The Successful USM Psychology Major

The USM Psychology Department Faculty and
The Psychology Scholars
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Welcome to Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior—understanding how people and other organisms develop, learn, think, feel, act, and relate to one another. When you graduate with your bachelor’s degree in psychology, you will not be a psychologist! Rather, you will have a greater understanding of human behavior. Knowledge about human behavior can be useful both in understanding your everyday experience and in making decisions about your career. Our students are prepared for entry-level jobs—in psychology/mental health, social services, law, business, and education—and for advanced degrees in psychology and other professions, such as law and business. The University of Southern Mississippi Department of Psychology provides high quality undergraduate education and is designated a Center of Excellence by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Board of Trustees.

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SECTION 1: TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING AS A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR
Studying psychology at the University of Southern Mississippi will be different than your experience in high school or junior college. Students tell us this all the time. The skills you used in your previous educational experience, whether you were successful or not, may not be enough to ensure your success in college and in the Psychology Department. To help you succeed the faculty have provided the tips for in class and outside of class. These tips are based on years of faculty experience observing the behaviors of successful and unsuccessful psychology majors, as well as input from students from The Psychology Scholars.

**Quick Reference to Helpful Websites:**

- **2017-2018 Psychology Degree Plans**
  - If you need help accessing a different bulletin/catalog year, please email Christy.Oberst@usm.edu

- **2017-2018 Semester-by-semester Guide**
  - If you need help accessing a different bulletin/catalog year, please email Christy.Oberst@usm.edu

- **USM Student Success Website**

- **College of Education & Psychology Student Advisement & Support Center**

- **Statistics Tutoring Center**

- **Department of Psychology Website**

- **Department of Psychology Facebook Page**

- **Department of Psychology Faculty**

- **USM Writing Center**

- **USM Speaking Center**
CHAPTER 1: FACULTY TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Faculty Recommendations for Class (Face-to-Face Classes) Success

• **GO TO CLASS!!**
  o Your occupation is student – treat this like a job.
  o Be early or on time at the latest.
  o Stay the entire class and DO NOT leave early.
  o Sit at the front of class.
  o Pay attention
    ▪ Put your phone or tablet, etc. away & make sure it is on silent or turned off – not on vibrate. Social media will be there when class ends.
    ▪ Avoid talking during class as that is a distraction for you and your classmates.

• Introduce yourself to your professors.
  o Tell them what you are most interested to learn in the class.
  o Use office hours.
  o Ask for clarification of material you don’t understand.
  o Ask for help early.

• Take notes by hand instead of on a computer.
• **DO NOT rely solely on PowerPoint slides.**
  o Many faculty use PowerPoint as a lecture outline and they never have all the information covered in a lecture.
  o Whatever the instructor covers (explanations, definitions, elaborations, examples) are ALL potentially important and helpful, not just the information on the screen/handout.
  o Take notes on the PowerPoint handouts if you have them.

Faculty Recommendations for Class (Online Classes)

Many students expect that online classes will be easier than traditional courses; however, this is rarely the case. In fact, online classes are often more challenging because they require more self-motivation and discipline to be successful. It is easy to “forget” about online classes because there are no face-to-face meetings. If having regular interaction with a faculty member is
important to you and helps you perform better, we advise against taking online classes. Below are some tips to succeed in online classes.

- Until you have experienced the challenges of online classes for yourself, we encourage you to not take more than one online course at a time.
- Understand the technical requirements of the course before it begins and make sure you can meet them (e.g., computer access, reliable high-speed Internet).
- Carefully review the syllabus and make sure you are aware of all requirements, noting all due dates.
- Access the course regularly (i.e., at least 4-5 days a week) to make sure you do not miss announcements or fall behind.
  - It is suggested that you schedule class time each week and record this in your planner. You are encouraged to consider using the Advisement Center as a set location for your “class time” each week so you have a structured location and access to assistance from the Advisement Center staff.
  - Just like a regular class, you should expect to spend at least 3 hours completing class readings, watching lectures, etc., and probably an additional 3-6 hours each week studying and completing assignments.
- Regularly check your USM e-mail account.
- Create a study schedule and stick with it. Online courses require effective time-management skills, and it is easy to fall behind without them.
- Use a consistent workspace where you can minimize distractions.
- Do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments or exams. If you encounter technical problems 5 minutes before an assignment is due, it will probably be too late to resolve them.
  - Email the instructor BEFORE a deadline if you experience problems with the course.
- Make online connections with your classmates. Online courses can be isolating, so use discussions or other tools available in your course to communicate with others.
- Make connections with your faculty instructor. Do this by attending online office hours and/or reaching out via email/phone. Just as in a face-to-face class, regular communication with the instructor is critical for success.
  - Communicate with your instructor especially when you are falling behind or not performing as well as you’d like. Do not assume things will get better unless you are able to make changes.
- Review ALL course materials. Do not skip the lectures. Success in online classes requires that you are using all the materials available.
• Use respectful language when engaging in online class discussions. Just like in face-to-face classes, disrespectful discussion posts are not tolerated.

Faculty Recommendations for Work Outside of Class and Studying

• Study in an environment that is distraction free.
  o No cell phones, loud music, busy environments, etc.
  o Maintain a study routine – write it in your planner and treat it like you would a class.
  o Research suggests that regular studying is better than cramming.
• Keep up with reading assignments.
  o Completing assigned reading BEFORE class will help you:
    ▪ Make the most out of lectures.
    ▪ Clarify information.
    ▪ Contribute to class discussion.
    ▪ Get questions answered.
• Re-write notes in between classes.
  o Makes them more readable.
  o Helps you learn concepts.
  o Put things in your own words so that you clearly understand the concepts.
  o Add in examples from your own life so that you can recall concepts more quickly; making the information personally meaningful is critical to success.
• Review notes
  o Spend about 10-15 minutes reviewing your notes after class AND before the next class.
• Space out study sessions instead of study binges.
  o 2 hours of study spaced over a 1-week period is more effective than 2 hours of study in a single session.
• Attend study groups (if offered) or create your own.
  o Developing a group of study partners is a great way to connect with other psychology majors. Social support is critical to success!
• Quiz yourself on the material often.
  o Quizzes that are most like the actual test are best. Take multiple choice quizzes if you are going to take a multiple-choice test and essays for an essay test. Online programs like Quizlet can help you develop study materials and quiz yourself.
  o Remember flash cards for concepts – make them.
  o Quiz yourself only without the aid of notes at the time the quiz is completed.
    ▪ Using notes/textbook after the quiz for feedback is essential.
Use whatever works for you (study buddy, covering sections of your notes and trying to recite/recall them).

- Prepare early for tests and assignments.
  - Cramming does not work.
  - Prepare for tests as though they are going to be short answer/essay tests NOT just as though it is a multiple-choice test.
    - Can you list the 5 points discussed about something, define or explain them, and give an example. If you can prepare this way, multiple choice questions should not give you much of a problem.
  - Last minute papers look like last minute papers.
    - Starting early allows you to write, step away, and revise and will lead to a higher quality paper and a higher grade.
    - More tips below on writing papers.

- Use a planner/schedule.
  - Most smart phones & email providers have calendars with reminders.

- Use USM resources (see page 5 for Quick Reference links).

- Get good sleep.
  - Sleep is known to enhance learning, so be certain that you are getting adequate sleep, especially around test-taking times.
  - Consider the value of sleep to solidify learning, rather than “cramming” the night before an exam.
Faculty Recommendations on Approaching the Writing Process

The problem: It’s time to work on a paper. You open Word and write your name and the date….You don’t know what to do next…You stare at the blinking cursor and get frustrated and demoralized. If the paper is not due tomorrow you give up and move on to something else. If the paper is due tomorrow you stress out and want to cry and would do anything to have the paper be done.

The solution: Break writing into 2 tasks: 1) What you want to say 2) How to say it.

Part 1: The “What”

The key tool here is to make an outline of everything you want to include in your paper and then put it in the order that makes the most sense. Always have a finished outline before you start writing – it makes it so much easier to write because once you know what you want to say you have a clear vision for how the paper will look. Purdue OWL is a great resource with examples and more details.

*If you don’t know what to put on your outline then you don’t know enough about the material yet or you are being too perfectionistic. Writing is output – any system in the world needs input to create output. To solve this problem go back through your textbook or lecture slides/notes and get a better feel for the information. Maybe you need to read something on the subject that is outside of material covered in class like a research article. However, if you are confident you know the material but still feel blocked up, try a mind map.

One of the advantages of this technique is that by not writing the paper all at once it discourages procrastination. Starting the paper early is easy when all you have to do is add things to your outline. Keep a note on your phone for when ideas pop in your head that could be topics for your paper or would be a great supporting point. Then add them to outline at the end of the day.

Part 2: The “How”

Think of ways you can add detail to your outline. Go through several times and add details that support your main points. Even though this process is two steps you will definitely save time. Think of your time with the outline as an investment not as wasted time.

The more detailed the outline the easier it is to write the paper. In fact, if you allow enough time to make several passes through your outline, adding new detail each time, the paper should almost be written, you just have to add the connecting words and transitions. You will find that the process of writing is much less stressful when you are only thinking about how to make the points from your outline (e.g., Should I use the word “significant” or “important” to best describe
the experiment?) versus thinking about how to make your points and planning the paper at the same time.

If you have trouble with the elements of writing or APA style, the USM Writing Center can help you turn your outline into a paper.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating (including copying from others’ work).
- Plagiarism (representing another person’s words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts).
- Falsification of documents.
- Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student.
- Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members’ involved.
- Unauthorized academic collaboration with others.
- Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct.

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of “XF” for the course, which will be on the student’s transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” For more details, please see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.
CHAPTER 2: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Success as a Freshman

Freshman year can seem intimidating and overwhelming at times; however, it doesn’t have to be. With the right attitude and solid support system, it is very much possible to start out strong and be successful in the psychology department.

A few Do’s and Don’ts to aid in your success:

- **Do** form a relationship with your professors…ask questions, go to office hours, etc.
- **Do** get involved academically as well as in extracurricular activities. For example, join departmental clubs, honor societies, research labs etc., but also make time for things outside of school so as not to get burned out.
- **Do** take breaks and make time to enjoy yourself.
- **Do** try to pin point and follow your interests.
- **Do** set both long and short-term goals and stick to them.
- **Do** push yourself to be your best in all areas; don’t slack off.
- **Do** push yourself to be your best in all areas; don’t slack off.
- **Do** always put school first.
- **Do** use a planner and stay organized.
- **Don’t** lose sight of your goals.
- **Don’t** let your mental health get out of control.
- **Don’t** be scared to ask for help.
- **Don’t** slack off.

Success as a First-Generation College Student

- **Don’t be afraid to ask questions!** Your professors are there to help you.
- It’s okay to not know what you’re doing sometimes, regarding your major and your career. Seek help from professors, mentors, the Student Support Specialist, and the Advisement Center!
- Form a relationship with your professors, they can help guide you through the unfamiliar territory of college.
- Don’t be afraid to make new friends! You’ll be surprised at how many people you meet that are new to college like you.
- Learn to manage your stress. College can and probably will be stressful. Learn what works best for you to manage your stress, and take time for yourself every now and then.
- Go to the new student events. These events often provide helpful tips about the school and how to navigate things around campus.
• Don’t get frustrated if your family is unable to answer the questions that you may have about college (form relationships with your professors!). Not everyone is afforded the same opportunities, but you’re here and you can do this.

Success as a Transfer Student

Being a successful transfer student requires a conscious mind and a willingness to always ask questions, because you might not know all about the Psychology program. You might have to step out of your comfort zone and ask people where things are, where to go, and advice on what you should do. Your success will be determined by your efforts. No one else can put in the work, show up to class, or study for the exams for you. Successful psychology students take responsibility for all of the work that they have to do. Here are some tips for Success as a Psychology Transfer Student.

• Make sure ahead of time that you explore the campus, so you know where you are going & where important buildings or resources are located.
• When making your schedule make sure that the credits from your previous school have all been transferred correctly. If something is incorrect, talk to the Student Support Specialist, Christy Oberst (OMH 133, Christy.Oberst@usm.edu).
• On your first day, after every class introduce yourself to your professors and express how excited you are to be a part of the class. As tedious as this sounds it lets the professor know you didn’t just sign up for this class because you had to.
• If your goals include graduate school, try to join a research lab as a research assistant as soon as you can. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, joining a research lab helps prepare you for graduate school in multiple ways, and as a transfer student the time you have to really be involved and build your competitiveness for applications is expedited. Check out the 2017-2018 Research Lab openings.
• Join the Psychology Club to meet people who can help your learn about your classes and professors.
• Whenever you have a test approaching, study at least one week ahead of the test date in 30-minute study sessions.
• Buy a planner & write down all your deadlines (i.e., exams, assignments, projects, presentations).

Success as a Non-Traditional Student

• Get connected with as many people as possible. Ask questions even when you feel like you should know the answers. Get involved in the clubs, organizations, and meetings around campus. Utilize the resources offered on campus.
• Get familiar with your campus. Know where you can park and locate those parking lots across campus. Learn the three-letter code for each building so you will know where you have class. Walk your campus and visit the resource buildings to familiarize yourself with where each one is located.

• Introduce yourself to your professors. Sit in the front of the class to avoid distractions. If you struggle meet with your professors and allow them to help get you back on track. Get involved with a lab that interests you. Make sure you communicate with your professors when missing class this will show that their class is important to you.

• As a non-traditional student, I understand that keeping our priorities straight gets confusing. Knowing what is most important can be difficult at times. So, learn to forgive any mistakes you make because life will happen. Know your limits and allow a day each semester for you. Be flexible and learn the art of balance, compromise, and asking for help. Most of all enjoy the journey.

Success Tips from USM Psychology Students

• Get to know the people in the Psychology Department, ask questions when you do not understand, and remember you are smart enough and you can do this.

• Careers in Psychology class (PSY 251) was literally the foundation of figuring out all I needed to do to make sure I succeed as a psychology major.

• Keep EVERYTHING you do in the Careers in Psychology class (PSY 251).

• Remember, that your professors do not expect you to know everything they teach. All they are really looking for are students who have an open mind and work hard to learn the material they teach.

• As a psychology student, you will take many classes dealing many different career paths within the major. Be sure to pay attention to the ones you are most interested in and maybe look into joining a research based lab within that area. This will help you gain mentoring relationships with faculty and gain more in-depth and applied knowledge in that area.

• Get ahead of any problems that you may run into before it is too late. For example, if you are taking a class and finding it hard to grasp the information, go to your professor’s office hours as soon as possible to share that with them. They probably have taught that class numerous times and know how to help struggling students. They will not think negatively of you because you need help. Instead, they may even remember and commend you for reaching out to them for assistance. It shows them that you are a responsible and determined student. Besides, one of the worst things that a college student can do is try to solve their issues at the last minute.
CHAPTER 3: EFFECTIVE & PROFESSIONAL E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

E-mail is an excellent, efficient method for communication, and you are encouraged to contact faculty (or their TA) with questions/concerns via e-mail (unless it is something better suited for office hours, see below). Constructing a professional e-mail is an essential skill on the job, so best to learn and practice now. Before sending any professor, university staff, boss, or TA an e-mail, make sure your e-mail follows the guidelines below (for more information, click here).

Before E-mailing
- Consider the timing and subject.
  - Is e-mail the right way to communicate?
  - If a question can wait, would it be better to ask in person – before, during, or after class?
- If you are asking for feedback on coursework (e.g., exam, quiz), it is better to go to office hours (with the coursework if you have it).
- **Avoid asking for information that is readily available online or that your professor has already given you (e.g., IN THE SYLLABUS).**
- Before writing about missing a class, look on the syllabus to find information on your professor’s policy about missed classes. Do not e-mail the professor while sitting in his/her class!
- Better to e-mail than to not communicate at all.

Beginning Your E-mail
- Always use your USM e-mail address when e-mailing about academic matters.
- Identify your purpose for the e-mail in the subject. **Do not leave the subject line blank.**
  - Do not expect your professor to know you, which course you are in (including section number), or your e-mail address.
  - Example: “Subject: PSY 436 Exam 1”.
- Use a formal greeting:
  - Start with a salutation + title + last name (e.g., “Dear Professor XX”, “Dear Dr. XX”)
  - **NOTE: Address ALL faculty as Dr. or Professor unless instructed otherwise**
- Your professor likely interacts with many students each day, so be sure to identify yourself & which course you are in (including section number). Identify yourself: “This is Jane Smith from your Abnormal Psychology class.”
Writing Your E-mail

- **Be specific & concise.** If you have a lot to say, an in-person meeting is better.
- **Make sure requests are clearly written as requests; don’t assume it will be granted.**
- Remember that **e-mail is not confidential**, so be thoughtful about what you say.
- E-mail to faculty should be considered formal communication.
  - What is acceptable for text messaging is not appropriate for professional or academic communications (do not use slang, abbreviations, all CAPS, or emojis).

Before Sending Your E-mail

- Read it over
  - Make it shorter. How can you edit your e-mail so that the reader can quickly understand what you are asking?
  - Make sure the point of your e-mail comes at the beginning.
  - Read aloud to be sure your point is clear.
  - Check spelling and grammar.
- End with an appropriate closing and your full name (e.g., “Sincerely, Jane Smith”). **It is considered rude not to sign formal correspondence to your professor.**

After Sending Your E-mail

- **Wait 24-48 hours (not including weekends & holidays) before following up.**
  - Do not expect an immediate response, and definitely do not send a follow-up e-mail/prompt in less than 48 hours (not counting weekends & holidays).
  - Many professors do not reply to e-mails in the evening.
  - If you do follow up, be polite and keep in mind the pointers above.
- When the professor replies, it’s a good idea to acknowledge the reply and thank him/her.
- If you don’t hear back from your professor, you may want to resend the email.
- If you still don’t hear back, consider following up in person before/after class, or during office hours. Seek help from your mentor and/or the Department Chair’s office if needed.
CHAPTER 4: ACADEMIC SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Your academic success is influenced by many factors, most of which are within your control. Having a personal interest and motivation to learn about psychological concepts will have a direct impact on your academic performance, along with the strategies outlined below.

*Time Management*

- Time management is essentially managing your To-Do List.
- Create a To-Do List.
  - Include all course exams, assignments, and projects, as well as other personal obligations (i.e., employment, family responsibilities).
  - Prioritize demands on your time.
  - Recognize your needs and know your limits.
  - Keep a balance of responsibilities and leisure.
  - Make large tasks more manageable by making a plan.
    - Breaking the task down into multiple steps.
    - Create a timeline for completing each step, working backward from the due date – make informal personal due dates for each part.
- Use your master To-Do List/schedule to make weekly lists & schedules.
- Identify a format that works best for you, and USE IT!

*Organization*

- Taking time to organize in the beginning will save you time later!
- Enact a ritual to prepare to study.
  - Keep notes and handouts organized.
  - Lay materials out – make sure you have everything you need.
  - Create a physical or virtual barrier to distractions and temptations.
    - Avoid plans to study in your bed or bedroom if possible.
- Create an effective study environment.
  - Designate an area just for studying. This will strengthen your ability to focus quicker, and longer, because your mind will make an association.
  - Be sure your study spot has little or no noise.
    - While some people prefer studying with background noise such as a crowded café or with music or the television, these environments typically cause more distractions and waste precious study time.
• Give quiet environments a try, and if you really need some background noise, consider a white noise (many apps offer this) or instrumental music at a low volume via headphones.

• Adequate lighting is important!
  • Low lighting leads to being too relaxed and eye strain which will make you tired.

• Eliminate distractions.

• Make a routine – try studying at the same time each day. Again, this strengthens the association and helps your mind focus quicker and longer.

Reading Comprehension

  o Look up unfamiliar words.
  o Pace yourself – plan to read small sections throughout the term instead of trying to read several chapters in one sitting.
  o Read BEFORE class so you can follow the lecture better & ask questions for clarification.
  o Avoid highlighting every line. Instead, only highlight key words or concepts.
  o Make brief notes while reading, then flesh out afterward.
    • Rewrite important concepts in your own words.
    • Use personal examples to help you remember.
  o Try the SQ3R Method to read actively.
    • Survey the chapter/article quickly to assess the layout and sections.
    • Identify Questions you have about the concepts.
    • Read the text & reflect on the author’s points & how you can apply it.
    • After reading each section, try to recite answers your questions that have been covered without looking at the text. Use your own words and examples. Anything that you struggle to answer will be important sections to re-read until you understand.
    • Test your memory with a review of the whole reading by reviewing your questions, notes, your personal experiences, and how the material fits with the course.

Note-Taking Skills

• Effective note-taking is NOT writing down everything the professor says!
  o Taking notes requires active listening and promotes learning, memory, and reducing boredom.
  o Come prepared to the lecture—read beforehand!
  o Be selective—identify main points. These may be evident via:
• Repetition usually signals important points.
• Concepts written on board/in powerpoint slides (expand what is on the slide) are likely important to study.
• A professor may pause for note-taking after important information.
• Key phrases may include “more importantly” or “above all” or “remember.”

Streamline your note-taking:
• Use your own shorthand (just be sure you remember your own abbreviations).
• Use an outline structure, leaving space to fill in concepts later.
• Be sure your writing is legible.

Don’t stop taking notes during class discussions!
• Powerpoint slides are NOT sufficient for notes, typically they only have a basic outline of the lecture.

After class, review your notes and correct and organize them.

BEWARE of typing your notes.
• Typing tends to promote passive listening.
• Research shows that hand-written notes promote learning.
• Avoid misuse of electronic devices in class.
  • Stay off of social media or websites unrelated to the lecture.
  • Keep alerts and sounds off.
  • Consider the distractions your screen provides your peers.

If you miss class:
• First of all, DON’T MISS CLASS!
  • At the start of each class each term, check the syllabus for the professor’s policy on absences.
  • If possible, email your professor before missing a class (or right after) if you are ill or have an emergency.
  • If possible, hand in your assignments before the missed class.
• Seek notes from multiple peers to synthesize the information.
• Be sure you have read the related readings.
• Seek clarification from the professor if you have specific questions, but DO NOT expect them to review the entire lecture.
• NEVER ask a professor to “go over what I missed” or if you “missed anything important?”

Test-Taking Skills

Preparing for the Test:
• Make a plan for what material needs to be covered & reviewed.
• Avoid cramming – research shows this as ineffective!
- Plan short review sessions – 30 minutes to 1 hour each.
- Recite information spontaneously (i.e., in line for coffee, walking to class).
- Anticipate questions.
- Create study sheets – make a 1-page synopsis of major concepts.
  - Test-day strategies
    - Any last-minute questions – ask professor **BEFORE** the exam begins.
    - Read the exam directions carefully.
    - Ask for clarification.
    - Preview the entire test before beginning to get an overview and plan your time for each section.
    - Ask if you can write on the test – it may be helpful to jot down important concepts or diagrams on a blank section.
- Multiple-Choice Tests:
  - Read the question and **each** answer option carefully.
  - Eliminate distractors (obviously incorrect answers).
    - Spelling errors may indicate distractors.
  - If 2+ answers are correct, look for “All of the Above.”
  - If 2 answers are very similar, chances are high that one of the pair is correct.
  - Find answers/clues in plain sight.
  - Don’t get stuck – make an educated guess & then come back to it.
  - Don’t leave anything blank!
  - Don’t overcomplicate the questions/answers.
  - Don’t change your answers unless you’re confident of the new response.
- Essay Tests:
  - Read each question/prompt carefully.
  - Jot down ideas, diagrams, outlines, examples to clear your mind.
  - Complete easy questions first, then those with highest point value.
  - Organize an outline.
    - 1st paragraph: share an overview and identify main point.
    - Body paragraphs: explain points in detail using specific information, examples, quotations.
    - Last paragraph: summarize.
    - Leave space between paragraphs to add more later if you have time.
  - Budget your time for each prompt.
    - If you run out of time for one prompt, list remaining points and move on.
• This ensures you have at least some chance at receiving points on every prompt, instead of no points for leaving a question blank due to time.
• Proofread if you have time.
• Avoid the “kitchen sink” method of writing everything you can think of on a topic.

Minimize Test Anxiety:
• Understand that test anxiety varies by person, and even by course or exam.
• Sleep is known to improve learning and comprehension. Getting a good night’s sleep is actually better for you than studying into the night.
• Consider your physical well-being.
  • Get adequate sleep the night before a test.
  • Eat a good breakfast on test day.
  • Arrive early to campus and class so you don’t feel rushed.
  • Take a restroom break before the class starts.
• Be prepared with all necessary materials such as pen, pencil, Scantron, Blue Book, Calculator (if applicable), and a watch to keep track of time.
• Resist talking with peers just before the exam – their anxiety can influence your thoughts and emotions (and they may have studied something wrong).
• Calm yourself using relaxation techniques.
• Use tools to help yourself focus.
  • Grounding techniques are a quick tool including identifying something in your surroundings for each of your five senses.
  • Read the question “out loud” in your head.
  • Circle or underline key words or phrases to help you concentrate.
• If you feel stuck, skip ahead and come back.

After the test:
• Avoid after-test stress—once you leave the exam try not to continue worrying about it, it’s over!
• Review returned tests for errors, clues for the next test, and to learn missed questions.
• Evaluate what worked in your note-taking, study skills, and test-taking tips.
• Be flexible in learning what works for you!
CHAPTER 5: MENTORING

A mentor is a guide or an experienced and trusted advisor. In the Psychology Department at USM your initial mentor is your “advisor” and you can find who that person is in SOAR (SOAR→Self Service→Student Center→Advisor box on right side). Perhaps you have experienced the benefit of a mentor growing up, in high school or in another environment. Faculty members in the Psychology Department at USM are dedicated to helping you work toward success at USM and beyond!

Making the Most Out of Mentoring: Faculty Perspective

As mentors, a psychology faculty member can help you not only navigate the winding path toward graduation but help you in many ways you may not be aware of. For example, a faculty mentor can help you:

1. Discuss and decide what you want to do in psychology as a career.
2. Gain experiences you can’t have in the classroom such as research experience.
3. Decide if you want to apply to graduate school and in what areas.
4. Connect you to resources at USM and elsewhere.
5. Make your experience at USM less stressful and more enjoyable.

So, how you make the most out of your mentoring experiences? Below are some pointers from the faculty perspective.

1. **Recognize the purpose of the mentoring relationship.** The first step is to realize the importance of your faculty mentor and thinking realistically about what this relationship entails. A mentor is a guide and trusted advisor. As such, your advisor is more likely to help you solve problems, rather than solving them for you. This may or may not be consistent with previous experiences so it will be important to remember that your mentor is helping you to develop additional skills and abilities. Similarly, your faculty mentor may be able to help you determine appropriate elective classes which will prepare you for your graduate school/career goals, but most course-selection is handled in the College Student Support and Advisement Center.

2. **Contact/connect with your mentor in the first semester and then regularly each semester throughout your undergraduate career.** Approach your mentor in the first semester (this is especially important for transfer students) either through e-mail or during office hours (see email tips earlier in this manual and be sure to always communicate respectfully with your mentor via email). Introduce yourself and state why you are a psychology major. Keep in mind that faculty mentor schedules are busy, so consider this when scheduling appointments during peak times in the semester. Plan a
regular schedule of mentoring (e.g., once each semester). It is helpful to put these meetings on the calendar early to avoid the rush around academic advising and course selection.

3. **Reach out when you need help.** Faculty mentors are most effective when they can help you work through problems before they become emergencies. Seek advice after the first poor grade or missed assignment, rather than waiting until the end of the semester. Faculty mentors can help you establish better study skills, but these are most effective throughout the semester, not only during finals week.

4. **Show initiative in the mentoring relationship.** This may include effectively communicating why you want to meet, being flexible about meeting times, and being prepared for meeting with topics to discuss and questions. Being prepared will help you gain the most out of this relationship. Be on time to all mentoring appointments.

5. **Research mentoring:** Should you join a research lab at some point, be certain to contact the Chair’s office. Research mentors can replace the advisor listed in SOAR. This may be helpful to students who are actively involved with a particular faculty mentor and avoid redundancy in the mentoring process.

Other considerations:

- Faculty mentors all have office hours, but most prefer that you set appointments to ensure that there is sufficient time to address concerns.
- Most faculty mentors also work with graduate programs. You may find that mentoring from graduate students is also useful and informative.
- Faculty mentors will be the ones to write Letters of Recommendation for graduate school or for employment positions. Keep this in mind and develop these relationships early so that you are able to benefit from recommendations that are strong, and unique to your particular situation. Similarly, many faculty maintain contact with community professionals and faculty at other graduate programs. Therefore, honing these mentoring relationships can be an effective way to benefit from this networking.
- Faculty mentors are not likely to discuss your personal problems or engage in therapy; they are happy to help with referrals if needed.
- If you find that you have a preference to be reassigned to a new faculty mentor, please discuss this situation with the chair’s office. Research mentors are commonly assigned as “advisors” in SOAR, for example.

**Making the Most Out of Faculty Mentors: Student Perspective**

Developing a relationship with some of your professors gives you access to educated and experience-based advice about your present undergraduate experience and future career goals. It is great to attend class and get good grades but that is not the overall goal of a college degree. The main goal is to prepare and guide students to their desired career. This is why faculty-student mentorship is so valuable. This relationship helps students reach this goal by simply
developing a professional relationship and asking questions. In addition, it also increases motivation and achievement as an undergraduate student (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010).

After developing a mentoring relationship with a faculty member, it is the student’s job to maintain and navigate this relationship. Keep in mind that the mentor/professor cannot answer a question that they don’t know you have. It is easy to think that professor will just give instructions and the job is to follow them but this is not how it works. This mentorship does not follow a class lecture style but instead a conversation that is mostly geared by the student. With that being said, the student should keep in touch with the mentor, be clear and concise about what they need help with, and update their mentor on their accomplishments and obstacles. Faculty mentors at USM are always there to help but first, they must know and understand what the student needs help with.


CHAPTER 6: CONSIDERING YOUR FINANCES

Cost of Attendance & Finish in Four Initiative
The cost of college reaches beyond paying for tuition and books. The Cost of Attendance for the 2017-2018 academic year is estimated to range between $23,000 to $25,000 per semester (see chart below). Due to the continuing increase in costs of attendance, completing your degree in a timely manner is increasingly important. For this reason, you will be advised to enroll 15 hours each Fall and Spring semester, giving you the best chance to complete your degree in four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charges</th>
<th>In-State Student</th>
<th>Out-of-State Student</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$23,122</td>
<td>$25,122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Use of Financial Aid
Some sources of financial aid will not cover Summer term, but you may have the option of seeking student loans to cover this cost if Summer enrollment is important for you. Keep in mind, however, that each academic year you will have limits to the amount that you can borrow in student loans, which are set according to your academic level (i.e., sophomore, junior, etc.). Therefore, if you are planning for Summer enrollment, you will likely need to be conservative in the amount of loans you accept in the Fall and Spring to have funds leftover for Summer.

Financial Aid Requirements & Importance of Satisfactory Progress
Each source of financial aid carries eligibility requirements to (1) qualify for and (2) continue receiving funds. Failure to meet the expectations will result in financial aid suspension. Contact the Financial Aid Office and Scholarship Office to be certain of the expectations of your financial aid. Most sources of financial aid require you to:

- Enroll in and successfully complete a minimum number of hours each term.
- Maintain a satisfactory GPA (may differ from the USM Academic Standards policy).
- Complete your degree in a reasonable time period.
- More details on Satisfactory Academic Progress found online.
CHAPTER 7: PROBLEM SOLVING IF THINGS DON’T GO WELL

The faculty at USM understand that sometimes things do not go according to plan. Despite our efforts, sometimes we make a poor grade on an assignment –or– despite our intentions, situations beyond our control prevent us from doing well. Here are some pointers to help you overcome these situations if they occur. Remember, ignoring issues will not result in positive outcomes!

- If you become sick and need to miss 1 or more class sessions:
  - Check the syllabus for the professor’s attendance policy.
  - Email the professor to let him or her know of the reason for your absence – before the missed class if possible. Submit assignments you will miss early, if possible.
  - Complete the assigned readings, ask peers in the class to share their notes, and then reach out to the professor during office hours for clarification on specific points. However, do not ask the professor if you “missed anything important” or to review the entire missed lecture(s) for you.
  - If you have 3rd party documentation verifying the necessity for your absence, then seek absence verification from the Student Ombudsmen Office. This is imperative if you missed any quizzes, exams, assignment deadlines, etc.

- If you receive a low grade on an assignment:
  - As soon as possible, plan to meet with your professor during office hours as soon as possible, or email them and ask for an appointment to discuss the assignment and how to improve on remaining assignments.
  - Take the assignment to the Advisement Center and have the staff review the assignment with you to identify areas for improvement.
  - Many courses offer tutoring centers through the course’s department. To learn about tutoring centers available to you, check out the USM Student Success site.

- If you receive a low grade in a course:
  - Speak to the Student Support Specialist (Christy.Oberst@usm.edu) to assess whether or not to consider retaking the course. Many factors will be considered when looking at possible course retakes.
  - If you are advised to retake a course, meet with the Student Support Specialist and/or the Advisement Center to make a plan for improving your performance in the course.

- If you receive a low grade in multiple courses in one semester:
  - Consider what barriers you encountered to your academic success and what changes may need to occur for you to have academic success. This may include working less or considering part-time enrollment, depending on your situation.
  - Make an appointment with the Student Support Specialist (Christy.Oberst@usm.edu) right away to discuss support opportunities.

- If you have life situations that are interfering with your academic responsibilities:
  - As soon as possible, contact your Faculty Mentor and/or the Student Support Specialist (Christy.Oberst@usm.edu) to explore the best course of action.
CHAPTER 8: ENGAGING IN THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT & RESEARCH

Taking classes is only one aspect of your education in the Department of Psychology at Southern Miss. Research and our experience shows us that students who are more highly engaged in the department are more successful. More engaged students tend to be more successful likely because they have more contact with faculty and students, increase their exposure to psychology content and feel a greater sense of connection to the department and psychology as a discipline. It is also through engagement in the department that students learn more about the application of psychology as well as potential career directions. Fortunately there are multiple ways students can become engaged in the Department of Psychology at Southern Miss!

Joining the Psychology Club

- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Melanie Leuty (Melanie.Leuty@usm.edu)
- Click here for the Psychology Club’s Website
- Click here for the USM Psychology Club Facebook group page
- Anyone interested in Psychology is welcome to join.
- There are no GPA restrictions.
- Member dues are $10 per semester.
- Meetings are once a month.
- Provides you with tools and information to help you succeed.
- Opportunities for community service.
- Great way to meet and connect with other students, faculty, and staff.

Joining Psi Chi

- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Michael Madson (Michael.Madson@usm.edu)
- Psi Chi is the International Honor Society in Psychology & was founded in 1929 with a mission to encourage excellence in scholarship and advance the science of psychology.
- Membership Benefits:
  - Receive international recognition for academic excellence.
  - Gain access to Psi Chi’s three publications.
  - Access to seek more than $400,000 in annual awards and grants.
- Membership requirements:
  - Be an undergraduate student majoring or minoring in psychology.
  - Have completed at least 3 semesters or equivalent of full-time college coursework.
Psychology Success Manual

• Have completed at least 9 semester credit hours or equivalent of psychology courses.
• Must have cumulative GPA in the top 35% of their class (sophomore, junior, or senior).
• Must have minimum 3.0 GPA average for psychology courses.

• Psi Chi chapter at USM promotes leadership experience, personalized education, mentoring involvement, and community service.
• The Psi Chi Society lifetime membership fee is $75.

Joining a Research Lab

1. If you are interested in joining a research lab, review research labs with openings by clicking here: 2017-2018 Psychology Research Lab openings.
2. Joining a lab as a research assistant offers invaluable connections and learning opportunities that prepare you for the workforce and/or graduate school.
3. Do not wait until your Senior year. Go ahead and join a lab, even if you don’t know what you want to study. Any research experience is good experience, and you can always switch labs or add another later.
4. When you do join a research lab, be involved by offering your time. Ask what you can do to help with ongoing projects. It will be beneficial for you to learn as much as you can about the research process, and hands-on experience will help you remember. Plus, the more you know how to do on a research team, the more competitive you will be for employment and/or graduate school applications.
5. Your work in a research lab may present opportunities to create posters. Creating posters to present at conferences is significantly easier if you have a lab foundation. Plus, publications and presentations help strengthen your CV.
6. Involvement with a research lab helps you to make connections because you will create bonds with the people in your lab. A graduate student mentor can be endlessly helpful, because they know what you are going through, and it is fresh on their mind. The lab professor is also a great asset, because not only have they already done what you and the graduate students have, they obviously did it well.

Participating in Psychological Research

As a student you will experience many opportunities to be involved in psychological research as a research participant, often as an opportunity for extra credit in some Psychology courses. Not only will your participation as a research participant be beneficial to you, your participation in psychological research within the Psychology Department will also be greatly appreciated by the undergraduate, graduate and faculty researchers who conduct these studies. These researchers
are trying to answer important questions about human behavior and when you participate, you are providing the information that helps them find the answers to these questions. Not only do you gain first-hand experience in research participation & help answer researchers’ important research questions, but they communicate their findings to the world via research presentations and publications in psychological journals. Thus, your participation is an essential contribution to understanding human psychology!

Should you decide that you would like to participate in research studies in our department, you should be familiar with the following guidelines, which describe both your responsibilities, and your rights, as a participant in psychological research.

**Utilizing SONA**

Student research participation is coordinated through **SONA**. If you have never used this system, you can click the link on the right hand side of the website to create an account. For those who already have a SONA account, you can simply log in as you did in previous semesters. Through this website, students will be able to schedule appointments for research sessions. The website also records students’ participation credits, which course instructors will apply towards students’ course grades, based on the number of credits students decide to distribute to particular courses. For example, if two of your courses allow you to earn up to 10 SONA credits for extra credit and throughout the semester you earn a total of 15 SONA credits, you can choose how you would like to distribute those credits toward your courses (e.g., 10 SONA credits toward one course and 5 SONA credits toward the other; 8 SONA credits toward one course and 7 SONA credits toward the other). You CANNOT double up on SONA credits; that is, once you assign a SONA credit to one course, you cannot assign that same SONA credit to another course.

**Note:** It is important for students to check SONA regularly, beginning early in the semester, because most research sessions are conducted for only part of the semester. Students are strongly encouraged not to wait until the end of the semester, as opportunities may not be available at that time. Because SONA participation is one of multiple ways to obtain course credit, it is not the researchers’ responsibility to ensure that studies are consistently available to students. Students who want to earn SONA credits need to participate in studies when they are available if they want to maximize their opportunity to earn SONA credits (as opposed to obtaining course credit via alternatives to SONA participation provided by the course instructor).

**Attending Research Appointments and Cancelling Appointments**

When you sign up for a study, you are communicating your initial intention to participate. Should a conflict arise that makes you unavailable to participate, or if you determine that you would prefer not to participate, you must log into SONA and cancel your session. Researchers conducting lab studies will provide a deadline for cancelling a study session (e.g., participants
must cancel their session at least 24 hours before it is scheduled to occur); if you do not want to participate in a study you have signed up for, you must cancel your session before the deadline provided by the experimenter (this information is located on the study site in SONA). For online studies, you may cancel at any time before the deadline for the study for which you have signed up.

If you fail to cancel your session of a lab study by the deadline provided by the experimenter and do not show up for your session, the experimenter can utilize one of two options when handling your no-show: 1) an experimenter may assign you a “no show” for the study, in which cases you are still eligible to sign up for future sessions of that particular experiment, or 2) the experimenter may assign you 0 credits for the study, in which case you will be ineligible to participate in future sessions of that study for actual SONA credit. It is up to each experimenter conducting research to determine how they prefer to handle participants not showing up to a session and failing to cancel their sign-up for that session in a timely manner. If you cancel your session at least 24 hours before it is scheduled to occur, then you will be able to sign-up for another session of that study should you choose to participate.

Arriving on Time to Appointments for Laboratory Studies

It is important to arrive on time for scheduled research sessions when those studies take place in a laboratory in the Psychology Building. Research participation for students arriving late for their appointment is left to the discretion of the researcher. Researchers may choose to continue with the appointment or cancel the appointment. Researchers are not obligated to reschedule the appointment if a student is late. Researchers are not obligated to allow the student to participate in the scheduled session if the student is late. If you are unsure of where a study is scheduled to take place, you should contact the researcher ahead of the scheduled appointment for further clarification; you should also arrive at least five minutes prior to when your session is to occur in case you need additional time to find the location of your study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in a given research session is completely voluntary. If after arriving for a session or after beginning a session, a student decides not to continue, that student may withdraw without penalty.

About Online Studies

Many researchers in the department offer online studies through SONA. It may be tempting to race through an online study as fast as you can or complete it while distracted with another task; however, this undermines the research process and reduces the accuracy of the researcher’s information. Please be aware that many researchers in the Department of Psychology are now
using quality assurance procedures to make sure that research participants are carefully reading questions before answering and providing thoughtful responses. Students who fail these quality assurance checks may not receive research credit for completing these studies. To make sure you receive credit for participating in an online study, it is important that you read the instructions, read each question carefully, and provide thoughtful responses.

*Receiving Research Participation Credit*

Research participation credit will be awarded by the individual researchers after students complete their appointments. The research credits will usually be posted on the research participation website within 7 days after participation requirements have been met. If credit is not awarded, students should contact the researcher directly about the credit(s). If the matter is not resolved after contacting the researcher, the student should then contact Dr. Alen Hajnal, the SONA administrator, at Alen.Hajnal@usm.edu.

*Credit Value for Laboratory and Online Studies*

It is important to pay attention to the type of study that you have signed up for because you need to realize not only whether the study you have signed up for takes place in a laboratory or can be completed online via any computer (including a personal computer), but because laboratory studies and online studies are worth different amounts of credit. Specifically, laboratory studies are worth 3 times as many SONA credits as online studies of equivalent length. Thus, a 30 minute laboratory study is worth 1.5 SONA credits, whereas a 30 minute online study is worth .5 SONA credits. Similarly, a one-hour laboratory study is worth 3 SONA credits, whereas a one-hour online study is worth 1 SONA credit.

*Receiving Credit if an Experimenter Fails to Show Up to Administer a Study Session*

In the event that your experimenter does not show up for an appointment, you should contact the faculty adviser for the study immediately and explain the situation. When the experimenter fails to show up to administer the study to a participant, the participant will receive full credit as though they actually participated in the study.

*Students Under the Age of 18*

Not all of the research on SONA allows students under 18 to participate. Research that does allow students under 18 to participate should provide instructions for students concerning how to obtain permission from the student’s parent/guardian. If students under the age of 18 are unable to earn the required number of research credits through research participation, then they can complete the alternative extra credit assignment for their courses.

*Comments, Complaints, and Questions*
Students will be treated with all due consideration and courtesy by the researchers and course instructors. Any comments, complaints, or questions that arise in the course of participating in research should initially be directed to the researcher and/or instructor involved. Any concerns that are not satisfied by the researcher and/or instructor may be addressed to Dr. Alen Hajnal, SONA administrator, at Alen.Hajnal@usm.edu.

Credit Transfer

The SONA system administrator resets and archives the credits after each semester. Credits earned in past semesters do not transfer and cannot be used in the current semester.

SONA Quick Tips

- Be sure to register the right classes to your account so credit can be applied appropriately.
- Get a head start on SONA participation because many studies later in the semester have ‘prior study’ restrictions.
- Going into labs for a study are worth more points.
- Read and respond carefully during surveys because you will not be granted credit if you incorrectly respond to a study’s validity checks.
- Joining a research group may give you even more experience with using and setting up SONA.
- Keep in mind to be as accurate and helpful as possible with your responses because soon you may be the researcher of your own study.
- Contacting the researcher when you have questions is highly valuable; they know the most about their research.

Value in Participating in Lab-Based Research Studies

Finding ways to apply the knowledge you are learning helps you to be successful in your classes. Many of your Psychology courses will offer opportunities for extra credit by participating in research through SONA (see more details about this process above). Some opportunities are lab-based (in person) whereas other studies are fully online. While the online studies offer convenience, here are some reasons why participating in lab-based research studies is valuable:

- Participating in Lab-Based studies allows you to learn different ways psychological research is conducted.
- Lab-based studies help you appreciate the application of psychological research you may not appreciate as much through on-line studies.
- You may find a new area of psychology that interests you.
• Participating in a Lab-Based study may give you something to talk with your professor about – especially if it is their study.
• Lab-Based studies allow you to meet additional professors and graduate or undergraduate students in the department.
  o Often times other students are actually working with participants in Lab-Based studies and you can meet new students.
• You are helping out your student peers conduct their research!
• Convenient access to the researcher in-person to ask questions.
• Lab-Based (in-person) studies are worth more points than online studies.
CHAPTER 9: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

On-Campus Resources

- The Psychology Student Support Specialist oversees advisement processes and procedures, as well as helps connect Psychology Majors and Minors to helpful resources. Located in OMH 133, appointments are recommended but not required. Contact her by email (Christy.Oberst@usm.edu) or by phone (601-266-4840).

- Faculty members have a wealth of knowledge about career and graduate school choice within their areas of specialization.

- The Department of Psychology website has some useful information for Psychology Majors such as ways to get involved and helpful resources.

- Like us on Facebook to catch important announcements about deadlines, resources, helpful articles, accomplishments within the department, and job opportunities. Search for Department of Psychology (The University of Southern Mississippi).

- Statistics Tutoring Center is located in OMH 134 and offers individualized tutoring to students enrolled in PSY 360: Introduction to Statistics for Behavioral Sciences. No appointment is necessary and hours are updated every semester & announced in class, as well as posted on building monitors and on the Department of Psychology’s Facebook page (see above).

- The USM Career Services office has a team of professionals dedicated to helping students succeed in their careers. In addition to career counseling, the office staff help students find jobs today that prepare them for their career. The office can help students build their résumé and cover letter, practice interviews, and ultimately find their entry-level job.

- USM Student Counseling Services provide quality services to USM students by promoting sound mental health and the coping skills necessary for successful pursuit of their educational and life goals. As mental health professionals, the counselors work in a spirit of collaboration within the Division of Student Affairs to support individual responsibility, personal growth, and wellness of all members of the student body. Phone: 601-266-4829.
● Students can also seek low-cost counseling services through other clinics on campus (see below). Not sure when to get help? Some indicators that counseling may be helpful include when you notice changes to eating and sleeping that interfere with your daily functioning, sadness lasting several days, nervousness which interferes with test performance, thoughts of suicide.

  ● **Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic** (601) 266-4601
  ● **Psychology Clinic** (601) 266-4588
  ● **School Psychology Services** (601) 266-4594
  ● **University Clinic for Family Therapy** (601) 266-5475

● The **USM Student Success Center** website is an online resource to help with questions from students, parents, and faculty and staff.

● The **USM Writing Center** is located in Cook Library 112 & offers free tutoring for writing projects for USM students. While walk-ins are accepted, appointments are highly recommended. Be sure to take your syllabus and writing project guidelines/rubric with you so your tutor can understand the assignment. Make an appointment on their [website](#).

● The **USM Speaking Center** is located in Cook Library 117 & offers free tutoring for speaking assignments and presentations for USM students. The tutors in the Speaking Center can be helpful for CMS 111 (Oral Communication), preparing for group presentations, and improving your interview skills for jobs. To learn more or to schedule an appointment, visit their [website](#).

● USM offers an online **GPA Calculator** which works by entering the appropriate values from your Degree Progress Report.

**Online Resources**

- APA & scientific writing
  - APA website
  - Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab)
  - William Strunk, Jr. Elements of Style
- Academic success
  - General academic skills
CHAPTER 10: PSYCHOLOGY FAQ

- **How do I contact my professor?**
  - The best and easiest way to contact any Psychology department professor is by email. Click here for a list of all Psychology faculty and instructor email addresses and phone numbers.

- **How can I find out when my professor's office hours are?**
  - Your professor's office hours may also be listed on his or her office door, and on your syllabus, which is your first and best resource for information about the class. If you are taking an online class, your professor may not hold office hours, and can be contacted by e-mail or Canvas. Information regarding faculty office hours is also maintained by the undergraduate secretary in OMH 231.

- **I've emailed my professor but I haven't heard back. What should I do?**
  - Please give your instructors 48 hours to respond to your emails. They may be getting emails from many, many students, and responding as quickly as they can in the order in which they received them. If it has been 48 hours and you still haven’t heard, please send the e-mail again. If you continue to receive no response, please consult your faculty mentor for assistance or the Chair’s office in OMH 231.

- **What is the CoEP Student Advisement & Support Center?**
  - The Advisement Center is a facility staffed by advisors trained to answer your course scheduling questions, address general advisement concerns, assist with connecting with campus resources, and help with tutoring. The Advisement Center is open throughout the semester and requires an appointment only during Intensive Advisement (typically every October & March).

- **How do I know when to go to the Advisement Center and when to see my Mentor?**
  - Your faculty mentors are available to help you with course, career, and graduate school planning on an appointment basis. The Advisement Center staff is prepared to help you with specific course scheduling questions, SOAR issues, and begin any paperwork process associated with your enrollment or graduation from USM. Advisement Center staff will refer you to your Faculty Mentor when appropriate. Advisement Center staff is available for you to drop in during their posted hours of operation (601-266-5662). You should plan to set an appointment with your mentor at least once each semester.

- **How will I know when advisement is?**
• Advisement dates are listed in the General Academic Calendar on the Registrar’s webpage. You will also see posters all over the OMH building that list the Intensive Advisement times for the Psychology Department. Advisement happens in October and March of each year, however you can drop-in to the Advisement Center anytime.

• **When can I enroll in classes?**
  o After you have been advised, please allow your advisor 24-48 hours to check the eligible-to-enroll box on your account, and then check your Student Center for your enrollment appointment. General enrollment dates can be found in the General Academic Calendar.

• **I’m trying to enroll in classes but SOAR won’t let me. Why?**
  o There are three reasons that you might not be able to register.
    - Your window is not open. To check when your SOAR window will be open, look on your student center page for enrollment dates.
    - You have not been advised. Please visit the Advisement Center with your scheduling questions and issues. If you have been advised, please allow 24-48 hours for your Faculty Mentor or the Student Support Specialist to click your “Eligible to Enroll” button. If you are still not able to enroll, please contact your Faculty Mentor.
    - You have a hold on your account. To check to see if you have a hold, look on your student services page for holds. This will tell you the reason for the hold. If it is financial, please contact Business Services at 601-266-4774. If you are on probation continued or suspension, you will need to email the Student Support Specialist, Christy Oberst, at Christy.Oberst@usm.edu who can assist you in preparing for an Academic Standards Meeting.

• **I think I received an unfair grade. Who can I talk to?**
  o The first person you should talk to is your instructor. Take your exam or your paper to your instructor’s office during his or her office hours and ask why you received the grade you did and how you can improve. If you still feel that your grade was unfair, you can make an appointment to talk to the Chair of the Psychology Department, Dr. Joe Olmi by emailing d.olmi@usm.edu; or calling 601-266-4177. He will talk to you about your situation, and about the grade appeal process.

• **How do I avoid being accused of plagiarism?**
  o The best way to not be accused of plagiarism is not to plagiarize. Fortunately, avoiding plagiarism is fairly simple: if you use phrases or sentences that you did not write yourself, put them in quotation marks and cite your source. If you copy anything and paste it into your paper, use quotation marks and cite your source. If
you copy something but change the wording or the order, this is paraphrasing. You won’t need to use quotation marks, but you still need to cite your source. If you read a great argument that you want to use in your own paper, cite your source. If you cite your sources and use quotation marks when necessary, you will not be accused of plagiarism.

- If you use another person’s writing (or your own writing from a previous assignment) without citing the source, you will be caught. The university subscribes to a service which, when your paper is entered, will compare it with sources all over the internet, published books and articles, papers from paper mills, and any student papers that have ever been submitted to it before. If the service finds parts of your paper that were copied from a source, they will provide a link to the source, so your paper and the source can be compared side by side. It is never, ever worth the risk. If you run out of time to write a paper, it is much better to ask for an extension or even to submit what you have than to plagiarize. If you fail a paper, you have an “F” on one paper, and still have time to bring up your grade or withdraw passing from the class. If you plagiarize, you may fail the entire course. Don’t risk it.

- To review the university’s policy on plagiarism, please look in your Student Handbook.

**I have been unfairly accused of plagiarism. What should I do?**

- If you believe you have been unfairly accused of plagiarism, you should talk to your instructor as soon as you can to find out why it is that he/she feels you have plagiarized. If you are unable to resolve the issue with your instructor, you may make an appointment with the Chair of the department, Dr. Joe Olmi at d.olmi@usm.edu. He will talk to you about your situation, and about the grade appeal process. To review the grade appeal process on your own, please click here to see the relevant information from USM'S Student Handbook. Please note that you must make a good faith effort to work things out with your instructor before talking to the Chair, because if you have not, the Chair will refer you back to the instructor.

- If you are unable to resolve things with the Chair, you may appeal your grade before a university committee.

**What is a "W"?**

- A “W” (withdraw) means that you are leaving the class, and will not count against your GPA, although it will remain on your transcript if you are dropping the class after the deadline to withdraw without academic penalty. (This deadline will be listed in the General Academic Calendar.) The decision to allow you to withdraw is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

**What does the grade “NA” mean?**
“NA” means “not attending” and it is given to students who sign up for a class but don’t attend it. “NAs” count as “Fs” in your GPA, and you will also be charged for the class, as financial aid will not pay for a class that you haven’t attended. This is something you definitely want to avoid. Check your schedule at the beginning of the semester and make sure that all the classes that are on there are classes you plan to attend. If you don’t plan to go, drop the class while you still can on SOAR, and if it is past the deadline, see procedures for dropping a class after the deadline. If you feel you have been given an “NA,” in error, please contact your instructor. See more information here.

- **I am unable to complete my coursework in one or more courses this term, what should I do?**
  - In exceptional circumstances, you may request an incomplete (“I”) grade in a course to allow you time to complete remaining assignments. To request an “I,” you should talk to the professor in each course that you may need the “I” and develop an Incomplete Contract before the end of the semester in which the class was originally registered. Refer to this contract for requirements for completion of the course in which you received the incomplete. Incompletes must be resolved by the end of the following term (not including Summer term) or they will automatically change to an “F.”

- **My incomplete suddenly turned to an “F.” What should I do?**
  - Incompletes only stay on your transcript for one semester. If you have not completed your work at the end of the following semester (not including summer), the “I” disappears and is replaced with an “F.” If this has happened to you, contact the instructor of the class right away.

- **All my classes have been dropped from my schedule. What should I do?**
  - If your classes were there one day and gone the next, they were most likely dropped due to lack of payment. Call the business office at 601-266-4137 to find out how you can fix the situation. Once you have paid the fees, if it is past the deadline for you to add your classes back yourself on SOAR, pick up an Add/Drop form for each class in the Advisement Center. You will need to fill out the forms completely, then have the instructor of each class sign the appropriate form, and then take the form to the department office for the Chair’s signature. Once the Chair has signed, take the forms to the Registrar’s office in Kennard-Washington and they will reinstate you. IMPORTANT: Keep attending all your classes while you are in limbo. If you are taking an online class, email your instructor and let him/her know that you have been dropped but will log back in as soon as you are reinstated.

- **How do I get into a closed class?**
The best way to get into a closed class is to attend it and talk to the instructor after class. It is possible that other students who are enrolled are not attending, in which case there might well be a space for you. You can also try emailing the instructor, but you double your chances if you make the effort to show up, particularly if you participate in class. If you want into a closed online class, email the instructor and ask permission. Please note that instructors will be much more inclined to let you in if they learn of your intent the first week of class. If you show up the third week of class and want in, most likely they will tell you to try again next semester when you haven’t already missed so much class.

- **How do I drop a class after the deadline for dropping classes?**
  - Ideally, classes should not be dropped after the deadline. To determine your best course of action and discuss your options, please meet with your instructor before proceeding. You can initiate a request to withdraw from a class using SOAR.

- **How can I find out when my final exams are?**
  - It is available here: Exam Schedule from the Registrar’s home page. Also, make sure to double check your class syllabus and course schedule provided by your instructor as that will always have the most accurate date for your specific class.

- **I am having trouble in one of my Psychology classes. How can I get help?**
  - Your first resource is your instructor. Instructors hold office hours each week specifically to help students who are having trouble. He or she will be happy to answer any questions you have about the lecture, or to go over papers you’ve written and suggest areas for improvement.
  - Stop by the Student Advisement and Support Center in OMH 131 for tutoring opportunities.
  - If you’re having trouble with your writing, another resource is the Writing Center, located in Cook Library right next to Starbucks. The Writing Center has tutors who will talk with you about your writing project and help you figure out what you want to say and how you can say it most effectively. To make an appointment at the Writing Center, please call 266-4821.
  - The university offers several resources to ensure student success. Visit the Student Success Website.

- **I’m taking an online class and I don’t know where to start.**
  - Your first stop should be Southern Miss Office of Online Learning. Click on the Student Support button at the top of the page. Then select the topic related to your questions or concerns. This will give you all the information you need to know. If you are having technical problems, please call the iTech help desk at 266-HELP. If you are having problems with a particular class assignment, please email the instructor of the class. Note: Please do not call the Psychology Department Office.
for help with an online class. We do not have the resources to help you with technical issues.

- **I got a letter telling me I am on probation or suspension. What should I do?**
  - You received this letter because you were on a list of students with low grade point averages. Contact the Student Support Specialist by emailing Christy.Oberst@usm.edu. The Student Support Specialist will guide you through the paperwork to complete to prepare for an Academic Standards Meeting which will give you the opportunity to seek approval to enroll. The Student Support Specialist and Academic Standards Committee will discuss with you ways that you can improve your GPA, and will work out a contract with you which will allow you to continue your education here at USM while you try to bring your grades up. For more specifics about academic probation or suspension, please visit the Registrar’s web page and check out their FAQs.

- **How do I change my major or add a minor?**
  - To change your major, you need to go to the department office of the major you are changing to. If you want to change your major to Psychology, fantastic! Please come to the Advisement Center, OMH 131 (601-266-5662), where you will be given information about the department and advised on coursework for the next semester. Then you will need to visit Margie Newsome in the Dean’s office (OMH 121C) in order to make the new major official! To add a minor, you need to pick up a form from the department office of the minor you are trying to add. To add a minor in Psychology, please come to the Advisement Center, and you will be given information about the department and appropriate courses to fulfill the minor. After being advised, you should visit Margie Newsome in the Dean’s office (OMH 121C) so that she can add your minor to your transcript.

- **How do I declare a minor in Psychology?**
  - To minor in Psychology, please come to the Advisement Center, OMH 131 (601-266-5662), and you will be given information about the department and appropriate courses to fulfill the minor. After being advised, you should visit Margie Newsome in the Dean’s office (OMH 121C) so that she can add your minor to your transcript.

- **I am feeling overwhelmed, depressed and anxious. Who should I talk to?**
  - Psychological services are available through three clinics in our building:
    - Community Counseling and Assessment Clinic (601) 266-4601
    - Psychology Clinic (601) 266-4588
    - School Psychology Services (601) 266-4594
Current USM Students can receive free mental health services at the USM Counseling Center.

- If it’s after 5:00pm or a weekend and you need to talk to someone right away, please call 601-606-HELP (4357) or 911.

**I have questions about my financial aid package.**
- Please call the Financial Aid office at 601-266-4774. You can either ask your question over the phone or make an appointment to talk with a financial aid counselor, who will be happy to go over your options with you.

**I have questions about my bill.**
- All billing questions need to be directed to the Business office at 601-266-4091, even if the question is about lab fees for Psychology classes. The Psychology department cannot remove or adjust fees.

**I’ll be ready to graduate soon. What steps do I need to take?**
- For all the information you need on how to graduate from USM, please visit the Registrar’s web page on graduation. There you will find instructions & other important information such as deadlines. Once you follow the instructions to print the application, you can visit the Student Support Specialist in OMH 133 to sign as Advisor. Please note the “Deadline for Graduation” document on the Registrar’s website and pay close attention to the dates your application is due. Make sure to allow plenty of time for your paperwork to be signed and processed.

**How do I activate my USM email address and why should I?**
- You can activate your email address by logging into your SOAR account, going to Self Service, then USM Self Service, then Activate Email.
- You should activate your USM email and check it daily because you may get important communications from your professors. (For example, if one of your classes has to be cancelled at the last minute, the news will be sent out via SOAR to the entire class roster, and only to USM email addresses. For obvious reasons, it would be much better to receive that news the night before than to show up at 8:00 a.m. and find a note on the classroom door.) They might also send you information about your assignments, advisement, or about where a class is meeting if it is not meeting in its regular classroom.
- If you need help having your USM email forwarded to the email account that you prefer (Yahoo, hotmail, gmail, etc.), please call iTech at (601) 266-HELP and they can walk you through the process.

**How do I fill out my course evaluations?**
- You can fill out your course evaluations through your SOAR account.
SECTION 2: ADVISEMENT
Each semester, at about mid-semester, you will plan a course schedule for the upcoming semester(s) by meeting with staff in the College of Education and Psychology Student Advisement and Support Center or by meeting with your Faculty Mentor. You’ll be contacted through your USM email account with instructions for scheduling an advisement appointment. Course scheduling will likely take some “back & forth” with the chosen classes and class timing to find the schedule that works for you. Below you will find more information on preparing for advisement.

**Select a Degree Track: BA vs. BS**

Two degree programs are offered in the Department of Psychology—the Bachelor of Science degree and the Bachelor of Arts degree. These programs are distinguished by the inclusion or absence of a foreign language. For the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, students must take 9 hours of one foreign language. For the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree, the student is not required to take a foreign language and, instead, completes additional general electives for those 9 hours. Except for this distinction, the same basic requirements must be met for both degree programs (124 credit hours and the minimum GPA requirement of 2.0).

**Questions to Consider Before Advisement**

- When do you hope to graduate? (helps you see what you will need to do to be on track for this goal, especially if it is soon)
- What is your course catalogue/bulletin year? (this refers to the catalogue year by which your degree plan is set; this should be indicated on your Degree Progress Report)
- What are your goals for the semester? …with your degree? (this may help to plan electives, timing of classes)
- How many classes/hours do you need to take next semester? (All students should be advised for 15 per semester; students taking less than 15 per semester need a minimum of 6 hours in the summer to graduate within 4 years)
- Do you work or have a family in addition to going to school? If you have a job now, how many hours do you work?
- Do you have any restrictions about days or times during which you can take a course? (It is important to have flexibility but you will be accommodated during course scheduling when possible)
- What class or classes do you know you need to take next semester? Classes essential toward progression of degree should be chosen first.
● Are you satisfied with your grades from last semester? If not, what could be changed to help you improve them next semester?

● What challenges did you face last semester and/or what contributed to your success?

● Does your Degree Progress Report reflect all of the information accurately?

● Have you ever gotten credit for college coursework through another institution?

● Have you ever substituted a course for another course?

● Have you ever taken the same course more than 1 time?

Course Planning & Sequencing

The University of Southern Mississippi has worked with each department to develop Semester-by-Semester guides for planning your courses which take care to split historically challenging courses into separate semesters to promote your success in every course. The links to find these guides are listed below by degree plan (Psychology BS or Psychology BA). Adhering to these guides is strongly recommended. However, we understand that sometimes your situation may require you to stray from these guides—(i.e., transferring courses from another institution, working around class sections that are full). Therefore, we also include additional course sequencing tips below.


- Course sequencing
  - MAT 99 or MAT 101 (depending on ACT score)
  - PSY 360
  - PSY 361
  - PSY 475 (capstone-taken in last semester)

- Courses that should NEVER be taken in the same semester
  - PSY 360
  - PSY 361
  - PSY 475
  - PSY 426
Possible Electives

In addition to completing the requirements of the College and the Department, students will have approximately 38/29 hours unfilled. This number may vary depending on the student's catalog year & other factors. These hours are free choice general electives which students can select from any department. Depending on an advisee’s goals, he or she may satisfy these hours with additional Psychology courses, a second major, or a minor, in an area that will help secure a job, pursue other academic interests, or strengthen application to Graduate School.

General

- PSY 491 (Research in Psychology) enables students to get credit for assisting a professor in conducting research. Credit is pass/fail. This course may be taken for a maximum of 6 hours. This course **DOES NOT** count toward the psychology elective credits needed, but does count toward the general elective credits needed. A maximum of 6 hours of 491 may count toward the degree.

- PSY 492 (Special Problems in Psychology) is a course that may serve a variety of learning opportunities including current topic classes, independent study, and honors thesis projects. Credit is graded A-F

Clinical or Counseling Psychology:

- PSY 312: Counseling Theory & Practice
- PSY 313: Vocational Development
- PSY 330: Principles and Processes of Case Management
- PSY 331: Medical Aspects to Rehabilitation
- PSY 385: Applied Behavior Analysis
- PSY 413: Multicultural Counseling
- PSY 432: Behavioral Interventions
- PSY 433: Workshop in Counseling Procedures
- PSY 435: Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Intervention
- PSY 440: Forensic Psychology
- PSY 453: Psychology of Humor

Brain and Behavior:

- PSY 420: Sensation and Perception
- PSY 424: Animal Behavior
- PSY 425: Cognitive Psychology
- PSY 426: Behavioral Neuroscience
- PSY 450: Social Psychology
- PSY 469: Psychology of Music

School Psychology:
- PSY 270: Child Psychology
- PSY 275: Developmental Psychology
- PSY 372: Adolescent Psychology
- PSY 374: Educational Psychology
- PSY 422: Psychology of Learning
- PSY 432: Behavioral Intervention
- PSY 450: Social Psychology

The Degree Progress Report

The Degree Progress Report (DPR) is part of a computerized system which compares all of your courses, both completed and in progress, with the course requirements for the degree and curriculum year. Students are asked to produce their DPR for a variety of situations including academic advisement, substitution of courses, and graduation preparation. To view a tutorial describing the procedure, visit this webpage.

How to Prepare for Advisement

1. Print your degree progress report (DPR)
   a. Log into your SOAR account
   b. Go to your Student Center
   c. Click on “My Records” in the top left portion of the page
   d. Click on “View My Advisement Report”
   e. Once your report has generated, click on “View Report as PDF”
   f. Click “print”
   g. Change “pages per sheet” to 2 to save paper!
   h. If you cannot generate a report, contact iTech (601.266.HELP) IMMEDIATELY in order to gain access to your DPR!
2. Using the semester-by-semester guides & your DPR, find what classes you need to take
3. Search for the classes on SOAR
4. Fill out the Schedule Form (see below) to the best of your ability
5. Bring your printed DPR and completed/partially completed Schedule Form to the Advisement Center during Intensive Advising for approval

**Advisement Schedule Form**

STUDENT NAME: __________________________ ID NO. ____________

Student Phone Number: ___________ Student Email Address ______________

Schedule: Semester ________ Year ________ Faculty Mentor __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Days/Times</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1111</td>
<td>PSY 110</td>
<td>HOO1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INTRO TO PSYCHOLOGY</td>
<td>TTH 8-9:15AM</td>
<td>JANE DOE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After Advisement

Once a course schedule has been determined, your “Advisement Required” indicator must be released. If you complete advisement with your Faculty Mentor/Advisor, they are able to complete this process for you. If you complete your advisement via the Advisement Center, then your DPR and course plans will be reviewed by the Psychology Student Support Specialist to ensure your course plans appear appropriate and have you on track to graduate. If there are any concerns, the Student Support Specialist will contact you through your USM email to plan for resolution. If there are no issues, or once issues are resolved, the “NEE-Must be advised” service indicator is removed and you are given access to register in SOAR. Completing advisement places course plans in your SOAR shopping cart.
You will still need to log on to SOAR and register for those classes (i.e., complete enrollment/checkout) once your registration window opens.

**Possible Issues that may be Encountered while Enrolling**

Student is “blocked” from enrolling his or herself in SOAR: There are several reasons a student may be blocked from enrollment including, but not limited to:

1. Registration window is not open. Check the student’s SOAR student center for SOAR registration windows.

2. The advisee was not advised for the previous semester and, therefore, their Not Eligible to Enroll (NEE) service indicator has not been removed. NEE service indicator will result in the student not being able to add or drop or withdraw until the NEE is removed.

3. There is a hold on the advisee’s account. The advisee’s student services page will provide information/reasons for account holds.

   A) Financial: advisees should contact business services at (601) 266-4774

   B) Probation continued or suspension hold: requires appointment with Christy Oberst, Psychology Student Support Specialist. Christy.Oberst@usm.edu (601) 266-4840

   C) Hold from the athletic department. If advisee is an athlete, contact athletic department. The Student Support Specialist and other authorized users in the college will be the individuals with access to enroll advisees in classes in “blocked enrollment” situations.

   D) VA Hold. Student receiving VA benefits may not change their schedules after the first day of class without notifying the VA representation in Financial Aid. Notify the VA rep to temporarily lift the hold so the student can add or drop a class. New VA paperwork will need to be filled out and signed by the undergraduate academic advisor to reflect the change.
SOAR HELPFUL TOOLS

The Registrar’s Office provides a PowerPoint presentation to help familiarize students with using some basic aspects of SOAR. You can find this tutorial at http://www.usm.edu/registrar/ and click on Tutorials.

The Registrar’s Office also provides a schedule planning tool, http://www.usm.edu/registrar/ and click on students, then USM Schedule Planning Tool. This tool was designed to help advisors and students arrange conflict-free schedules and arrange specific schedules to meet their needs.

The class schedules that are shown on the results panel will serve as a starting point in developing a class schedule for the term. Students still must login to their SOAR accounts and register for classes.

**Name of Faculty Mentor:**
Self Service>Student Center
See Advisor box on right side of Student Center page

**Searching for classes:**
Self Service>Class Search/Browse Catalogue
Choose the term during which you wish to schedule class, click “go”
Enter a Subject (e.g., PSY, ENG); Choose an exact course number if desired (e.g., 436, 110);
Select course career (i.e., undergraduate); Select Campus (i.e., Hattiesburg); Click “search”.
Follow this process for each new course you search for.

**Finding Degree Progress Report (DPR):**
Self Service>Student Center>My Records>View My Advisement Report

**Printing the DPR:**
Once the Advisement Report has generated:
Click View Report as a PDF>Print>Go to Printer Properties/Preferences>Change “Pages per sheet” to 2

**Finding a Class:**
Self Service>Class Search/Browse Catalogue
Choose the term during which you wish to schedule class, click “go”
Enter a Subject (e.g., PSY, ENG); Choose an exact course number if desired (e.g., 436, 110);
Select course career (i.e., undergraduate); Select Campus (i.e., Hattiesburg); Click “search”.
Follow this process for each new course you search for.
Enrolling in Classes:
Self Service>Student Center>Add a Class>Select Term>Enter Class Number>Enter>Next>Proceed to Step 2 of 3>Finish Enrolling

Possible Errors: Red -this indicates that a correction has to be made. (i.e. Not enrolled, course is full, or a prerequisite has not been met for a course in which the student is attempting to enroll). The red “X” is an indicator that the course is not added to the student’s schedule. In this case, the student will have to do another class search to select a new course.

Message- If this error populates read the message, verify that course has been properly added to the student’s schedule.

Positive Identifier: Green -This indicates the course has been added to the student’s schedule successfully.

Additional Advising Information

- **Double Majors** need to be advised by both major departments. The department listed first on the Degree Progress Report is the department with access to remove the student’s advisement hold. When advising a double major with a CoEP major listed first, ensure that he/she has been advised by his/her other major department before removing his/her NEE.

- **HIS 201/202** Students transferring in either of these courses may need to complete a course substitution form to apply these courses to their General Education requirements. SOAR should automatically populate these courses to fulfill the HIS 101/102 requirement. Native USM students **MAY NOT** take HIS 201/202 to fulfill the requirement for HIS 101/102. Additionally, students **MAY NOT** take HIS 101 & 201 or 102 & 202 to fulfill both Humanities History and Humanities Elective General Education requirements, even if both courses populate into these areas as “satisfied” on the DPR.

- **BSC 107/L** is not a GEC approved course and will not fulfill any science requirements.

- **BSC110/L** or **BSC 111/L** cannot be taken in conjunction with **BSC 103/L** to satisfy the GEC lab science requirement.

- Taking more than 19 credit hours in a fall or spring semester or more than 14 hours in the summer is considered **Course Overload** and requires approval from Advisor, Department Chair, and Dean’s Office approval.
Student would like to **retake a course** to improve his or her grade in the course or overall GPA: Undergraduate students who take a course more than one time are allowed to mark a repeat on the lower grade to improve the USM grade point average. Students are allowed four repeats or 12 hours maximum on course work taken at USM during their undergraduate career. To request for a ‘repeat’ to be marked on a transcript, the student must complete a form available in the Registrar’s Office, KWH 110. Only the student signature is required. For more information see the Registrar’s Office FAQs page. The Registrar’s office will not mark retakes for grades of C or higher.

It is important that students complete the MAT requirement as soon as practically possible. Putting this off has resulted in graduation delays due to students not realizing that they need to take MAT 099 due to their ACT mathematics subscore.

ENG 99E, 100E, and 101

- **ENG 099 (ACT 16 and below):** English 99E, the Expanded Composition Studio, is a one-hour, non-credit-bearing companion course to the first semester of Expanded Composition I (ENG 100E – see description below). Students who scored a 16 or below on the English portion of the ACT are required to co-enroll in both ENG 100E and ENG 99E.
- **ENG 100E (ACT 19 and below):** English 100E is Expanded Composition I. It covers the same material as ENG 101, but does so over the course of two semesters, and in most cases with the same teacher, same students, and even the same classroom. English 100E provides students with additional time, attention, and resources to help them succeed in their college classes. While Expanded Composition is required for any student scoring a 19 or below on the English portion of the ACT, it is recommended for anyone who wants to take a little more time with his/her first college composition class.
- **ENG 101 (ACT 20 and above):** English 101 is Composition I, and is a required course for all Southern Miss students. This course aims to introduce students to the strategies, tools, and resources they’ll need to become successful writers and communicators in a range of academic, professional, and public settings.
- Additionally, students enrolled in ENG 100E in the fall semester will be automatically enrolled in ENG 101E for the spring semester. The spring section of ENG 101E will be at the same time and on the same days as the section they are currently enrolled in.

- Challenge Exam
• If students would like to challenge their placement in ENG 100E, they may sign up for our Challenge Placement Exam.
• Please note: Students who scored a 16 or below on the English portion of the ACT are ineligible to take the challenge exam and must register for both ENG 100E and ENG 99E

Add/Drop a Class After the Deadline

Students have access in SOAR to adjust their class schedules until the published deadlines. To adjust their schedule after the deadlines, students must have permission from the instructor (or Teaching Assistant/Proxy in some cases) and the department chair for the course (or the departmental chair designee). This special permission request is available online for students to initiate via their SOAR account according to the instructions given in this tutorial to follow. The special permission request is intended to assist students and faculty with an efficient and auditable process for reviewing enrollment requests outside of the standard registration periods. Academic departments are encouraged to process the requests in a timely manner to provide decisions which will enable students to respond according to the outcome of the request.

Each request is sent electronically to the instructor (and teaching assistants/proxy if applicable) immediately upon submission by the student. Assuming the instructor approves the request, the special permission is electronically forwarded to the Chair (or Chair Designee(s) if appropriate). Assuming the request is approved, the special permission is electronically forwarded to the Registrar’s Office on the appropriate campus for final processing. The student will receive a grade of W. The withdraw grade (“W”) will not lower the GPA but may impact financial aid and an excessive record of withdrawals may reflect poorly on student's application for employment or graduate school.

Additional Notes: Once a request has been made on a specific class section, a second request for the same ACTION (add/drop) on the same section will not be processed. Students will receive an error stating a ‘Request has already been submitted for this section.’ Therefore, if a request needs to be reversed after it has been processed, please contact the Registrar’s Office for processing instructions.

More information about add/drop after deadline: click here. Any questions or issues in processing the online special permission should be sent via email to the Registrar’s listserv at registrar@usm.edu.
How to Request Permission to Add/Drop after Deadline

SOAR>Self Service > Student Center > My Classes > add (or drop is the same process except for different drop navigation)

In Add or Drop process, the 3rd panel is the Results panel. If a special permission is allowed according to the published deadlines, the Special Permission button will appear as shown below.

To make a special request to add/drop after the deadline, click the special permission button. BEWARE: Turn off your Pop-Up Blockers.

If the class is a variable hour course, the student must indicate the appropriate hours.
Students select the add/drop request, the appropriate reason for the late change in schedule as well as providing a daytime phone in case further discussion is needed and comments to provide additional reasoning.

All blanks MUST be filled in and the ‘understanding statements’ checked, in order for the request to be submitted. The request is NOT official until the student has clicked SUBMIT.

Students receive the following panel next for further instructions. An email is sent immediately ONLY to the instructor (and Teacher Assistants/Proxy if applicable).

No further action is needed by the student. Students should not assume that making a ‘Special Request’ is automatically granted. Any questions regarding the request should be directed to the instructor of the course.