



**PSYC 250 (1 credit)**  
**Special Topics: Careers in Psychology**  
**Summer Session I, 2017**

**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

This is a **hybrid** course: the coursework is to be completed primarily online. There are two in-person meetings on Thursday, May 18, 6-8pm and Thursday, June 15, 6-8pm.

**Instructor:** Dr. Megan A. Smith  
**Class meetings:** Horace Mann 186  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Email:** msmith1@ric.edu  
**Office:** Horace Mann 313



**Course Description and Objectives:**

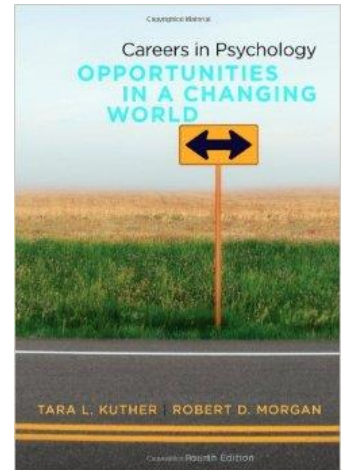
This course provides an overview of the broad range of areas within the field and career opportunities in these areas. The information pertains to a very wide range of students, from those first starting their undergraduate careers to those preparing for graduation. While the class is intended for psychology majors, others may take the course if they are interested in the topic. Some examples may include a student who is considering a major or double major in psychology and would like to know about potential careers available, or a student minoring in psychology who is interested in how to market the skills they are gaining through the psychology minor.

During this course, we will explore career options for psychology majors with a bachelor's degree, and career options for individuals after graduate school (e.g., Masters, PhD, PsyD, EdS, etc.). All assignments will be aimed at helping you learn about available opportunities and develop skills needed to find a job and/or get into graduate school. You will be asked to read the brief chapters from the assigned text, and participate in online and in-class discussions, and write a reflection paper.

**Specific course outcomes:**

- 1) Each student will develop a broad understanding of the opportunities for those studying psychology.
- 2) Each student will identify a career plan based on their interests. This career plan should help students do one or more of the following:
  - a. Specialize during the remainder of their undergraduate work
  - b. Seek employment after graduation
  - c. Seek further education by applying to graduate programs
- 3) Each student will demonstrate basic interpersonal skills by participating in online and in-class discussions with classmates and the instructor.

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### Required Text:

Kuther, T. A., & Morgan, R. D. (2013). *Careers in psychology: Opportunities in a changing world* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

This book is an excellent resource filled with information from a wide range of areas within the field of psychology and opportunities for individuals with varying levels of education (undergraduate through doctorate).

A copy of this text is available on reserve in the library (to be used in the library). In addition, I have put PDFs of the first 3 chapters on Blackboard for you to use while you obtain a copy of the text.

## BLACKBOARD

We will use Blackboard heavily in this course:

- 1) Modules will be posted on Blackboard, and reflections and discussions for online modules will take place on Blackboard.
- 2) Grades will be posted on Blackboard and it is your responsibility to keep track of your grades throughout the semester.
- 3) Announcements will be posted on Blackboard.
- 4) All written assignments will be submitted via Blackboard.

To access Blackboard, go to: <https://blackboard.ric.edu/>. Need a computer? Try one of the computer labs on campus or the Library. Make sure to check on hours of operation during this intersession term:

- ➔ Horace Mann Computer Lab: [https://www.ric.edu/uss/tech\\_center\\_mann.php](https://www.ric.edu/uss/tech_center_mann.php)
- ➔ Adam's Library: <http://www.ric.edu/adamslibrary/hours.html>

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND GRADING

The course is separated into 5 brief modules (one per week), and you will receive points for completing the readings, reflecting on the readings, and engaging in discussions with classmates (either online or in-class). For online modules, reflections and discussions should be posted in the discussion board for the given chapter. For in-class modules, prepare by writing your reflections and questions down. Bring these to class, and engage in the live in-class discussion. There is also a reflection paper, due at the end of the class. Below are descriptions of each learning activity to be used in the class, the rationale for these assignments, instructions, and grading criteria.

### Readings

For each module of the course, I have assigned chapters from the text. The readings are intended to help you learn about the different career options in psychology, as well as to give you an idea of what these different careers are like for those who pursue them (course objective 1). As you read through the chapters, make sure to think about how the information applies to your own life (course objective 2).

The content in the chapters will provide the basis for our online and in-class discussions. Therefore, it is very important that you read the chapters by the assigned due dates. See the course calendar (last page of the syllabus) for specific chapters and dates.

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### **In Person Discussions (5/18 & 6/15)**

We will meet in person during weeks 1 (5/18) and 5 (6/15) of this course. The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate your thinking about the career opportunities in each area, to help you learn about opportunities available at RIC or in our communities, and to help answer your questions (course objectives 1 and 2). In-class discussions will also give you practice interpersonal communications with your peers about your skills related to the field (course objective 3). During the in-person meetings, we will discuss the content from the module readings. You should come to class having read the chapters, and ready to ask any questions you might have.

Grading: Each in-person discussion is worth 15 points. In order to receive full credit, you need to attend class and participate in our in-class discussions. Participation may include asking questions, offering suggestions, providing information, sharing relevant experiences, or other useful contributions. You are certainly not expected to know everything about the topic prior to class. However, you should come to class prepared (i.e., having read the assigned chapters) and ready to ask questions you may have.

### **Introduction Discussion Board (due 5/22)**

This assignment is intended to be completed after the first in-person meeting. The purpose of this assignment is to give you some practice using the discussion boards on Blackboard.

Instructions: Go to the discussion board posted in the “week 1” folder and create a thread with a unique name (e.g., your name). Then, in your thread, post 2-3 sentences introducing yourself to the class. Provide your name as well as your current career plans, if you have them. You may also write about why you are taking this class, and/or what you hope to learn during this course. In addition, you should comment on at least one of your classmates’ threads. You may simply say hello, if you’d like. The purpose of this is to make sure you get practice using the online discussion board. If you have any difficulties or questions, please contact me right away! We will be using these discussion boards for the remainder of the course.

Grading: The module for week 1 is worth 15 points. I will give you 10 points for completing the introduction discussion board. The remainder of the points will come from your in-class participation.

### **Online Discussions**

After reading each chapter within a module, please post something in the discussion board for each chapter. The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate your thinking about the career opportunities in each area, to help you learn about opportunities available at RIC or in our communities, and to help answer your questions (course objectives 1 and 2). Online discussions will also give you practice interpersonal communications in a virtual format (course objective 3). Check the course calendar for specific due dates each week. I will post a discussion board for each of the chapters assigned that week. Within the boards for each chapter, you can start a thread related to the career opportunity you are discussing (e.g., child care workers, teachers, real estate agent). If another student has already created a related thread, then you can post there.

Instructions: Your posts should include both your reflections on the career opportunities presented as well as questions to other students to spark discussion. Here are some questions to consider that will help you create your post: What were your thoughts about pursuing the careers mentioned in the chapters? Did the chapters discussed something you may want to pursue in your career? Do you have no interest in the areas discussed, and if so, why? Would you like to get involved in research in the discussed area? Would you like to take more classes in the area? and so on.

In addition to posting your own thoughts, please read content posted by your fellow students’ and respond to their posts. Responses may include follow-up questions, encouragement, ideas for courses to take or outside of school opportunities to prepare for a given career, resources you have found, etc. I want you to discuss careers in psychology freely. As always, you must remain respectful of your fellow classmates and the RIC community. Remember: treat your fellow classmates the way you would like to be treated!

Grading: Each online discussion is worth 15 points. In order to receive full credit, you need to post (either by creating your own thread or in someone else’s thread) for each chapter, and you need to respond to at least 2 classmates’ posts. Posts will differ for each student, and that is perfectly okay. Please just show me that you

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have read through the chapters, that you have thought about how the content relates to your interests, and that you are engaging in discussion with your fellow students using the discussion boards.

### **Reflection Paper (due 6/22)**

As a conclusion to the course, I am assigning a reflection paper. The purpose of this assignment is to help you synthesize your thoughts about the various career options you have, and to help you outline a concrete career plan to help you move forward (course objective 2). This paper should be around two to four pages (double spaced) and is worth 25 points.

*Content of the paper:* In this paper, you may consider:

- What do you plan to do with your undergraduate degree?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- Why did you chose psychology as your major?
- What type of career do you plan to pursue?
- Have your plans have changed due to this course?
- Did you learn about careers you had never considered? Were able to eliminate potential careers in which you were previously interested?
- What types of experiences you plan to search for to help you achieve your goals?
- Do you plan to do more research on a specific area?

There are many things you could write about. I am looking for your thoughts while reflecting on your career! A good reflection paper will demonstrate thoughtful consideration of possible career paths as well as concrete steps to take to pursue this career path. You do not have to have everything mapped out perfectly. At this stage in your career, you are not likely to have everything mapped out, and that is okay! Further, your career plans are likely to change as you continue taking classes and pursuing opportunities to gain skills. It is perfectly okay to identify areas for which you will need to gain more information, or opportunities you will need to seek as you continue your studies. For this assignment, I am looking for a thoughtful plan that is reflective. If you have any questions, please let me know before the due date.

*Format:* Please submit this paper on Blackboard as a .doc or .docx file. You do not need a title page for this assignment. Please put your first and last name in the header of the document so that it is easy for me to keep track of multiple students' assignments. Your paper should be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

*Grading:* This reflection paper is worth 25 points. You will receive full credit if you follow the directions above. A good reflection paper will include a reflection of at least 4 of the questions to consider listed above, and will be free of spelling and grammatical errors. There are no right or wrong answers for this assignment. Students should be thoughtful.

### **Policy for Late Assignments:**

Because this course is during the summer, it is compact and moves along quickly. Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have access to Blackboard, a reliable computer, and a reliable internet connection throughout the course. Technological difficulties do occur on occasion, so please plan ahead and do not wait until the last minute to complete and submit assignments. You will only receive credit for assignments that are submitted on time, regardless of technological difficulties.

### **Course Grades**

Grades will be assigned based on the number of points you accumulate during the course. Note, it is each student's responsibility to keep track of his or her grade throughout the course using Blackboard.

The table below outlines the distribution of points:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Week 1 module: reading and discussion (in-person meeting)	15
Week 2 module: reading and discussion (online)	15

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Week 3 module: reading and discussion (online)	15
Week 4 module: reading and discussion (online)	15
Week 5 module: reading and discussion (in-person meeting)	15
Reflection Paper	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Grade	Points	Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	93 ≤	B-	80 – 82	D+	67 – 69
A-	90 – 92	C+	77 – 79	D	63 – 66
B+	87 – 89	C	73 – 76	D-	60 – 62
B	83 – 86	C-	70 – 72	F	≤ 59

## COURSE POLICIES

*I have a few policies to make the class a positive learning environment for everyone. I aim to create an environment that is enjoyable, fair, and safe. I have written these policies with students in mind, and will do my very best to apply them consistently throughout the entire course. Please be mindful of these policies:*

### Punctuality:

It is very important that students show up on time for in-person classes. This course has limited in-class meetings, and it is important to be present during the entirety of these meetings. In addition, being late distracts me and the other students.

### Class Conduct:

It is expected that all students act in a respectful manner with each other and the instructor. Disrespectful behavior of any kind will not be tolerated and may result in a deduction from the student's grade. This policy applies to both in-class meetings and online course discussions.

### Students with Disabilities:

If a student is in need of a reasonable accommodation to course policies due to a disability, he or she should inform me within the first two weeks of the semester or within the first week of adding the class, whichever is later. Proper documentation is required. Visit the DSC or [www.ric.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices) for more information.

### Academic Dishonesty:

RIC holds all students to the highest academic standards. Any misrepresentations of another person's work, including plagiarism and failing to appropriately cite original source material, as well as cheating on assignments or exams constitutes a violation of the student code of conduct and will not be tolerated. Such violations will result in a reduced grade or failure in the course. The RIC Student Handbook contains Academic Standards for RIC students (see section 3.9.1: <https://www.ric.edu/studentlife/pdf/RICStudentHandbook.pdf>). Make sure you know and understand the Academic Standards for RIC students. Note, this handbook also has other useful information, such as rights of students.

*How does this policy apply to this course?*

Your reflection papers should be written independently and for this specific assignment. You need to submit your own posts during discussions.

Violations of the student code of conduct will result in an F for the assignment or course, and your actions will be reported to the RIC disciplinary board. Let's avoid this scenario!

Here is a useful website to understand the definition and issues surrounding plagiarism:

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html).

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### Things to Note:

- ➔ The best way to contact me is via e-mail.
  - Please do not send messages through Blackboard or reply to Blackboard announcements – these sometimes go to spam and I cannot guarantee I will receive your email.
  - I will try to respond to all e-mails within 24 hours. If I will be slower to respond to emails for some reason, I will do my best to make an announcement during class.
- ➔ This course is discussion based, and therefore engaging in discussions is vital. If you find that you are having trouble with the course, please email me immediately and ask for help. It is better to do this sooner, rather than later. As the course progresses it will be more and more difficult to improve.
- ➔ This course is about more than just a grade. Given that this is an elective, I am assuming you are taking this course because you want to learn about careers in psychology. Keep this in mind as you go through the modules. Taking short-cuts may get you through an assignment, but in the long run you will not learn as much by doing this.

### COURSE CALENDAR

*for details regarding specific assignments and modules, please read earlier pages in this syllabus*

Week	Topics & Readings	Format	Assignments & Due Dates
1	Can I Get a Job with a Psychology Degree? (Ch 1)	In person 5/18	Read note from Dr. Smith and chapter 1 before class Complete introduction discussion board by 5/22
2	Practice, Clinically-Based, and Health Careers (Chs 2, 3, 5)	Online	Complete readings by 5/24 Complete discussion posts and respond to classmates by 5/26
3	Applied Careers and Applied Research Careers (Chs 4, 6, 8, 10)	Online	Complete readings by 5/31 Complete discussion posts and respond to classmates by 6/2
4	Research-based Careers (Chs 7, 9, 11)	Online	Complete readings by 6/7 Complete discussion posts and respond to classmates by 6/9
5	Preparing for the Job Market or Graduate School (Chs 12, 13, 14)	In person 6/15	Complete readings before class Be prepared to have an in-class discussion!

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6	Work on reflection papers	-----	Reflection paper due by 6/22
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