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# PSYC 4999 SYLLABUS

## INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Megan Papesh

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## CO-INSTRUCTORS

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## OFFICE LOCATION

Audubon 310

## OFFICE HOURS

By appointment

## COURSE OVERVIEW

PSYC 4999 is a research experience course, intended for students to develop a deeper understanding of the practice of conducting and writing about psychological science research. In this course, students will learn how to responsibly and ethically conduct behavioral science research, maintaining professionalism, confidentiality, and integrity. They will also gain experience with multiple software platforms, including E-Prime and Microsoft Office products. All students will learn how to run and troubleshoot an EyeLink 1000+ eye tracking system. Students will be required to participate in several lab meetings held throughout the semester, during which they will engage in discussion of peer-reviewed articles related to the projects conducted in the lab. Students will also complete a final paper on a topic announced during the first week of classes (before the drop date). Students who wish to take on additional responsibilities or who wish to generate topics for future research projects are encouraged to email the co-instructor.

## COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

There is no textbook for this course. All materials will be provided on the course Moodle site.

## GRADED WORK

Your grade in this class will be out of 100 points, 65 points accumulated from standard lab work and 35 points accumulated from work that culminates in the final paper. The grading period for lab work begins on January 21 (after the add/drop date) and ends on April 26, with Spring Break and Mardi Gras holidays excluded. Students can earn up to 5 points per week by completing regular lab duties, including showing up for your sessions promptly, following lab protocols, and notifying the co-instructors of any issues encountered during your sessions (e.g., equipment malfunctions, sleepy or unruly participants, etc.). Most students will earn full credit for each week, and grades will be updated on the Moodle gradebook on a weekly basis. Any point deductions will be explained in the feedback column of your gradebook. Point deductions for various infractions include:

- Failure to attend (without an excused or approved absence): -2 points
- Tardiness: -1 point (per session)
- All other protocol violations: -1 (per violation)
- Failure to respond to emails: -1 (per violation)

The final paper is intended to give you experience with scientific writing, and may even result in a publication (which looks stellar on applications to any graduate program to which you might apply). The aim is to write a paper that could appear in [Frontiers for Young Minds](#), which publishes articles written by scientists for kids. For example, check out the article describing [people who never forget](#). The final paper will be described in more detail in a separate handout.

To calculate your grade, simply take your current points, divide them by the total available, and multiply by 100. This formula will be used to determine your final letter grade. Final percentages ending in decimal points will be rounded prior to posting your final letter grade (scores ending in .5 or above will be rounded up to the next whole number).

<b>Grade Category</b>	<b>Plus</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Minus</b>
A	97 – 100	93 – 96	90 – 92
B	87 – 89	83 – 86	80 – 82
C	77 – 79	73 – 76	70 – 72
D	67 – 69	63 – 66	60 – 62
F		< 59.5	

## SCHEDULING AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Hours in the lab are calculated by the accepted standard of 3 hours of work for each credit hour (e.g., 3 credit hours equals 9 hours in the lab per week). On weeks with lab meetings, an hour will be deducted from your in-lab work and used for the meeting instead. Lab schedules are decided on individual bases, and students are required to follow this schedule on a weekly basis. If you need to change your schedule, please notify a grad supervisor as soon as possible.

[LSU Policy Statement 22](#) (LSU PS-22) outlines university-approved reasons for student absence, the most frequent being illness and family emergency (please read the full policy statement for other approved reasons). Absences must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. For illnesses, that documentation must be a “return to work/school” note from a healthcare provider. Student Health on campus does not provide these notes; you must go to a hospital, doctor’s office, or urgent care facility. Similarly, notes from online health appointments (e.g., web chat with a nurse) will not be accepted. I will determine the acceptable documentation for all other excuses on a case-by-case basis. Students with excused absences will be permitted to makeup their lab work when they return to school, and should coordinate with one of the co-instructors to schedule.

If you know in advance that you need to miss a lab day (e.g., personal travel, a conference you want to attend, taking the GRE, etc.), please notify one of the grad supervisors by Friday afternoon, the week prior to the date you need to miss. We will make every effort to accommodate scheduling changes when we have advance notice.

## LAB BEHAVIOR/ETIQUETTE

While working in the lab, students are expected to maintain a standard of professionalism with other research assistants, the graduate students, and (most importantly) the participants. To this end, we expect students to respect “In Progress” door signs, and to keep conversations quiet and cellphones on silent to minimize interruptions to the experiments. Profanity, while tolerated in *quiet* individual conversations, should never be used when participants might overhear.

Although we do not adopt a strict dress code, we ask that research assistants dress appropriately for their position. Participants look to the research assistants as lab representatives, and research assistants are often the person of authority in the room. Jeans and t-shirts are certainly acceptable, but revealing clothing, shirts with profane or inflammatory messages, dirty clothing, etc. are not allowed, as they are distracting to participants.

The preferred form of communication for the lab is email. Students are expected to check emails at least once per day, and to confirm the receipt of all lab communications by replying to the sender (even if your reply is just “got it!”). Please read all emails carefully, as they often contain scheduling information and instructions for experiments.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PSYC 4999 should be a fun course! Although the syllabus is necessarily formal in tone, research experience is an easy way to (hopefully) get a good grade and an excellent way to get to know grad students and faculty better, because we can write stellar letters of recommendation. Moreover, there is a chance that your final paper could turn into a published paper, which would be outstanding. We’re here to help you learn about real-life research. If, at any point, you feel that you are not learning enough, we would be happy to adjust your responsibilities to help you get more out of your lab experience.

You are part of the lab, so please feel free to share opinions and ideas with us. We would be thrilled if you came up with a research idea to discuss with us, and we may even help you run it in the lab.

## IMPORTANT LAB DATES

Date(s)	Description
Jan. 17	Final date to drop without a “W” grade (4:30p)
Jan. 18	Final date to add classes (4:30p)
Mar. 4-6	Mardi Gras holiday, no classes (classes resume 12:30p on 3/6)
Apr. 15-19	Spring Break, no classes
Apr. 26	Last day of M-Fr classes

## ADDITIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

*Late Assignments:* Assignments are due exactly at the times listed in any assignment handouts, and late penalties will be assessed starting immediately after the due date/time. After the due date/time passes, a 10% deduction in the total points available for that assignment will increase every 24 hours.

*Code of Conduct:* You are expected to be familiar with the [LSU Code of Student Conduct](#). Although it is nearly impossible to cheat in this course, the Code of Conduct should nevertheless guide your behaviors.

*Students with Disabilities:* If you are seeking accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you are required to register with Disability Services (DS). DS is located in 115 Johnston Hall, and their phone number is 225-578-5919 ([disability@lsu.edu](mailto:disability@lsu.edu)). To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper DS forms and provide them to me as soon as possible.

*Lab Behavior:* We strive to treat all students respectfully and expect you to do likewise. If you feel offended by another student, or by us, please share your concerns with Dr. Papesh as soon as possible.

*Psychological Services:* This is an academic class and not meant as a substitute for psychotherapy. Students who are seeking personal psychological help may contact the LSU Student Health Center at (225) 578-8774 for mental health services.

*Diversity Statement:* LSU's [Diversity Statement](#) says that "LSU strives to create an inclusive, respectful, intellectually challenging climate that embraces individual difference in race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, spirituality, socio-economic status, disability, family status, experiences, opinions, and ideas."

For more information regarding Diversity at LSU, please visit the website for the Office of Diversity, or contact them in 135 Thomas Boyd Hall, by phone 225-578-5736, or by email at [diversity@lsu.edu](mailto:diversity@lsu.edu).