



San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC 30-80,
Psychobiology, Fall 2026

Instructor:	Jill Citron, PhD
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Phone Number:	(408) 924-5606 – <i>Messages Only</i>
Drop-In Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, and by appointment.
Office Location:	DMH 352
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 pm to 2:45 pm
Classroom Location:	Online via Zoom; link posted on the Canvas homepage
Prerequisites:	Either: Bio 021 or Bio 065 You must <u>complete</u> the prerequisites classes before taking this course.

CANVAS and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of some course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. Messages to the class may be sent through Canvas or MYSJSU.

Course Description

Biological Psychology is a major subdivision of psychology, the systematic study of behavior and mental processes. Biopsychology tries to understand the biological basis for brain and behavior. This discipline involves examining many aspects of human functioning, through the mechanisms of evolution, genetic, neural and hormonal influences on normal and abnormal behavior. The goal of this class is to pursue a greater understanding of brain and behavior from the smallest unit of the human nervous system, brain structures and interconnections with the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.

Communication with Instructor

Use email, office hours, or class time to ask questions. I respond to email M-F 9:00-5:00. Please allow 1-2 days for a response. When emailing, include a relevant title and our course number (30). If you have extensive questions about an assignment or class work, please come to office hours, or contact me to set up a Zoom appointment.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes (CLO)

PSYC 30 Introduction to Psychobiology explores the biological basis of cognition and behavior. This course examines the structural and functional components of the nervous systems, from the cellular level to the system level, and will consider how information from the internal and external environment can direct 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 significant concepts related to basic neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and psychopharmacology. The assessment outcome *for this will be Infographic #1 and Section Test #1.*

CLO2 – *Students will be able to* –describe and communicate the major transduction mechanisms, neuroanatomical pathways, and theoretical perspectives associated with vision and nonvisual sensory systems, motivational systems, and learning processes. *This CLO will be assessed in Section Test #2 and Infographic #2 assignment.*

CLO3 – *Students will be able to* –identify, describe, and communicate experimental approaches and associated empirical findings for various methodological techniques in biopsychology. *This CLO will be assessed primarily in Section Tests #1 and #2.*

CLO4 – *Students will be able to* think critically and creatively about biopsychological approaches to address behavioral and mental health issues. *This CLO will be assessed by participation in the Hallmark Study.*

CLO5 – *Students can* apply biopsychological principles to individual, interpersonal, and group behavioral and mental health issues. *This will be assessed by Hallmark Study participation and Section Test #3.*

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 can 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 can 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 roles and responsibilities as members of society.

The goals for this course fall into three categories. Learning outcomes for the first part of the course are a general

understanding of the philosophical issues driving much of contemporary neuroscience research and an understanding of mechanisms during brain development, and students are expected to develop a firm hold on biological foundational knowledge as it relates to the central nervous systems. The second category will give students a detailed understanding of the sensory systems. The final section of the course, students will gain an understanding of how neural systems contribute to various behaviors ranging from motivation to learning.

It is strongly recommended that students use the Chrome Web Browser when working in Canvas. Using Chrome will decrease the glitches and errors you experience, as Canvas was developed using Chrome. In addition, update your Canvas setting to receive messages from this course, as announcements are sent out regularly.

Clearing your cache may help if you have trouble logging into the site.

Accessing the Course Canvas site

To access the Canvas site go to <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/> and click on “Log in to Canvas”

Username = *SJSU 9-digit ID*

Password = *your current SJSUOne password*

For additional information or help with logging in:

Canvas Student Tutorial: <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/>

Required Textbook

By Watson, Neil. Mind's Machine. 2024 5TH Edition.

Publisher: Oxford

ISBN 13: 9780197666081

The Text is available at the bookstore and online.

The book is available at the bookstore. Below are two other options, but there are many others!



[Vital Source](#)

[Alibris](#)

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas in PDF format.

Library Liaison

The SJSU library has a librarian specializing in psychology (and other social sciences), and this librarian can serve as an extremely valuable resource for helping you develop research ideas and locate appropriate research materials. The library also has an abundance of resources for doing psychology research: Christa Bailey, 408-808-2422, christa.bailey@sjsu.edu, <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/psychology>

Online Classroom Protocol

As a member of this class, you are part of a community. Students are expected to maintain professional and courteous behavior—their cell phones and other distractors away before the beginning of class. We will respect our class members and expect the same respect in return. Do not have side conversations or make unrelated comments in class. You may not realize that your actions are distracting to those around you. Students who do not abide by these policies (after being alerted to their behavior) will be asked to leave the class. This class is the community we make this semester, so we will all need to work together. Chat will be enabled to encourage interaction. Cameras need to be on during class. I understand that having the camera isn't fun, but it makes the class much better, I promise!

Dropping and Adding

Students must understand the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's catalog, <https://catalog.sjsu.edu/>, policy section. The Late Drop Policy is available at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Please be aware that there are changes due to COVID-19 SIP. Information about the latest changes and new is available at the Advising Hub at <https://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>. This semester the last day to add a class or drop a class without a "W" is September 15th.

Attendance

This is a synchronous online class. Students are expected to attend all meetings as they are responsible for materials discussed in class and are active participants, which 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 fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others 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, three Infographic exercises, quizzes on each chapter topic, online class activities, and a class assignment on hallmark research studies that changed the biopsychology course.

SJSU classes are designed to be successful. Students are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Anticipate that your grades in Canvas will continue to change throughout the semester. Do not contact me at the end of the semester, asking if I will round up your grade. I want all my students to succeed and 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 forty-five hours over the length of the course. As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150 minutes of direct faculty instruction and six-hours of out-of-class student work each week. Please review the following sources and policies, as well:

- University Syllabus Policy S16-9 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>
- Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Late Assignments

Please check your schedule to ensure there are no conflicts with due dates. Extensions are only provided when there are extraordinary events (with documentation). Contact me as early in the semester as possible to create an alternative plan. Quizzes will not be reopened for any reason.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San Jose State University. Familiarize yourself with the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that students are fairly graded. 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 necessarily 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.

Copying content you have not created—either directly or in a modified form—without properly acknowledging the creator qualifies as academic misconduct, as does utilizing unauthorized digital tools such as artificial intelligence to create content. An assignment found to have been plagiarized or 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 guide to follow, if more than four words are taken from another source, it must be cited.

All students must use Turn-It-In to ensure the academic integrity of their writing.

GRADING INFORMATION AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be based on the number of points that 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
Discussion Board	1	20	20	12%
Infographic	3	5	15	8%
Hallmark Study	1	30	30	16%
Name Coach	1	3	3	1%
New York Times	1	2	2	1%
Topic Quizzes	12	10	120	62%
Total:			190	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

University Policies: Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

Assignment Descriptions:

Infographic: In these assignments, you will use Canva to design an infographic demonstrating your understanding of three systems' structures and functional steps. Your task is to create an image highlighting the structure and function of various parts of the nervous system.

Quizzes: There will be twelve quizzes during the semester with multiple-choice and True-False questions. The quizzes will be open at the beginning of a new topic category and close when that topic category ends.

Name Coach: Name Coach functions as a recording and playback platform, allowing students and instructors within a course to record and share the correct pronunciation of their names effortlessly. This feature enables all course members to listen and learn how to pronounce each other's names accurately. Details and instructions are provided in Canvas.

Neuralink Discussion Board: You will prepare to participate in this meaningful conversation by doing background reading and watching relevant videos. After preparation, you will begin discussing Neuralink with your peers. Together, we will explore the neuroscience, research process, and ethics of Elon Musk's Neuralink!

Hallmark Studies: Toward the end of the semester, students will choose from a list of classic studies in psychobiology to research and present to their peers. During the last two classes, we will share what we have learned with each other in small groups or pairs (a.k.a., no big presentations).

Student Resources

Student Computer Resources –

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

- For information regarding the loan of laptops, tablets, and other computer materials; <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, <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 in 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

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 the 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 Writing Center— Check for different ways to access these services during the COVID-19 SIP.

The SJSU Writing Center “offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of our services are free for SJSU students.” If you have questions about services, call the Writing Center at 408.924.2308 or email us at writingcenter@sjsu.edu, or visit their webpage to make an online appointment <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services invites “all students to come into Counseling and Psychological Services, located at 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/>

Assignments

Below is a tentative list of important course events. Instructions for each assignment are available on Canvas.

Name Coach

Due: Tuesday, August 25

NYT Subscription

Due: Tuesday, August 25

Infographic #1

Due: Thursday, September 17

Final Due Date for Quizzes 1-4

Date: Tuesday, September 22

Discussion on Neuralink

Due: Thursday, October 1

Infographic #2

Due: Tuesday, October 13

Final Due Date for Quizzes 5-7

Date: Thursday, October 15

Infographic #3

Due: Tuesday, November 17

Hallmark Studies

Submissions Due: Sunday, November 29

Final Due Date for Quizzes 8-12

Date: Tuesday, December 15,
Chapters 8–12

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning) as the instructor deems necessary.

Week	Date	Topics	Reading Before Class	Assignment
1	Th – 8/20	Course Introduction & Syllabus	Get the textbook!	
2	T – 8/25 Th – 8/27	Structure and Function: Neuroanatomy and Research Methods	Chapter 1	Name Coach New York Times Due: 8/25
3	T – 9/1 Th – 9/3	Neurophysiology	Chapter 2	
4	T – 9/8 Th – 9/10	The Chemistry of Behavior	Chapter 3	
5	T – 9/15 Th – 9/17	Development of the Brain	Chapter 4	Infographic #1 Due: 9/17
6	T – 9/22 Th – 9/24	The Sensorimotor System	Chapters 1–4 Chapter 5	Quizzes 1–4 Due: 9/22
7	T – 9/29 Th – 10/1	The Sensorimotor System Hearing, Balance, Taste & Smell	Chapter 5	Discussion on Neuralink Due: 10/1
8	T – 10/6 Th – 10/8	Hearing, Balance, Taste & Smell	Chapter 6	
9	T – 10/13 Th – 10/15	Vision: From Eye to Brain	Chapter 7	Infographic #2 Due: 10/13 Quizzes 5–7 Due: 10/15
10	T – 10/20 Th – 10/22	Hormones and Sex	Chapter 8	
11	T – 10/27 Th – 10/29	Homeostasis	Chapter 9	
12	T – 11/3 Th – 11/5	Biological Rhythms and Sleep	Chapter 9	
13	T – 11/10 Th – 11/12	Emotions & Stress	Chapter 10	

Week	Date	Topics	Reading Before Class	Assignment
14	T – 11/17 Th – 11/19	Psychopathology	Chapters 11–12	Infographic #3 Due: 11/17
15	T – 11/24 Th – 11/26	No Class – Thanksgiving Week		Hallmark Studies Submissions Due: 11/29
16	T – 12/1 Th – 12/3	Hallmark Studies		Hallmark Presentations
Final	12/15 1:00– 3:00 pm	Final Course Activities Online	Chapters 8–12	Quizzes 8–12 Final Due Date: 12/15