

PSY 493: Motivation Spring 2026

Instructor: Shiyu Yang, Ph.D.
e-mail: shiyu.yang@sfsu.edu
Instructor Office: EP 202

Meeting Day: Tuesday 1:00PM - 3:45PM
Classroom: Burk Hall 226
Office Hours: By Appointment (in person/virtual)

Prerequisites: Restricted to upper division Psychology majors; PSY 200, PSY 371, or equivalent.

Course Learning Outcomes ("CLOs")

When a student has completed this course, they will be able to....

- Identify and describe key concepts from a variety of motivation theories.
- Construct clear and concise arguments using **evidence-based** concepts and theories of motivation and emotion.
- Explain socio-cultural factors impacting motivation theories and research.
- Present your ideas to a group of colleagues in a clear, concise, and engaging manner, while incorporating appropriate multi-media support.
- Build and enhance interpersonal relationships with their colleagues, including interacting effectively with others to share ideas.

Class Expectations

1. Be respectful and reflective in your words and actions. We are all valuable members of the learning community we create in this course, and everyone will learn more and have a more positive experience if we treat each other with kindness and respect.
2. Actively engage in our learning community. Complete the readings, watch the videos, and be ready to think, write, listen, and discuss.
3. Uphold high levels of academic integrity. Submit your own work, following the spirit of course guidelines regarding the use of outside resources. Clearly denote when something is your opinion, and use appropriate citation of sources. Be careful of copyright infringement when using online materials. **If you aren't sure, ask.**

Recommended Course Materials

Textbook: Reeve, J. (2013). *Understanding Motivation and Emotion* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9781119367604

It is highly recommended that students obtain a copy of the textbook; a hardcopy or an electronic copy are both fine. Based on past experience, students who have purchased an electronic version indicated that it can be difficult to flip through an electronic book to find the content you want, or to make notes in the text. If you are concerned about cost, you can rent a

copy or buy a used copy of the textbook and sell it back to the bookstore when you're done. A hard copy of the book will also be made available in library reserve for students in this class.

Study Materials

- Lecture Slides (Primary)
- Textbook (Recommended)
- Activities or discussion notes handed out in class
- Other supplemental readings provided on Canvas

Grading Scheme

A = 90% or above

B = 80% - 90%

C = 70% - 80%

D = 60% - 70%

Fail to pass = below 60%

Learning Activities

A) Individual Attendance and Participation (individual based; 20% of Course Grade)

Your participation is a key element of the design of this course. Much of the learning will occur through discussion and activities, either as a class or within small groups. It is expected that you will come to class **prepared** and **ready** to contribute.

What is an “active participant” in this class? An active participant a) speaks frequently during appropriate times (i.e., class discussions) about the topic at hand and contributes to everyone's learning of the material and is not just talking for the sake of talking, b) is professional/respectful of others in the class including peers, the instructor, guest speakers, visitors, etc. c) arrives to class on time and prepared, d) refrains from private conversations/text messaging/web surfing during class time, and e) offers comments/questions that help to create a positive learning environment. Active participation also includes broader engagement, such as forming teams successfully and responding responsibly to other in-class activities or assignments.

B) Mid-term exam (individual based; 30% of Course Grade)

March 17th, 2026

C) Final Exam (individual based; 30% of Course Grade)

May 19th, 2026

D) Team Research Paper (team based; 15% of Course Grade)

Please form teams of five to six students. Each team has the liberty to divide the labor amongst its members as they see fit. To successfully complete the assignments, each team should perform the following two responsibilities: (1) complete a short literature review paper related to motivation and (2) deliver an oral presentation.

The topic must be approved by the instructor by **March the 3rd, 2026**. The paper should follow APA guidelines. You will be asked to structure your paper according to the following outline:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Topic of Interest
 - a) Summary of previous research findings
 - b) What we still don't understand
- 3) Conclusions/Future research ideas

Although there is no limit as to how long the term paper can be, you should be prepared to write an 8–10-page paper (double space; not including references and title page). You will choose a topic pertaining to human motivation (subject to my approval) and conduct a search of the relevant literature. You must select a topic that is at least somewhat different from the topics of others in the class. In addition, the topic must be one for which there is enough academic literature available to allow for a reference list of 10 to 15 separate citations. The citations must be empirical studies or theoretical papers **primarily** from academic journals. Wikipedia is not an academic source.

To ensure that teams are successful in completion of the term paper, each team will be asked to submit a term paper **blueprint**. The blue print should include the following two components: (1) a bibliography with 10-15 scholarly citations and (2) a (tentative) outline of labor division among team members. This exercise is designed to ensure progress with the term paper. The bibliography will help form the foundation of the paper, and the labor division plan will help manage team efforts by highlighting and clarifying individual contribution and accountability. Please submit the term paper blueprint to Cavas by the end of day on **April 14th, 2026**. The final draft of the term paper is due by the end of day on **May 12th, 2026**

E) Team Oral Presentation (team based; 5% of Course Grade)

One of the most important competencies for successful practitioners of psychology is the ability to communicate orally. As a team, you will deliver a 10–15-minute presentation on your literature review topic by using PowerPoint slides on **May 5th and May 12th, 2026**. The goal will be to present the topic to an audience in a way that is succinct and engaging. You will also be required to discuss the relevance of your topic to modern society. Your classmates and I will be the audience, and will be encouraged to ask questions.

The due date of the team research paper is **May 12th, 2026**. Please submit your document via Canvas. *Only one team member needs to make the submission on behalf of the team.

F) Bonus Assignment: Individual Reflection Paper (individual based; 10% of Course Grade)

Due date **April 14th, 2026**, end of day. Write a 2–3-page long paper (single space; no citations required) that reflects on your own life experiences from the perspective of motivation research. For example, you can think of a time in your life when you felt a total lack of motivation in certain areas or activities. Alternatively, you could think of a time in your life when you felt highly motivated or when you oscillated between being highly motivated and totally unmotivated. Think along these questions:

- 1) What makes you so (un)motivated? Is it your emotion, self-concept, mindset, the environment, or something else? Please be comprehensive in analyzing the factors that influenced your motivation.
- 2) What are the consequences of your (lack of) motivation?
- 3) If you could travel back in time, what would you have done differently (or not done) to change your motivational state?
- 4) **Important:** Try to think critically and analyze your life experience by utilizing frameworks, topics, concepts, and theories discussed in this class.

Course Calendar	
Dates	Topics/activities
Week 1 01.27.2026	Chapters 1-4 Overview of motivation science • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities • Form teams (each team should have 5 or 6 members)
Week 2 02.03.2026	Chapter 5 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 3 02.10.2026	Chapter 5 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Continued) • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities • Complete team formation
Week 4 02.17.2026	Chapter 6 Psychological needs • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 5 02.24.2026	Chapter 7 Implicit motives • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 6 03.03.2026	Chapter 8 Goal setting and goal striving • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities • Submit team paper topic on Canvas
Week 7 03.10.2026	Chapter 9 Mindsets & review session for mid-term exam • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 8 03.17.2026	Mid-term Exam (in-person)
Week 9 03.24.2026	No Class; Spring Recess
Week 10 03.31.2026	No Class; Cesar Chavez Day
Week 11 04.07.2026	Chapter 10 Personal control beliefs

	• Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 12 04.14.2026	Chapter 11 The self and its striving • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities • Bonus assignment due on Canvas • Team research paper blueprint due on Canvas
Week 13 04.21.2026	Chapters 12-14 Emotion • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 14 04.28.2026	Chapter 15-16 Growth motivation and unconscious motivation • Participate in class lectures, discussions, and activities
Week 15 05.05.2026	Team project presentation (Part I)
Week 16 05.12.2026	Team project presentation (Part II) • Team research paper due on Canvas • Team presentation slides due on Canvas
Week 17 05.19.2026	Final Exam (in-person)

Canvas: I utilize Canvas to communicate with the class, to post assignments, and to provide supplemental reading materials. The university requires that your SFSU e-mail account be used for Canvas communications. It is your responsibility to check this account for information related to this class.

Disability Access: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/415-338-2472, video phone/415-335-7210) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Title IX Coordinator by completing the report form available at <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>, emailing vpasem@sfsu.edu or calling 338-2032.

To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

- The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/
- Counseling and Psychological Services Center: (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>
- For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

Religious Holidays: The faculty of San Francisco State University shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each

semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed.

Generative AI Tools Policies: This class does not use artificial intelligence tools during in-class discussions. Student use of AI tools is not prohibited, **provided they are used conscientiously to facilitate—but not disrupt or replace—your own active learning.** The instructor reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of GenAI usage for course work. **If you are unsure, please ask.**

- Examples of inappropriate use: relying on AI tools to generate complete paragraphs in written assignments or to answer exam questions (midterm or final).
- **General principle: you may use GenAI thoughtfully and at your own risk.** To decide whether GenAI use is appropriate for your coursework, consider the following questions:
 - 1) Am I confident I can critically evaluate the quality of the GenAI output?
 - 2) Am I confident I can identify mistakes or weaknesses in the GenAI output?
 - 3) Am I confident I can refine and improve the GenAI output?
 - 4) Am I confident I can assess the accuracy or truthfulness of the GenAI output?
 - 5) Am I confident the GenAI output enhances my active learning (e.g., strengthens my knowledge retention, critical thinking, verbal and written communication abilities)?

***Note – I reserve the right to add/change topics, assignments, and deadlines throughout the semester**

Psychology Department Statement on Inclusion

We VALUE Respect, Civility, and Inclusion

The Psychology Department is committed to providing a multi-cultural academic setting and climate that is respectful, inclusive, civil, and harassment-free for individuals regardless of ability, age, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, indigenous heritage, immigration status, nationality, physical appearance, political affiliation, race, religion or spirituality (or lack thereof), sexual orientation, social class, socioeconomic status, or other cultural, demographic, and social identification*.

We ASK that all members of our department, including undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and guests, treat each other with respect and civility. We strive for this in every aspect of our interactions including, for example, in language (e.g., pronouns), verbal and written communication (e.g., thoughtful and active listening), and behaviors in the virtual or real classroom, research laboratory, as well as in any other setting that holds a department function.

Examples of language or behaviors in the academic setting that are not respectful include but are not limited to:

- Discriminatory statements that are overt (e.g., hostility) or subtle (e.g., microaggressions)
- Posting discriminatory materials on campus or campus-related forums (iLearn, Zoom)
- Behaviors or statements that interfere with the learning of others
- Marginalizing individuals based on their social or demographic identity, or perceived identity
- Inappropriate, unwelcome, or non-consensual comments, behaviors, photography or recording
- Advocating for or encouraging any of the above

We encourage ACCOUNTABILITY and seeking SUPPORT

- To receive support for
 - o Asian American and Pacific Islander Retention and Education (<https://aspire.sfsu.edu/home>)
 - o Disability Programs and Resource Center (<https://access.sfsu.edu/>)
 - o Diversity, Student Equity, and Interfaith Programs (<https://equity.sfsu.edu/node/16>)
 - o Mental health at Counseling & Psychological Services (<https://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>)
 - o Physical health at the Health Center (<https://health.sfsu.edu/>)
 - o Sexualized violence at the Safe Place (<https://psyservs.sfsu.edu/content/safe-place>)
 - o Undocumented students at the Dream Resource Center (<https://drc.sfsu.edu>)
- To contact
 - o Professors (<https://psychology.sfsu.edu/>)
 - o The University Police Department (<https://upd.sfsu.edu/>)
- To report
 - o Harassment or discrimination based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation (<https://titleix.sfsu.edu/content/reporting>)
 - o A bias incident (<https://equity.sfsu.edu/content/bias-incident-education-team-sf-state>)
- To learn about the University Code of Conduct
 - o Undergraduate: (<https://conduct.sfsu.edu/standards>)
 - o Graduate: (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/academic-policies-procedures/>)