



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
MADRID

PSY 4900: PSYCHOLOGY CAPSTONE-CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY
Fall 2017

Class Days and Time: WED, 11:00-13:30

Classroom: PRH 15

Prerequisite(s): Psychology Major in Senior Standing; Approval from PSY Major Advisor

Credit(s): 3.00

Instructor: Laurie Mazzuca, Ph.D.

Instructor's Email: laurie.mazzuca@slu.edu

Instructor's Campus Phone: 91 554 58 58, ext. 230

Office: SIH, 300A

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to fulfill the Capstone requirement for Psychology Majors. The Critical Thinking Capstone represents an opportunity for Psychology Majors to integrate and apply previous coursework in psychology by learning to *use* psychology in order to design creative solutions to real-world issues or problems in our communities and workplaces.

Course Format:

This course will be conducted in seminar/workshop format, meaning that the primary process of learning will occur through active inquiry, or an experiential, hands-on learning process. During weekly seminars, students will learn about critical thinking from the perspective of psychology and then combine these critical thinking skills with their knowledge of psychological theories and research in order to address problems and/or issues that directly affect the Madrid campus community. In the spirit of a true capstone course, students will be expected to take an active, conscientious approach to their learning. Thus, rather than that of a traditional lecturer or instructor, the role of the instructor(s) is that of a facilitator who will guide students in their own inquiry.

Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes:

Through the use of readings, videos, activities, discussions, and written assignments, this course should enable you to:

- Become more aware of how psychological constructs, theories, and findings are understood by and disseminated to the general public.
- Develop an appreciation for how scientific research can be applied to help resolve real-world problems or issues that affect themselves, their peers, and the general community.
- Engage in critical thinking in order to develop consensus with others.
- Become familiar with ethical and professional issues related to the dissemination of psychological theory and science, as well as the application of psychological principles when working with individuals in the community.
- Further develop critical academic skills, such as oral and written communication skills, independent study and organization skills, and the ability to work effectively with others.

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, the Campus regularly assesses its teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs is kept on file, such as assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of student work for this course, including written assignments, in-class exercises, and exams may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If students prefer that Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus does not keep their work on file, they need to communicate their decision in writing to the professor.

Required Texts and Materials:

Throughout the semester, the instructor will provide readings in the form of book chapters and articles that address issues such as critical thinking and ethics in psychology. As students focus on particular topics for their Capstone project (see “Evaluations and Assignments”), students will be required to research and discuss empirical articles related to the topic in preparation for the final project.

Attendance Policy and Class Participation: Given that this course will be delivered in seminar-format, class attendance (and the resulting discussion) is absolutely imperative for successful learning to take place. In addition, successful completion and execution of the Capstone project depends on full participation by all group members. Thus, students are expected to attend class regularly and to arrive to class *promptly*. The Class Participation grade carries significant weight in the overall course grade, and will be based both on your attendance record, as well as your preparedness for and participation in seminar discussions.

You are responsible for all announcements made and/or material covered during class meetings. It is the student’s responsibility to stay abreast of any scheduling changes or adjustments to the syllabus that are announced in class.

Students will be permitted only TWO unexcused absences during the semester. Absences in excess of the two permitted will result in the student’s class participation grade being lowered one full letter grade, according to the following formula:

- 3 absences: one letter grade (10 percentage points)
- 4-5 absences: two letter grades (20 percentage points)
- 6-7 absences: automatic failure (F) for Class Participation

Please keep in mind that, as seniors, Capstone students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, and to act in a conscientious, responsible manner. Students who must miss class due to illness or other extenuating circumstances are asked to notify the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the issue and agree upon the appropriate course of action.

Classroom Environment and Expectations: Open discussion is an important part of the learning process, therefore, it is vital to maintain a classroom environment that is respectful and free of discrimination and/or recrimination from peers. Please make every effort to be respectful of others’ opinions.

Regarding course content, be aware that we will be discussing topics related to Psychology that may trigger emotional or psychological distress in some students. Please keep this in mind as you make comments or pose questions. Thus, if your personal circumstances make it difficult for you to listen to or

engage in discussion about critical issues in Psychology, please give careful consideration to your participation and enrollment in this course.

With that in mind, in this culture of social media which often includes "over sharing", I would encourage you to think carefully prior to sharing very personal/intimate information about yourself during discussion. Please remember that the Capstone seminar, while small, is NOT a protected, confidential environment, and the professor cannot guarantee that other students/peers will maintain your confidential information.

Email and Technology in the Classroom

E-mail: Campus and course announcements will often be handled by e-mail. Students should check their "@slu.edu" e-mail regularly.

The professor will respond to email **between the hours of 9:00 and 6:00 pm.**, Monday through Friday. In general, emails are answered within 48 hours. Please be aware that I do not regularly check my SLU email in the evening, so if you send me an email after 6 pm, I may not respond until the next working day.

At the start of the semester, all students are permitted to use a laptop to take notes during class. However, the professor reserves the right to revoke this permission during this semester if it becomes apparent that students are misusing this permission and engaging in personal activities online during class (e.g., Facebook, reading the news, etc.).

MOBILE PHONE USE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN CLASS FOR ANY REASON. As a courtesy to others, you are expected to turn off or put your phone on silent during the class session. Any student using a mobile phone in class may be asked to leave the room.

Course Requirements and Grading Rationale/System:

Your total course grade will be based on the following evaluations:

Group Project	50%
Individual Article Reviews	25%
Class Participation	25%

Evaluations and Assignments:

Capstone Project: Applied Psychoeducational Activity (Group)

The primary Capstone project will consist of a group project in which students will design and implement a psychoeducational activity that addresses an issue/problem that is relevant to the Madrid campus community, and to which psychological theory and science can be applied. Students will work in groups of 3-4 to choose a relevant topic, investigate that topic, and create a psychoeducational activity about that topic that will be presented to the campus in some way. The idea is for students to apply what they have learned in Psychology in order to solve a real-world problem, and give back to the campus community at the same time. Put another way, students should ask themselves, "How can we use what we have learned to help educate our fellow students in a way that is both practical and valuable to them?"

The project will develop in three phases:

- **Phase 1 (approximately 4 weeks): Identification of Group Topic**

During weekly seminars, students will complete assigned readings by the instructor(s) designed to introduce them to the process of psychoeducation, and to stimulate critical thinking about psychological issues. Students will also find that the readings and topics addressed in class will lead to brainstorming about potential topics for the Capstone Project.

During this phase, the instructor(s) will facilitate discussion about readings, and provide feedback regarding the nature of issues/problems, relevancy for a college campus, etc., as well as guidance regarding the feasibility and appropriateness of various topics. By the end of this period, each group will have agreed upon a topic for the final activity. All topics must receive final approval by the instructor(s). Examples of topics that are often relevant for college student that may be addressed by psychological science include poor stress management, body image issues, development of cultural identity, LGBTQ and/or sexuality issues, study skills, racism and prejudice between students, etc. Keep in mind that topics do not need to be “clinical” in nature, or represent a specific psychopathology or mental health problem; rather, topics may be derived from any subfield of psychology, ranging from multicultural identity development to addiction to mindfulness, and beyond. Ultimately, the final topic chosen by each group should be the product of discussion, research, and debate, until the group reaches a consensus about the topic they would most like to work on, and one which they believe will have the greatest impact or benefit for their peers.

- **Phase 2 (approximately 4 weeks): Research/Literature Review**

During this phase, students will begin to investigate more thoroughly the topic their group has chosen for the final project. In other words, before students can educate others about their topic, they first need to educate themselves. Facilitated by the instructor, each group will create an outline of their topic which includes the major subtopics or themes they will need to investigate in order to fully understand the issue at hand. The outline must be approved by the instructor(s). It is important that any psychoeducational activity presented to the campus be based in psychological science, thus, each group will be expected to conduct a comprehensive literature review of the topic. *Group members will be required to divide up the work equitably, and each member will complete part of the literature review for the group, which will be graded separately and on an individual basis.*

- **Capstone Research and Empirical Article Review (Individual)**

- In preparation for the group project, each group member will be required to find and review at least FIVE empirical articles related to the selected subtopic. The student will research the topic, select the articles for review, and write a brief, one-page (maximum) summary of the study’s aims, method, results, and implications for the group project. In order to avoid repetition of articles among group members, subtopics for research will be generated and divided up by the group during seminar. For example, if the topic is smoking cessation, one group member may investigate personality variables of college students who smoke, whereas, another group member may investigate effective smoking cessation

strategies for college students. Due date to be determined based upon group progress in Phase 1.

- During seminar, each group member will have an opportunity to present their subtopics/articles orally to the rest of the group for discussion. Students will be required to turn in their article summaries for credit, and will receive an individual grade for this part of the project.

- **Phase 3 (approximately 8 weeks): Activity Design and Implementation**

During this phase, group members will work together to design an activity about their topic that serves to educate and engage the student body. Once again, the goal of this activity is to apply psychological knowledge and science to the daily issues that we all confront, and to somehow use this information in a way that is useful in the community. The actual activity chosen will depend both on the topic itself as well as the creativity and ingenuity of the group members. Group members are, after all, members of the student body, and are in an excellent position both to identify the subjects that are important to their peers, as well as to decide how best to “get the word out” around campus. At this stage, class time will be divided up as needed, allowing time for the group to present their work/progress to the instructor(s) in order to get feedback, as well as for students to engage in independent, unguided group work. While the instructor(s) must ultimately approve the activity based on its ethical and professional qualities and feasibility for the Madrid campus, students will have significant flexibility regarding the presentation format. Groups will be expected to “present” their activity to the campus community during the final two weeks of classes (before final exams), although the actual timing will depend greatly on the nature of the activity.

NOTE: The psychoeducational activity is graded based on GROUP WORK, thus, each group member will receive the same final project grade, based on their cumulative work. The final work product of the group will be judged based on its relevancy to the campus community, the ability of the group to apply psychological science to the topic, accuracy and thoroughness of the information presented, creativity of the project design, and implementation of the activity (e.g., demonstration of public speaking skills, organizational skills, ability to work well as a team).

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY GRADE POLICY

A	94-100	4.0	SOBRESALIENTE
A-	90-93	3.7	SOBRESALIENTE BAJO
B+	87-89	3.3	NOTABLE ALTO
B	84-86	3.0	NOTABLE
B-	80-83	2.7	NOTABLE BAJO
C+	77-79	2.3	APROBADO ALTO
C	74-76	2.0	APROBADO
C-	70-73	1.7	APROBADO BAJO
D	60-69	1.0	APROBADO BAJÍSIMO
F	<60	0.0	SUSPENSO
P/NP			APTO / NO APTO
W			CLASE RETIRADA

University Statement on Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the

greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office [website](#) at: Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

University Title IX Statement: Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multilingual Therapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

Students with Special Needs: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/campus-life/student-services/disability-services>

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via

email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

***Note about University Counseling Services:** Since Dr. Mazzuca is the Director of the University Counseling Services. Students enrolled in PSY 4900 who would like to access any of the services provided by the University Counseling Center are asked to speak directly with the other counselor, Eduardo Fernandez-Cruz, Ph.D., or to contact directly the outside services provider, Sinew MTI, for a consultation or counseling appointment (listed on the Counseling Services website).

Fall 2017 Important Dates:

Academic Calendar: <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/fall-2017>