# General Psychology (PSYC 2301-11)
## Fall Semester 2017

### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Ruby Charak  
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**Teaching Assistant:** Leticia Rodriguez  
Office Location: ELABN 314, 1201 W. University Dr., The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, Texas  
Email: leticia.rodriguez02@utrgv.edu  
Office Hours: 11am-12pm (Tuesday) or by appointment  
Class-room location: ELABN 111  
Class time: 9.25am-10.40am (Tuesday and Thursday)

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SECTION 1

Textbook and Resource Material

1. The textbook we will be using is:


- Use of blackboard is required. There is blackboard app available for iOS, Android, and Windows mobile devices (https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Student).
- A laptop.
- Use and availability of good quality high-speed internet is required.
- You will need to download the Respondus Lockdown Browser in order to take exams. If you choose not to download the software, then you will be unable to take this course. The software is available for download at http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=721834533

How to get this Textbook

Online: Purchase online hardcover or e-book directly from Cengage Learning or from Amazon. Be sure to get the textbook with the right ISSN.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. The course will serve as an introduction to nature, and scope of psychology. It will introduce you to the basic concepts, terminology, principles and theories that comprise an introductory course. The course will be taught in lecture and discussion format.

Instructor Responsibilities

- The overall design of the course.
- Course requirements, including exams and assignments.
- Handling issues related to cheating and plagiarism.
- Handling issues related to missed or late assignments.
- Determination of final grades

Teaching Assistant Responsibilities

- Grading assignments.
• The grading and tracking of extra credit and research participation.
• Answering messages/emails related to course content.
• Tracking students performance and offering assistance to students who are following behind and/or doing poorly on assignments.
• Monitor Blackboard activities.

Email accordingly the concerned person accordingly.

SECTION 2

Learning Objectives/Outcomes for the Course
The primary purpose of the course is to facilitate your thinking and knowledge about basic behavior areas and scope of psychology. These include—but are not limited to—personality, learning, memory, intelligence, human development, biological basis of behavior, and abnormal behavior. This course will prepare those students who are interested in taking other more focused courses in psychology and, in fact, serves as a prerequisite for many of these courses. A secondary goal of this course is to show students how psychology relates to everyday life. Note we will not cover the above areas in tremendous detail. Rather, the course will provide a broad overview of psychology.

Student learning objectives for the general education core curriculum that this course will focus on developing:

• Critical Thinking: Students will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of written texts and other information sources by analyzing and evaluating the logic, validity, and relevance of the information in them to solve challenging problems, to arrive at well-reasoned conclusions, and to develop and explore new questions.
• Communication Skills: Students will demonstrate the ability to adapt their communications to a particular context, audience, and purpose using language, genre conventions, and sources appropriate to a specific discipline and/or communication task.
• Empirical and Quantitative Skills: Students will be able to make and communicate informed conclusions and predictions based on the interpretation, manipulation, and analysis of empirical and quantitative data.
• Social Responsibility: Students will recognize and describe cultural diversity, the role of civic engagement in society, and the link between ethics and behavior.

Student Learning objectives for a psychology major that this course will help you develop:

• Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
• Understand and apply basic research methods in Psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.
• Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.

Important Note about the Textbook: Please note that the textbook is required for the course. Because we cannot cover all the course material through lecture, you are expected to read the textbook (I would suggest that you first read each chapter before we cover that
chapter in lecture). It will be very difficult for you to pass the course without closely reading the text.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of grade (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>$150 \times 0.5 = 75$</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activities</td>
<td>$2 \times 5 = 10$</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research participation</td>
<td>4 hours research</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
<td>$2 \times 2.5 = 5$</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Letter Points**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89.9-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79.9-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.9-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9 % &amp; below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* To get your final grade for the class, total the number of points you have earned (for the exams, quizzes, discussion/debate, and extra credits), divide that by 100, and multiply by 100. Find the corresponding value in the table above to convert to a letter grade.

- **Exams (#3):** There will be **3-exams (25 points for each exam).** Each exam will consist of **50 multiple-choice questions** (worth **0.5 points each**) drawn from the textbook, and power points (including multimedia presentations). You will have **60 minutes to complete each exam.** You will not be allowed to use your notes or book, and the exams will be proctored via the Respondus Lockdown Browser. You will take the exam in class on your laptops (see course calendar for exam dates). You can only take the exam once and they will not be curved. **NO MAKEUP EXAM WILL BE GIVEN.** The exams will take place in the virtual “Exam Room” on Blackboard. Please remember to submit your exam for grading when you are finished with your exam. This ensures that your grade is entered into my Grade Book. You should be able to view your grade after the exam period is over.

- **Group Activities (#2):** **Two in-class group activities** will be conducted and you will have to post summaries of the activity via Blackboard. Each group activity can get you **5 points**, adding to a total of **10 points.** You have to complete the activity during class in the one-hour of time provided.

- **Research Participation Credit (#1):** You can earn a **total of 10 points** by completing this activity. For more details, read section 5 on pp. 9-10 of this document.

- **In-class Participation (#2):** While teaching I will ask you all questions or will ask your opinion on topics. **In each session (of the three session; see course calendar) you can earn up to 2.5 points** maximum by asking questions or making a respectful comment/opinion relevant to the topic of discussion. You can earn a **total of 5 points during the semester.** It is your duty immediately after class to make sure that the instructor have noted down your name and student id for you to achieve the points.
Extra Credit (5): Over the semester, I will randomly take attendance via Blackboard for which you will be given a point for that day. If you are absent no points will be given for that day.

Sometimes students are caught up in everyday life and schoolwork, and it is not uncommon for students to lose sight of course deadlines. Hence, it is strongly recommended that you immediately put the deadlines for exams and quizzes into your daily calendar (you may use a daily diary, Outlook or Google calendar for it) so that you do not miss the deadlines for the course.

Computer Skill Requirements

- Students should be comfortable and able to navigate online. A basic level of computer skills is a prerequisite.
- Use of the Blackboard is required.
- For this course you will need to be competent in the following skills:
  - Viewing/navigating webpages.
  - Sending & receiving email messages.
  - Opening and viewing video files and listening to audio files.
  - Downloading softwares programs and installing them on your computer or laptop.
  - Creating file folders on your computer and saving files to these folders.
  - Attaching files to email messages; opening files attached to email messages.
  - Use of MS Office software (especially MS Word).
  - Saving files to portable storage media such as USB keys or in the Cloud (e.g., Dropbox or UTRGV OneDrive).
  - Back Up Your Work! I recommend that you go to your computer right now and create a folder within My Documents (or somewhere else) on your hard-drive for this class. Call this new folder “PSYC 2301.” Remember to save a copy of all of your work (including group activities and exam screenshots and important email messages) in this folder.

SECTION 3

Tour of Our Class Home Page on Blackboard

Following are the areas on the home page on Blackboard that your need to visit and learn to use for this course:

- Welcome Note: This is where the instructor would post a welcome note.
- Course Syllabus: The course syllabus is available here. Please download the syllabus and have it stored on your computer or take a print out and keep it handy with you. Mark all assignment deadlines on your daily calendar.
- About Your Professor & Teaching Assistant: Here, contact information (e.g., name, email id, office location) of the instructor and teaching assistant are available.
- Announcements: All announcements including reminders for deadlines will be made here and via email. You will receive the email on your UTRGV email id.
- Course Materials: This is where chapter summaries from the textbook are located. The overall purpose of the summaries is to provide a template for your reading of the chapter. Please read the textbook. Many of the summaries include multimedia, such
as, video segments and web links. These materials are included in the course as a way to highlight course material. All information in the lecture notes, including the information presented in the videos and web links, may appear on exams.

**Exam Room:** This is where you will go to take your online exams. The dates for the exams are given below in the course calendar. For taking the exam you have to download and use the Respondus Lockdown browser. You will not be allowed to take the exams without this.

**My Grades:** This is where your grades and point wise distribution of all assignments for your quizzes and exams are posted.

**Evaluation:** This is where you can evaluate the course after you have completed all exams, and other assignments.

### SECTION 4

**Policies**

**LATE POLICY:** All exams and other assignments should be submitted on time. No makeup exams or quizzes will be offered beyond the deadline unless there was a medical emergency. Inform the instructor well in time in case of a medical emergency occurs due to which you are unable to take an exam, or any other assignment. Medical emergency should be supported with proper documentation.

**UTRGV Policies**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Online evaluations will be available **November 15 – December 06, 2017**. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:** As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject
to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide learning, working, and living environment that promote personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

COURSE DROPS: According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

Responding to Your e-mail: I will send out responses to your email questions and comments on Tuesday and Friday evenings. USE YOUR UTRGV EMAIL ID FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH ME. I will not reply to emails from other sources due to cyber-security reasons. Consider all e-mails to me professional correspondence. You may address me as “Dr. Charak,” “Professor Charak,” or “Professor.” This means that you should proof-read all correspondence and use proper grammar and spelling. If your spelling and/or grammar interfere with my understanding about what you want to say, I will need to ask for clarification and this will delay your ability to get the information you requested.

Course Expectations

Here are some of my general expectations:

- It is expected that you will keep up in reading the textbook and the lecture powerpoints throughout the entire course.
- It is expected that you will plan appropriately so as to have your exams completed by the designated deadlines.
- It is expected that you will explore all the multimedia materials associated with each chapter (e.g., video series and other material posted by instructor).
It is expected that all correspondence for the course will be written in a professional style. This means that you should use proper spelling and grammar and that you should refrain from using informal speech (e.g., abbreviations) and language.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU WILL TAKE THE THREE EXAMS WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF COURSE NOTES OR THE TEXT BOOK (i.e., THE EXAMS ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE OPEN BOOK).

Absenteism: This is NOT a self-paced, self-timed course. This course is designed to be a successive progression from one chapter to the next. If you have work or family emergency that interferes with your ability to participate/attend or meet deadlines in this class, you need to notify the instructor by e-mail as soon as possible. Such events may necessitate dropping the course.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Please be aware that any instances of cheating will result in an automatic “F” for the course. Please do not cheat.

Professional Courtesy: It is expected that you will act, perform, and conduct yourself as a true professional. This includes the content and style of your face-to-face and online communication and the nature of communication with me. Profanity, vulgar or offensive words or phrases are unacceptable. In class you may address me as “Dr. Charak,” “Professor Charak,” or “Professor.”

Additional Course Support

Technical Assistance With Blackboard: If you are having technical problems or need assistance with the Blackboard, please contact the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology (COLTT) at 956-882-6792 or Rusteberg 108 (Brownsville Campus)/ 956-665-5327 or Education Complex EDCC 2.202 (Edinburg Campus). You may also email them at colthelp@utrgv.edu

Notification of Technical Problems: Technical problem with your computer are not a legitimate reason for failing to complete assignments, or exams. You should have your internet connections ready and steady during the course of the in-class assignments and exams. I highly recommend you to test your internet connections before hand. If there is any technical issues, contact the UTRGV IT Service Desk at 956-882-2020 or Main 1212 (Brownsville Campus) / 956-665-2020 or Academic Services Building 1.102 (Edinburg Campus).
SECTION 5

Research Exposure Requirement

To introduce students to the research methodology of psychology, all students in General Psychology (PSY 2301) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley must accumulate 4 units of research credit during the semester. These 4 units of research credit may be obtained by: (1) participating in psychology experiments and/or (2) writing research reports or another alternative research-based activity. Overall, the required research component of the course will be worth 10% of the possible points in the course. These points will be awarded to students on a prorated basis. For example, students who complete 4 hours of research will be awarded all of the possible research points; those who complete 2 hours of research will be awarded half of the possible research points; etc.

Research Participation. One unit of research credit will be provided for each hour (or part hour) of research participation. At the start of each research session, the procedures will be explained to you and you will be given the option of continuing or withdrawing from the session. Please note that participation in research studies is always voluntary. You will always have the option of choosing alternative assignments. The participation of students is appreciated and the department is aware of its debt to students like you who make the program possible. All studies are carefully evaluated to comply with the ethical code of the American Psychological Association and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. If you are concerned about any research-related procedures, please contact the Chair of the Department, Dr. Frederick Ernst.

Required Research Participation for General Psychology Students

All students enrolled in General Psychology (PSYC 2301) are required to obtain experience with the methodology of psychological research through participation in psychology studies or through the completion of available equivalent options. A summary of the research requirement is provided below and you will be provided with additional details early in the semester.

The Research Participation Pool (RPP) Manager:

The Research Participation Pool (RPP) Manager is the individual assigned to oversee required research participation of General Psychology students. The RPP Manager is Marlene Orta (marlene.orta01@utrgv.edu). She will provide additional guidance about the process, oversee alternative assignments, and keep a database of student participation.

Requirements for Introductory Psychology Research Participation:

1. All students enrolled in General Psychology (Psych 2301) must complete 4.0 hours of research (or equivalent non-research alternatives) before the end of Wednesday, December 6th, 2017. Overall, the required research component of the course will be worth 10% of the possible points in the course. These points will be awarded to students on a prorated basis. For example, students who complete 4 hours of research will be awarded all of the possible research points; those who complete 2 hours of research will be awarded half of the possible research points; etc.
2. Information about available research studies will be posted on SONA, a cloud-based software system. More details regarding SONA will be given in class.
3. If you complete 3.5 hours of research without showing up late (or failing to show up at all) for studies, you will be *rewarded* (credited) with the remaining .5 hours.

**Alternative methods for obtaining research participation credit:**

1. If you would rather not participate in a research study, you can earn credit through equitable alternative research-related activities.
2. Details about these alternatives will be provided by the RPP Manager throughout the semester.
3. Participation in research studies is limited to adults (age 18 or older). **If you are younger than 18**, you will still need to earn research credits, but should do so by completing 4 hours of alternative activities.
4. Participation in research studies is always voluntary. You always have the option of choosing alternative assignments.

**The paper trail for research participation:**

There are a number of methods through which research participation information is collected. For most studies, the information is provided directly to the RPP Manager by SONA.

1. Participant shows up to a face-to-face research session and the researcher records the participation in SONA. The list of participants is then provided to the RPP Manager through SONA.
2. Participant completes an online survey study; upon completion of the study, the online study site then notifies SONA that the participant has completed the study. The list of participants is then sent to the RPP through SONA.
3. At the end of the semester, the RPP will forward research participation data to General Psychology instructors. The General Psychology instructors will then integrate these data into the students’ final grades.

In case there is a discrepancy between the total research hours you believe you have completed and the number of hours the RPP Manager and Psych 2301 instructors have in their records, it is very important that you yourself keep close track of the number of research hours you complete.

**Research Reports.** Credit is based on writing a brief report about a research paper published in a psychological journal. These reports involve answering a series of questions concerning the hypotheses, methods, and results of the research paper. One and a half units of credit will be provided for each satisfactory report. Research reports can be written and turned in to the Research Participation Pool (RPP) Manager, Marlene Orta (marlene.orta01@utrgv.edu) at any time during the semester, but must be turned in no later than **Tuesday, December 5th, 2017**. For more information on writing research reports, you can contact Ms. Orta.

**Rules and Procedures for Participation:** Students are responsible for fulfilling the research exposure requirement. To sign up for an experiment, you will need to login to the Psychological Science department’s research sign-up system on the internet (the address is given at the bottom of this sheet). There should be an account already set up for you in the system. To login, type in your student username and password and, once you are logged in, you will be able to view a list of the available research studies and sign-up for them. All the information you will need for each study will be presented on the webpage. New studies will be
available on a regular basis. Before signing up, be sure to check for exclusion criteria for each study. You will not receive credit if you sign up for a study for which you do not qualify (for example, if you are male, don’t sign up for a “female only” study). For information on how to use the department’s research internet page, please e-mail the RPP manager, Marlene Orta at: marlene.orta01@utrgv.edu.

YOU are solely responsible for getting to a research study on time and keeping the appointment. Be sure when you sign up to record the date, location, and time of the study in addition to the name and phone number of the researcher.

**Cancellations.** If it is necessary for you to miss an appointment because of illness or some other emergency, please cancel your appointment at least 1 hour before the study session. To cancel, you will need to login to SONA and cancel your appointment; or, if you need to, you can call the researcher to cancel. If a researcher fails to show up for a session but you do, you will still receive credit for participating. Be sure to wait ten minutes first; then contact the RPP Manager at: marlene.orta01@utrgv.edu

HERE IS THE ADDRESS FOR THE DEPARTMENT’S RESEARCH SIGN-UP SYSTEM
https://utrgypsyh.sona-systems.com/

BELOW PLEASE FIND THE COURSE CALENDAR!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (year 2017)</th>
<th>Chapter No. &amp; Title</th>
<th>Summary/Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td><em>Day 1</em>: Introduction, Syllabus, Creation of groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31/September 5</td>
<td>Chapter 1: The Science of Psychology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7/11</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Biological Foundations of Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14/18</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Sensation and Perception</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 21/25</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Consciousness</td>
<td>Group Activity 1 (in class submission; Sep 21)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 28</strong></td>
<td>EXAM 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4)</td>
<td>EXAM 1 (in class exam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 3/5</td>
<td>Chapter 5: Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 10/12</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Memory</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 17/19</td>
<td>Chapter 7: Thinking, Language, and Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 24/26</td>
<td>Chapter 8: Motivation and Emotion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>October 31</strong></td>
<td>EXAM 2 (Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8)</td>
<td>EXAM 2 (in class exam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2/7</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Chapter 9: Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Instructor Conference travels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Chapter 10: Psychology and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
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<td>➢ Graded Group Activity With Teaching Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Instructor Conference travels</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21/28</td>
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<td>➢ Chapter 11: Personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30/December 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Chapter 13: Psychological Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>EXAM 3 (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 13)</td>
<td>EXAM 3 (in class exam)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE.** The syllabus and grading is subject to change. Any change would be announced via the Blackboard site and an email from the instructor, and a revision will be posted.

*Have an enriching and fun semester. Good luck!*