

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMOR
SENIOR CAPSTONE, PSYC 494-002
FALL 2026

PROFESSOR

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OFFICE HOURS FOR DR. SEGRIST

I am happy to meet with you via Teams or in person whenever you have questions or would like to discuss course material. My regular office hours are **Mondays 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**. But if you'd like to meet at a different time, just email me to let me know what days/times work for you and we can set up a time to meet. The link for my Teams office hours is:
<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/238666589234755?p=gr0ipha5bDbp8YxnYF>

CLASS MEETINGS

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m., AH 0302

REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL READINGS

All readings for this course are posted on Blackboard.

TECHNOLOGY PRIVACY INFORMATION

We will be using Blackboard in this course. View the [Anthology Blackboard Privacy Statement](#) to review how your data is being used and stored.

PREREQUISITES

- Grade of "C" or better in PSYC 220 and PSYC 221
- Senior standing in Psychology

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will explore research, theories, and individual differences regarding humor. Students will work in teams to develop, conduct and present a research study focused on humor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who are successful in meeting the objectives of this course will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge related to theories of and research about humor
- Perform a literature review to facilitate the development of a research project related to humor
- Talk knowledgeably about the formulation, execution, results and implications of a group research project related to humor
- Demonstrate the skills and judgment needed to work with human participants
- Create an SPSS database
- Run SPSS analyses and interpret results
- Demonstrate professionalism in discussing a research project in a publicly held poster session
- Work with fellow group members to create a poster summarizing their group's research project
- Write a paper summarizing their group's research project
- Demonstrate professionalism in actively working as a member of a team

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

- Your notes from PSYC 220 and PSYC 221 will be helpful during this course
- You will need to create your group's survey in Qualtrics. Below are some resources for accessing and using Qualtrics.
 - Link to access Qualtrics: <https://www.siue.edu/its/qualtrics/>
 - You will use Qualtrics for data collection. If you are not familiar with Qualtrics, watch this introduction video: <https://youtu.be/hWM1z4uBP1U>
- Later in the semester you will need access to SPSS: There are several ways for you to access SPSS:
 - Remote access to SPSS through SIUE's V-Lab and using your SIUE login:
 - V-Lab login: <https://www.siue.edu/its/labsclassrooms/vlab/index.shtml>
 - Windows instructions: <https://kb.siue.edu/71294>
 - Mac instructions: <https://kb.siue.edu/96570>
 - How to save files to your computer in V-Lab: <https://kb.siue.edu/71215>
 - How to open files on your computer in V-Lab: <https://kb.siue.edu/71221>
 - Download SPSS using SIUE ITS instructions:
 - <https://www.siue.edu/its/labsclassrooms/vlab/spss.shtml>
 - Download a free trial of SPSS directly from IBM. This trial lasts for **30 days**, so I recommend downloading it **around Week 9**:
 - <https://www.ibm.com/analytics/spss-trials>

COURSE GRADE

Individual Assignments

Syllabus Quiz	10 points
Student Introduction	5 points
Copy of IRB/Citi Training Certificate	5 points
Rate a Poster	10 points
Pop Quiz #1	10 points
Pop Quiz #2	10 points
Key Articles for Discussion/Review	30 points (15 points each)
Attendance at Group Meetings*	60 points (5 points each)
Participation (from Peer Ratings)**	30 points
Participation (from Faculty Ratings)	20 points
Individual Paper***	40 points

Team Assignments

Project Proposal	30 points
Draft of Lit Review and Hypotheses	20 points
Draft of Method	10 points
Draft of Results	15 points
Draft of Discussion	15 points
Poster Ratings from Poster Day	50 points

Final Grade

- A: 333 – 370 points**
- B: 296 – 332 points**
- C: 259 – 295 points**
- D: 222 – 258 points**
- F: < 222 points**

*your course grade will drop by one letter grade if you miss more than two meetings with your group (except in cases in which health-related issues or emergencies caused the absences); your course grade will drop by two letter grades if you miss more than four meetings with your group (except in cases in which health-related issues or emergencies caused the absences)

**If the mean participation rating from your fellow group members is 6 – 8 your course grade will drop one letter grade; If the mean participation rating from your fellow group members is < 6 your course grade will drop two letter grades.

***you must receive a grade of “C” or better on the Individual Paper in order to pass the course.

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

- Your attendance is expected; however, please make your health and the health of others a priority. If you or your significant others are dealing with health-related issues that interfere with your ability to perform in this course, please let me know.
- This is a demanding class - you should only take this class this semester if, in addition to class time, you are able to meet with your group outside of class on at least a weekly basis.
- Participation is expected. Your group is counting on you. If you don't contribute your fair share to your group's work, you cause your colleagues to have to work harder. A lack of adequate participation could cause you to fail this course.
- Attend group meetings. Except when emergencies or health-related issues arise, you are expected to meet with your group at least once per week outside of class.
- Read assigned material. In order to discuss material with your group members and instructor as well as to generate project ideas and ask informed questions you are expected to keep up with the reading. If it becomes apparent to me that your group members have not read the assigned material, I will postpone meeting with your group until all group members have done so.
- Check your email regularly. I will frequently send emails to you during the semester and these emails will contain important information about the course and/or your group's project.
- Only in extreme circumstances and with my prior approval can late assignments be considered. Unless otherwise noted, if a late assignment is approved, it will automatically be docked one letter grade and then an additional letter grade for each day it is late.
- The timeline from project development to project completion is very tight. You and your fellow group members will need to be active and take initiative to maintain progress on your project--there is no time to waste.
- Collegiality, Professionalism, and Ethics. You are expected to conduct your data collection as well as your interactions with group members and research participants professionally. Your group is relying on you—you are expected to be dependable, reliable, and follow through on the commitments you make. It is understandable that there may be times that you have conflict within your group; however, you are expected to deal with this in a mature and collegial way.
- Academic Honesty. Making up data, falsifying results, and plagiarizing are serious infractions that will be reported to the Provost's office and will at minimum result in an "F" in this course. For the individual paper you are required to write you may NOT work with other group members, nor can you read their papers.
- Initiative. While I am available and happy to assist you with your research, ultimately the project is yours. Consequently, it is up to you and your group members to keep your project moving forward.
- Final Grades are Not Negotiable. I do not "round" point totals on final grades. Letter grades for the course are not negotiable and will be assigned based on the Final Grade scale above.

- Fun! Enjoy this experience. My hope is that you'll find that it's exciting to put together a study, collect the data, collaborate with your peers, and take pride in your accomplishments. Look at this as a unique opportunity to use and enhance your critical thinking, research, teamwork, and presentation skills!

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT SENIOR ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All students at SIUE are required to do a Senior Assignment in order to graduate. This is the class in which you will work on this project. In order to pass the Senior Assignment requirement, you must 1) pass your Capstone course with a grade of C or better, 2) present a poster based on the project you completed in the Capstone class at the Department of Psychology's Senior Assignment Poster Session, 3) have your poster deemed acceptable by the faculty (i.e., a mean rating of 3 or above on the faculty evaluation form), and 4) fulfill any other senior assignment requirements stipulated by your professor. In the event that you do not fulfill all four requirements in a given semester, you will need to retake the Capstone course and complete all four requirements in a subsequent semester. For example, if you receive below a C in the Capstone course, even if your poster presentation is deemed acceptable by the faculty, you will fail to complete the senior assignment requirement and must retake Capstone in its entirety with a new project. If you receive a C or better in the Capstone course, but your poster presentation is deemed unacceptable by the faculty, this in most circumstances will result in having to retake Capstone in its entirety, unless the Capstone professor presents evidence to the contrary. In order to help you with this endeavor, you have several resources: your Capstone professor, the Senior Assignment Coordinator (Dr. Shimizu), and two Senior Assignment Graduate Assistants (Haley Burton and Tuhina Joshi).

This semester's Senior Assignment Poster Session will take place on **Thursday, December 3, 2026, from 3:30 – 4:45 (with a pinning ceremony to follow from 4:45 to 5:15) in the basement of Alumni Hall in the Research Hallway (back hallway by the Resource Center)**. Your attendance at this event is mandatory in order to pass Senior Assignment – please plan your schedule accordingly! In the event that a medical emergency or other extenuating circumstance (e.g., jury duty, death in the family, religious obligation) might prevent you from attending the Senior Assignment poster session you must seek approval from your capstone instructor immediately and provide documentation. Should you miss the poster session for this reason you may be required to complete an individual makeup assignment equivalent to the poster session.

We will have a mandatory in-class meeting with the SRA graduate assistants during the 2nd week of classes where specific procedures relating to SRA will be discussed. Please make every attempt to be in class on that day. Should you be absent, you MUST contact the SRA graduate assistants as soon as possible for an individual appointment with them to hear this information. The SRA GAs' office is AH 0348 (Resource Center). You can e-mail them at psychsra@yahoo.com for an appointment. You can also reach Dr. Shimizu, the Senior Assignment Coordinator, at mshimiz@siue.edu or during his office hours (Monday 11:00 am -12:00 pm).

The SRA GAs will need to be e-mailed by ONE member of your group by Friday, November 6 with the following information: your Capstone professor's name, the title of your poster, and the names of all other members of your group.

Finally, students who take their capstone class in the fall may consider applying to present their research at the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) annual meeting in Chicago the following spring (typically late April). Having your research accepted for presentation here is extremely

prestigious and will look great on your vita/resume. If your capstone work is accepted, the Department of Psychology may be able to fund part of your trip's costs, although not guaranteed. The application is typically due toward the end of October. If you are interested in this option, you need to let your capstone professor know and he/she will provide guidance with the application process. Once you commit to this presentation mode, and are accepted, at least one member of your group must attend the conference.

Once again, if you have any questions related to Senior Assignment, please email Dr. Shimizu (mshimiz@siue.edu) or the Graduate Assistants (psychsra@yahoo.com).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the [Student Academic Code \(3C2\)](#) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, or dismissal from the University, per the [SIUE academic dishonesty policy](#). Students are responsible for complying with University policies about academic honesty as stated in the [University's Student Academic Conduct Code](#).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Unless expressly allowed by the instructor, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.

TURNITIN

This course will utilize the Turnitin plagiarism detection software. A Turnitin link will be available anywhere written work is to be submitted in the course. [Find out more about using Turnitin](#). Visit the [Turnitin Services Privacy Policy](#) for additional information on their privacy policy.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Contact ITS at [618-650-5500](tel:618-650-5500) or at help@siue.edu with any technical concerns. You can also check the functionality of University systems, including Blackboard, at the [ITS System Status page](#), or search the [ITS KnowledgeBase](#) for various how-to and troubleshooting guides.

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICY ON WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETE GRADES

All withdrawals must be completed by the end of the 13th week of classes during fall and spring, and by a similarly late date (i.e., before 82% of class meetings have occurred) in any summer term. Grades that apply to students who initiate a withdrawal and grades that apply when a student fails to officially withdraw within established deadlines are determined by university policy (see <https://www.siue.edu/registrar/class/dropping.shtml>).

All withdrawals must be completed by the end of the 13th week of classes during fall and spring, and by a similarly late date (i.e., before 82% of class meetings have occurred) in any summer term. Grades that apply to students who initiate a withdrawal and grades that apply when a student fails to officially withdraw within established deadlines are determined by university policy (see [Grading System \(1J1\)](#)). The granting of a grade of I (Incomplete) is not automatic. It is available only in cases when a student has completed most of the work required for a class but is prevented by a medical or similar emergency from completing a small portion of the coursework before the

deadline for grade submission. An I must be approved by the instructor with appropriate documentation provided by the student. If an instructor agrees to give a student an I, the instructor will fill out a Memorandum of Incomplete Grade to be kept with the student's records. If the work is not completed by the time specified on the Memorandum, the student's grade will be changed from I to F.

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism includes presenting someone else's words without quotation marks (even if you cite the source), presenting someone else's ideas without citing that source, or presenting one's own previous work as though it were new. When paraphrasing from another source or your own work, at the very least, the student should change the wording, sentence syntax, and order of ideas presented in the paper. Additionally, you should not submit a paper, or parts of a paper, written to fulfill the requirements of one class for the requirements in another class without prior approval of the current instructor and appropriate citation. Ideally, the student will integrate ideas from multiple sources while providing critical commentary on the topic in a way that clearly identifies whether words and ideas are those of the student or are from another source.

Plagiarism is one type of academic misconduct described in SIUE's [Student Academic Code \(3C2\)](#). University policy states that "Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. A plagiarism offense shall be reported to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs" ([Plagiarism \(116\)](#)). The University policy discusses additional academic sanctions including suspension and expulsion from the University. To ensure that you understand how to avoid plagiarism, we encourage you to review the linked information on plagiarism.

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICY ON WRITING

As a student in this course, you will be expected to display university-level writing, which includes completing course assignments that meet the following basic writing criteria.

Specifically, all written assignments completed for this course should include:

- clear transitions from sentence to sentence and idea to idea (e.g., paper is organized/flows well);
- verb tense consistency;
- clear and unambiguous sentences and ideas;
- writing that is free of typos, spelling errors, and major grammatical errors;
- properly formatted citations and references (if relevant).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of basic writing skills but will give you an idea of what we are looking for in our papers. If you feel you need help with your writing, you are encouraged to seek assistance from the writing center on campus (<http://www.siue.edu/is/writing>) or utilize one of the many online resources they have identified to help students (<https://www.siue.edu/lss/writing/resources.shtml>). If your graded written assignments fail to

meet the basic writing requirements listed above (and any others found to be appropriate by your instructor), the instructor will stop the grading process and return the paper to you (see below for the specific policy for this class).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND INFORMATION

University policies and guidance that address teaching, learning, and student support services are available at: <https://kb.siu.edu/132378> Students are encouraged to visit this resource site for current information on:

- Regular and Substantive Interaction
- Recordings of Class Content
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Pregnancy and Newly Parenting Policy
- Services for Students Needing Accommodations (ACCESS)
- Academic and Other Student Services (Library, Academic Success, Tutoring, etc.)
- Cougar Care
- Student Success Coaches

SUBJECT TO CHANGE NOTICE

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

August 25

- Review syllabus
- **DUE:**
 - *Student Introduction*
 - Complete *Syllabus Quiz* by 11:59 p.m. on 8/26/26 (you may use your syllabus while taking the quiz)

August 27

- Assignment to groups
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me your group's responses to items #2 and #3 on the *Capstone Group Members Questionnaire* by 4:00 p.m. on 8/28/26

September 1

- Humor Lecture
- **READ (readings are in *Required Readings* folder on Blackboard):**
 - *Sense of Humor* (Martin, 2003, pp. 313-316)
 - *Personality Psychology* (Gibson, 2019, pp. 58-78)
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#1) by 11:59 p.m. on 9/5/26

September 3

- Humor Lecture
- **READ (articles are in *Required Readings* folder on Blackboard):**
 - *Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health*
 - *Finding Comfort in a Joke*
 - *Humor Styles and the Big Five Meta-analysis*
 - *Humor and Pathological Personality Traits*
 - *Humor Styles Predict Emotional and Behavioral Responses to COVID-19*
 - *Instructor Humor and Student Engagement*
 - *Use of Humor in the Workplace*

September 8

- Group work: Brainstorming
- **DUE:**
 - *Proof of IRB Training* – upload a copy of the certificate your IRB Training Certificate (e.g., CITI) you received during PSYC 220/221 by 2:00 p.m. on 9/8/26
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#2) by 11:59 p.m. on 9/12/26

September 10

- Group work: Brainstorming
- **DUE:**
 - *Rate a Poster* - submit your poster ratings for the poster you were assigned by 2:00 p.m. on 9/10/26

September 15

- Conducting a Literature Review
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#3) by 11:59 p.m. on 9/19/26

September 17

- Discuss key articles in your group
- **DUE:**
 - Key articles assignment – submit by 2:00 p.m. on 9/17/26

September 22

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#4) by 11:59 p.m. on 9/26/26

September 24

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - Participation check-in (link to survey will be sent to you)

September 29

- Telling the class about your project
- **DUE:**
 - Submit Project Proposal by 2:00 p.m. on 9/29/26
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#5) by 11:59 p.m. on 10/3/26

October 1

- Lecture on Literature Review and Hypotheses sections

October 6

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#6) by 11:59 p.m. on 10/10/26

October 8

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - Draft of Literature Review and Hypotheses due by 2:00 p.m. on 10/8/26
 - Your Qualtrics survey should be ready by 2:00 p.m. on 10/8/26

October 13

- Lecture on Method section
- Data Collection
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#7) by 11:59 p.m. on 10/17/26

October 15

- Group Work
- Data Collection

October 20

- Preparing your database
- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#8) by 11:59 p.m. on 10/24/26

October 22

- Lecture on Correlation and Regression
- **DUE:**
 - Method Draft by 2:00 p.m. on 10/22/26

October 27

- Group work
 - **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should upload proof of your group's meeting (#9) by 11:59 p.m. on 10/31/26
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October 29

- **DUE:**
 - Draft of Results section by 2:00 p.m. on 10/29/26
 - Participation check-in (link to survey will be sent to you)
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November 3

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#10) by 11:59 p.m. on 11/7/26
 - Draft of Discussion due by 2:00 p.m. on 11/3/26

November 5

- Group work
- One member of your group should email the Senior Assignment Graduate Assistants (psychsra@yahoo.com) with the following information by 4/6/26: **your Capstone professor's name, the title of your poster, and the names of all other members of your group**

November 10

- Group work
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#11) by 11:59 p.m. on 11/14/26
 - Complete Poster Draft due by 8:00 a.m. on 11/10/26 (emailed to me)

November 12

- Practice Q & A

November 17

- Practice Q & A
- **DUE:**
 - One member of your group should email me proof of your group's meeting (#12) by 11:59 p.m. on 11/21/26

November 19

- Practice Q & A
- **DUE:**
 - Final draft of poster due by 2:00 p.m. on 11/19/26 (emailed to me)

November 24

- NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 26

- NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

December 1

- Practice Q & A

December 3

- Practice Q & A

SENIOR ASSIGNMENT POSTER DAY & PINNING CEREMONY

3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

December 8

- **DUE:**
 - Individual Paper due by 2:00 p.m. on 12/8/26

December 10

- **DUE:**
 - Take Program Assessment Test by 11:59 p.m. on 12/16/26