

# Current Issues Capstone

## PSYC 190

Fall 2026 Section 04 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/19/2026 to 12/07/2026 Modified 08/18/2026

### Contact Information

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**Instructor:** Dr. Désia Bacon

**Name Pronunciation:** Day-sha Bay-cun

**Email:** [desia.bacon@sjsu.edu](mailto:desia.bacon@sjsu.edu)

**Office:** Dudley Moorhead Hall, Room 323

**Phone:** 408-924-5640

**Pronouns:** she/her

**Office Hours (beginning August 25th; DMH, 323):** Tuesdays 1:00 - 2:00PM and Thursdays 7:30 - 8:30AM.  
Available via Zoom upon request.

I am looking forward to meeting each of you over the course of the semester and to helping you with questions about course-related material. Please visit my office hours even if you do not have a specific question – it is always helpful to introduce yourself and have a chance to talk with professors. I also keep snacks in the office, so stop by when in DMH to say hi and grab a quick snack.

### Course Information

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**Class Days/Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:15AM

**Classroom:** Hugh Gillis Hall, Room 217

**Canvas Course:** <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1633380/>

**Course Description**

In an age of fake-news and an increasing presence of artificial intelligence, critical thinking and the ability to distinguish science from pseudoscience are more important than ever. This course is a critical investigation into what differentiates scientific and pseudoscientific claims, what cognitive biases are involved in pseudoscientific thinking, and how we can utilize the scientific method to investigate phenomena and to identify evidence-based claims, especially those made in psychology. Students will develop critical-thinking skills applicable to real-world situations beyond the classroom, learn to identify cognitive biases and logical fallacies, and learn to critically evaluate information across varied sources.

The course includes discussion of a wide range of topics including conspiracy theories, phrenology, ESP, horoscopes, misinformation, mind-control, psychic readings, and superstitions, and will incorporate multiple perspectives, as well as the cultural significance of various practices into the discussion. Students will also be engaging with social media and AI to learn how to identify and evaluate information from different sources.

## Course Description and Requisites

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Integrative survey of current issues in psychology, how they developed and likely future directions. Completion of the research methods requirement prior to enrollment in this course is recommended.

Prerequisite: PSYC 100W and senior standing.

Co/Prerequisite: PSYC 118 or PSYC 120

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

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### Contacting me

Your best contact method, outside of class, is going to be via Canvas message. Professors get a lot of emails, but Canvas is special because only our course enrolled students can access us that way - which means you! Please, if you really want me to see something, message me on Canvas. You'll get the quickest response!

If you do decide to email me, to help me respond to student questions and concerns as quickly and thoroughly as possible, please adhere to the following email policy:

1. Please include PSYC-190, your class meeting time, and the message/email topic in the subject line, e.g., "Psyc 190, 10:30A, Selling group project"
2. Please understand that I will do my best to reply to your communications (via Canvas message or email) within 24 business hours [Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM]; however, I do not guarantee a response on the weekend or on a holiday. That means that if you message or email me on Friday at 3PM, you may not get a response until Monday or Tuesday (or even Wednesday!). Please make note of deadlines and plan accordingly.

### Class Citizenship

I expect you to be attentive in class, participate in discussions and assigned pairs/groups, and limit other distractions.

Please place cell phones on silent during class unless there is an emergent reason (e.g., you need to have calls from your childcare provider ring through). If you must make or answer a call, please excuse yourself from class.

Please do not browse the web during class, as it is distracting to both you and peers.

Most importantly, please be respectful of your classmates' opinions; we are all learning and growing together, and we are here to critique ideas, not each other.

Attendance is expected for each class in order to help you get the most out of the course. If you do not attend classes, you will miss lectures, activities, and discussions that will help you better understand the material that will be necessary to help you demonstrate your knowledge of course materials on your class assignments and projects, as well as activities that will impact your course grade.

Please use your best judgement when posting on Canvas and interacting in the classroom. I encourage your questions, comments, and sharing, but try to monitor yourself. We want to cultivate a community where we treat others with fairness and respect.

We are all beholden to the SJSU expectations for treating one and other with respect and dignity. Please make sure you maintain being collegial and kind, and reach out to me with any concerns, and I will do my best to ensure we maintain a safe and effective learning environment. If you experience distressing interactions in the course, whether in person or online, or receive a distressing message from someone else in the course, that is the one time you are allowed to take a screenshot of that message or content and reach out to the appropriate resource, whether that is me or the appropriate authority dependent on the messaging. Let's keep this a safe and conducive learning environment!

### **Recording of Class Lectures**

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictates that you notify someone when you are recording them, and university policy dictates needing permission to do so for course materials. You may not make photographic, audio, or video recordings of this class, including from the lectures I give and any content I post for you and the content others post. The materials in this class can be used for your private study purposes only. They should not be posted online in any format outside of our course Canvas. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor. You may not publicly share or upload instructor-generated material for this course such as lectures, exam questions, classroom activities, or discussion material. You may not share other students' discussion material outside of the classroom or Canvas environment.

### **Conflicts with class**

Any student with a conflict between an academic requirement in this course and any religious observance will be given an alternative means of meeting the academic requirement, with two qualifications:

1. students must make requests to the instructor in writing by the semester Add deadline;

2. reasonable limits will be set on the total number of days claimed by any one student.

If you have to miss a class for any excused reason (e.g., university-sponsored athletics, unforeseeable medical event), please let me know ahead of time, or when is reasonably possible (e.g., if you have a religious observance or planned athletics event, tell me at the beginning of the semester; however, I do not need you to email me from the Emergency Room, but once you are back home, safe, and getting better is fine!).

### **Make-up assignments (TL;DR - case by case basis)**

If you have to miss a few classes, please make an appointment with me (Dr. Bacon) so that we can discuss your progress in the course and your reasons for not attending class.

Make-up assignments will be discussed on a case-by-case basis and formatting is at the discretion of the instructor, and may not be in the same format of the original assignment. Make up assignments may not be made available if there is not an excused absence.

### **Child Care**

Parenting or kinship care should not restrict your access to class. If there is an emergency that causes an immediate change to your childcare plans for that day, you are invited to bring your child/sibling to class, provided that the child does not prove a disruption to the others in the room, the child is not sick, and we are within the fire code allowance for the room. Please be prepared to step out with your child/sibling if they begin to become a distraction.

Please also note that this does not include when a child is sick - please do not bring a sick child to class, just as I ask that you do not come to class sick. If you know in advance that a child is coming, please let me know and I would be happy to bring a few children's books from my office for them to read.

### **Tips for success**

1. I encourage you to **attend and participate in every class**, as well as the Canvas community! A classroom is a community of learners, and attendance and engagement will allow you to better understand the readings, explore different perspectives, thoughtfully formulate questions and answers, and get the most out of what each community member has to offer. On Canvas, there are discussion boards where you can request slides from me, notes from classmates, ask questions, and can share things from the news, YouTube, TikTok, etc. that you find relevant to the course content. Active engagement will allow you to better understand the readings, explore different perspectives, thoughtfully formulate questions and answers, and get the most out of what each community member has to offer.
2. **Read** the assigned readings before the class lecture on the topic and be sure to fully read them again before the class discussion on the topic. The lecture will help you gain a better framework on a topic, and then you can follow-up what you learned in lecture by reading the more detailed coverage in the text. The ideal strategy is to *at minimum* skim the reading before the first class, attend class, and then read the text carefully soon after lecture and complete your pre-discussion questions.
3. Please use your best judgement when speaking in class. I encourage your questions and comments, but try to monitor yourself if you find that you are commenting very frequently; given the size of the

class, we must work together to make sure that everyone who wants to speak gets a turn. You are always welcome to write down your questions for us to discuss during office hours, or chat with me before and after class!

4. Do your best to **manage your time** by getting started on your assignments and your research project early. Deadlines can sometimes sneak up on us, but by beginning early, you will be able to complete the assignment in smaller increments that are less overwhelming. Starting earlier will also give you plenty of time to reach out to me about any questions related to the rubric or your selection of content for the assignment prompt. Please be mindful of my 24 hour Monday through Friday response policy, and plan accordingly.
5. Approach the course material with an open mind and bring your unique perspective. We all are coming in with different levels of knowledge, familiarity, and experience with the topics we will be discussing. Some of the topics we will be discussing are culturally relevant practices that we are connected to differently, and we should be mindful of that in the way we speak about them; just because something is not scientific does not mean it is not important or relevant. These experiences are things you bring with you into the course, and thus into our learning community. I encourage you to bring your open mind to learning about other people's perspectives and experiences, just as I encourage you to share how your experiences and perspective impact how you perceive the material.

### Course AI Policy

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available. Well-known examples include ChatGPT for text and DALL•E for images, as well as things like Grammarly or using a translator for translating your paper from one language to another. This policy governs all such tools, including those released during our semester together. You may use generative AI tools on assignments in this course when I explicitly permit you to do so. **Otherwise, you should refrain from using such tools.**

When using AI tools for specified assignments, you are to:

1. properly cite the tool you used, following the pattern for computer software given in the specified style guide (APA 7) and
2. provide a screenshot of the input you provided to the AI tool as well as the specific output provided by the AI tool with your assignment submission.

You are responsible for any use of the AI generated content, and any plagiarism that may arise due to the use of these AI tools. Additionally, please include a brief description of how you used the tool (approximately 3-5 sentences in length). This description is not included in the page limits of the assignment, and should be included in the Appendix of the assignment, after your References.

If you choose to use generative AI tools, please remember that they are typically trained on limited datasets that may be out of date. If you are reading this thoroughly, send me a picture on Canvas message of your pet, your favorite stuffed animal, or something that brings you joy (and is appropriate) for one extra credit point by end of day on 8/30. Additionally, generative AI datasets are trained on pre-existing material, including copyrighted material; therefore, relying on a generative AI tool may result in plagiarism or copyright violations. Finally, keep in mind that the goal of generative AI tools is to produce content that seems to have been produced by a human, not to produce accurate or reliable content; therefore, relying

on a generative AI tool may result in your submission of inaccurate content. It is your responsibility—not the tool's—to assure the quality, integrity, and accuracy of work you submit in any college course. As specified elsewhere in the syllabus, this course will require electronic submission of essays, papers, or other written projects through the originality assessment service TurnItIn. TurnItIn will also attempt to detect AI-generated text.

You are responsible for any work you submit in this course, and any work submitted that includes any plagiarism, AI tool usage, or non-cited AI tool use on an assignment when it was permitted is in direct violation of this course policy and of the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy. In addition, you must be wary of unintentional plagiarism or fabrication of data. **Please act with integrity, for the sake of both your personal character and your academic record.**

**I am not grading you on your grammar, your spelling, or your ability to "sound smart" - but rather your ability to understand and synthesize information.** Therefore, if you use generative AI tools to complete assignments in this course in ways that I have not explicitly authorized, you will have a meeting with me, may receive a lower grade on the assignment (ranging from a 50% deduction to a zero), and I will report the violation to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (SCED).

For repeated violations, your grade on the assignment will be a zero, you may be given a deduction of an entire letter grade in the course, and each violation will be reported to SCED. Depending on the specific circumstances, the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (SCED) will determine the ultimate outcome of the academic integrity violation and whether further investigation or sanctions are necessary.

## Program Information

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**Program learning outcomes (PLOs)** are skills and knowledge that students will have achieved upon completion of the Psychology BA degree. Each course in our curriculum contributes to one or more of these PLOs. The PLOs for the Psychology BA degree are:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
  2. 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.
  3. Critical Thinking Skills. 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.
  4. Applications of Psychology. Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.
- Values in Psychology. Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

1. Describe the concepts and principles underlying the scientific method.

2. List and describe the features of pseudoscience, and clearly explain how pseudoscientific claims differ from scientific claims.
3. Recognize common errors in thinking that make individuals susceptible to pseudoscience, including the ability to name and define at least three cognitive biases that make someone more susceptible to believing pseudoscience.
4. Analyze the evidence for and against claims presented to determine if they are grounded in science or pseudoscience.
5. Effectively present and defend ideas through written and verbal presentation, both individually and collaboratively.
6. Evaluate information presented in popular science and on social media for pop-psychology to determine if it is grounded in psychological science or pseudoscience.

## Course Materials

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### **Textbook**

For this course we will be using Investigating Pop Psychology: Pseudoscience, Fringe Science, and Controversies (Hupp & Wiseman (Eds.), 2023; ISBN 9781003107798). You may use whatever format of the course textbook you prefer. The MLK Library has an eBook version that you have access to as an SJSU student as long as you are logged into your one.SJSU account. There you can read the book online or download it by chapter. You have a page limit per day for downloads, so I recommend you go on once per day for the first week or two to download a chapter, so you have your full book to access whenever you need it.

### **Other Readings**

Additional materials will be posted on the course Canvas page. This additional material may either be part of an in class assignment, project, an extra credit opportunity, or may provide more optional information or context for material discussed in the text or during lecture. All additional materials and readings will be accessible on the course Canvas page.

### **Other technology requirements / equipment / material**

In this course, you will need access to the textbook and regular access to a computer/tablet with internet access and a word processor to complete assignments and assignments on the Canvas page for the course. You will occasionally need to bring an electronic device with wi-fi access to class to complete web-based activities in groups; you will be given warning ahead of time. Only 1 group member will be required to have one of these devices, and a tablet or cell phone will be fine for these tasks.

Please come prepared with paper and something to write with every class for in class activities and submissions of daily questions/activities.

Please come prepared to class with whatever materials you personally need to be successful. Note taking is recommended, and you are welcome to bring a computer, tablet, or paper and a writing utensil to do so.



If you have questions about other note taking methods, please let me know and we can discuss what may work for you.

## University Resources for Students

### Library Liaison

The SJSU library has a librarian who specializes in psychology (and other social sciences), and this librarian can serve as a very valuable resource for helping you to develop research ideas and locating appropriate research materials. The library also has an abundance of resources for doing psychology research.

#### Psychology Librarian:

Lauren DeCelle, [lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu](mailto:lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu>)

### Student Technology Resources

Computer labs and other resources for student use are available in:

- Associated Students Print & Technology Center (<https://www.sjsu.edu/as/departments/print-shop/index.php> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/as/departments/print-shop/index.php>)) in the Student Union (East Wing 2nd floor Suite 2600) where you can go for printing (not necessarily free)
- Student Computing Services (<https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services> (<https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services>)) where SJSU students can borrow laptops, iPads, hotspots, and more for free with a current Tower Card. Located on the 1st floor of the King Library at the Circulation Desk. All SCS equipment loans (except semester-long laptops and tablets) are done in-person and are on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Computers at the Martin Luther King Library (<https://www.sjpl.org/sjaccess> (<https://www.sjpl.org/sjaccess>)) for the public at large (which still includes you!) where you can borrow a Chromebook, iPad, or laptop, get tech support, and take free tech courses. You can also get your SJPL library card free while you're there!
- Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for free student checkout with your Tower Card from Collaboration & Academic Technology Services (<https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/classroom-tech/equipment-loaning/> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/classroom-tech/equipment-loaning/>)) located in the IRC Building. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide, and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens, and monitors.

### Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center offers a variety of free resources to help students become better writers. The center offers writing resources, workshops, and one-on-one and small-group tutoring sessions. Services support writing for students in all disciplines and at all levels. The SJSU Writing Center has two in-person



locations, Clark Hall, Suite 126 and MLK Library, 2nd floor. Workshops and tutoring are also available through online platforms.

Visit the Writing Center (<https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>)) website to make an appointment, or to use the many resources available online. This is an amazing resource to help you with grammar, APA style writing, writing personal statements for scholarships or graduate school applications, writing professional emails, and everything in between. Please utilize this resource!

### **Mental Health and Basic Needs**

You can access a host of Mental Health and Basic Needs Resources on the Psychology Department website by going to: <https://www.sjsu.edu/psych/resources/mental-health-and-basic-needs.php> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/psych/resources/mental-health-and-basic-needs.php>)

The page has resources ranging from information for local [Bay Area], state, and national resources for mental health and basic needs, including warmlines and crisis hotlines, as well as campus affinity group resources, local clinics, links to free guided meditations in multiple languages, and more. If you ever encounter an issue with the page, please contact Dr. Désia Bacon at [desia.bacon@sjsu.edu](mailto:desia.bacon@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:desia.bacon@sjsu.edu>)

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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“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.”

**In-class daily questions (1pt x 28 = 28 points):** There will be daily questions in class that you will be expected to submit for a grade. These questions may be based on a video you will be responding to, related to the textbook chapter assigned, a reflection question posed by the instructor, or some other aspect of the course material. These questions will be due at the time they are assigned in class. The activity question may occur at any time during the class period; therefore, coming late to class and missing the activity will result in you having missed the opportunity to complete the activity. Note: there are a total of 29 daily question activities, with one being dropped over the course of the semester.

**Class Activities (3pt x 10 = 30 points):** Each week students will complete an a class activity that is done individually or together with classmates during class time. You will pass the activity if you follow the directions and write in complete sentences in your responses. No bullet point lists unless the instructor specifies that in the instructions. Note: there are a total of 12 on the calendar; 2 are dropped over the course of the semester.

**Home Activities (3pt x 2= 6 points):** Occasionally, students will complete a home-based activity that is done individually related to what we are doing in class. You will pass the activity if you follow the directions and write in complete sentences in your responses. No bullet point lists unless the instructor specifies that in the instructions.

**Weekly discussion board questions (1pt x 10 = 10 points):** Submit 2-3 questions to the pre-designated Canvas discussion board about the reading(s) 24 hours prior to the start of the activity and discussion-based class. Questions will be used to guide that week's discussion. Questions should reference that week's assigned readings. An example posting will be available for you on Canvas at the top of each week's discussion post.

**Weekly post-class self-reflections (4pt x 12 = 48 points):** Each week, students will submit a 250- to 500-word [roughly 1 to 2-double-spaced page] self-reflection on how that week's class readings, lecture, activity, and discussion impacted their knowledge of the topic, changed their perspective, and furthered their learning. This should (a) summarize the topic/concept being discussed, (b) discuss what the student found interesting, surprising, or novel about this topic (e.g., what it added to your existing knowledge about horoscopes), (c) discuss a specific hypothetical example of how this concept, knowledge, or topic could be relevant to the student's life outside of the classroom setting, whether in their future career, current workplace, or in their life generally. A full rubric will be provided on Canvas.

**Sell us on pseudoscience group project (30 points):** Come up with a product to cure what ails us - you are going to become what some may call a "snake oil salesman." You can be as silly as you would like, or as serious as you would like with your product; but you have to be able to sell it using information you have learned in the course. You are welcome to use AI in this specific project to aid you in coming up with a name for your product, help you design an ad for this product, and even come up with an image of what your product looks like for your marketing materials.

Your group will submit your materials to an assignment on Canvas, as well as a write up about your project, detailing what techniques you used to try to sell your product. Your group will be presenting your product to the class using an advertisement that your group has created. The class is then going to be trying to identify the techniques your group used to try to sell your product. Your product will be graded on its originality, creativity, your ads completeness, following the full rubric, and including at least 4 techniques from the course. A full rubric will be provided on Canvas, including guidelines from Dr. Bacon on how to appropriately utilize, and cite your usage of, AI for this project.

**Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project (50 total points - broken into smaller increments; 30 points are your final exam):** For this project, you are going to explore a potentially pseudoscientific topic or belief that we are not discussing as a primary topic during the course of this semester. You are tasked with learning more about the topic, critically analyzing the claims, learning more about those that do believe in

the claims, and presenting the information in a clear manner. It will be up to you to determine whether you believe that your topic is actually pseudoscience. You are able to submit your project in a number of different formats, including as a video, a podcast, a blogpost, and more - which will be discussed in class. There will be check-in assignments to scaffold your success on the final assignment throughout the semester. A full rubric will be provided on Canvas, with the specific dates of the check in assignments and details. Dr. Bacon will provide you with a list of potential topics, though if you have a different one in mind, please check with your instructor for approval.

### Final Examination or Evaluation

"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."

Your final exam in this course will be your final submission of your Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project. This portion is worth 30 out of 50 of the total points of the assignment. The final submission is due by the end of our university assigned final exam time slot, due Thursday December 10th, by 12:45 PM pacific time, as noted on the course schedule later in this syllabus. A final submitted more than 5 minutes late, up to 24 hours late, will get an automatic 50% total value deduction on the grade. That means the highest grade you can earn will be a 15 out of 30. No submissions will be accepted 24 hours after the original deadline except in extreme circumstances, which are to be determined at the instructor's discretion and per university policies.

For a total of 202 points.

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Honor Code

(Reference: Academic Integrity Policy at: <https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/S26-10%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/S26-10%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>) )

In order to ensure fairness and have a single standard of representing knowledge acquired, all students participating in SJSU courses must agree to abide by the following code of conduct.

1. My work will be my own in this course, except where the assignment is to work in groups or teams.
2. I will not give any answers for individually graded assignments to anyone else, or share assignments on the internet via course tutoring websites.
3. I will not engage in any other activities that will misrepresent my own work or improve my results falsely. I will not engage in any activities that will misrepresent others' work.
4. I will not download, save, or otherwise retain materials from the course for anything but personal use.

Grades will be based on In-class daily questions (1pt x 28 = 28 points), Class Activities (3pt x 10 = 30 points), Home Activities (3pt x 2 = 6 points), Weekly discussion board questions (1pt x 10 = 10 points), Weekly post-class self-reflections (4pt x 12 = 48 points), Sell us on pseudoscience group project (30 points), and Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project (50 total points - broken into smaller increments; 30 points are your final exam) for a total of 202 points. There will be occasional extra credit opportunities.

### **Make-up policy**

The only acceptable reason for missing an in-class activity or daily question is illness or an excused absence due to a University-sponsored activity (i.e., athletics). Absences due to any other reason will be evaluated for make-up opportunities on a case-by-case basis, so please contact the instructor. If you will be absent due to a previously discussed religious observance or previously discussed University-sponsored event, we will work out a plan for you to do the in-class activity and daily question in a way that accommodates both of our schedules. Make-up activities are formatted at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Late work policy**

Please plan ahead and know that the due date is not the do date! An assignment is considered "late" anytime it is submitted after the assigned deadline. I have a 5-minute grace period for the initial submission deadline, since sometimes logging into your oneSJSU account and navigating to the submission page takes a couple minutes. That being said, any submission 5-minutes or more after the deadline is late (e.g., if your assignment is due at 11:59 PM, a 12:03 AM submission will be accepted without penalty, but a 12:06 AM submission will be considered late and subject to the late penalty).

I will accept late submissions for most outside of class assignments (excluding any extra credit opportunities, and there is a special Final Exam late policy) until it is 96 hours plus late, with a 20% late penalty per day. 5 minutes up to 24 hours past the deadline will be an automatic 20% deduction. 24 to 48 hours late is an automatic 40% deduction. This continues until you can earn 0%.

Any extra credit opportunities will receive no extension of the deadline, including no grace period. If the extra credit is not submitted on time, it will not be eligible to be considered for extra credit. This is non-negotiable. A given deadline is the solid deadline for extra credit since it is an extra grade booster, and above and beyond the typical curriculum.

### **Emergency Button**

All students will be granted one "Emergency Button" to use at some point in the semester where they can, no questions asked, receive an extension of 48-hours on any individually-submitted outside of class assignment (excluding the Final Exam, in-class assignments, or any extra credit opportunities). Once you use your Emergency Button, I will record that on the assignment and give you the extension. You must

request to use your Emergency Button before the assignment deadline. I may not respond to you right away, especially if you contact me outside of working hours, but rest assured that if you contact me to use your Emergency Button and it is an eligible assignment, I will apply it for you.

## Breakdown

### Grade breakdown table

Below is a table with a grade breakdown. The points are listed as whole numbers. Due to the extra credit opportunities offered throughout the semester, and some rounding I already do in the chart below, I do not round grades at the end of the semester. Please do not ask me to round your grade, as I do not make any exceptions in an effort to maintain fairness to all students across the course, and I appreciate your understanding.

Remember that your grade is out of a total of 202 points, so you can calculate your final grade at any time by dividing the total points you have earned by 202.

| Grade | Range  | Notes                                                     |
|-------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| A+    | 97-100 |                                                           |
| A     | 93-96  | 96.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| A-    | 90-92  | 92.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| B+    | 87-89  | 89.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| B     | 83-86  | 86.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| B-    | 80-82  | 82.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| C+    | 77-79  | 79.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| C     | 73-76  | 76.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| C-    | 70-72  | 70.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| D+    | 67-69  | 69.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |
| D     | 65-66  | 66.5 is rounded up to the next grade range, below is not. |

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<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 the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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The dates and readings are subject to change. Please check in on Canvas to read course announcements regularly to keep yourself informed of any changes.

*Note: All assignments are due by **11:59 PM** (unless otherwise specified) in the current Pacific Time Zone. DBQ= Discussion Board Questions, SR= Self Reflection.*

*Daily questions (done in-class) are not included in the Assignments due section of the schedule but will be done daily in class every day, nor are the Activities since they are listed on the dates we will be completing them in class, and you do not need to complete them or submit them outside of class time.*

This table contains the course schedule by class meeting date. It includes the semester week and class date meeting schedules with the topics, readings, and assignment deadlines.

| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                         | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified                   |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 - R                        | 8/20        | Course introduction, overview, and logistics<br><br>What is science?                                                  | Syllabus       |                                                                                    |
| 2 - T                        | 8/25        | Science, pseudoscience, and pop-psychology<br><br>Building our investigative toolkit to critically investigate claims | Chapter 1      | EC - Syllabus Quiz due 8/24<br><br>DBQ due 8/26                                    |
| 2 - R                        | 8/27        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                         | Chapter 1      | SR due 8/31<br><br>Topic for Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project due 8/31 |

| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Reading</b>             | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 - T                        | 9/1         | Library day - Meet in MLK Library<br>Room 213 to learn from Library Liaison<br>Lauren                                                                                                         |                            | Library Scavenger Hunt due 9/2                                   |
| 3 - R                        | 9/3         | In Class Activity - Intro to AI                                                                                                                                                               |                            | SR due 9/7                                                       |
| 4 - T                        | 9/8         | Phrenology to the Big Five - and the<br>costs of pseudoscience<br><br>We're all fallible - and a little 'stitious';<br>Superstitions and how they impact us<br>as individuals and communities | Chapter 2<br><br>Chapter 5 | DBQ due 9/9                                                      |
| 4 - R                        | 9/10        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                                                                                                 | Chapter 2<br><br>Chapter 5 | SR due 9/14                                                      |
| 5 - T                        | 9/15        | Cognition and Pseudoscience - where<br>do learning styles and brain training<br>really fall in?                                                                                               | Chapter 7<br><br>Chapter 8 | Brain game due 9/16                                              |
| 5 - R                        | 9/17        | In Class Activity<br><br>Cognition and Pseudoscience - where<br>do learning styles and brain training<br>really fall in?                                                                      | Chapter 7<br><br>Chapter 8 | DBQ due 9/21                                                     |



| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                           | <b>Reading</b>             | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 - T                        | 9/22        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                           | Chapter 7<br><br>Chapter 8 | SR due 9/28                                                      |
| 6 - R                        | 9/24        | It came to me in a dream - but what does it mean? Dream interpretations                                                 | Chapter 4                  | DBQ due 9/28                                                     |
| 7 - T                        | 9/29        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                           | Chapter 4                  | SR due 10/2                                                      |
| 7 - R                        | 10/1        | Horoscopes and Projective tests - how our emotions and personality impact our fallibility to pseudoscientific practices | Chapter 10                 |                                                                  |
| 8 - T                        | 10/6        | Horoscopes and Projective tests - how our emotions and personality impact our fallibility to pseudoscientific practices | Chapter 14                 | DBQ due 10/7                                                     |

| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Reading</b>                                 | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8 - R                        | 10/8        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                                                                                                             | Chapter 10<br><br>Chapter 14                   | SR due 10/12                                                     |
| 9 - T                        | 10/13       | What does "alternative medicine" really mean? How does this impact psychology?<br><br>How do people get sold on pseudo-"science backed" products and practices?<br><br>Alternative therapeutic practices? | Chapter 12<br><br>Chapter 13<br><br>Chapter 16 |                                                                  |
| 9 - R                        | 10/15       | What does "alternative medicine" really mean?<br><br>How do people get sold on pseudo-"science backed" products and practices?<br><br>Alternative therapeutic practices?                                  | Chapter 12<br><br>Chapter 13<br><br>Chapter 16 | DBQ due 10/19                                                    |
| 10 - T                       | 10/20       | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                                                                                                             | Chapter 12<br><br>Chapter 13<br><br>Chapter 16 |                                                                  |

| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                               | <b>Reading</b>                                 | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified                      |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 - R                       | 10/22       | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                               | Chapter 12<br><br>Chapter 13<br><br>Chapter 16 | SR due 10/26                                                                          |
| 11 - T                       | 10/27       | What is parapsychology?<br><br>Is it all in your head - even if it feels like it isn't? ESP, Premonitions, and Mind Control | Chapter 3                                      | DBQ due 10/26                                                                         |
| 11 - R                       | 10/29       | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                               | Chapter 3                                      | SR due 11/2<br><br>Outline for Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project due 10/30 |
| 12 - T                       | 11/3        | If you were abducted by aliens, how would you remember it? The role of false memory and sleep paralysis                     | Chapter 6                                      | SR due 4/7<br><br>DBQ due 4/8                                                         |
| 12 - R                       | 11/5        | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                               | Chapter 6                                      |                                                                                       |
| 13 - T                       | 11/10       | Possession, social influence, or verifiable clinical disorder? The role culture and religion play in beliefs                | Chapter 15                                     | SR due 4/14<br><br>DBQ due 4/15                                                       |
| 13 - R                       | 11/12       | Discussion, In Class Activity                                                                                               | Chapter 15                                     | SR due 11/16                                                                          |

| <b>Semester<br/>Week/Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>                                                                                                 | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Assignments due by 11:59 PM</b><br>Unless otherwise specified                                                  |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 - T                       | 11/17       | Fake news, AI, and Open Science; How to use your toolkit to be conscious consumers                            | see Canvas     | DBQ due 11/18                                                                                                     |
| 14 - R                       | 11/19       | Fake news, AI, and Open Science; How to use your toolkit to be conscious consumers<br><br>In Class Discussion |                | SR due 11/23                                                                                                      |
| 15 - T                       | 11/24       | Sell us on pseudoscience group presentations [and interaction from audience, as part of your grade]           |                | Sell us on pseudoscience group presentations <u>due in full</u> on Canvas, 11/23 (regardless of presentation day) |
| 15 - R                       | 11/26       | No class - university closed                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                   |
| 16 - T                       | 12/1        | Sell us on pseudoscience group presentations [and interaction from audience, as part of your grade]           |                |                                                                                                                   |
| 16 - R                       | 12/3        | Sell us on pseudoscience group presentations [and interaction from audience, as part of your grade]           |                |                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Finals - Thursday</b>     | 12/10       | <b>Finals - Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project</b>                                                  |                | Investigating Pseudoscience Research Project final submission due by <b>12:45 PM on Canvas</b>                    |