COURSE TITLE: Introduction to Psychology
COURSE NUMBER: PSY 101

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an overview of psychology providing students with a framework for understanding self and others regardless of their field of study. Information in the course will connect to personal and societal application, as well as factual information. It will also provide the foundation for future study of psychology for those furthering their study in this area.

As Psychology professionals, we recognize that reactions to trauma come in many forms. The content of this course, and discussions about trauma from different perspectives, may bring about unexpected and unsettling reactions. Responses to trauma are often strategies that survivors have developed to keep themselves safe, and therefore really reflect strength and resiliency. Recognizing how trauma impacts anyone is an important part of skill building for creating trauma-informed services and systems. Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor at any time during the course if you would like to discuss, privately, your reactions to the content we are reviewing and/or the discussions we are having.

II. MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A:
The student will demonstrate an understanding of the field of psychology, including the historical evolution and the process of studying human behavior.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

A-1 Define psychology.
A-2 Identify key issues in studying human behavior (e.g. nature vs. nurture).
A-3 Evaluate ethical guidelines in the field of psychology as it pertains to conducting research.
A-4 Explain the theories associated with the major theorists in the field of psychology and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the theories.
A-5 Apply each of the theories covered in the course to everyday life.

GOAL B:
The student will be aware of biological aspects of human behavior.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

B-1 Describe the biological basis for behavior including genetic and neurophysiology.

B-2 Explain the process by which neurons communicate with each other, allowing the nervous system to integrate complex information.

B-3 Differentiate the major branches of the nervous system, explaining the core biological function of each branch.

B-4 Analyze the implications of advances in methods used to study the brain.

B-5 Identify key structures and regions of the brain that are important for physical and psychological functioning.

**GOAL C:**

The student will become familiar with concepts associated with sensation and perception.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

C-1 Explain how humans use their senses to process information.

C-2 Apply the Gestalt Laws of Organization to how one perceives information.

C-3 Classify signal detection outcomes in perception scenarios as hits, misses, false alarms, or correct rejections.

C-4 Evaluate the evidence for bottom-up and top-down perceptual processing mechanisms in contexts of object recognition and depth perception.

**GOAL D:**

The student will show an understanding of consciousness.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

D-1 Analyze the meaning of consciousness in terms of alertness, sensory awareness, and self-awareness and debate whether various nonhuman animals have consciousness.

D-2 Differentiate the states of consciousness including waking, sleeping, dreaming, hypnosis, meditation and chemically altered states.

D-3 Compare and contrast several sleep disorders in terms of their symptoms and the type of sleep disturbed.

D-4 Differentiate the neurochemical mechanisms and effects on consciousness of hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, and opiates.

**GOAL E:**

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The student will demonstrate an understanding of emotion and motivation.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

E-1 Differentiate emotion and motivation, and analyze their relationship to each other.

E-2 Identify theories of and elements of emotion.

E-3 Define motivation and describe how it affects human behavior.

E-4 Associate aspects of emotional responding with activation of central and autonomic nervous system structures.

E-5 Describe the Facial Feedback Hypothesis as it relates to experiencing emotions.

**GOAL F:**

The student will demonstrate knowledge of learning processes.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

F-1 Describe cognitive development using relevant theories (Piaget, Vygotsky, etc.).

F-2 Describe and analyze the components of the three main learning theories (classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning).

F-3 Analyze the classic “Bobo Doll” study and other examples of observational learning, identifying the cognitive processes necessary to produce learning, and differentiating observational learning from operant conditioning.

F-4 Apply each of the learning theories to situations experienced in everyday life.

**GOAL G:**

The student will become familiar with memory processes.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

G-1 Describe the importance of attention to memory.

G-2 Explain the process of memory and information processing in terms of encoding, storage, and retrieval as well as sensory memory, working memory, and long-term memory.

G-3 Summarize the variables influencing retrieval from short- and long-term memory.

G-4 Explore strategies used to improve memory.

**GOAL H:**

The student will understand cognitive processes.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:
H-1 Summarize the four steps of problem solving.
H-2 Discuss the development and importance of language.
H-3 Analyze the building blocks of language, and debate whether nonhuman animals have language.
H-4 Define general intelligence.
H-5 Explain intelligence including multiple intelligences and the strengths and limitations of intelligence testing.

GOAL I:
The student will demonstrate an understanding of developmental psychology.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:
I-1 Construct a timeline of major physical, cognitive, and social/emotional changes that take place during the prenatal period, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.
I-2 Debate the research evidence for continuity versus discontinuity in the trajectories of physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development.
I-3 Describe the role of attachment throughout the lifespan.
I-4 Apply developmental theories to self by describing how one has developed according to a specific theory.

GOAL J:
The student will understand personality development.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:
J-1 Define personality and describe its development.
J-2 Differentiate several distinct aspects of “self” (self-concept, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-regulation) in terms of their content, sources, and implications.
J-3 Compare and contrast the psychodynamic, humanist, traits/Big Five and social-cognitive theories of personality in terms of the specific individual differences that are emphasized and how these differences are explained.
J-4 Debate the validity of self-report inventories versus projective tests as measures of personality, considering the strengths and limitations of each.

GOAL K:
The student will evaluate psychological concepts of social psychology.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:
K-1 Differentiate prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination and discuss how they impact social behavior.
K-2 Describe how groupthink applies to decision making.
K-3 Identify mechanisms of attraction and how they relate to relationship building.
K-4 Discuss ways in which the social media influence human behaviors.

GOAL L:
The student will become familiar with psychological disorders.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

L-1 Critique the general definition of psychological ‘disorder’ and its application in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)*.

L-2 Describe various psychological disorders including anxiety, depression and major psychoses.

L-3 Identify the impact of beliefs and values and culture on mental health.

L-4 Devise and explain examples of the relationship between psychological and physical health.

GOAL M:
The student will demonstrate an understanding of therapy.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

M-1 Identify the various types of mental health professionals and their role in the field of mental health.

M-2 Apply psychoanalytic, humanistic, behavioral, and cognitive psychotherapy techniques to an example case.

M-3 Debate various approaches to treatment of disorders including behavioral therapies, cognitive therapies, and medications.

M-4 Explain the biological mechanisms by which medication, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), psychosurgery, deep brain stimulation, and bio-neurofeedback are thought to alleviate symptoms of disorder.

GOAL N:
The student will understand how trauma-informed approaches influence the field of psychology.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

N-1 Describe the ACEs study.

N-2 Provide examples of real-life applications of trauma-informed approaches.
N-3 Describe the benefits of the application of basic trauma-informed approaches.

N-4 Apply a trauma-informed approach to understanding psychological concepts, such as memory, learning, and motivation.

GOAL O:

The student will demonstrate appropriate written and oral communication skills.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

O-1 Speak with confidence, clarity, and conciseness.

O-2 Research, prepare, and deliver professional presentations.

O-3 Write with clarity and precision using correct English grammar: mechanics (punctuation) and usage (sentence structure and vocabulary).

O-4 Present scholarly writings by correctly utilizing the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).