



Syllabus for  
PSYC 495-WS1  
*Psychology of Humor* – Fully Online  
Department of Psychology  
Winter Term,  
12/16/24 – 1/5/25

### **About the Instructor**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (Central time) via Zoom or by appointment:

Zoom Link for Office Hours: <https://siue.zoom.us/j/98481579532>

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to the *Psychology of Humor*! I'm very excited to teach this class and look forward to working with each of you.

### **Bio**

I have been a faculty member in the SIUE Psychology Department since 2004 and teach undergraduate and graduate courses. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio and received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Cincinnati. I received my Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in clinical psychology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

### **Communicating with the instructor**

Anytime you have questions or want to talk about the course material, feel free to email me at [dsegris@siue.edu](mailto:dsegris@siue.edu) And if you'd like to meet to talk over Zoom but are not able to meet during my office hours, email me with days/times that you're available and we can arrange a time to meet.

### **About the Course**

This is a 3-credit hour course. This course will focus on psychological theories and research about humor.

### **Prerequisite knowledge**

- PSYC 111 is a prerequisite for this course

### **Course goals and objectives**

It is my goal that by the completion of this course you will have demonstrated:

- increased knowledge of the theories used to conceptualize humor
- increased knowledge about psychological perspectives on humor
- an understanding of the physiological processes associated with humor
- increased awareness of the application of humor to workplace and educational settings
- the ability to design a study focused on humor

## Course textbook and readings

- readings as assigned (provided on Blackboard)

## Course Requirements

### Course activities/assessments

Each week the course will focus on topics related to humor. On a weekly basis you will be expected to read the assigned readings, watch lectures, submit Discussion posts/responses, and take a quiz. Throughout the semester you will take two exams. At the conclusion of the course, you will turn in a final paper (assignment is described below).

### Submitting work

All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard.

### Online class behavior

- **Reflect** before you post an emotional response and make sure that what you post is professional. Communicate as if your comments are printed in a newspaper.
- **Communicate** effectively. Do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ???, etc.).
- **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your posts in order to build a strong classroom community.
- **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.
- **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas and the course content but do so in positive ways. It's fine to disagree, but when done politely you stimulate and encourage helpful discussion, and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.
- **Keep the conversation on the topic.** Online dialogue is like a conversation. If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add to it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.

### Technology requirements and capabilities

Technical requirements for students can be found in this [ITS KnowledgeBase article](#). Additional resources for learning with technology can be found on the [Online at SIUE site](#).

### Technical Support

Contact ITS at [618-650-5500](tel:618-650-5500) or at [help@siue.edu](mailto:help@siue.edu) with any technical concerns. You can also check the functionality of University systems, including Blackboard, at the [ITS System Status page](#), or search the [ITS KnowledgeBase](#) for various how-to and troubleshooting guides. Additional guidance for taking online courses can be found on the [Online at SIUE site](#).

### Technology Privacy Information

We will be using Blackboard in this course. View the [Anthology Blackboard Privacy Statement](#) to review how your data is being used and stored.

## University Policies and Information

University policies and guidance that address teaching, learning, and student support services are available at:

<https://kb.siue.edu/132378> Students are encouraged to visit this resource site for current information on:

- Regular and Substantive Interaction
- Recordings of Class Content
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Pregnancy and Newly Parenting Policy
- Services for Students Needing Accommodations (ACCESS)
- Academic and Other Student Services (Library, Academic Success, Tutoring, etc.)
- Cougar Care
- Student Success Coaches

## Course Grades

Your course grade will be based on your combined performance on quizzes, exams, Discussion posts/responses, and a reflection paper. All assignments should be turned in via Blackboard.

- **Syllabus Quiz**
  - During the first week of the course there will be a 10-question syllabus quiz worth 10 points. You may use your syllabus when taking the quiz. Once you have started the quiz you will be given one hour to complete it.
- **Weekly Quizzes**
  - There will be a multiple-choice quiz worth 5 points each week that will focus only on that week's material. You may take each quiz up to two times and only your highest score will count toward your grade. You may use your notes, course handouts, and readings while you take the quizzes. Once you have started a quiz you will be given 45 minutes to complete it.
- **Exams**
  - There will be two multiple-choice exams worth 30 points each. You may use your notes, course handouts, and readings while you take the exam. Once you have started an exam you will be given 90 minutes to complete it.
- **Discussion Posts**
  - An important component of this course involves engaging with the material by discussing specific topics with your classmates. During the course you will be asked to create Discussion posts in response to specific prompts. The purpose of these posts is for you to demonstrate and share your knowledge of specific course topics and to communicate your understanding, opinions, and experiences to your classmates.
- **Discussion Responses**
  - You will also be asked to respond to students' Discussion posts - two responses for each of the five Discussion posts during the course.

Your discussion board posts and responses will be graded using the scale/rubric below:

- **0 points:** No post/reply is made or post/reply is not made in a timely way; post/reply uses offensive language
- **2-4 points (post)/1 -2 points (response):** Post/response reflects minimal effort and/or does not show thoughtful consideration
- **5-7 points (post)/3 points (response):** Post/response is adequate in terms of content/length.
- **8-10 points (post)/4-5 points (response):** Post/response is a very thoughtful and meaningful contribution to the discussion.

- **Final Paper**

- For this paper you will design a research study in which humor is one of the variables of interest. **You will not actually conduct the study or collect data for this assignment.** Your paper should include the following sections:
  - **Research Question:** describe the specific question your study would answer (e.g., *What is the relationship between coping humor and optimism? What is the effect of humor on memory for facts? What is the effect of group size on laughter?*). The study you design should not be the same as one we have covered in this class, either through lectures or through readings. However, your study can involve a significant modification or extension of one of those studies. Your study should involve at least two variables, one of which must be related to humor.
  - **Article Summaries:** summarize two full-text articles that relate to your research question. For this portion of the paper, you will locate two peer-reviewed journal articles (using resources such as Google Scholar or PSYC Info) that relate to your research question or one of the variables in your study. Provide a brief summary of each article in your own words. In your summary of each article, be sure to include the following:
    - describe the research question the researcher were trying to answer
    - describe the sample/participants used in the study
    - describe the method – what participants were asked to do in the study
    - briefly describe the results of the study (you don't need to provide statistics) and the meaning/implications of those results. You can limit your focus to the results that are relevant to your study/variables
    - submit full-text copies of both articles when you submit your paper on Blackboard.
  - **Method:** describe what participants will do in your study – be as specific as possible.
  - **Hypothesis:** describe what you think would happen if you were to conduct your study and why you think you would get those results
- The paper should be double-spaced and at least 2 pages in length. The paper should have 1-inch margins and use an 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.
- Citations and references should be formatted using APA style. There are a variety of APA style resources available online, including: <https://tinyurl.com/as8rzueh>

Your Reflection will be graded using the scale/rubric below:

- **0 points:** no paper is turned in; paper contains plagiarism
- **18 points or less:** paper reflects minimal effort; paper is 1 page or less
- **19-23 points:** paper shows some thoughtful consideration; paper is less than 2.5 pages; significant grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors
- **24 points-265 points:** paper shows thoughtful reflection; some grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors
- **27-30 points:** paper is very well written and demonstrates a very thoughtful and insightful reflection

## Grading Scale

- Syllabus Quiz 10 points
- Weekly Quiz 15 points (5 points per quiz)
- Exams 60 points (30 points per exam)
- Introduction Post 5 points
- Discussion Posts 30 points (10 points per post)
- Discussion Responses 30 points (5 points per response)
- Final Paper 30 points

### **FINAL COURSE GRADE**

**A: 162 – 180 points**

**B: 144 – 161 points**

**C: 126 – 143 points**

**D: 108 – 125 points**

**F: < 108 points**

## Late or Missed Assignments

Late assignments will typically not be accepted. If they are accepted, they will drop one letter grade for each day the assignment is late. Exceptions may be made in cases of illness or emergency – but for that to happen the student must contact the instructor and discuss the situation with him as soon as possible.

## Recordings of Course Content

Faculty recordings of lectures and/or other course materials are meant to facilitate student learning and to help facilitate a student catching up who has missed class due to illness or quarantine. As such, students are reminded that the recording, as well as replicating or sharing of any course content and/or course materials without the express permission of the instructor of record, is not permitted, and may be considered a violation of the University's Student Conduct Code (3C1), linked here: <https://www.siu.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>.

## Course Schedule

### Subject to change notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, monitor your email, and review the Blackboard site for any announcements regarding changes in course material, assignments, and/or due dates.

WEEK 1 (12/16-12/22)				
MODULE	TOPIC	WATCH	READ	ASSIGNMENTS
Module 1	Definitions and Forms of Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions and Forms of Humor</li> </ul>	<i>Three decades investigating humor and laughter: An interview with Professor Rod Martin</i>  <i>The science of humor is no laughing matter</i>	Syllabus Quiz DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/17
Module 2	Early Theories of Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Theories of Humor</li> </ul>		Introduction Post DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/17
Module 3	Contemporary Theories of Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contemporary Theories of Humor</li> </ul>		Quiz for Week 1 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/20  Discussion Board Post for Week 1 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/19  Discussion Board Responses for Week 1 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/22
Module 4	Culture and Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture and Humor</li> </ul>	<i>To be or not to be</i>  <i>humorous? Cross cultural perspectives on humor</i>  <i>An intergroup investigation of disparaging humor</i>	Exam 1 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/22
Module 5	Social Psychology and Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Psychology and Humor</li> </ul>		

WEEK 2 (12/23-12/29)				
MODULE	TOPIC	WATCH	READ	ASSIGNMENTS
Module 6	Cognitive Psychology and Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive Psychology and Humor</li> </ul>	<i>Finding comfort in a joke: Consolatory effects of humor through cognitive distraction</i>	Quiz for Week 2 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/27
Module 7	Personality and Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personality and Humor</li> </ul>	<i>Personality, humor styles and happiness: Happy people have positive humor styles</i>	Discussion Board Post for Week 2 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/26
Module 8	The Physiology of Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Physiology of Humor</li> </ul>	<i>Perceptions of Duchenne and non-Duchenne smiles: A meta-analysis</i>	Discussion Board Responses for Week 2 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 12/29
Module 9	Health and Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and Humor</li> </ul>	<i>The use of humor in palliative care: A systematic literature review</i>	
WEEK 3 (12/30-1/5)				
MODULE	TOPIC	WATCH	READ	ASSIGNMENTS
Module 10	Humor in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humor in the Workplace</li> </ul>	<i>A review of humor in educational settings: Four decades of research</i>	Quiz for Week 3 DUE: by 11:59 on 1/3
Module 11	Humor in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humor in Education</li> </ul>	<i>Funny business: Using humor for good in the workplace</i>	Discussion Board Post for Week 3 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 1/2
Module 12	The Measurement of Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Measurement of Humor</li> </ul>		Discussion Board Responses for Week 3 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 1/5
				Exam 2 DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 1/5
				Final Paper DUE: by 11:59 p.m. on 1/2

