Foundational Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Social and Behavioral Sciences. Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

The proposed course must contain all elements of the Foundational Component Area. How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

**PSYC 107 Introductory Psychology** requires the integration of skills in critical thinking, social responsibility, empirical and quantitative methods, and communication in the pursuit of understanding how human thinking and behavior emerge. Students will consider information on the complex influences of nature (such as genetic and physiological mechanisms) and nurture (such as other individuals, groups, institutions, events, socio-economic status, and socio-cultural context) that interact to shape the human condition. Students will practice applying critical thinking strategies and ethics to evaluate both internal and external influences on human behavior, to consider social challenges from a scientific perspective, and to identify the neural and behavioral processes that enable normal perception, thinking, learning, and behavior, as well as the disrupted processes that underlie the abnormal behaviors associated with psychological disorders. Students will practice basic empirical and scientific methods that will allow them to properly locate and assess research reports that explore nature-nurture interactions and their influences on human behavior, and to communicate these assessments in oral and written form. At least one of these reports will be conducted in a group format, allowing students to achieve the course goals in both individual and team environments.

**Core Objectives**

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

The proposed course is required to contain each element of the Core Objective.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

1. **Learning Outcome 1.** Students will receive instruction on and will gain a foundation of knowledge and skills in objective, scientific methods of inquiry, investigation, analysis, and evaluation of the numerous factors that interact to predict human thinking and behavior. Specific activities include a) participation in active research projects to provide firsthand insight into the implementation of these methods in a working lab, b) completion of at least 2 independent research debriefing sessions demonstrating the creative thinking and innovation involved in designing research on human psychological characteristics, c) completion of a research reflection on published research and written in the style of the psychology discipline.

2. **Learning Outcome 2.** Students will practice applying these skills to understanding and solving personal and social issues. Specific activities include synthesizing all the elements of critical thinking to develop an original psychology research proposal.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):
Learning Outcome 3. Students will receive instruction on and be able to evaluate and interpret professional and popular media reports, with a focus on the effects and interpretation of different communicative framings that will make them more effective and responsible consumers of research communications. Activities include reading, comparing, and contrasting professional and popular media reports on the same research study.

Learning Outcome 4. Students will use these skills to develop and express an original research proposal in small group teams. They will create a powerpoint presentation of their ideas and film themselves delivering the presentation, where each team member will contribute at least 2 minutes of film time.

Learning Outcome 5. Students will receive instruction on and will demonstrate skill in communication technology through the use of online databases to document sources of support for their research proposal, and the use of Learning Management System for disseminating their final audiovisual report and written reference list following the professional writing style of the psychology discipline.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions):

Learning Outcome 6. Students will receive instruction on and gain a broad understanding of basic empirical and quantitative practices, including descriptive statistics, that identify correlational and causative relationships. Activities include completing objective examinations on published research in the psychology discipline.

Learning Outcome 7. Students will be able to identify appropriate application of accepted strategies for analyzing and interpreting psychological data or observations to understand, describe, predict, and manage psychological characteristics. Activities include the development of an original research proposal that includes the type of data to be collected and the type of statistic(s) appropriate for analyzing the data.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

Learning Outcome 8. Students will receive instruction on and will be able to identify important interactions among elements of nature and nurture that underlie differential development of belief systems and cultural norms, including different civic and gender roles. Activities include discussion and objective examination of ways cultural norms develop and change as a function of information provided about social influences such as socioeconomic status, unemployment, education, war, regional industry, and current world events, as well as how recognizing the validity of different belief systems promotes functionality and productive cooperation among and between regional, national, and global communities.

Learning Outcome 9. Students will receive instruction on and will be able to identify reasons supporting the critical importance of applying standards of ethical conduct and treatment during the design and implementation of psychological research and practice. Activities include experience with active research projects, participation in an Internal Review Board workshop presentation, and discussion of landmark psychological studies, such as the Stanford Prison Experiment.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.