grades by percentage

Grade	Percentage
A	90–100%
B	80–89%
C	70–79%
D	60–69%
F	Below 60%

Penalty point deductions: percentage points will be deducted from assignments or final grades for violations of class policies, especially the digital-device policy, at the discretion of your professor.

Class Policies

No Digital Devices

This class maintains a strict **no-digital-devices policy** to protect your focus and foster an environment conducive to deep, meaningful learning. You may not use laptops or tablets to take notes — research shows longhand note-taking leads to better comprehension than

typing. You may not have a phone or smartwatch on your person; these go in your assigned number in the phone cubby upon entering the classroom. This policy is grounded in robust empirical evidence on the distraction effect, lower academic performance, and "brain drain" — please [read the summary of the science behind this policy](#). You are required to sign this policy before our second meeting. Violations result in a loss of points. *Exceptions are made only for students with an approved accommodation specifically for device use.* (The one exception: when we use PollEverywhere for in-class polls, you will be invited to take your phone out — and only then.)

Recording of Lectures

You are not allowed to film or record my lectures without my explicit permission. Unauthorized video or audio recording is prohibited and will be reported to the St. Joseph's University administration. Also: creepy.

Email & Canvas Expectations

Check your SJNY email frequently — it is my main method of communication. Canvas is used **exclusively** for announcements, materials, quizzes, and assignment submissions, so configure it properly: go to Account → Notifications and make sure Canvas emails you **immediately** whenever an announcement is made. There is no excuse for "not seeing" something posted to Canvas.

A note on reaching me. I read and answer email, and I want to be responsive to you — but expecting a response instantly is not reasonable. Please allow at least 24 hours on weekdays for a reply before following up; and know that an email sent Friday evening may not get an answer until Monday. Also...I go offline at 9:00 PM each evening (because I get up at 5:45 AM!), so anything sent after that I will not see until the next day. If you write me at 10 PM the night before something is due, my answer will arrive too late to help you. This is not me ignoring you — it is how I stay rested enough to teach you well. Ask early and you will always hear back.

Classroom Conduct

Please do not eat during class; a drink in a spill-proof container is fine. Please do not put your head down on your desk — if you are too tired to keep your head up, please do not come to class; it will negatively impact your grade.

Absences, Lateness & Missed Work

Absences are absences — you are present or you are absent, just like in real life. There are technically no "excused absences," and *nothing* is accepted late. There are no make-up quizzes and no make-up exams. Meeting deadlines is a life skill that needs developing like any other: miss the deadline, miss the points. If you are absent, please do **not** email me to ask what you missed — get contact information from a few classmates and check with them. Students who need an extension must reach out *before* the deadline. Exceptions may be made for serious *documented* medical emergencies that take a student out of class for a significant amount of time. You are permitted 3 absences; each additional absence reduces

your final grade by 2%. Perfect attendance (no absences, no lates) earns 2% extra credit toward your final grade.

Academic Integrity

The University expects students to observe academic integrity in all aspects of their academic life. Plagiarism, cheating on examinations, and all forms of academic dishonesty are forbidden. Students found guilty of such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which **will include** a reduction in grade and possible failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion.

AI Tool Usage

Since a central goal of this course is to help you become an independent and critical thinker, **you are forbidden from using AI tools to create any text, video, audio, or images that end up in your work for this class.** Work crafted by AI tools — even in part — will be treated as plagiarism under SJNY academic integrity policies: a report to the Academic Dean and a zero for the assignment; a repeat infraction means failure of the course. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out for a conversation *before* submitting your work.

Student Accessibility Services

St. Joseph's University, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provides assistance and resources to students with disabilities. If you have a documented physical, psychological, cognitive, and/or medical disability and require accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services, McEntegart Hall Room 300A: Coordinator Hannah Singer, 718.940.5859, hsinger@sjny.edu. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with faculty members; all information is kept confidential.

Wellness

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle, and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help — sooner rather than later. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, the Office of Counseling and Wellness is here to help: 718.940.5853, bkwellness@sjny.edu, or start the intake process at the [BK Path to Wellness appointment page](#). Consider also reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust.

Class Schedule — Fall 2026

Meetings are Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:40–3:05 PM, Touhy Hall 214. Exam dates are fixed; topics may shift. Any change is announced in class and on Canvas, and the posted schedule at CoolPsychology.com/psy100 is always current.

Date	Day	Topic — and what happens that day
Sep 9	Wednesday	Course overview, Introductions, Selective Attention
Sep 14	Monday	Discussion
Sep 16	Wednesday	History of Psychology
Sep 21	Monday	Scientific Method
Sep 23	Wednesday	Review Methods Exercise · Scenarios · Research Ethics
Sep 28	Monday	Biopsychology I: Genetics, Natural Selection, Evolutionary Psychology
Sep 30	Wednesday	Sexual Selection · Physical Attractiveness & Evolutionary Ideas of Beauty
Oct 5	Monday	Exam 1 — everything since the start of the semester — Project proposal due
Oct 7	Wednesday	Film Origins of Us (Bones)
Oct 12	Monday	No class meeting — Fall Break
Oct 14	Wednesday	Neurons, the Brain & Nervous System, Neuroimaging
Oct 19	Monday	Localization of Functioning · Split Brains
Oct 21	Wednesday	Sleep
Oct 26	Monday	Learning: Classical & Operant Conditioning
Oct 28	Wednesday	Learning Exercises · Exam Review · Discussion
Nov 2	Monday	Exam 2 — everything since Exam 1
Nov 4	Wednesday	Film Your Brain: Who's in Control?
Nov 9	Monday	Sensation Part 1: Psychophysics, Smell, Taste, Hearing & Pain
Nov 11	Wednesday	No class meeting — Veterans Day
Nov 16	Monday	Sensation Part 2: Vision & Synesthesia — Data & article check-in due
Nov 18	Wednesday	Perception
Nov 23	Monday	Film Your Brain: Perception Deception
Nov 25	Wednesday	TBA
Nov 30	Monday	Memory Part 1: Mnemonics, Joshua Foer's TED Talk, Forgetting
Dec 2	Wednesday	Memory Part 2: Eyewitness Testimony, False Memories, Super Memories
Dec 7	Monday	What did we miss? · Discussion · Course evaluations · Extra credit
Dec 9	Wednesday	Exam 3 — everything since Exam 2
Dec 14	Monday	Everyday Psychologist presentations — Group 1 — Group 1 slides due before class
Dec 16	Wednesday	Finals session — Everyday Psychologist presentations — Group 2 · 1:40–3:40 PM

Semester dates to know: Sep 9–15 — late registration and program changes · Sep 30 — last day to opt for Pass/No Credit · Oct 29 — last day to withdraw with a WD (semester midpoint) · Dec 15 — last day of classes · Dec 16–22 — finals. **The live schedule, always current, is at CoolPsychology.com/psy100/schedule.html.**