

Revisions to Psychology 101, from Andrea Li (andrea.li@qc.cuny.edu), acting as representative of the Psychology Department

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I originally submitted 2 sample syllabi, and the committee indicated that one did not contain information about the research requirement, and both needed to be revised to indicate how the course would address PLAS goals. The file I am attaching is a revised version of only ONE of these syllabi (the one that already contained information about the research requirement, with indication of PLAS goals added). The reason I am only submitting one is because the other syllabus was from an adjunct who probably will not be teaching psy101 again. The attached syllabus is from Rich Bodnar, who will likely be the lead instructor for psy101, and so we will make sure that all syllabi follow his format.

II. Criteria for Perspectives Courses

Justification

Please describe how the course will address criteria for Perspectives on the Liberal Arts and Sciences courses. Be sure to include an explanation of the course's specific learning goals for students to make a connection between these and the general criteria for Perspectives courses.

In view of the fact that Psychology studies a broad realm of human behaviors touching upon almost every aspect of human existence and experience, this socially relevant course cuts across many disciplines from the neural to the study of intact human group behaviors. It explores biological (Biology) and chemical determinants of behavior as well as the effects of experience and environment. It studies the learning process (Education) and considers diversity along with the role of the individual in social structures (Sociology). The course illustrates how psycholinguists have devised empirical methods for obtaining knowledge and understanding of behavior. Students are exposed to the arguments of nature and nurture and how behavior changes over time. The historical roots of psychology in Philosophy and its subsequent evolution as an independent discipline describe how the field and its subject matter have changed over time and how these changes have hinged on historic context and events (History). As an introductory course, it illustrates how different methods are used to acquire psychological data and show how principles and theories are derived. As a course in the Natural Sciences, this course teaches empirical methods used to collect data, the formulation of a testable experimental design, and how answers to that question can be used to derive basic principles. Psychology allows an understanding of the behavior of both individuals within society as well as the behavior of social groups, and thus is relevant not only within the liberal arts, but also the larger society. Students are engaged in active inquiry by being required to either participate as subjects in psychological research experiments ongoing in the department that include debriefing and explanation about the nature of the experiments (primary oral source), and/or by writing short summary papers on articles published in Psychology related journals (primary written sources). As Psychology is such a vast field that includes so many subdomains, the different sections of this course may emphasize slightly different aspects of the field. For example, some may choose to emphasize biological aspects of psychology (e.g. sensory processing), while others may choose to emphasize behavioral/cognitive aspects. However, general uniformity of a core syllabus across the sections will be insured via meetings with the lead instructor.

Criteria Checklist

Please be sure that your justification addresses all three criteria 1-3, below. For criteria 4-8, please check all that apply and discuss these in your justification.

A Perspectives course must:

1. Be designed to introduce students to how a particular discipline creates knowledge and understanding.
2. Position the discipline(s) within the liberal arts and the larger society.
3. Address the goals defined for the particular Area(s) of Knowledge the course is designed to fulfill.

In addition, a Perspectives course will, where appropriate to its discipline(s) and subject matter:

4. Be global or comparative in approach.
5. Consider diversity and the nature and construction of forms of difference.
6. Engage students in active inquiry.
7. Reveal the existence and importance of change over time.
8. Use primary documents and materials.

III. Course Materials, Assignments, and Activities

Please provide an annotated list of course readings and descriptions of major assignments or exams for the course, as well as distinctive student activities that will engage students in working toward the course goals discussed in the course description and/or justification.

Please include the author and title for each reading or text, along with a short description providing information about how the reading will contribute to course goals.

See attached sample syllabi (2), writing assignments (2), and exam questions.

Note that many sections of Psy101 are too large to logistically give (and grade) writing assignments. Regardless of the number of students per section, however, all students are required to fulfill a “research requirement” to engage them in active inquiry and to expose them to primary literature sources. This requirement can be fulfilled by completing anywhere from 2-3 “credits” (depending on the enrollment of the course that semester, and the number of departmental researchers who need experimental subjects). Each credit can be completed by participating as a subject in an experiment conducted by researchers in the psychology department and subsequently being debriefed by an expert in the field (a primary oral source), or by writing a short summary paper on an article published in a journal specified by the instructor (primary written source). Credits can be fulfilled in any combination (e.g. one one-hour experiment + two papers, one two-hour experiment + one paper, three one-hour experiments, one three-hour experiment, three papers, etc.). Students receive an Incomplete if these credits are not fulfilled.

IV. Assessment

Perspectives courses must be recertified every five years, and we are seeking ideas for how to best carry out this assessment. What forms of evidence that the course is meeting its goals as a Perspectives course would be appropriate to collect for this course during the next five years? How would you prefer assessment to be conducted? How might evidence of effective teaching and student learning be collected and evaluated?

To insure that this course continues to meet its goals as a PLAS course, the lead instructor will meet with section instructors before the start of each semester to discuss core topics to be included in syllabi and to provide suggestions on assignment and exam formats. The Psychology Department already has in place a comprehensive outcomes assessment protocol designed to collect and evaluate a wide variety of evidence of effective teaching and student learning in a number of different courses required for the major. To assess student learning, it would be possible to additionally assess the extent to which this course is meeting the respective goals as part of our wider evaluation activities. To assess effective teaching, graduate student adjunct instructors are evaluated once a semester by full-time faculty.

V. Administration

What process will your department develop to oversee this course, suggest and approve changes, and conduct assessment? Who will be in charge of this process? Also indicate whether the course will be primarily taught by full-time or adjunct faculty, or by a combination of the two types of instructor.

This course is primarily taught by a combination of full-time and adjunct faculty. A lead instructor (full-time faculty) for the course will be designated. As part of the assessment process, all instructors will meet to discuss material, syllabi, and exams. The Psychology Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee will oversee all administrative matters concerning potential changes in the course, and any evaluation protocols for PLAS courses in the department.

VI. Syllabus

Please attach a sample syllabus (or set of syllabi, for courses on variable topics or courses that will be taught in variable formats).

Some resources to guide syllabus construction:

- The Provost's page outlining guidelines for syllabi:
http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/provost/Cur_stud/Syllabus_expectations.htm
- Sample syllabi for W courses, from Writing Across the Curriculum:
<http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/wsyllabi.htm>
- Goals for Student Writing at Queens College:
<http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/Goals.htm>
- Harvard's Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, suggestions for syllabus planning:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k1985&pageid=icb.page29695>
- Lehman College's Gen Ed Syllabi Project:
http://www.lehman.edu/lehman/programs/generaledu/gened_syllabi_project.html

Submit this completed form and a sample syllabus (or set of syllabi) by email to Eva Fernández (eva.fernandez@qc.cuny.edu), Director, Center for Teaching and Learning.