

PSY 2385-002 Writing in Psychology (Spring 2025)
CRN 23189 STEM 125 TR 8:00 – 9:15 AM



Professor Brett Murphy, J.D., Ph.D. **Phone** 210-784-2814
Office STEM 237E **E-mail** brett.murphy@tamusa.edu
Student Office Hours Tues/Thurs: 3:30 – 5PM
Weds: 10-11AM, 4 – 5PM
By Appointment via Calendly:
<https://calendly.com/bmurphy-tamusa/dr-murphy-office-hours>

Course Description:

An introduction to APA style and writing in psychology. Focus will be placed on interpretation of published psychological research and refining writing skills for different communication purposes. Prerequisites: PSYC 2301 (Introduction to Psychology); Co-requisites PSYC 2388 (Research Methods & Statistics 1).

Required Course Materials:

- ***Handbook:*** American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual* (7th ed). Washington, DC: Author.

Contact Guidelines:

I will strive to be available to aid your learning process by providing a number of ways to contact me:

- ***Email:*** Only use official university e-mail and include the course and section (e.g., PSYC 2385) and full name in subject line. Please do not use Blackboard messages! My university email is my primary and preferred point of contact outside of the classroom.

I check my email regularly on Monday – Friday from 8 to 5. I will generally respond within 24 hours of this timeframe. If you do not hear back from me, email again in the event your message went to my Junk email box and/or follow up directly with me in class or during office hours (see above).

On the weekends, I am not available by email, but will reply on the subsequent Monday. Please plan especially when it comes to clarifying assignment instructions and/or submission requirements.

In all communications, please be professional in your tone and specific in your message (i.e., avoid informal correspondence styles like text messaging which lack appropriate punctuation and capitalization). Your correspondence **MUST** include the information specified above. If you send an email without sufficient information, I likely will not reply or may reply asking for clarification about your inquiry (this can result in an unnecessary delay). Please begin a new email thread in lieu of responding back to older emails if you are beginning a new conversation unrelated to the previous email (this helps minimize confusion caused by chain replies).

- ***Student Hours:*** I will be available in my office (STEM 237C) to meet during student hours (see times listed above). Student hours are dedicated to interacting with and providing students with assistance regarding course work. An appointment is not necessary to attend these hours, but interactions are limited to a first-come, first-served basis. If there is a specific assignment/materials or topic you want to discuss, providing advance notice will allow me to have these resources ready. If students cannot meet during these times, an alternative time can be requested via email and I will do my best to try to accommodate students accordingly. For discussions involving more personal and/or sensitive

information, some forms of advance notice is recommended.

Specific Learning Objectives (from APA Guidelines for Psychology Majors):

This course will assess your ability to:	Specific Outcomes
2.2 Demonstrate psychology information literacy	2.2a Read and summarize general ideas and conclusions from psychological sources accurately
	2.2b Describe what kinds of additional information beyond personal experience are acceptable in developing behavioral explanations (i.e., popular press reports vs. scientific findings)
	2.2c Identify and navigate psychology databases and other legitimate sources of psychology information
	2.2d Articulate criteria for identifying objective sources of psychological information
	2.2e Interpret simple graphs and statistical findings
2.4 Interpret, design, and conduct basic psychological research	2.4c Define and explain the purpose of key research concepts that characterize psychological research (e.g., hypothesis, operational definition)
	2.4e Explain why conclusions in psychological projects must be both reliable and valid
4.1 Demonstrate effective writing for different purposes	4.1a Express ideas in written formats that reflect basic psychological concepts and principles
	4.1b Recognize writing content and format differ based on purpose (e.g., blogs, memos, journal articles) and audience
	4.1c Use standard English, including generally accepted grammar
	4.1d Write using APA style
	4.1e Recognize and develop overall organization (e.g., beginning, development, ending) that fits the purpose
	4.1g Use expert feedback to revise writing of a single draft

Assessment and Evaluation:

All assignments, with the exception of in-class work, will be administered from and turned into Blackboard. No paper copies will be accepted unless otherwise noted. Late work will not be accepted without a university approved excuse and/or advance notice with instructor approval. Additionally, you are expected to complete all work independently (see Academic Integrity section for more details on independent work).

The following descriptions are intentionally brief. A more full and complete set of instructions will be available in class and through Blackboard throughout the semester. Furthermore, each assignment will have a specific set of instructions students will be required to follow. For longer writing assignments, there will be specific rubrics provided that will be used to determine the grade students earn on these assignments.

Scientific Communication, Organization, and Planning Exercises (SCOPE) – 20 points each

There will be several weeks where students will practice their scientific communication, organization, planning skills with SCOPE. Students must attend class to be eligible to earn points on these assignments. Without a university approved excuse, no make-up for SCOPE assignments will be accepted. These assignments will help develop and reinforce important skills related to the term paper in this course (see below).

Writing Appointments – 40 points each

As per course requirements, there are two occasions when students will individually meet with their instructor to discuss their term paper (see syllabus calendar). These appointments are mandatory and will be held in my office or via Zoom (depending on student's preferences). During these individual meetings, students will have an opportunity to discuss various aspects related to their research topic and receive expert feedback and guidance from their instructor. For these meetings to be successful, students will need to be organized, arrive promptly on time, and have their various writing documents open/accessible including their APA manual. If students are using an electronic device, make sure it is fully charged and connected to the university Wi-Fi prior to arrival. Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to have specific questions prepared to ask and should take notes during these meetings to serve as helpful reminders when writing later.

Review Assignments – 40 points each

Writing is a practice-driven craft. As a wise person once said, "There are no great writers and very few great rewriters." (Tracy Henley, personal communication). These review assignments will let us practice and share what we know and exchange feedback and ideas among peers.

Writing Assignments – 100 points each

Writing assignments include summaries of a literature review and empirical articles, outlining a paper with APA citations, and producing a first APA-style draft of the final term paper. These assignments will serve as additional means for instructor and peer feedback in route to the creation of the final term paper.

APA Mastery Exam – 100 points

After we cover the APA Manual, students will take an at-home, online test on Blackboard to assess their understanding and application of its principles. More details will be provided prior to finals week.

Final Term Paper – 200 points

The writing assignments all contribute to a final term paper. This paper will include no fewer than 10 peer-reviewed sources over a topic of the students' choice (options to be discussed in detail in class). To be eligible to earn points for this final paper, students must adhere to instructions for writing assignments that contribute to this final work.

Grading:

Course Component	Value	Number	Total	% of Final Grade
SCOPE Assignments	20	10	200	20%
Writing Appointments	40	2	80	8%
Review Assignments	40	3	120	12%
Writing Assignments	100	3	300	30%
APA Mastery Exam	100	1	100	10%
Final Term Paper	200	1	200	20%
TOTAL			1000 possible points	100%

A: 900 and above B: 800-899.99 C: 700-799.99 D: 600-699.99 F: below 600

Missed / Late Homework Policy

Missed assignments will be assigned a grade of zero. You must e-mail your instructor about a missed assignment before the due date or as soon as possible after the emergency that causes you to miss the deadline. *You will not be allowed to earn credit for late assignments and will receive a zero for that assignment unless you experience an emergency/illness. Excused absences include family emergency and death in the family. Work conflicts or difficulty with parking do not count as legitimate reasons.*

Legitimate reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Illness and/or injury (personal)
- Illness of friend or family member that requires your assistance
- Transportation
- Athletic and/or organizational obligation
- Death or injury of friend or family member

Non-legitimate reasons for missing exams, but **NOT** for make-ups include:

- Vacation
- Lack of preparation and/or just not feeling like it

Late coursework will not be accepted for reasons other than those outlined above. Blackboard will not display grades attempted after the deadline posted on Blackboard.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require accommodation(s), please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dsupport@tamusa.edu.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance).

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/uploadfile/folders/sdbowen23/pdf/pdf-635073426137928167-10.100.20.116.pdf>

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. The faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and in special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots’ Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victims' advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant students that would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition and that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, University Catalog and to comply with them, as well as federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

USAGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The use of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is prohibited *without my express permission*, except in the following ways:

- To ensure proper usage of English in students' original self-written materials
 - Prompt: Review the text below and note any grammatical errors. Be detailed and provide examples/explanations.
- To clarify or condense *portions* of students' original self-written materials
 - Prompt: Review the text below and concise the information. Be detailed and provide examples/explanations.
- To identify areas of improvement in students' original self-written materials
 - Prompt: Review the text below and identify areas of improvement. Be detailed and provide examples/explanations.

Students who choose to utilize generative AI tools for this purpose **MUST**:

- Declare the use of AI tools by identifying the program and purpose (i.e., allowed uses)
- Cite the tool in the reference section
- Include their original writing as an appendix to any assignment submission

Students are cautioned that all written assignments are checked for integrity using Turnitin, an AI program that detects plagiarism and language based generative AI content.

If generative AI usage is detected and not declared upon assignment submission, the student may be held accountable for violating the Academic Integrity Policy. The first step following any flagged material is a one-on-one conversation in a timely manner with the student to discuss the situation further and to determine what course of action is appropriate.

Course Schedule:

Although I will do my best to abide by this schedule, it is subject to change with notice. *Italicized assignments will be completed in the corresponding class. Bolded assignments will be started in class, but due by Sunday at 11:59 pm (i.e., the last minute of the day) on the corresponding week.*

Wk	Start of Week	Topic	Assessment Type	Points
1	Jan 20	Syllabus	<i>Knowledge Assessment (Quiz Blackboard)</i> <i>Read Article: Jensen (2024) - (Prep Work Scope #1)</i>	
2	Jan 27	Why APA? & Different Types of Academic Writing Library & Literature Search Strategies	<i>SCOPE #1 (Evaluating Article Types)</i> <i>SCOPE #2 (Literature Search Strategies)</i>	20 20
3	Feb 3	How to Cite In-text, References, Citation Managers (Ch. 8, 9, & 10)	<i>SCOPE #3 (Annotations & References)</i>	20
4	Feb 10	Reading and Interpreting Peer-Reviewed Literature Summarizing and Critiquing Peer-Reviewed Literature	Writing Assignment #1 (APA template with template sections for future assignments, and completed Annotated References Section with common lit review & three other sources)	100
5	Feb 17	Plagiarism, Quoting, and Paraphrasing	<i>SCOPE #4 (Plagiarism/Paraphrasing)</i>	20
6	Feb 24	Practice Peer Review Establishing Topics	Peer Review of Writing Assignment 1 <i>SCOPE #5 (First Draft Slide Deck)</i>	40 20
7	Mar 3	Revisiting the Process: Writing Center, Read Out Loud, Office Hour Appointments	Individual Appointments with Professor	40
	Mar 10 – Mar 15	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)		
8	Mar 17	Organization & Building Arguments	Writing Assignment #2 (First Draft with at least six peer-reviewed sources, title page, introduction paragraph, and reference section)	100
9	Mar 24	Grammar (Ch. 4) & Mechanics (Ch. 6)	<i>SCOPE #6 (Grammar & Mechanics)</i>	20
10	Mar 31	Style: Tone, Clarity, Smoothness (Ch. 4)	Peer Review of Writing Assignment 2 <i>SCOPE #7 (Writing Skills Reflection)</i>	40 20

11	Apr 7	Reducing Bias	Writing Assignment #3 (Second draft with at least 10 peer-reviewed sources, title page, introduction & conclusion paragraphs, and expanded reference section)	100
12	Apr 14	Reading Week and Individual Appointments	Individual Appointments with Professor <i>SCOPE #8 (Appointment Reflection)</i>	40 20
13	Apr 21	The Publication Process (Ch. 12)	Critical Self Review of Writing Assignment 3 <i>SCOPE #9 (Term Paper Planning)</i>	40 20
14	Apr 28	Writing for Different Audiences: Academic Conferences and General Public, Wrap Up Working on Term Paper & Revisions	<i>SCOPE #10 (Presentations)</i>	20
15	May 5 May 6	Last Day of Classes Study Day (No Classes)	Final Paper – Due date TBD (Expanded & Revised Writing Assignment #3 using instructor feedback & critical self-review)	200
Finals	May 7 – May 13 th	Final (see academic calendar for date and time)	APA Mastery Test (Due Date TBD Based on Academic Calendar / Exam Will BE Administered Through Blackboard)	100

Important Dates:

January 20	No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 21	First Day of Classes
February 5	Census Day
April 21	Last Day to Drop with an Automatic “W”
April 28	Last Day to Drop a Course or Withdraw from the University
May 5	Last Day of Scheduled Classes for Weekday Classes
May 6	Study Day – No Classes
May 7-13	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>