

PSYC 410  
 Ψ  
**Communicating Psychological Science**

INSTRUCTOR: Karla Lassonde, Ph.D.

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Rationale:** Think of when you have learned something for the 1<sup>st</sup> time! This class emphasizes your passion for Psychology and will best prepare you to communicate Psychology. The work we do in this course will challenge most of you and it may be the 1<sup>st</sup> time you try things like: improvisation, blogging, refining your speaking skills in front of others, talking often in class. I too will be challenged as this is the 1<sup>st</sup> time I'm teaching this course! I have a big vision though for the work we will do. I'm so glad you are with me in this journey to create a new and important course for the future of our major!

**Course Description:** This course will provide you with knowledge and strategies to describe, identify, and write about Psychological Science. This course will reinforce the science of Psychology through the teaching of successful communication strategies of psychological concepts. You will complete the course demonstrating how to successfully communicate the discipline to the public.

**Course Objectives:** After completing this course you will be able to:

- 1.) Identify facts vs. misconceptions in Psychological Science
- 2.) Develop critical thinking skills on issues in Psychological Science
- 3.) Evaluate academic and non-academic writings of Psychological Science
- 4.) Communicate topics in Psychological Science to the public.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

**1.) Texts:**

Alda, A. (2018). **If I understood you would I Have This Look on My Face?** Random House Publishers, New York, NY.

Greene, A. E. (2013). **Writing Science in Plain English.** University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Dean, C. (2017). **Making Sense of Science.** The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

*\*These texts are available at the bookstores and can be purchased on any online book retailer.*

**LEARNING ASSESSMENTS**

**1.) Attendance:** I expect that you will attend class and arrive and leave on time.

**Attendance will directly influence your overall grade.** You may miss up to 3 classes throughout the semester without absences affecting your grade.

**Here are circumstances that will lead to an ABSENCE:**

- Missing class due to colds or minor illness (e.g., not under care of a doctor).
- Scheduling conflict (work, appointments, vacations, or similar reasons life gets in the way).
- Missing class for personal reasons.
- Arriving late or leaving early.

**Here are circumstances that will lead to an EXCUSED absence:**

- A doctor’s note from illness or injury.
- A documented absence for an academic event or activity (\*must communicate the event in writing ahead of time).
- A family emergency (\*written documentation must be received promptly).

2.) **Participation:** Class participation IS CONSISTENT WITH ACADEMIC SUCCESS. Having good eye contact, following along and listening with complete attention, and consistently answering questions in large and small groups is expected. *Being a good class participant makes you a stronger student and is the #1 aspect I think of when I consider your success.*

- Attendance will be taken during each class.
- Next to your attendance for each day I will record one of the following:
  - **PLUS** – your performance is consistent with academic success and you have made an extra effort to contribute.
  - **CHECK** – your performance is consistent with academic success.
  - **MINUS** – your performance is inconsistent with academic success.
- Participation will be graded based on your which type of record you have the most of.

3.) **Written Assignments:** Writing is essential to effective communication. We will complete a variety of assignments that assist you in refining your psychological writing.

- **Academic writing** – you will be introduced to strategies that improve traditional academic writing (e.g., abstracts, journal articles, research papers). Due dates can be found in the course outline.
- **In-class writing activities** – you will be asked to complete short writing activities to support learning experiences. These will accompany readings and in-class work. These will be scheduled by me during class periods and will not be announced ahead of time.
- **Bloggng** – you will be introduced to effective blogging strategies. We will be completing several preparatory activities so that you can draft, edit, and publish blogs. Due dates can be found in the course outline.

4.) **Speaking Assignments:** Clear and engaging speech is essential to effective communication. We will complete a variety of assignments that assist you in refining your communication of psychology.

- **In-class activities** – you will be asked to complete short activities to support learning experiences. These will accompany readings and in-class work. These will be scheduled by me during class periods and will not be announced ahead of time.
- **Public speaking** – you will be required to communicate information at different time-lengths: 3 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute, and 30 seconds AND for a variety of audiences.

**Grading Procedures:**

1.) **Attendance Outcomes:**

- Missing 3 or fewer classes will lead to your retaining the grade you receive based on all other learning assessments. For example, if you have a “B” “B+” or “B-” based on total course assessments, you will earn that grade.
- Missing either 4, 5, or 6 classes will lead to you earning a full letter grade lower than your total course assessment. For example, if you have a “B” you will earn a “C”. If you have an “A-”, you will earn a B.

- Missing 6 or more classes will lead to you earning two full letter grades lower than your total course assessment.

## 2.) Participation Outcomes:

- Majority of record PLUS = 25% of course grade (5% will be added as BONUS)
- Majority of record CHECK = 20% of course grade
- Majority of record MINUS = 10% of course grade

3.) Written Assignments = 40% of course grade

4.) Speaking Assignments = 40% of course grade

## CLASS PROCEDURES

**1.) Participation:** If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get the notes and keep up with assignments. *Please do not email and ask “what did I miss?” You will always miss something.*

**2.) Electronics:** Electronics such as laptops can be used during class. If any device becomes a distraction in class, you will receive a MINUS in participation on those occasions.

**3.) Arrivals/Departures:** Please arrive on time and expect to be here for the entire class. Not meeting these expectations (certainly there are extenuating circumstances) will lead to a MINUS in participation.

**4.) Email:** Please put **PSYC: 410** in the subject of your email. I welcome questions/comments from you; however, please do not email me late in the evening and expect I will be able to reply to you then. I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours. Consult your syllabus and D2L for information before you email me. Chances are you can find what you need there. **DO NOT EMAIL ABOUT GRADES.** Grades will only be discussed by scheduling an office hour appointment.

**5.) Accessibility Resources:** Every effort will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability and you will require special accommodations in this course, please contact the Accessibility Resource Office at <http://www.mnsu.edu/access> (507) 389-2825 or 1-800-627-3529 for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

**6.) Other Academic Support Agencies:** There are a number of organizations on campus that can help you with academic and non-academic related needs. If you have a problem that you would like to discuss at any point in the course, please come and talk to me and I can point you in the direction of a suitable resource.

**7.) Academic Honesty:** I expect that you will conduct yourselves with honesty and academic integrity while in this class. MSU, Mankato students are obligated to adhere to the [Statement of Student Responsibilities](#). Students caught cheating will fail that specific assignment and may be turned over to student affairs for formal discipline.

### COURSE OUTLINE\* See next page

**KEY:** \*Starred readings can be found in the “Content” section of D2L in a folder called “Readings.”  
 Alda = If I understood you would I Have This Look on My Face?  
 Greene = Writing Science in Plain English.  
 Dean = Making Sense of Science.

DATE		TOPIC	READINGS Due	ASSIGNMENTS Due
Monday	1/14	Course Introduction		
Wednesday	1/16	Psychological Science & Psychology Misconceptions	“*Psychology as a Core Science” & *Misconceptions: A Review	Be prepared to write <sup>4</sup> about and discuss readings
Monday	1/21	MLK Day: No Class		
Wednesday	1/23	Improvisation and Writing Clean-up 1	Alda (Chaps 1-5)	Example Abstract; Example Blog
Monday	1/28	Improvisation and Writing Clean-up 2	Alda (Chaps 6-11)	Example Writing
Wednesday	1/30			
Monday	2/4	Improvisation and Speaking Activities	Alda (Chaps 12-16)	Psychology Pitch (1 minute)
Wednesday	2/6	Practicing Empathy Activities	Alda (Chaps 17-21)	Practicing Empathy written report
Monday	2/11	Problems with Scientific Writing?	Greene (Chaps 1-2)	2-3 Research articles in interest topic
Wednesday	2/13	Story Telling in Scientific Writing	Greene (Chap 3) and exercises; *‘‘Telling a story reading’’	Children book examples; Research article corrections
Monday	2/18	No Class; Cancelled		
Wednesday	2/20	No Class; Snow Day	Submit Chap 4 exercises and ‘‘1 <sup>st</sup> Blog example’’ in assignment folders on D2L	
Monday	2/25	Blogging introduction	Greene (5-7) *reading only	Personal Story 2 mins
Wednesday	2/27	Draft Blogging	Greene (8-11) *reading only	Psychology Pitch 2 mins
Monday	3/4	Spring Break Week: No Class		
Wednesday	3/6			
Monday	3/11	Flawed Knowledge	Dean (Intro & Chap 1pp 1-29)	
Wednesday	3/13	Flawed Knowledge	Dean (Chap 1pp 29-56)	Blog #1 Draft; review
Monday	3/18	Science – How we know	Dean (Chap 2 pp 57-76)	
Wednesday	3/20	Science – How we know	Dean (Chap 2 pp 77-94)	Blog #1 Final; review
Monday	3/25	Ethics and Psyc. Science	Dean (Chap 3 pp 95-112)	Draft Blog #2
Wednesday	3/27	Ethics and Psyc. Science	Dean (Chap 3 pp 112-127)	
Monday	4/1	Science Influencers	Dean (Chap 4)	
Wednesday	4/3	Science Influencers	Dean (Chap 4)	Blog #2 Final; review
Monday	4/8	Public Outreach & Psychology	*How Can Psyc. Science Contribute to healthier, happier....	
Wednesday	4/10	Public Outreach & Psychology	*Individual article summaries from ‘‘How can Psyc. science...’’	Blog #3 Draft (to D2L)
Monday	4/15	Social Media & Sci Communication	*Readings on D2L	Blog #3 Final copy; Graphic & Pitch
Wednesday	4/17	Social Media		Social Media Piece 1 (to D2L)
Monday	4/22	Political Science	Dean (Chap 5)	Social Media Piece 2 (to D2L)
Wednesday	4/24	Pitch Filming Day		
Monday	4/29	Psyc. Science Future	Dean (Conclusion)	
Wednesday	5/1	Course Reflection & Wrap-up		1 Blog prepared for website; Graphic prepared for website