PSYCH 105: Introductory Psychology

**Due: WEDNESDAY 11/13/2019 By START of Class (2:10pm)**

**Submit both online copy (through Blackboard) & a hard copy in class!**

20 pts (10% of your course grade)

**The Case Study Assignment**

**THE PURPOSE:**

**Knowledge & Skills:**

After completing this assignment, you will be able to:

1) Think like a psychologist and form specific connections between the course material and your own

personal experience.

2) Use the information you have learned in this course (i.e., psychological terminology, principles, concepts,

and/or theories) to explain behavior you observe in the real world.

**Learning Outcomes:** This assignment is connected to the following learning outcomes for the course (listed in the table

on your syllabus: 1) ***knowledge of psychology***; 2) ***information literacy***; 3) ***personal and professional growth***

**YOUR TASK:**

You will need to recruit a friend or acquaintance to assist you with this assignment. This individual should be a person who has no formal training in psychology (i.e., has not taken a psychology course or received some other form of training on the topic). Be sure to explain this assignment to your friend ahead of time and get permission to use her/his input in your write-up (see below).

Over the next few days, your task is to pay attention to your behavior and the behavior of others around you. For the purpose of the assignment, you and your friend should observe the behavior of a third party (e.g., another person or group of people). After observing this interaction, the two of you will discuss, interpret, and analyze it together. Your friend will provide the perspective of the “casual observer” (i.e., the average person). You will provide the perspective of the “social scientist” and use the information you have learned in this course (i.e., psychological terminology, principles, concepts, and/or theories) to explain what you have witnessed. ***For these reasons, you should focus on observations you can link to any of the topics covered in the course thus far in the semester.***

Your behavioral observation will be referred to as your “case study.” Once you and your friend have completed the observation, you will construct a “case study write-up” that includes the following information:

1) **Date** of the behavioral observation (i.e., case study).

2) **Location** of the case study.

3) **Brief Case Description.** This description should include any and all details needed to provide a complete

description of the event/observation for someone who did not witness it first-hand. Avoid specific personal identifying details, such as names, to protect the privacy of the people you observe, but be sure to provide a comprehensive description of the event itself and the behavior of the persons involved.

4) **Casual Explanation.** This explanation will be provided by your friend/acquaintance. Ask your friend to

describe what she/he observed and to provide an explanation for, or interpretation of, the behavior. How does the “average person” view the behavior(s) observed? What explanation does she/he give for those behaviors?

5) **Psychological Application.** This application will be provided by you (the social scientist). In doing so, you will

seek to analyze/explain/interpret the behavior(s) you observed using what you have learned in this course. You willconnect your observations to relevant course material (i.e., a specific psychological concept, principle, or theory). Be sure to discuss your case study using appropriate psychological terminology. ***You must also incorporate information from ONE academic source into your analysis (this CANNOT be your textbook).*** Be sure to cite that source both in text and in a Reference list at the end of your assignment using APA editorial style. You should avoid internet sources, with the exception of electronic versions of articles from **peer-reviewed** journals.

6) **Compare/Contrast.** Compare and contrast the explanations provided by your friend (the casual observer) and

you (the social scientist). Were the explanations similar or different? In what ways? Did you focus on different aspects of behavior when trying to explain it? Did you focus on different factors/variables when trying to explain the behavior? What did you learn from this exercise about casual, everyday explanations of behavior and those provided by the scientific study of behavior?

7) **Reference list.** Provide a complete reference entry for any source cited in your psychological application

discussion. You are encouraged to use the APA resources posted in Blackboard for help with APA format.

**THE CRITERIA:**

Review the grading criteria for this assignment on the attached grading rubric (see page 3) to understand what you need to address in your case study to earn points on this assignment.

**Your Completed Assignment MUST Include:**

**1)** ONE behavioral observation of events in your own life.

**2)** A 2-3 page write-up (12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced and 1 inch margins) in which

you summarize and then compare/contrast the two perspectives/explanations specified in this assignment (i.e., a causal/everyday explanation [provided by a third party] and the explanation based on scientific investigation).

**3)** Full in-text and Reference list citation for the ***research sources*** used to complete the assignment (in APA editorial

format).

**4)** A copy of the grading rubric (found at the end of this assignment). Be sure to complete and sign the academic

integrity statement before submitting your assignment.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT:**

Chances are you have made a lot of casual observations of human behavior in your lifetime. You have probably also speculated about the causes of many of those behaviors (i.e., asked yourself “why did so-and-so behave that way?”). Psychologists are also keen observers of human behavior. However, in contrast to the average person, psychologists are interested in determining the causes of behavior using the scientific method and using what they learn to explain other instances of similar behavior. When we say psychology is an “applied” science, we are highlighting how psychologists use scientific inquiry to understand behavior and then apply what they have learned to solve problems in the real world.

This assignment will teach you how to adopt the mindset of a psychologist and form specific, functional connections between the course material (i.e., the science of human behavior) and your own personal experience.

**REMEMBER**: Your write-up should consist of complete, understandable sentences with proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Carefully proof-read your paper before submitting it to avoid losing points.

**PRINT THIS PAGE and staple it to your assignment for use during grading.**

As members of the Cougar community, all Psych 105 students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Please affirm your commitment to academic integrity by inserting your name and signature in the statement below.

***“I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, verify that this assignment is my original work.”***

**Your Signature**: *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**THE GRADING RUBRIC**

This grading rubric will be used to score this assignment. Addressing each element of the rubric well will ensure that you have included all critical aspects of the assignment.

**MECHANICS & STYLE** (25% = 5 points)

1) *Are there 3 or more errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation? If so,*  -2 pts

2) *Are sentences logically related to one another? If not …*  -1 pt

3) *Is the paper’s overall organization consistent and logical? If not . . .*  -2 pts

**APA FORMAT** (20% = 4 points)

1) *Are the in-text citations in APA Format?*

Only 1-2 errors -1 pt

3 or more errors -2 pts

2) *Are the references on the Reference page in APA format?*

Only 1-2 errors -1 pt

3 or more errors -2 pts

NOTE: Failure to include citations for references in your assignment is considered plagiarism so

please be sure to cite all resources you use.

**CONTENT** (60% = 11 points)

1. *Does the write up include a detailed description of an event involving the behavior of*

*one or more individuals under “real world” conditions” Does the description provide*

*sufficient details of all behaviors observed (including verbal and nonverbal) so that*

*someone who has not witnessed it would still have a clear understanding of what had*

*occurred?*  \_\_\_\_/3 pts

1. *Does the write-up provide a critical analysis that compares and contrasts two*

*potential explanations or interpretations of the behavior, including:*

*a) one everyday, casual explanation provided by a friend*

*and* \_\_\_\_/4 pts

*b) another explanation that uses a psychological principle/theory/concept to*

*explain the behavior(s)?* \_\_\_\_/4 pts

**Was the assignment late? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*(2 pt deduction per/day including the due date if assignment was submitted after class)*

**NOTE: Assignments submitted more than 3 days past their deadline will not be accepted.**

**FINAL GRADE** (Mechanics/Style + Format + Content minus any late deductions): **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/20 points**

**Overall Comments:**