

Psychology



Guidelines for Study

Psychology is the science of behavioral and mental processes. It is similar to any science course, because it looks at both concrete and abstract ideas involving research theories and schools of thought.

Clues for Reading the Text

- Read the assigned chapters before coming to class! This will help you to better understand the lecture.
- Before reading the chapter, go through and look at the chapter outline, as it will enable you to see the bigger picture. Ask questions such as, “Do the subsections fit within the larger ideas, or into different schools of thought?”
- As you read the chapter title and subsequent headings, consider what you already know about the topic. Most of psychology is based on behavior that you see every day; build on what you already know!
- When reading, pay close attention to examples. These can often help simplify concepts and allow you to apply them to your own life.
- After you finish a section of reading, review, reflect, connect, and ask yourself questions:
 - Did I understand what I read? If not, what questions need to be asked?
 - How does this information fit into my previous knowledge?
 - How do I feel about this (agree, disagree, etc.)?
 - How might I remember this information/definitions? (using word rhymes, bigger concepts into which they fit, etc.)?
- Next, summarize the section in your own words (in your head, out loud, or by writing it down, depending on your own learning style).
- Reread the summaries at the end of each chapter, and go over any review questions which may be presented along with the summaries. This is a good way to get a quick overview of the material, before going into more detail and more specifics.
- Try summarizing and rewriting your own notes. It’s often very easy to skim through your notes visually, recognize the material, and feel that you know it. **This can be deceptive.** By actually writing out or typing the information again, you’re forcing yourself to really process the material, not just recognize it. This is a great way to review if you tend to be easily distracted, or if your mind tends to wander.

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- If you're unclear on a particular concept, try to remember examples that your professor may have used when explaining the material. Sometimes a colorful or odd example sticks in your mind and can really help to clarify a subject!
- Some professors offer copies of previous exams on reserve in the library. Get these! This is especially helpful when preparing for the first exam of the semester.
- Study with someone. One of the best ways to review material is to work with a classmate and ask each other questions. This forces you to really get a handle on what you're studying, because you'll need to have a clear understanding to be able to explain a concept to someone else.
- Use the Academic Assistance Center and its peer tutors as resources. Academic Assistance is here to help all students, regardless of how they are doing in the class. It is a service provided by PLU, free of charge, to help you do your best academically.

Psychology is a wonderfully diverse field of study with an abundance of theories and theorists. Don't let the names and ideas overwhelm you. Take the material chapter by chapter and section by section; don't skip ahead to a new topic before understanding the previous one. If you can take the time to work through the material, chances are that you'll find psychology to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience.