

**PSY 388: Human Sexuality / CRN 35208 / 4 Credits / TH 12:00-1:20 / 221 ALL (Allen)**

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*Course Webpage available at: <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>. Please check email and Bb website regularly (3x a week or more often), as I will post important course information on Bb and contact students through email.*

**Overview:** This **4-credit** course is designed to facilitate a frank, honest, and respectful conversation about the nature of our sexuality and how psychological and sociological science has studied sexuality in its many forms. Through readings, lectures, discussions, and film clips, we will explore and expand together the multiple meanings and constructions of sexuality.

We will address questions such as: *Why is such a basic part of human functioning often considered “wrong” or “dirty?” Why is sexuality so often difficult to talk about? Why are conceptions of male and female sexuality so often divergent? How does sex “work” and how do people study it? What is sexual “dysfunction?”* To provide a starting point in answering some of these questions, we will discuss the biology, physiology, evolution, and psychology of sexuality, with a strong focus on societal conceptions and interpersonal aspects of sexuality.

Although human sexuality courses sometimes use heterosexuality as the standard model of healthy sexuality, and may consider homosexuality and bisexuality as anomalies, I (and the authors of your text) take the position that sexual orientation is flexible and can take on many forms. Accordingly, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and other forms of sexuality that don’t fit neatly into one of the above are all equally considered as valid expressions of *human* sexuality. What this means is that you will be presented with images and descriptions of both other-sex and same-sex relationships and sexual practices in lecture and in your text.

The class will primarily be a lecture format, but we will have frequent class discussions that will be essential to your learning and moving the conversation forward. If past classes are an indicator, it should be a lively class! There may also be occasional films/film clips, guest lectures, small group discussions and projects, group debates, and exams. Outside of class, students will be expected to complete weekly readings (textbook and/or articles posted to Blackboard), debate preparations, independent projects, and written work. To succeed in the class, you need to come to class, complete all readings and assigned work on time, and think about class material. Although I will usually provide lecture slides (when used), these are **not** substitutes for attendance.

By the end of class, students who remain engaged with the material will have a broad understanding of some of the main findings about human sexuality in the scientific literature. Students will also leave with a basic understanding of the methodologies researchers use to answer questions about human sexuality and should have improved their skills as informed consumers of popular and scientific research on the topic. More generally, students will have sharpened their analytical skills and broadened their thinking.

**My Class Philosophy:** College can (and should) be an exciting adventure for all of us, filled not just with rote learning, but also with active questioning and examination. The advancement of knowledge depends on all of us, including instructors, teaching assistants, and students. Learning requires an **active** involvement with course content; merely reading the material and showing up for class is not enough to advance class goals. It is important to exercise one’s brain, to *think* about the course material and *relate* it to experiences in one’s own life, rather than just remembering facts. Students who do so will do well in the class.

The material we will cover typically elicits strong reactions in those who engage with it; I encourage this, and strongly support all forms of *respectful* interaction with the material, with each other, and with the ideas presented in class. As we make our way through the course, there will be many opportunities to engage with the material, and we should all reflect on the impact our sexuality has on us, particularly within the context of our culture.

**My Expectations:** Active learning is a constantly evolving dialogue that has no clear beginning or end. Moreover, learning is more than acquiring and remembering facts; learning is also about *personal growth*. Because of this, it is important to establish some ground rules to which we can all agree.

First, attendance is paramount. Skipping class is like walking out in the middle of a conversation. However, I will not take attendance. I expect students to come to class without being forced to do so. To make this class an optimal learning environment, everyone involved should also come to class **prepared**. This includes having completed assigned readings prior to class and being ready to devote the 1:20 of class time twice a week to the topics we will cover. As part of this, I expect that students will **not** be sitting in class texting or surfing the web. While I understand the allure of screens, if use of phones or non-class-related computer/phone use becomes distracting to me or to class, I will ask people to turn electronics off or leave.

Be aware that this is a four-credit class. Four credits translate into 120 hours over the course of the term (12 hours per week, or up to 9 hours of work *outside of class* each week). See [http://registrar.uoregon.edu/faculty\\_staff/academic\\_scheduling/syllabus](http://registrar.uoregon.edu/faculty_staff/academic_scheduling/syllabus) or page 20 of the student handbook: [advising.uoregon.edu/AA\\_Pages/documents/StudentHB2014-FINAL\\_000.pdf](http://advising.uoregon.edu/AA_Pages/documents/StudentHB2014-FINAL_000.pdf). This course is designed to comply with the psychology department's guidelines for learning. For information about expectations for psychology undergraduates (including information about grading policies) see: [psychology.uoregon.edu/undergraduate](http://psychology.uoregon.edu/undergraduate).

**Diversity of People & Opinions:** It is *vitaly important* that we all share the responsibility of being open to the variety of thoughts, ideas, and feelings held by all of us about the material. If there are 150 of us in the room, we can expect 150 different perspectives. No one experience or viewpoint is more important or valuable than the others. You may not agree with the views expressed by me or by others in the course, but we must all agree to respect each other's right to have and share our experiences. Hearing and listening to others' perspectives helps create greater understanding of the diversity of experience in contemporary American society.

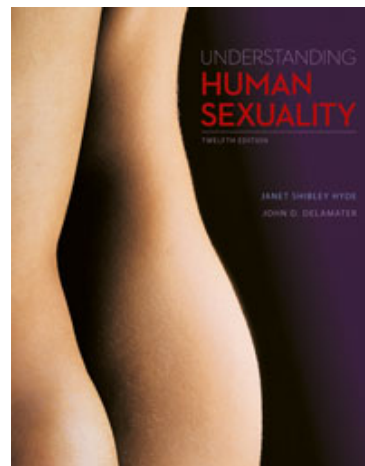
This class promotes respect for diversity in all of its forms (some examples are: gender, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, political, sexual...there are many forms). Although it may hard to believe, the predominant cultural beliefs in the U.S. are not the only views that exist in the world or even within this country. We should therefore all try to *understand* and *celebrate* the diversity of human experience. The varied cultural, ethnic, political, and religious views about human sexuality that exist are as valid as mainstream American beliefs, and all of human behavior should be viewed within the context of broader social, political, and cultural forces.

**Required Textbook:** We will be using a new edition of a text I have used many times before and like a lot, by a psychologist and a sociologist, both of whom are excellent researchers. The text is:

Hyde, J. S., & DeLamater, J. D. (2010). *Understanding Human Sexuality*, 12<sup>th</sup> Ed.

I have ordered a special-made paperback version that skips a few chapters, in order to make the book more affordable. The price is around \$80 at the Duckstore. You can also purchase the full textbook from an online retailer, if desired.

Other readings (journal articles) will be posted on Blackboard.



**Suggested Reading (for writing):** If you haven't read it, I *strongly* suggest reading Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* (1999). This is a classic, excellent, and very short reference book that anyone who writes should own. You can also get the text at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/> or type the title into a search engine for a free pdf.

### Individual Assessments (78%)

**Research Paper Summary (5%):** Students will read an empirical research report on a topic in human sexuality and write a short summary about and discussion of this paper. The research report on which this paper is based **cannot be one that was assigned for class**. A handout with further instructions is posted on Blackboard.

Your summary can be no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced, with 1" margins and a 12-point font. You will lose points for improper formatting. It needs to be turned in on Blackboard by **Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 PM**. *Late papers will lose 10% of their grade in each 24-hour period following the due date/time, and will not be accepted after May 15<sup>th</sup>.*

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**Short Reaction/Reflection Paper (13%):** Students will write a short reaction or reflection paper in response to one of several topics. A handout with the topics and instructions is posted on Blackboard.

Ideal papers will, in most cases, integrate knowledge gained over the quarter and will demonstrate original thinking, logical flow, and clear, straightforward, interesting (dare I say, elegant?) prose. Regardless of topic, papers that get good or excellent grades will use correct English grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Serious flaws – particularly when they hurt comprehension – will cost points.

Be sure to appropriately cite others' words or ideas. Have fun, be interesting, think clearly, and write carefully. Leave plenty of time to edit and rewrite (hint: start sooner rather than later). As the author James Michener once said: "I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter." This describes most of us (including me). If you do all of these things, you should do well on your papers!

Your reaction paper can be no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced, with 1" margins and a 12-point font. You will lose points for improper formatting. It needs to be turned in on Blackboard by **Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 PM**. *Late papers will lose 10% of their grade, and will not be accepted after June 9<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 PM.*

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**Short Exams (60%):** Exams will assess your knowledge of course material. Success on exams requires the ability to *define* terms and concepts, *identify* concepts that are presented in abstract form, and *apply* concepts you have learned to new domains. *The keys are definition, identification, and application!* While the emphasis will be on material I have covered in lecture, questions can be drawn from any element of coursework, including: readings, lecture and in-class discussion, film clips, and guest speakers. **If it has been assigned, it may appear on an exam.** Typically, exams will focus on the most recent material and on broad concepts rather than small specifics.

**Exams *must* be taken on/at regularly scheduled days and times.** Dates are listed on the course schedule, below. Plan your schedule accordingly. *If you know you cannot make an exam date, you should not take the course.* Please take care of yourself so that you can attend all exams well rested and in good health. *Student athletes or others with university-sponsored excuses must contact me early in the course to make alternative arrangements for testing.* I will offer a **cumulative (i.e., information from the whole course, including presentations), optional make-up exam during the class final exam period. Students must inform me to take this exam.** This exam will be more difficult, and longer, than the regularly scheduled exams.

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### Group Assessments (22%)

In this class, you will also practice working with others in groups. Groups will have *5 or 6 members*. Many students have told me that the group work they did in this class was one of the most rewarding aspects of the class. A much smaller number have told me they hated it. In any case, I think that group work is valuable and I've been very happy with the insight and information groups have provided. It might help to consider that outside of the classroom (i.e., in almost every job imaginable, including universities), people occasionally work in groups to accomplish goals and are evaluated for their ability to achieve them. People must accommodate one another, pull

their load, and communicate. Part of your overall class grade, described below, will be based on how the members of your group evaluate your contribution. So play nice and don't make me get involved!

Groups should try to meet several times over the course of the term (perhaps even as study groups!). However, because scheduling can be difficult, communication can be achieved in other ways. You can always break into smaller groups that meet in person, then coordinate and communicate with each other. Have fun, and choose a fun name!

All groups will receive the same grade on group assignments. Five different grades are possible. These are "Truly Outstanding" (100% - few groups will get this grade on any assignment, and the grade may not be assigned at all, depending on the quality of work); "Excellent" (95%); "Good" (85%); "Adequate" (75%); and "Inadequate" (50% - this will apply to work that is very low in quality). Work that is not turned in will get a grade of 0.

**The group name must appear in all documents turned in for credit, along with the names of all group members. This can be in the header of the document.**

**I strongly advise you to not procrastinate in your group work. Preparation will make for great grades across all assignments, and waiting until the last minute will likely result in low grades.**

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**Group Debates (5%):** Four times throughout the term, we will, in small groups and as a class, engage in debates about sensitive topics in human sexuality. For each debate, each group will prepare a set of pro and con arguments for and against some resolution. These will be turned in on Blackboard, *prior to the day of the debate*. Dates are listed on the syllabus. A handout with further instructions is posted on Blackboard.

Groups will turn in a short set of arguments *in support of and against* each resolution. These should include a short summary of the pro and con positions and 3 to 4 bullet points with short explanatory statements for each point. The document should be no longer than two pages, single-spaced, with 1" margins, 12-point font.

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**Group Project (14%):** Groups will independently come up with an idea or topic in human sexuality that is of interest to group members, and will prepare a short (~5 minute) presentation on this topic to the class toward the end of the quarter. **Topic ideas need to be formally submitted to me, in writing, by Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.** All topics need to be approved by me. A handout with further instructions is posted on Blackboard.

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**Group Ratings (3%):** I do not want to have to intervene in groups. As in other aspects of life, sometimes you have to work with people with whom you would not otherwise work. Thus, I am offering relatively *free* credit toward final grades, by allowing people to rate other group members. This is meant to be an incentive to work together nicely and for each group member to pull her or his own weight. At the end of the class, each group member will rate every other group member on a 3-point scale. These ratings will be turned in *privately* (i.e., on Blackboard) so no one will know what ratings you give. 0 means the rated member did *essentially* no work at all (e.g., attended no meetings or very few, did not communicate much if at all with other group members, contributed basically nothing or very little to the debate, paper, and project assignments). 1 means the member contributed, even if not enormously, or the member was "average" (e.g., attended some meetings, communicated sometimes, even if not often/regularly, contributed something, even if not a lot, to assignments). 2 means "great group member."

We will average ratings for each person. Anyone getting an average < .5 will receive none of their group rating credit. **Furthermore, ratings below .5 will result in a grade of zero for all group assignments.** *Group work is part of class, and if a group member contributes nothing, they will receive no credit for this work, which may result in a failing grade in the class.* Averages between .5 and 1.3 will get 80% of the rating credit. Averages > 1.25 get 100% credit. **Group member ratings are due, on Blackboard, by June 4 at 6:00 PM.**

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**Grading Summary:** Research Paper Summary (5%), Reaction/Response Paper (13%), Short Exams (60%), Group Debates (5%), Group Project (14%), Group Evaluations (3%) = 100%

A+ (reserved for truly exceptional performance), A 93%-100%, A- 90-92.99%, B+ 87-89.99%, B 83-86.99%, B- 80-82.99%, C+ 77-79.99%, C 73-76.99%, C- 70-72.99%, D+ 67-69.99%, D 63-66.99%, D- 60-62.99%, F < 60%.  
If taking pass/fail: >70%=pass, <70%=fail.

### **Meaning of Grades:**

**A+** signifies a rarified level of achievement. The student shows a command of material that includes both faultless explanation of the details of the content, and the ability to apply the material at all levels assessed. **A** signifies an exceptional level of achievement. The student shows a superb command of the material and the ability to apply their knowledge at many different levels. This grade is indicative of committed, motivated, and fully engaged learners who take advantage of all learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom. **B** signifies a good but not exceptional level of achievement. The student shows a clear grasp of the material and the ability to apply it at several but not all levels. **C** signifies a fair or adequate level of achievement. The student shows some mastery of the material and a narrow range of application. This grade may be indicative of a mismatch between the study techniques and course assessments, or a lack of commitment, motivation or engagement leading to less than full participation in learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom. **D** signifies little or no true understanding of the material. This grade may be indicative of little or no commitment, motivation or engagement in the course learning opportunities. **F** signifies a performance below the level of random chance. It is assumed that no learning objectives have been met, and therefore no credit has been earned for the course.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about student codes of conduct (e.g., concerning plagiarism) can be found here:

[uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode.aspx](http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode.aspx)

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Plagiarism or cheating will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and all suspected academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. This is required of instructors.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and may need accommodations, contact me ASAP. Please let me know in advance even if you are not sure that your disability will require accommodation (for example, if you have a physical disability that may require you to miss class, but you aren't sure it will). With advance planning, adjustments can be made. Last minute changes will be problematic. Students who are experiencing learning difficulties are encouraged to consult the Accessible Education Center (164 Oregon Hall; 346-1155; <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>). Without documentation, accommodations are made at discretion of instructor.

**Other Students:** If you are a student with children, a job, or have other circumstances that might affect your ability to devote time to the class, please let me know now so we can discuss strategies to promote your success in this course. If you wait until you have problems in the course it may be too late to salvage your grade, but planning ahead will likely lead to success.

**Student Athletes:** You must let me know during the first week of classes if you will miss class due to travel with a UO athletic team and require accommodation. Requirements for the course will not be relaxed for student

athletes; however, minor scheduling accommodations may be made (e.g., taking a quiz a few hours early) if planned well ahead of time.

Schedule of Topics and Due Dates – **Note: This schedule is subject to change at discretion of instructor.** Some topics may be skipped, depending on pace. Students will be notified of changes, if they occur, in class, by email, or by announcement on Blackboard.

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Week 1 (3/30)

Introduction, group formation, lecture

History & Theory: Chapters 1 & 2, Delamater & Friedrich (2002) Human Sexual Development

Week 2 (4/6)

Theories Continued; Sex Research: Chapter 3

Sexual Double Standards – Marks & Fraley (2005); Crawford & Popp (2002); (Optional but suggested: Sakaluk & Milhausen, 2012)

Week 3 (4/13)

Anatomy; Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, & Menstrual Cycle: Chapters 4 & 5

**Exam 1, Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, first 45 Minutes of Class (lecture to follow), Chapters 1-5, readings, and lecture**

Week 4 (4/20)

Contraception & Abortion; Physiology of Sexual Response: Chapters 7 (pp. 126-158) & 8 (pp. 159-197)

**Debate 1, Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>: Abortion**

Week 5 (4/27)

Attraction; Sexual Coercion: Chapters 11 & 15

Rape Myth Acceptance – Suarez & Gadalla (2010); Beck et al. (2012)

**Debate 2, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>: Open Committed Relationships; Group ideas also due to me, in person or email, by 8:00 PM on same day (4/28)**

**Exam 2, Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, first 45 minutes of class (lecture to follow), Chapters 6-8, 11, 15, readings, lecture**

Week 6 (5/4)

Sexual “Dysfunction” and the Medical Model; STI/Ds: Chapters 17 & 18; Laurent & Simons (2009)

**Research Summary Paper due on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, by 8:00 PM.**

Week 7 (5/12)

Sexual Variations; Sex work, porn, and all that: Chapters 14 (pp. 253-280) & 16 (pp. 302-327)

**Debate 3, Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>: HIV/STIs**

Week 8 (5/18)

Sex Work, Porn, and All That Continued

**Debate 4, Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>: Legalizing Sex Work**

**Exam 3, Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, first 45 minutes of class (presentations to follow), Chapters 14, 16-18, readings, lecture**

Week 9 (5/25)

**Presentations**

Week 10 (6/1)

**Presentations, Wrap Up and Epilogue**

**Group member evaluations due June 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM, on Blackboard.**

**Reaction Papers due Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 PM**

Optional Cumulative Final Exam Make Up: Monday, 6/8, 8:00 AM, in same room as class

## How to Succeed in This Class (and All Your Others, Too!)

Throughout the year, every year, I get the following questions from students: “How do I do better on your exams?” “How do I do better in your class?” “What’s the most effective way of studying for your exams?” – and so on...

What follows are my tips for success in this class and others. Simply reading this won’t help, but actually *following the advice* WILL help. It really will. I promise. This class may be easy for some, moderately hard for others, and very hard for still others, but the most reliable path to succeeding scholastically involves **working** hard at learning a topic. That’s how I did well in school, if that helps. So, to do well, you’ll (probably) need to work hard.

1. **Come to class.** I can’t emphasize this enough. Many students make it for a few classes, and then stop coming regularly. Since I (and most instructors) base many of my exam questions on what I discuss in lecture, don’t you think it might be wise to be present? I strive to make class both enjoyable and worthwhile, and what I talk about in there is what I think is important. So come to class...you will certainly do better. Be aware, as well, that exams will assess your ability to *define, identify, and apply* terms and concepts. In class, you will be exposed to definitions and examples of concepts, giving you practice in all three of these “key” assessment areas. If you’re not there, you’ll miss it.
2. **Spend the time!** Each credit hour = 3 hours per week. So in a 4-credit class, you are reasonably expected to spend *12 hours per week* on the class. Who does this, you ask? “The students who get As!” I reply. It is exceedingly difficult to cram 4 weeks (3 weeks, 2 weeks, 6 weeks) of studying and learning into one night or a few short study sessions. Research shows that learning is best achieved when it is **distributed over time!** Spend some time studying every day. Moreover, do not just passively review notes, but actively pose questions and try to find the answers. Do this continually throughout the term. If you don’t, you’ll find yourself cramming right before exams, which is both more painful and less effective as a test preparation strategy.
3. **Read the book.** Although I cover material from the book, I supplement it with my own knowledge of the field, and I don’t cover every little detail. But questions on exams can come from anywhere (i.e., book, lecture, discussion). Some people don’t even GET the book; others get it and never read it. Use some of those 12 hours per week reading! First, *skim*, to get an idea of what you’ll be reading. Note the questions you may have. Then, go back and read closely. Some parts you may need to read several times to understand. Some parts you may want to ask me or someone else about to make sure you understand correctly. An active orientation is helpful – don’t just read and highlight, but write notes and questions in the margins; have a conversation with the textbook. Doing this *before class* is very useful, because then you have knowledge on which to build in lecture. If not, you should certainly read after class. But read, you must!
4. **Tie what I discuss to your own knowledge about yourself and others.** We’re talking about psychology here, right? You have a brain, nervous system, social context, personality, etc., and so do all your friends (one can hope!). We know more about ourselves and close others than we know about anything else. So, tie facts or concepts (learned in reading or lecture) to your own experiences and prior learning. Try to imagine times when the concept applied to you or someone you know. How does the concept remind you of an earlier experience, or what you

learned in another class, or what you do for fun? By tying new knowledge to old, you create a neural network of understanding that reinforces associated neural connections. This is a good trick for remembering and making information accessible later.

5. **Teach the material to others.** Some of the deepest, most durable learning occurs when teaching others (that's why we teachers are generally working hard and learning a lot over the course of a class, ourselves)! Create a study group and take turns teaching material to each other. If everyone has an area that they are "responsible" for knowing, they will each have at least *some* expertise in *something*! So to learn, teach.
6. **Be active in class, not passive.** Passive means you just sit there and listen or half-listen while daydreaming. Active means you think about what is being said, often posing questions to yourself and to me (and to the class). You engage with the material, tying it to your own knowledge and interests. If you're going to just come and listen, you're not doing enough...ENGAGE! Try to get excited about what you are learning. If you don't feel naturally excited, try the time-tested behavioral strategy of "fake it 'til you make it."
7. **If you're going to surf, text, or otherwise not be engaged, don't bother coming.** Many students believe it is possible to do several things well at once. That is, that a person can multitask during class and still learn what they need to learn. NOT SO! *Psychological research* has shown that people can do lots of things at once, but they can't do them all well at the same time. So if you come to class, come ready to engage in learning and to maintain focus on the class. Otherwise, you're wasting your time. I don't usually take attendance. If you want to text or surf, that's totally fine with me! Just not in class. Further, if I actually catch you texting or surfing, I'll make a big deal out of it, and you'll (maybe) be mad that I did. So, if you're in class, really use the time for class.
8. **Practice thinking.** I don't just teach material. I don't just teach to exams. I want all of us to practice thinking, to learn to reason (or reason better), to not passively accept but to actively challenge information and ideas. This is how science, including psychology, actually works; previously known "facts" are continually overturned, and grasping the *process* of scientific inquiry is at least as important as the content of any particular study. To me, this is what college is about, regardless of your goals for this class. Being a good thinker is what makes you successful in whatever field you choose to work. So, use class time as practice for living, in general.
9. **Come see me.** Come to my office hours. Ask questions. Students who do this do better, on average, than students who do not.
10. **Speak up in class.** If you have a question, many others probably have the same question. Go ahead and ask. It's fun and educational! It also helps me to know when I'm not being clear (which may occasionally happen) and will enhance everyone's learning.

That's about all I have, for the moment. It encapsulates what I have found to be helpful for myself and for many students over the years. Of course, just reading this handout won't do it...you've actually got to DO these things. That's the hard part. This is not an easy class to succeed in, although I do try to make it as painless as possible.

Good luck! ☺