

San José State University Department of Psychology

PSYC 18 – Introduction to Research Methods, Section 04 Spring 2026 Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Dr. Cary S. Feria
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Office Hours:	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 1:30-2:00pm You are welcome to schedule an appointment with me for a different time, if you are unable to make these times.
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday, Thursday 10:30-11:45am
Classroom:	DMH 149A
Course Section:	04

Course Description

SJSU Course Catalog Description: Psychological research methods and design (experimental, quasi-experimental [correlational], and descriptive investigations) covering observation, instrumentation, and the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of research data as illustrated through a review of original research in a variety of the subdisciplines of psychology. Prerequisites: PSYC 1 and STAT 95.

Specific Course Description:

We all hear about research findings on the news and the internet every day. And as practitioners of psychology, we often hear that one therapy or medication is better than another. How can we know whether to believe these claims?

In PSYC 18, you will gain the tools to become a smart and critical consumer of research. In lecture, you will learn the strengths and limitations of different types of studies, problems that can arise, and how these problems affect the interpretation of results. You will also gain hands-on experience carrying out two of the major types of psychology studies and analyzing their results.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1 – Understand and distinguish the different types of research designs

CLO2 – Understand the vocabulary of various research designs

CLO3 – Understand and identify problems in research studies

CLO4 – Understand how to use design procedures to control for potential problems in research studies

CLO5 – Interpret and understand basic statistics in the context of a research study

CLO6 – Calculate basic statistics using SPSS software and write up basic statistical results

CLO7 – Read and understand a psychology research article and communicate the methods and results of the study to other people

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements...

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Required Materials

Textbook

McBride, D. (2023). *The Process of Research in Psychology* (5th Edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publishing. ISBN number: 978-1-07184-747-3

Software

Each student will need to install the SPSS software on a laptop that they can bring to class on specific days. SPSS is a statistical software package, which is available to SJSU students for free. We will be using SPSS on certain days during class, and all students need to bring a laptop with SPSS installed on those specific days of class. (SPSS won't work on chromebooks and most tablets.) SPSS can be found here:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/support/desktop/instructions.php>. Dr. Feria will provide more specifics about installing SPSS in the next few days.

Computer

Other than the specific days when we will be using SPSS, students are generally required to have access to an electronic device (laptop, tablet, chromebook, etc.), and access to the internet. SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students and Wi-Fi options on campus, which are described on [SJSU's Learn Anywhere](#) website. To borrow a laptop, go to the website of [SJSU's Information Technology Equipment Loan](#) program. If you believe that you may have difficulties with having a laptop to use for SPSS, difficulties with having a device to generally use for class work, or difficulties with accessing the internet, please let me know immediately!

Course Requirements and Assignments

Exams:

There will be 4 non-cumulative exams. The exams will be given in class on the class days listed on the schedule on p. 7 of this syllabus. Exams will cover material from lectures and from the textbook. (A tip: Information that is in both the book and lecture is most likely to appear, followed by information from lecture only, then information from the textbook only.) Exams will be mostly multiple-choice, but may also include short-answer questions. Exams are closed-book and closed-notes. A study guide will be given out before each exam.

If you miss Exam 1, 2, or 3 for any reason, you may take a make-up exam on Wednesday May 20 (SJSU's official Final Exam Make-Up Day) (time to be determined). If a student has a valid excused illness or emergency, for which the student provides documentation, they may be considered for taking a sooner make-up exam. (Dr. Feria reserves the right to decide if the excuse is valid.) If a student arrives late (by more than 5 minutes) to Exam 1, 2, or 3, they will not be able to take the exam at that time, and instead will be allowed to take a make-up exam on Wednesday May 20. However, for Exam 4 (the final exam) students must be present and on time, as Exam 4 cannot be made-up unless the student has a verified illness or emergency, for which the student provides documentation. (aligned with CLO 1, 2, 3, 4; PLO 2, 3, 5)

Homework Assignments:

There will be 4 homework assignments this semester. Over the course of the semester, you will perform research lab activities giving you hands-on experience with psychology research. These will involve performing research studies and analyzing their results. Each homework assignment is about these research lab activities, and thus requires participation in the research lab activities. The research lab activities will be partly completed during class, and partly completed outside of class time, depending on the activity. Attendance at class is highly recommended on days in which we will be working on the research lab activities – these days are marked with an asterisk on the course schedule on p. 7.

Your 1 lowest scoring homework assignment will not count toward your grade, so 3 homework assignments will count toward your grade. (This policy of dropping the lowest homework assignment helps in case students have a technical issue with a given research lab activity or have life events that interfere with doing a research lab activity, because if a student misses a research lab activity for any reason, then that homework assignment will be dropped from their grade.) Homework will be turned in by each student individually. You will lose 10% of the point value of the homework for each day it is late. If the assignment is returned to the class before you hand in your homework, you will receive no credit. (aligned with CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; PLO 2, 3, 4, 5)

Introduction Assignments:

You will be doing two short introduction assignments at the beginning of the semester. The first introduction assignment is to help me get to know the students better. For this, each student will answer a short survey, which will be turned in individually. The second introduction assignment is a discussion board to help students get to know their classmates. For this, each student will write 1 post on the discussion board introducing themselves, and comment on 2 of their classmates' posts. More specific instructions will follow. (aligned with PLO 5)

Grading Information

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Exam 1	105	21%
Exam 2	95	19%
Exam 3	100	20%
Exam 4	105	21%
Homework Assignments (total)	90	18%
3 x 30 points each		
<u>Introduction Assignments</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1%</u>
Total possible	500	100%

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A plus	97% or higher
A	93 to 96%
A minus	90 to 92%
B plus	87 to 89%
B	83 to 86%

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	77 to 79%
C	73 to 76%
C minus	70 to 72%
D plus	67 to 69%
D	63 to 66%
D minus	60 to 62%
F	59% or lower

Extra Credit Opportunity: Bonus Quizzes

There will be an optional bonus quiz at the end of some class periods. The bonus quizzes are designed to help you and me evaluate your progress on understanding the material. They may cover any material from class or the book. Each bonus quiz will contain 3 questions. If you get at least 2 of the questions correct, you will receive 1 bonus point!

Classroom Protocol

Getting Help

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, please come to my office hours, and I will do my best to help you. If you are unable to come to my office hour times, you can contact me to make an appointment for a different time. If you have just a short question, you also can send it to me by e-mail.

Canvas

Canvas is our course website, and many course materials will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. Please make sure that the email address you have listed in Canvas is the one you usually use, so that you will receive Canvas Announcements directly to your email. Information on how to use Canvas is found here <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/how-tos/canvas/index.php>.

Attendance

If you are absent, you should consult a classmate to get the lecture notes and to find out about any announcements made in class.

Class Courtesy

Cell phones are not permitted in class. Please turn off your cell phone and put it away in your backpack before the beginning of class.

Posting Materials Online, Artificial Intelligence, Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty

Students are not allowed to post any materials on CourseHero or any other website or app. This applies to my materials and also to students' answers on assignments. Thus, students are not allowed to post my quiz questions, my powerpoint slides, etc. And students are not allowed to post their answers to a quiz, their homework assignment that they wrote, etc. Students are also not allowed to utilize a material that another student had posted on a website or app.

Students are not allowed to use writing generated by ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) or computer program. And students are not allowed to cheat, plagiarize, or commit academic dishonesty by any other method.

Note

The procedures and schedule in this course syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Prohibition of Students Recording the Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor.

This university policy (S12--7) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/resources/academic-calendars/) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/resources/academic-calendars/>. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Technology Requirements

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet). SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable Wi-Fi during tests. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible or at the latest one week before the test date to determine an alternative. See SJSU's Learn Anywhere website for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](https://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/PD_1997-03.pdf) at https://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

University Policies

The [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), Course Syllabi (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus: “Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

[University policy S17-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf>) states that “Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.”

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

PSYC 18 – Introduction to Research Methods, Section 04, Spring 2026

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Reading due dates and topic dates are approximate. I will announce any changes of exam or assignment due dates in Canvas.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
1	Thu. 1/22	introduction to course		
2	Tue. 1/27	psychology as a science	Ch. 1	Intro Survey
	Thu. 1/29	reliability, validity & variables	Ch. 4	Intro Disc. Post
3	Tue. 2/3	reliability, validity & variables	Ch. 5 (p.130-136)	Intro Disc. Comments
	Thu. 2/5	reliability, validity & variables		
4	Tue. 2/10	SPSS statistics basics (lab) *	Ch. 7 (review)	
	Thu. 2/12	observational designs		
5	Tue. 2/17	intro to experimental designs		
	Thu. 2/19	intro to experimental designs		
6	Tue. 2/24	Exam 1		
	Thu. 2/26	survey research	Ch. 10	
7	Tue. 3/3	correlational designs	Ch. 11	
	Thu. 3/5	survey study (lab) *		
8	Tue. 3/10	correlational designs		
	Thu. 3/12	Exam 2		
9	Tue. 3/17	survey SPSS analysis day 1 (lab) *		HW 1
	Thu. 3/19	survey SPSS analysis day 2 (lab) *		
10	Tue. 3/24	validity & research strategies	Ch. 5 (p.137-153)	
	Thu. 3/26	validity & research strategies		HW 2
11	Tue. 3/31	<i>Spring Break -- No Class</i>		
	Thu. 4/2	<i>Spring Break -- No Class</i>		
12	Tue. 4/7	validity & research strategies		
	Thu. 4/9	ethics	Ch. 3	
13	Tue. 4/14	Exam 3		
	Thu. 4/16	between-subjects experiments	Ch. 12	
14	Tue. 4/21	exper. study (lab), within-subjects		
	Thu. 4/23	exper. study (lab), within-subjects		
15	Tue. 4/28	exper. SPSS analysis day 1 (lab) *		
	Thu. 4/30	exper. SPSS analysis day 2 (lab) *		HW 3
16	Tue. 5/5	within-subjects		
	Thu. 5/7	factorial designs	Ch. 13	HW 4
finals wk	Thu. 5/14	Exam 4 (10:45am)		

* Class days that are marked with an asterisk are days when we will be working on research lab activities. Attendance at class is highly recommended on the days that are marked with an asterisk.