



**Syllabus for PSYC 494 - 002**  
**Capstone Seminar in Psychology**  
**Department of Psychology**  
Spring 2026

**Instructor:** Dr. Diana Jenkins  
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**Office:** AH 0122  
**Student Hours:** Mon/Tues 10-11am

**Term:** Spring 2026  
**Class Location:** AH 0302  
**Class Time:** M/W 1:30-2:45

### **Welcome**

Hi everyone! I am excited to be working with you this semester as we explore the psychological research process and apply the knowledge and skills you have gained throughout your degree courses for the psychology major. We will be taking a practical approach to research by developing, conducting, and presenting original research projects this spring.

## About the Course

### **Catalog Description**

Students will integrate critical thinking, communication and research skills by examining significant issues in various areas of psychology, culminating in a group research project. Requires declared major in psychology.

### **Prerequisite knowledge and credit hours**

Grade of "C" or better in PSYC 220 and PSYC 221  
Senior standing in Psychology  
Three credit hours

### **Course goals and 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 psychological constructs.
- Perform a literature review to facilitate the development of a research project related to psychological constructs.
- Talk knowledgeably about the formulation, execution, results and implications of a group research project related to psychological constructs.
- 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.

### **Course Readings (Required and Optional)**

All readings for this course are posted on Blackboard.

### **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/xJlhd5LmlYw?si=C9ilD9nhMApYFghs>
- 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: Contact ITS for help.
- How to save and open files on One Drive in V-Lab:
  - <https://www.siue.edu/its/labsclassrooms/vlab/open-save-onedrive.shtml>
- How to print files on your computer in V-Lab: <https://kb.siue.edu/page.php?id=71222>
  - 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>

### **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.

### **Technology requirements and capabilities**

Technical requirements for students can be found in this [ITS KnowledgeBase article](#). Additional resources for learning with technology can be found on the [Online at SIUE site](#).

### **Technical Support**

Contact ITS at 618-650-5500 or [athelp@siue.edu](mailto:athelp@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.

### **Communicating with the instructor:**

The most reliable way (and only way) to contact me is via e-mail. I respond to e-mails I receive during the week (M-F, 9-5 p.m.) within 24-48 hours. If you need to speak with me personally, I am easy to find during my office hours. If you are unable to attend office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please contact me for an appointment.

### **E-Mail Guidelines:**

E-mail is a wonderful tool when used properly. Please follow these simple guidelines when e-mailing me, so that I can identify you as one of my students quickly and address your concern.

1. Include class info in your subject line (PSYC 494)
2. ALWAYS sign your e-mail. Many of you have e-mail addresses that mask your identity.
3. Please treat your e-mails as professional communications.

### Communicating with YOU:

In addition to in-class announcements, I will may send out emails and announcements via Blackboard so it is your responsibility to check your SIUE email regularly, as well as Blackboard announcements.

## Course Requirements and Policies

### Course activities/assessments

Assignments are posted on Blackboard throughout the semester and will be due online at the scheduled date and time. This information can be found on the schedule presented in this syllabus. Specific instructions for each assignment can be found on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to make sure that all assignments are completed and turned in on time. It should not be expected that I will post or give verbal reminders for work. Work turned in after the scheduled date and time is considered late work.

### Submitting work

Students will submit all work on Blackboard via specific submission links for coursework. Emailed assignments will not be accepted unless prior approval is obtained from the instructor.

### Grading

This course will require students to complete both **Individual** assignments and **Group** assignments. Your final grade will be comprised of the total weighted points earned across both types of assignments.

Assignment Breakdown	Points Assigned
<b>Individual Assignments</b>	
Attendance Points (for the entire semester)	87
Syllabus and Course Readiness Quizzes, 5pts each	10
Student Introduction	10
IRB/CITI Training Certificate	10
Rate a Poster Assignment	15
Pop Quizzes, 10pts each	20
Key Articles, each worth 15 pts	30
Attendance at Group Meetings*, each worth 5 pts	60
Participation (Peer Ratings)**	30
Individual Research Paper***	100
<b>Group Assignments</b>	
Project Proposal	20
Draft of Literature Review and Hypotheses	20
Draft of Method	20
Draft of Results	20
Draft of Discussion	20
Poster Ratings from SRA Day	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>

\*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 earn a grade of “C” or better on the Individual Paper to pass the course.

### Grading scale

Letter Grade	Point range	Percentage Range
A	470–522	90–100%
B	418–469	80–89%
C	365–417	70–79%
D	313–364	60–69%
F	0–312	below 60%

- A traditional grading scale will be followed. I do not “round up” for final grades. Do not ask about this.
- If you have an issue with your grade on an assignment, you must notify me by email or set up an appointment to discuss the grade within a week after your grade is posted on Blackboard. I will not consider grade disputes raised after this time.

### 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](#).

**University guidance on artificial intelligence (AI)** 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. **The use of AI for written assignments and all formal assessments is prohibited.**

### Turnitin

This course may utilize the Turnitin plagiarism detection software. If this is used, then 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.

### Grading rubrics

Grading rubrics will be provided on Blackboard for assignments that utilize one for grading purposes.

### Feedback and grading timeline

Assignments with rubric feedback will be posted within one week of the due date. Other written assignments may take longer to grade, approximately two weeks or more. You can find your grade by clicking the My Grades link on the left menu of the Blackboard course. If there is a rubric attached to the assignment, you can click your score to see feedback on the rubric, if any. I will do my best to keep to this timeline, but this may vary throughout the semester based on my schedule.

### **Late or Missed Assignments/Rewrites**

- Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day past the due date. After 2 days (this includes all days within the week, Monday - Sunday), the assignment will not be accepted for credit.
- All assignments, except SRA day and the Individual paper, are subject to the late assignment policy.
- Rewrites may be permitted for this course. Any opportunity for a rewrite will be solicited by the instructor. Students are not to approach the instructor about rewrites for any assignment.

### **Attendance/Excused Absence Policy**

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. Holidays and scheduled class cancellations will not be included in the count of missing days. Each class is worth 3 points. We will meet for a total of 29 times, and you are allowed to **miss 3 classes (excused absences)**.

- An “Excused” absence will be recorded for any student who notifies the instructor (by phone or email) **prior** to the class meeting time that they will not be able to attend class. A note may be required if absences become frequent or upon the instructor’s request. Also, students who arrive at class meetings 15 minutes late or more will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- An “Unexcused” absence will be recorded when you do not notify the instructor prior to class time and 3 points will be deducted for each unexcused absence.
- Students are STRONGLY encouraged to attend all class meetings. There will be in-class activities and assignments for which you may receive points. If you are not present on the day of these activities/assignments, you will not receive points, and you cannot make these up. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes and/or handouts from your classmates.

### **Additional 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**. 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.
- ✓ The timeline from project development to project completion is very tight. You and your fellow group members will need to be active and take the 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.
- ✓ **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

### Department of Psychology SRA Policy:

All students at SIUE are required to do a Senior Assignment to graduate. This is the class in which you will work on this project. 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.

If 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.

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 (Madison Fradelos and Haley Burton).

This semester's Senior Assignment Poster Session will take place on **Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, from 3:00 to 4:15, with a pinning ceremony to follow from 4:15 to 4:45, in the Morris University Center (MUC) Conference Center on the 2nd floor. Your attendance at this event is mandatory in order to pass Senior Assignment – please plan your schedule accordingly!**

If 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.

**Below are important dates and deadlines for you to remember before SRA day.**

- 1) There will be a mandatory in-class meeting with the SRA graduate assistants during the 2nd week of classes (please check your syllabus for the date). 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.
- 2) ONE member of your group should email the SRA GAs (psychsra@yahoo.com) by the end of the 2nd week of March (i.e., the week of March 9th) the following information.
  - a. Your Capstone professor's name
  - b. The title of your poster
  - c. The names of all other members of your group (PLEASE check spelling!)

Finally, you can reach Dr. Shimizu, the Senior Assignment Coordinator, at mshimiz@siue.edu or during his office hours (Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am- 12 pm).

## Psychology Department Policy on Writing

As a student enrolled 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 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.**

### Course Questions

It is natural for everyone to have questions, and I want you to feel comfortable asking questions. That said, in some cases, students ask questions that could be easily answered by looking in the syllabus or course materials. To facilitate personal responsibility, I ask that you follow the “rule of 3 then me” before asking a question. If your question is about the course requirements or some aspect of the course check in 3 places for the answer before you ask me. When you ask me, tell me where you have looked for the answer and explain your question. This helps me understand the question so I can give you a better answer.

### 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.

Week	Content	Learning Activities & Assignments	Due Dates 11:59pm
<b>Week 1</b> 1/12-18	Introduction, Class Overview, & Group Assignments Topic overview	Syllabus & Course Readiness Quiz Student Introduction Readings: <i>Ta (2017)</i>	1/18
<b>Week 2</b> 1/19-25	Topic overview <b>Group work:</b> Project Brainstorming <b>NO CLASS MONDAY-MLK DAY</b>	Readings: <i>Norona, Preddy, &amp; Welsh (2015)</i> <i>Jenkins, Xiao, &amp; Martin (2023)</i> Submit Group Meeting Notes #1	1/25
<b>Week 3</b> 1/26-2/1	Topic Overview <b>Group work:</b> Project Brainstorming Project Proposal Development	Readings: <i>Cross &amp; Overall (2019)</i> <i>Eaton &amp; Rose (2011)</i> IRB/CITI Training Certificate Rate a Poster Submit Group Meeting Notes #2	2/1
<b>Week 4</b> 2/2-8	Conducting a Literature Review Writing a Literature Review & Hypotheses	<b>*Research &amp; Info Literacy Training Due 2/4*</b> Key Articles Assignment Submit Group Meeting Notes #3 Project Proposal Development	2/8
<b>Week 5</b> 2/9-15	<b>Group Work:</b> Key Articles Overview	Submit Group Meeting Notes #4	2/15
<b>Week 6</b> 2/16-22	<b>Group work:</b> Data Collection	Project Proposal Submit Group Meeting Notes #5	2/22
<b>Week 7</b> 2/23-3/1	<b>Group work:</b> Drafting Literature Review & Hypotheses section	Draft Lit Review & Hypotheses Completed Qualtrics Survey Submit Group Meeting Notes #6	3/1
<b>Week 8</b> 3/2-8	Determining & Writing Method Pre-paper presentation	Submit Group Meeting Notes #7 <i>Email SRA GAs (See Blackboard)</i>	3/8
<b>Week 9</b> 3/9-15	<b>SPRING BREAK WEEK-NO CLASSES</b>		
<b>Week 10</b> 3/16-22	Correlation & Regression Analyses <b>Group work:</b> Draft Method section & Database Preparation	Draft Method section Submit Group Meeting Notes #8	3/22
<b>Week 11</b> 3/23-29	<b>Group work:</b> Drafting Results section	Draft Results section Submit Group Meeting Notes #9	3/29
<b>Week 12</b> 3/30-4/5	<b>Group work:</b> Drafting Discussion section	Draft Discussion section Submit Group Meeting Notes #10	4/5
<b>Week 13</b> 4/6-12	<b>Group work:</b> Drafting Research Poster <b>Group work:</b> Finalize Research Poster	Poster Draft Submit Group Meeting Notes #11 Poster Final Draft	4/12
<b>Week 14</b> 4/13-19	Practice Q & A	Submit Group Meeting Notes #12	4/19
<b>Week 15</b> 4/20-26	Practice Q & A <b>SRA DAY &amp; Pinning Ceremony</b>	<b>SRA Day Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 3pm-4:45pm</b> <b>MUC 2nd Floor</b>	
<b>Week 16</b> 4/27-5/3	<b>Workshop Week:</b> Individual Paper	Program Assessment Test <b>Individual Paper</b>	5/3
<b>Finals</b>	<b>Finals Week-No Class Meetings</b>		

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