



San José State University
Department of Psychology
Introduction to Psychobiology
PSYC 030-06(49552), Fall 2026

Instructor:	Jill Citron, PhD
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm
Class Location:	BBC 202
Email:	jill.citron@sjsu.edu
Drop-In Times:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm & by appointment Zoom Link available on Canvas
Office Location:	DMH 350

Prerequisites: **BIOL 021, or BIOL 065**

Description: Biological psychology is an important subdivision that systematically studies behavior and mental processes. Biopsychologists aim to understand the biological basis of brain function and behavior. This field examines many aspects of human functioning through mechanisms such as evolution, genetics, neural pathways, and hormonal influences on both normal and abnormal behavior. This class aims to enhance understanding of the brain and behavior, beginning with the smallest unit of the human nervous system—brain structures—and their connections with the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.

Canvas: Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions are available on the Canvas learning management system course website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. Messages to the class may be sent through Canvas or MYSJSU. You are responsible for checking Canvas frequently for updates.

Course Format: This course includes lectures, assignments and discussions, and readings from the textbook and scientific journals. Lectures will build on reading assignments, and we will explore additional sources not covered in the readings. We meet in person for lectures and use Canvas for quizzes, discussions, and submitting assignments. Regular attendance in class is essential for success in this course. Being prepared and ready to engage with the material is necessary for learning.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes (CLO)

PSYC 30 - Introduction to Psychobiology covers the biological fundamentals of cognition and behavior. This course examines the structural and functional components of the nervous system, from the cellular to the systems level. It will explore how information from both internal and external environments can guide and influence adaptive behavior.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, Psych 30 students will be able to:

CLO1 – *Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts related to basic neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and psychopharmacology. Assessment for this CLO will be in Test 1, and Infographic 1*

CLO2 – *Students will be able to describe and communicate the major transduction mechanisms, neuroanatomical pathways, and theoretical perspectives related to vision and non-visual sensory systems, motivational systems, and learning processes. Assessment for this CLO will be in Test 2 and Infographic 2*

CLO3 – *Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate experimental approaches and related empirical findings for various methodological approaches in biopsychology. Assessment for this CLO will mainly be conducted through the Hallmark Assignment.*

CLO4 – *Students will be able to think critically and creatively about biopsychological approaches to addressing behavioral and mental health issues. This CLO will be assessed through activities, quizzes, and class discussions.*

CLO5 – *Students can apply biopsychological principles to individual, interpersonal, and group behavioral and mental health issues. This will be assessed through tests and the Hallmark Assignment.*

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successfully completing 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.

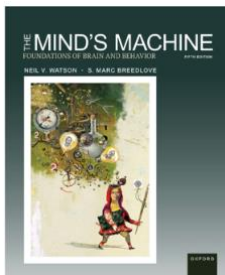
PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Library Liaison:

The SJSU librarian specializes in the social sciences and may serve as a resource for developing research ideas and locating the most appropriate research materials.

Psychology Librarian: **Lauren DeCelle** lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu

Required Textbook: Watson, N.V., and Breedlove, S.M. (2025). Minds Machine (5th edition). Oxford University Press. Available at the bookstore. A link to purchase directly from OUP is available on the Canvas home page.



Other Required Readings: Other required readings are available on CANVAS.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures for add/drop, grade forgiveness, and other relevant matters. Refer to the current semester's catalog policy section. The Fall 2026 Registrar calendar is available at <https://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/fall-2026.php>.

This semester, the last day to add a class or drop a class without a "W" is September 15.

Attendance

This is an in-person class. Students are expected to attend all meetings, as you are responsible for material discussion, and your active participation in class benefits all class members.

According to University Policy F15-12, "Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for material discussed therein and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. In some cases, attendance is crucial to achieving course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with their peers in the class. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."

Assignments and Grading Policy. During this course, you will be required to participate in class and complete various assignments, two Infographic exercises, three examinations (two tests and a final exam), classroom activities, and presentations on hallmark research studies that changed the course of biopsychology.

SJSU classes are designed so that to be successful, students are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours per unit of credit (typically three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and other related tasks. More details about the student workload can be found at

<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>

Expect your grades in Canvas to fluctuate throughout the semester. Please do not contact me at the end of the semester to ask whether I will round your grade up. I want all my students to succeed, and I will always round grades up (not down) when possible.

Definition of a Credit Hour

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 course's duration. For example, the expected workload for a 3-credit course is 150 minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week. Please also review the following sources and policies:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>

Make-up Exams and Late Assignments

Please check your schedule to ensure you have no conflicts with due dates. Let me know if you need an extension. Contact me as early in the semester as possible so we can develop an alternative plan.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San Jose State University. Familiarize yourself with the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy at <https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that students receive fair grades. A reminder about academic integrity and Chat GPT: All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) using ideas, words, images, or content in any other media that you did not create and presenting that content as if you were the creator. Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 [pdf]

Copying content you did not create—either directly or in a modified form—without properly acknowledging the creator constitutes academic misconduct, as does using unauthorized digital tools, such as artificial intelligence, to create content. An assignment found to be plagiarized or to have used unauthorized tools will automatically receive a zero, and you will not be allowed to repeat the assignment for a passing grade. Depending on the severity of the case, academic misconduct may result in a failing grade in the course. If you are unsure or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A simple rule to follow: *if you use more than four words from another source, you must cite them.* All students must use Turn-It-In. When prompted in Canvas, accept the terms.

University Policies: Per U University Policies: According to University Policy S16-9, relevant university-wide policy information for all courses, such as academic integrity and accommodations, will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information webpage at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

GRADING INFORMATION AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be based on the number of points you earn during the semester. The following table provides a breakdown of the points you can earn during the semester.

Assignment	How Many?	Points Per Assignment	Total Points	Approximate % of Final Grade
Chapter Quizzes	12	10	120	37%
Infographic	2	10	20	6%
Discussion	1	20	20	6%
Hallmark Study Assignment	1	40	40	12%
Name Coach	1	1	1	.5%
New York Times Subscription	1	1	1	.5%
Midterm	2	40	80	25%
Final Exam	1	40	40	12.5%
Total:			322	100%

Grading Scale:

Percent	Grade
100 – 94	A
93-90	A-
89 – 87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79 – 77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66 – 64	D
63 -60	D-
59 or below	F

Major Assignments

Infographic: In these assignments, you will be using Canva to design an infographic demonstrating your understanding of the structures and functional steps of three different systems. Your task is to create an image that highlights the parts of the system.

Hallmark Presentations: Choose one study from the provided list. Create a polished, two-page handout with a brief written summary and one original visual that explains a key finding, and a five-slide PowerPoint overview. You will use your slides to give a ~5-minute small-group presentation in class and answer classmates' questions.

Testing: There will be three tests and eleven-chapter quizzes throughout the semester.

Discussion: There will be one online class discussion based on the provided readings and relevant to the material being covered in class.

Student Resources

Student Computer Resources

Computer labs and other technological resources for students can be found in various places on campus:

For information on laptop, tablet, and other computer material loans, visit <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services>. For

IT Support, visit <https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php>

For a list of software available to all SJSU students, visit

<https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computingservices/software-available>

ACCESS Success Center

The Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in Social Sciences (ACCESS) Success Center “provides general education advising for undergraduate students majoring or intending to major in any of the departments in The College of Social Sciences.” Visit their webpage for more information and to schedule an online appointment at

<https://www.sjsu.edu/education/studentsuccesscenter/advising-and-tutoring.php>.

Accessible Education Center (AEC)

Ability Redefined - Please reach out to me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester for any support. “If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need 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 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with AEC to establish a record of their disability. Academic Senate Policy F06-2 [pdf].”

SJSU Peer Connections

The Peer Connections website “offers free mentoring, tutoring, and supplemental instruction services for students at SJSU. Peer Educators are students just like you; they understand the triumphs and challenges of being a student at San José State University.” If you have questions about services, contact Peer Connections at 408-924-

2587 or email at peerconnections@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage for more information,

<https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/programs/tutoring/index.html>

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services invites “all students to come to Counseling and Psychological Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, room 300B, for any support.”

If you have questions about services, contact CAPS at (408) 924-5910 or email at

counseling.services@sjsu.edu or visit their webpage, <https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/>

Due Dates for Major Assignments

Name Coach & NYT Subscription

Due: 8/23

Infographic #1

Due: 9/6

Quizzes 1-3

Due: 9/27

Section Test #1

Date: 9/28

Chapters: Chapters 1-3

Discussion - Online

Open: 10/4

Due: 10/11

Quizzes 5-7

Due: 10/18

Section Test #2

Date: Monday, 10/19

Chapters: Chapters 5-7

Infographic #2

Due: 11/22

Hallmark Presentation - Online

Presentation Materials Due: 11/29

Presentations Due: 12/2

Quizzes 8-12

Due: 12/6

Section Test #3

Date: Friday, 12/11 @ 3:15 pm – 5:15 pm

Chapters 8-12

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to modification, with fair warning, at the instructor's discretion.

Week	Date	Topics	Reading Before Class	Assignment
1	W – 8/19	Course Introduction!		Name Coach Due: 8/23
2	M – 8/24 W – 8/26	Structure and Function: Neuroanatomy and Research Methods	Chapter 1	
3	M – 8/31 W – 9/2	Neurophysiology	Chapter 2	
4	M – 9/7 W – 9/9	No Class - Labor Day Neurophysiology		
5	M – 9/14 W – 9/16	The Chemistry of Behavior	Chapter 3	Infographic #1 Due: 9/6
6	M – 9/21 W – 9/23	No Class The Chemistry of Behavior	Read!	
7	M – 9/28 W – 9/30	Section Test #1 The Sensorimotor System	Chapters 1–3 Chapter 5	Quizzes 1–3 Due: 9/27
8	M – 10/5 W – 10/7	Hearing, Balance, Taste & Smell	Chapter 6	Discussion Opens: 10/4
9	M – 10/12 W – 10/14	Vision	Chapter 7	Discussion Due: 10/11
10	M – 10/19 W – 10/21	Section Test #2 Hormones and Sex	Chapters 5-7 Chapter 8	Quizzes 5–7 Due: 10/18
11	M – 10/26 W – 10/28	Hormones and Sex	Chapter 8	
12	M – 11/2 W – 11/4	Homeostasis: Active Regulation of the Internal Environment	Chapter 9	
13	M – 11/9 W – 11/11	Biological Rhythms and Sleep No Class - Veterans Day	Chapter 10	
14	M – 11/16 W – 11/18	Biological Rhythms and Sleep Emotions, Aggression, and Stress	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	Infographic #2 Due: 11/22
15	M – 11/23 W – 11/25	Emotions, Aggression, and Stress No Class – Thanksgiving Break	Chapter 11	Hallmark Materials Due: 11/29
16	M – 11/30 W – 12/2	Psychopathology	Chapter 12	Hallmark Presentations Due Online:
17	M – 12/7	Last Class & Hallmark Presentations Discussion		Quizzes 8–12 Due: 12/6
Final	Friday 12/11	Test #3 3:15 pm – 5:15 pm SJSU Fall 2026 final exam schedule	Chapters 8-12	In Class