Course Objectives

- “How to use psych thinking in every day life”
- “To give them a completely different perspective on the things they think they know best”
- “How to use psychological concepts to understand and improve their daily lives.”
- “Help them understand that important ‘real life’ issues can be studied scientifically - they don’t have to rely on what someone just thinks or feels.”
- “How to use psychology in every day life and how our behaviors/attitudes are shaped by factors that we may not be aware of or appreciate”
Course Objectives

everyday life

daily lives

real life
Two Blogging Types

- personal blog
- course blog
Personal Blog Requirements

- 300-500 words per week
- briefly describe event/story/link
- analyze it through psychological lens
- identity at least one specific concept/theory from psychology in doing so
Personal Blog

- instructions are to set up blog to be private (only viewable by me and TAs)

- can write one post per week; can write multiple, shorter posts

- do not have to focus on the topic we’re covering that week
  - (though they’re told that broader coverage of topics from course will lead to better/more useful blogs)
Personal Blog Grading

- counts for 20% of final grade

- criteria:
  - how well students demonstrate comprehension of concepts discussed
  - how wide a range of concepts addressed
  - ability to analyze theories and concepts by answering the questions on this handout (or relevant others)
  - evidence of effort and creativity in analyzing life events and putting together blog more generally
Student Evaluations

- “I surprisingly really liked the blogs”
- “The blog assignment helped me realize how applicable social psychology is to everyday life”
- “I personally liked the blog posts, as they were an outlet for me to express the applications to my daily life that I was already making!”
- “Doing the blog posts was annoying but definitely helped to solidify concepts”
- “The blogging task really enabled me to reflect on the concepts learned in class and figure out how to apply them to new situations”
- “I understand the value of the blogs but I was not a fan of them”
Instructor Impressions

- helped accomplish critical goal of course

- gave students in large course opportunity for voice they otherwise wouldn’t have had

- giving feedback mid-semester was *much* easier

- reading the blogs was *much* more enjoyable (especially the creative ones)
Potential Tweaks

- word count?

- require a certain number of posts to transcend personal story telling and include link/photo/news story/video?

- require students to write one post that they do somehow share?
Course Blog

- I write short posts 3 or 4 times a week
- News story, link to a study release
- Students can comment
- Students can also write new posts (but those are moderated by me before appearing)
Course Blog Objectives

- facilitate student/instructor interaction in big course
- facilitate student/student interaction in big course
- venue for presenting current developments beyond textbook
- get students thinking about course material outside of the classroom
Course Blog Issues

- totally voluntary

- platform did not notify students of new posts (the way, say, a Facebook group would)

- worked very well, however, for summer on-line course, in which posting was required
Course Blog Future?

- unclear for traditional courses
- will definitely continue using it in on-line courses
- future integration with ebooks?
Conclusions

- blogging has potential for helping advance toward central goals of teaching psychology

- can work as personal assignments, but also as a forum for class interaction (with right set-up)

- happy to share developments in these continued teaching adventures or blog-assignment-specific materials: sam.sommers@tufts.edu