Psychology 4378.501: Psychology of Reality and Popular Television  
Fall 2020

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Course website: https://d2l.sfasu.edu/

Office Hours:  

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<th>Office Hours</th>
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<td>Online and by Appointment</td>
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I am usually very active in the course and will respond to email inquiries in a timely fashion. If you want to schedule a specific time to discuss issues either via chat, email, phone, Skype, etc. please send an email and we will find a mutually agreeable time to discuss your issues/concerns. I am here to help you, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

The following is included per the request of the university. Given we are online and have no face-to-face meetings, it does not apply to this course.

COVID-19 MASK POLICY Masks (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.


Book/Required Equipment: There is no book, nor is there any special equipment necessary for the course. Readings are available on the web for free. You may need to sign up for a free account, a nominal cost account, or install a video player or two, but that will be about it. Details will be provided at the appropriate time in the course site.

Videos: All video segments are closed-captioned and accessible online.

**Student Learning Outcomes include**
- Be able to identify different psychological phenomenon as presented in television programs
- Increase knowledge of psychological topics including
  1. Affiliation (dating)
  2. First impressions
  3. Stereotypes
  4. Attractiveness
  5. Change
  6. Personality characteristics
  7. Cosmetic and plastic surgery
  8. Organization
  9. Neatness/cleanliness/hoarding
  10. Leadership
  11. Teamwork
  12. Relationships
- Review literature to develop ideas and support for ideas
- Present, discuss, and critically examine research findings
- Generate scholarly presentations

**PSYC 4378 “Topics in Psychology”** (3 credits) is a course is designed to introduce students to an in-depth study of a special topic in Psychology by covering topics such as Psychology of Reality Television, evolutionary psychology, sport psychology, or positive psychology. The course typically meets 150 minutes a week in two 75-minute segments or three 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination period. Students typically have significant weekly reading assignments, writing assignments, are expected to take regular tests, and a final examination. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours. Online course sections contain extensive written content that includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture sections receive, requiring students to engage the online modules for at least three hours per week. For every hour a student spends engaging with the online content, he/she spends at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**
There are no specific program learning outcomes for this major that are addressed in this course.

**Exemplary Educational Objectives**
There are no specific Exemplary Educational Objectives for this course as it is not part of the general education curriculum.
There are NO required on campus meetings.

WELCOME TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REALITY AND POPULAR TELEVISION!
The goal of the course is to provide an introduction to the broad areas of Psychology as seen in reality and popular television programs (and YouTube). I have selected numerous articles and television programs in support of the topics we will be exploring. You will be responsible for reading all of the assigned materials and viewing all of the assigned programs. We will spend most of our time discussing the topics as they relate to the videos. Thus it is essential that you read all of the material and view the relevant programs prior to class discussions. For each topic you will also need to post in the appropriate discussion forum two issues regarding the readings/topic. The term “issue” is broadly defined. See the section below for more detail.

Your grade will be based on your discussion/participation, quiz performance, issues you submit, and your Course Talisman. We will cover much of the relevant materials during our discussions, but you will also need to explore the topic beyond our discussions. The final course activity will be for you to identify a Talisman. I will provide more information in the course site regarding this activity.

Final grades will be based upon total points earned on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion/Participation</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Talisman</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
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The timing of the course is intended to follow that of an on campus course. We will officially start our activity on Monday and finish Friday.

The deadline for quizzes and issues each week is midnight (actually 11:59 pm) the Thursday (Thursday is not a typo) we start the topic. You must complete these activities each week before you can participate in the week’s discussion. See the course calendar on the SFA D2L site for specific dates.

The deadline for all discussions, if there is one for the week, is midnight (actually 11:59 pm) the Friday we start the topic.

Although there will be NO official activity (by you or me) REQUIRED Saturday-Sunday, you (as will I) should use the time to prepare for the upcoming week. The course content will be released on Saturday if you want to start reviewing the upcoming week’s activity. The electronic calendar is the official calendar for the course. The calendar appended is a tentative.
Discussions 360 points (30 per topic)
You will not be able to participate in the discussion until you submit your issues and complete the quiz for the week. Please note the deadline for these qualifying activities is Thursday (not Friday – the discussion deadline is Friday) at midnight (actually 11:59 pm).

In each chapter there may be a discussion topic posted. The discussion can be either Traditional or Dropbox as described below.

Traditional: The Traditional discussions are intended to be like a discussion in class that may start with a specific question, but then, based on the initial responses, the discussion may evolve into something entirely different from the original question. Therefore, in the traditional discussions it is vitally important (to your grade) that you read all of the posts before making your post(s). If you post later in the discussion and you respond to the original question, your post will likely NOT ADD to the discussion and therefore you will not earn any points on the post.

Dropbox: Instead of a Traditional discussion in a chapter there may be a Dropbox discussion. Unlike the Traditional discussions described above, Dropbox discussions are submitted to a dropbox and your responses will be to the original question since you will not be able to see other students’ submissions.

All discussions, whether Traditional or Dropbox, are intended to assess your understanding and synthesis of the chapter materials. Passing grades will be earned based on how well your original ideas demonstrate your understanding and synthesis of the material from the text, the website, other students’ postings (in Traditional discussions), my comments, and any other sources of information.

That is, Full points will be earned if
• You make a post that contributes uniquely to the discussion and demonstrates your understanding and synthesis of the chapter materials including other students’ posts (for Traditional Discussions) and supported by meaningful course materials or other substantive scholarly sources*.

• Your submission is your “opinion” on a topic WITH a well-reasoned rationale based on specific, relevant, and meaningful course materials or other substantive scholarly sources* to support your opinion.

*although there is no comprehensive list of scholarly sources, such sources generally will include journal articles, books, research monographs, etc (try Google Scholar or the original articles that are summarized in Psychology Today) AND NOT Wikipedia, magazines, various websites (even Psychology faculty ones), discussion boards, etc. If you are not sure about a source and it did not come from Google Scholar, ask before you use it.
whereas No points would be earned if

- You make a post that does not demonstrate an understanding and synthesis of the topic/concept (e.g., “I agree with Sandy…” ) including other students’ posts (for Traditional Discussions) and supported by meaningful course materials or substantive other scholarly sources*.

- You make a post that does not add to the discussion.

- You make a post in a Traditional discussion to the original question when the topic has evolved beyond the original question.

- You post your “opinion” without a well-reasoned rationale based on the course materials or other substantive scholarly sources to support your opinion.

- Your post contains “texting” language. This is a senior-level course and although it is not writing enhanced, college level writing is expected including appropriate spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, etc. D2L has a built in spellchecker in the discussions and email, so please use it so you do not lose points.

I would recommend composing your post in a word processor, check it for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc., save the file (MS Word), then copy and paste your writing from your word processor file into the traditional discussion or submit the file in the appropriate Dropbox. That way you have a backup copy on your own computer in case of an emergency.

Informal writing conventions such as (i.e., texting convention) “decartes had a good point. i think he was interested..” or “B4 making a statement”, “LOL”, “i think u hv mde a gd pt.” are not acceptable and will result in an automatic 0 for the discussion regardless of the content of your post.

Using the “Read Aloud” tool in MS Word’s “Review” menu is also suggested.

Your total contribution to the discussion will be graded each week as Pass, Pass/Fail, or Fail (2, 1, and 0 points, respectively). Contributions marginally better than a Fail, but not achieving a Pass grade will earn a Pass/Fail grade. Fractional points will be deducted for submissions containing writing errors like those described above.
**Renegade Posts**

In Traditional discussions, posting outside the thread is called a *Renegade* post. *Renegade* posts will be deleted since they cause confusion for other students who are unsure of where to post. Thus, you should save a copy of your post on your own computer (see above) so you can easily repost if you accidentally create a *Renegade* post. *Renegade* posts occur when you do not use . If you see a *Renegade* post, please do not respond (even using ) because your response to the *Renegade* post is deleted when the original *Renegade* post is deleted. You will have an opportunity to practice your postings to ensure you are posting in the correct place.

**Extra credit**

In the Traditional discussions I encourage you to respond directly to other students’ posts and stay engaged in the discussion throughout the week. That is, you should stay engaged in the discussion by making more than one post and doing so before the final day of the discussion. Posting early and more than once increases your chances of earning a passing grade. Extra credit may be awarded to students who make extraordinary contributions to the discussions beyond the basic posting requirement. Extra credit may also be earned by posting early in the discussion versus near the deadline.

The deadline for posting to the discussion is midnight Friday of the week we start the chapter.

**Quizzes**

360 Points (30 points per topic)

There will be a short quiz over the readings and videos for each topic which must be completed BEFORE you can participate in the discussions for the week. All quizzes are closed-notes/closed-book format.

The deadline for a quiz is midnight (actually 11:59 PM) Thursday the week we start the topic. If I see any indication of academic misconduct occurring I will contact you for a conference. Two such incidents will result in immediate failure in the course. Please do not jeopardize your academic career for a few points.
**Issues**

180 Points (15 per topic)

For each topic you will need to post two issues regarding the readings/topic in the appropriate discussion forum. The term *issue* is broadly defined. Issues can be anything from reflections, to questions, to identified themes, to personal anecdotes (or any combination of these). **Remember, in all cases, I am attempting to assess your familiarity with the course materials (e.g., Professor Comments, readings, video segments, etc) so the more you make salient these aspects (i.e., by citing specific ones) the more likely you will earn the maximum number of points. A general guideline is that the issue will be a paragraph in length and each MUST BE individually and appropriately numbered (i.e., 1 and 2).**

The deadline for submitting your issue is the same as the quiz for the week; midnight (actually 11:59 pm) Thursday the week we start the topic.

Your issues submissions will be graded each week as Pass, Pass/Fail, or Fail (2, 1, and 0 points, respectively). Contributions that are marginally better than a Fail, but not achieving a Pass grade will earn a Pass/Fail grade. Earning too many of these Pass/Fail grades will have a negative impact on the number of points earned.

**Talisman**

100 Points

At the end of the semester you will submit a Talisman. I will provide additional details in the course site.

**Other Activities**

Before you can start the course you will need to complete the Syllabus Quiz (available in the course site) and earn a score of 95 or higher on a quiz. The quiz can be taken as many times as necessary to earn the required score of 95.

**Grading Scale**

The total number of points you can earn in the course is 1000. Following are the grades associated with different levels of performance. I have an Excel based grade book available in the course so you can keep a dynamic running total of your points and the grade you can/are/would earn.

- A 925-1000 Points
- B 825-924 Points
- C 725-824 Points
- D 625-724 Points
- F < 625 Points
**Attendance/Participation**
You are expected to actively participate in class. I am not specifying the amount of time, but your grade is heavily dependent upon it and I will monitor it. In the past, students that have actively participated have done well; those that did not participate did not do so well. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!!!! I find that students who wait until near the deadlines to participate, do not do as well on the required activities.

I will try to respond to your email and discussions as soon as possible. I will respond to all *substantive* email (most within 24 hours), but depending on the volume of discussion, it will be unlikely that I will respond to each individual post. Again, I will monitor the activity in the discussions since a large part of your grade is dependent upon it.

Before emailing me a question, please check the FAAQ in the Discussion forums in case your question is covered there.

PLEASE email me (in the course site) if you have any questions or are having any problems with the information being covered. If you do not receive an email response from me within 24 hours, please send an email follow up to mludorf.sfasu.edu@gmail.com. Please only use the @gmail.com email address if you do not receive a response in the course email system.

**If you are having technical trouble with D2L, please contact student support at SFA Online at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail.**

For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-HELP (4357) or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

**To learn more about using D2L, visit SFA ONLINE at http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu, where you'll find written instructions and video tutorials.**

Below is the tentative course schedule and description of the different tools. Please look them over (since they are covered on the syllabus quiz) and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

**THE OFFICIAL SCHEDULE CAN BE FOUND IN THE CALENDAR IN THE COURSE SITE IN D2L.**
COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Module 1  Psychology in Reality and Popular Television and YouTube
Module 2  Dating/First Impressions/Stereotypes
Module 3  Change
Module 4  Relationships
Module 5  Parenting
Module 6  Cleanliness/Organization
Module 7  Hoarding
Module 8  Plastic/Cosmetic Surgery, Attractiveness
Module 9  Leadership/Followership/Teamwork
Module 10  Competition
Module 11  Psychics/Faith Healers/Evaluation
Module 12  Addiction/Intervention/Therapy

Finals Week  Course Talisman Due by 5 pm Friday of Dead Week
## Course Tools

| **Syllabus:** | Contains relevant information about the course including course objectives, grading scheme, etc. |
| **Content (Learning Modules):** | This is really the heart of the course. Contained within this is the information from both the instructor and the text, along with excellent assessment tools for each chapter. Your learning plan should include processing and understanding of this information. Also you should feel uninhibited to review this material during the week. |
| **Calendar:** | Contains information about when we will be studying and discussing the different chapters. **It is important that you keep up with changes in the calendar, since it is the official calendar of the course. The calendar of events in the syllabus is only tentative.** |
| **Email:** | Email is the best communication device in the course. This will be the only email I will respond to. If you send something to my email @sfasu.edu or @gmail.com I will likely reply using the D2L email the first time. Subsequently, a response to email sent to my @sfasu.edu or @gmail.com accounts will be unlikely. |
| **Discussion:** | Used extensively throughout the chapters. In the discussion are threads or topics and students’ responses to these threads which are called posts. To respond to an individual’s posting use **Reply to Thread** instead of **Start A New Thread**. Also, to stay within the “thread” use **Reply to Thread** instead of **Start A New Thread**. **Posting outside the thread is called a Renegade post. Renegade posts will be deleted without warning (this is your warning). You should save a copy of your post on your own computer so you can easily repost if you accidentally create a Renegade post.** |
| **Checklists** | Use this page to view the checklists available to you. To view a checklist and check any of its items, click the checklist name. Let me give you a little tip here: One that is likely self-evident to everyone. You must log into and participate in the course to do well. One term when I taught a similar course there was a nearly +.87 correlation between activity level and overall grade. Points were NOT awarded for activity in general; rather students who logged into the course and participated did well. Those that did not |
log in and participate did not do well in the course.

**Grades**

Allows you to take keep track of your grades. If you are not able to see a grade, please email me so that I can investigate why you’re unable to see it.

**Classlist**

This shows you who is online in case you would like to chat with them.

**Quizzes**

Shows you the live quizzes and surveys that are available for you to take. You can also see your responses on any given survey/quiz.

**Withheld Grades - Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

I do not take kindly to **ANY FORM** of "Academic Misconduct" and will take necessary steps to ensure none occurs. Each incident will be dealt with on an individual basis. As part of the Syllabus Quiz you will need to confirm that you have read and understood the university’s Student Academic Dishonesty policy ([http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf)). The complete policy is available at for your review.

**Student Academic Dishonesty (4.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. All forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with seriously and immediately. Please respect SFASU, yourself and me enough not to participate in academic dishonesty.
**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf)

**Students with Disabilities (6.1)**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/) and [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf)

**Acceptable Student Behavior (in policy 10.4)**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

I reserve the right to change or modify this syllabus at any time throughout the semester. This is a tentative schedule and syllabus. The official ones are available when you log into the course.