

Fall 2017 PSYCH 490 (Senior Seminar) instructors and topics

Soto	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		1	Willard	T/R 10:35am - 11:50am
Nelson	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		2	Walker	T/R 12:05pm - 1:20pm
Hillary	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		3	Willard	T/R 3:05pm - 4:20pm
Jones	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		4	Life Sci	T/R 3:05pm - 4:20pm
Azar	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		5	Willard	W 2:30pm - 5:30pm
Adams	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		6	Theatre	T/R 9:05am - 10:20am
Swim	Offered	Senior Sem Psy	490	Fall		7	Willard	T/R 3:05pm - 4:20pm
Dennis	Offered	Senior Thesis	490	Fall		8	213 Buckhout	M/W/F 2:30 - 3:20

Section 1. Dr. Jose Soto (clinical): Emotions in the Context of Culture

This course will review the literature on emotions, from classic theories to recent empirical studies, to examine how culture shapes various emotional processes and how this knowledge informs our understanding of emotions.

Section 2. Dr. Keith Nelson (developmental): Art, Language, and Creativity in Children and Adults

Steve Jobs of Apple Computer, among other commentators, has observed that visual arts skills will be critical to many of the (rapidly changing) sorts of career challenges that adults will face in this, the 21st Century. Other commentators have emphasized that creative, flexible thinking skills are critical to both job success and personal satisfaction. Finally, rich language and communication skills also are strong benefits in every area of life. Despite widespread agreement on the importance of all these skills, it is far from clear what the best paths are to developing these skills during childhood. This course will approach these issues first through reviewing what is already known about facilitating art, language, and creativity in children and adults. The role of contact//awareness of patterns in nature also will receive attention. Then we will concentrate on generating ideas about new ways of facilitating these skills. Finally, we will critically sort through our new ideas to propose specific teaching and intervention plans that would appear to have high probabilities of high impact on art, language, and creativity.

Section 3. Dr. Frank Hillary (clinical/neuroscience) Using functional brain imaging to examine the human mind

The goal of this course is to discuss the use of non-invasive brain imaging methods (such as functional MRI) to examine human mind processes such as executive cognition, awareness, theory of mind, and consciousness. The course will pull primarily from published papers examining both normal developing mental processes as well as deficits of mind associated with developmental and neurological disorders (e.g., autism, schizophrenia). The goal is for students to understand how brain imaging methods can be

used to advance the understanding of human mental processes, but also, the natural limitations of these methods and some of the design challenges and even mis-uses of functional brain imaging in the study of the human mind.

Section 4. Dr. Kisha Jones (Industrial-Organizational): Diversity in Organizations

We all have various aspects of ourselves that make up our identities. These diverse identities influence many areas of our lives, including our experiences at work. This course will focus on understanding the perspectives of individuals that have been traditionally underprivileged in the workplace, including women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, individuals with disabilities, and religious minorities. Students will be exposed to theories and empirical research from psychology, management, and other related areas that will allow them to better understand how gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, physical ability, and other characteristics influence entry into the workplace, career advancement, interpersonal treatment, and other work experiences. We will also consider practical examples of how to manage diversity in the workplace.

Section 5: Dr. Sandra Azar (clinical): Marriage and Family

In recent years, psychology has gone beyond studying individuals and begun to look at couples and families. This course will extend students' understanding of human behavior beyond that of the individual and the parent-child dyad and help them to consider the individual in the context of other intimate relationships (e.g., dating, living together, marriage, and the family). It will begin by familiarizing students with the major psychological theories of how couples and families operate and develop their ability to apply these theories to real life family transactions, using material from films and literature. The methods used to study families and their strengths and limitations will then be presented. Using the family life cycle as a rough developmental framework, changes in couples and families over the lifespan will be reviewed and discussed (young adulthood and leaving family of origin, dating and becoming a couple, having children, raising young and adolescent children, and launching children and old age). Along the way, discussions will focus on non-traditional couples and families (e.g., families who have adopted children, divorced families, gay and lesbian couples), as well as issues of race, ethnicity, social class, and gender. Finally, students will begin to consider the effects of major stressors on couples and family (e.g., migration, chronic physical and mental illness, poverty) and within the couple and family disturbances (e.g., dating violence, domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse).

Section 6. Dr. Reg Adams (social): The Psychology of Humor and Laughter

Humor and laughter are vital to human functioning, promoting physical and emotional well-being, social harmony, learning, and creativity. Humor and laughter can also be used as weapons against others, and can transmit and perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice. This course is designed to explore these phenomena and to apply insights gained to broader research themes such as creativity, social cognition, attribution theory, and emotion theory.

Section 7. Dr. Janet Swim (social): Communicating about Climate Change

Poll data indicate that most of the U.S. population believes climate change exists and is caused, at least in part, by humans and half think that climate change is a threat to the United States. Yet, they list it near the bottom of the list of priorities for the government and many do not personally act on this

concern. In this class, we will review psychological reasons for this disconnect between beliefs and actions in this domain and examine, learn, and practice communication strategies that have been developed by interdisciplinary teams of researchers to address this disconnect.

Section 8. Dr. Nancy Dennis (Cognitive): False Memories & Eyewitness Testimony

This course will examine the cognitive processes that lead us to have false or inaccurate memories. Topics of discussion will include: theories of false memories, children & older adults as eyewitnesses, cross-race effect in memory, emotional influences on memory and memory distortions, and flashbulb memories. Class reading will be taken from both the behavioral and neuroscience fields.