Instructor: Dr. Jamie Hughes  
Email: hughes_j@utpb.edu  
Phone: 432-552-3345  
Office hours: available by appointment  
Webpage: http://general.utpb.edu/FAC/hughes_j/index.html

N.B., Please read this document carefully. By staying in this course you are providing tacit approval of the policies and procedures outlined below.

**Course Credits:** 3 credits  
**Prerequisites:** Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1301), Introductory Statistics (PSYC 3301), and Experimental Psychology (PSYC 3404)

**Description of the Course:** This is a capstone course for psychology students with Senior class standing that provides an in-depth examination of a controversial issues in social psychology. It also provides a review of how to write reports about psychological topics, and is writing intensive. The seminar format requires that students make regular and substantial contributions to the course, analyze, evaluate, and integrate literature, and justify, and design a research study.

**Student learning outcomes:**
- Analyze and evaluate controversial issues in social psychology  
- Integrate and synthesize research in an area of psychology  
- Chose and defend one side of a controversial debate issue  
- Evaluate other students’ defense of one side of a controversial debate issue  
- Demonstrate critical analysis of empirical research  
- Write a literature review  
- Develop and justify a research question  
- Design and justify a research design  
- Write a complete research proposal

**Who is this course designed for?** This course is intended for online academic partners psychology majors. Students who are pursuing their degrees through academic partners and UTPB take two courses per 8-week session. Two courses per 8 week session is considered full time. Students who wish to take this course in conjunction with more than one other course should do so at their own risk. This is a work intensive course that requires a lot of time. If you do not have 20 hours to devote to this class per week you should consider dropping it. This class is not intended for UTPB students who are pursuing our traditional, face to face degree.

**Professor’s expectations/Time Requirements:** As this is a capstone course, students are expected to have basic skills in information literacy, basic writing skills, knowledge of research methods and statistics, and the ability to comprehend empirical research studies in psychology. Although there are only two papers (a literature review and proposal based on the review) due in this course, these assignments are expected to be professional quality. A professional, high quality research report in psychology requires a substantial amount of work and persistence. Thus, students should expect to spend approximately 20 hours a week reading and writing for this course. Students who are unable to make this time commitment should consider dropping.

**Method of instruction:** This course is designed much like a face-to-face seminar course. Students will be required to read, analyze, and evaluate journal articles controversial issues in social psychology. Further, students will defend their position on the issue. Simultaneously, students will be making progress toward a complete APA style literature review and research proposal.

**Textbook**
  - Read or re-read this text and use it as a reference throughout the course  
  - There is a companion website with good resources: [http://www.jolley-mitchell.com/writingforpsychology/](http://www.jolley-mitchell.com/writingforpsychology/)

**Computer skills and Software Requirements**
Students are expected to know how to use Microsoft Word (save, revise, upload, download documents), and how to download PDFs (Acrobat Adobe may be needed). Students should be familiar with BlackBoard and turnitin software to upload assignments and view feedback provided by the instructor, check grades, navigate through weeks, etc. Students are also expected to know how to use the Dunagan Library catalog and have basic knowledge of database search using PsychInfo, PsychAbstracts, or Academic Search Complete. Students, Faculty and Staff at UTPB can obtain software licensing and media for selected Microsoft titles at very low cost through a software agreement: [http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-for-students/software-distribution/microsoft-select](http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-for-students/software-distribution/microsoft-select)
Communication Plan

Contacting the Professor:
The best way to contact me is via email (hughes_j@utph.edu) I will be checking these messages once a day, unless otherwise noted Monday - Friday. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response to your message and longer if it is a weekend. Please note that I may be away at times during the semester and may not be able to check messages as frequently. Should I have to go out of town or be away from my computer for prolonged periods of time, I will post an announcement and I will do my very best to continue checking messages at least once per day.

I find that our communication can be improved if you format your email in the following way: 1) list your full name, 2) discuss the problem or issue you are having, and 3) discuss what you have done thus far to solve the problem. Of course, if you are not having a problem just include your name in your email especially if your email address makes this ambiguous (e.g., lovesmastiffs@yahoo.com).

Course structure:
1) Controversial Issues Analysis: Each week students will read and analyze two position journal articles. Student will write argument analyses on each paper, and/or they will post and defend their position on the discussion board.
2) Written Reports: Each week there will be readings, activities, or written work assigned to help student stay on track for the literature review and research proposal assignments.

Grading Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument Analysis</td>
<td>2 @ 50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Posts</td>
<td>4 @ 25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>10 @ 20</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAT Assessment (failure to complete will result in 5% reduction of total grade)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This grade (out of 1000) will be converted into a letter grade using the following scale:
A (89-100%)
B (80-88%)
C (70-79%)
D (65-69%)
F (Below 65%)

Assessment Description

Argument Analysis: The argument analysis assignment requires that students read two articles and analyze them. Students will chose three central claims and analyze the evidence used to support these claims. Then they will turn in their analyses of both sides of the issue. These analyses are worth 50 points each

discussion board posts: Occasionally, students will chose and evaluate the strongest and weakest claims for and against an issue via discussion board posts. These are worth 25 points each.
Activities: Activities are designed to help you practice or master a skill and stay on track with your research reports. There are 10 throughout the semester worth 20 points each.

Literature Review: The literature review paper will be a complete APA formatted paper on a topic of the student’s choice. In general, the topic should involve a controversial issue, it should bring together two areas of research, or discuss new methods for research in an area. This will be due in the middle of the semester and is worth 250 points

Research Proposal: A final, professional, and thorough research proposal will be due at the end of the semester. It is worth 350 points.

ACAT Departmental Assessment: Students are required per department mandate, to complete an assessment before the end of the semester. This will help the department determine how we are doing in terms of our department learning goals. Although this will not be graded please do your best.

Extra Credit: Students can earn up to 30 points by participating in research studies or by writing about empirical research (or via some combination of the two).

- Participate in Research: Students will have the opportunity to earn a maximum of three percent (or 30 points) towards their final grade by participating in psychology research projects. Ten points will be awarded for each hour of research participation. To earn these bonus points, students must sign up for an account on the psychology subject pool website (see attached handout and go to Sona Systems) and complete up to 3 hours of research studies; this system will keep track of your progress and your bonus points will be added to your final grade at the end of the semester. Students have until the end of the day of regularly scheduled class to earn these bonus points.
- Write summaries: Students who are unable to obtain their full thirty points by participating in these studies, or who choose not to participate in the studies, may earn their bonus points by writing an article summary and/or critique of a published, peer reviewed journal article in any area of psychology (1 to 2 pages double spaced). Each paper will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will be worth 10 bonus point.
Assessment and Evaluative Feedback:
Feedback is an extremely important feature of my learning and teaching philosophy. For activities and assignments please examine the grading rubrics to understand how your work will be assessed. For activities or papers which have no grading rubric, the evidence, logic, and rationale that you used to arrive at conclusions will be assessed. I will try my best to provide you with feedback that helps you improve your work. If you feel you need more direction, please contact me. If there is any discrepancy in the grade, you should contact the instructor to let her know. If you would like to contest your grade, you should contact the professor with an explanation for why you believe your grade is incorrect and she will re-evaluate it. Be aware that if the professor re-evaluates your grade, your grade also has the possibility of being lowered if some errors that went unnoticed the first time are noticed. For the grade appeal process, go to the Student Grievances page of the Students Services website.

Class Participation:
Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times during a seven day period. It is critical that you read all assignment materials as well as all of the public discussion materials. Your full participation on a weekly basis is not only a requirement; it is also an essential aspect of the online course process. All students are expected to do the work assigned, notify the instructor when emergencies arise, and complete assignments on time.

Blackboard includes a tracking feature, which quantifies how often and when students are active in the course, and also provides information about whether or not a student has accessed different pages of the course.

Course Policies & Suggestions

Discussion Board Rules:
As in a traditional class, student discussions should be conducted in a respectful, courteous manner. Quality postings are more than "Good job!" or "I agree with you!". If you agree with a classmate, explain the reasons for this. If you disagree with a classmate, provide reasons to support your position. Writing discussion posts is different from writing a term paper or an essay question on an exam. As you post messages to the discussion forums, keep the above parameters and the following objectives in mind as they will be the criteria on which I grade your posts:

Relevance: Messages should relate to the subject matter. They should provide information, opinions or questions about social psychological concepts. Relating the subject matter to personal experience is acceptable as long as the focus remains academic in nature.

Concise/Grammatically Correct: Effective messages get to the point, are clearly stated, and are limited to one screen. Also, make sure you are spelling your words correctly, and using appropriate grammar. In other words, this is not like sending a text message.

Interactive: Online discussions work best when interaction occurs. Reply messages should explore, explain, or expand on a concept. If classmates reply or object, the message has served its purpose. A focused message that induces replies from fellow students moves the discussion forward and enhances learning.

Promptness: Your message should appear in the context of other similar messages. Reading the bulletin board regularly provides the opportunity to enter the discussion on a regular basis. Otherwise your comments appear late and out of context.

Logical: Educated persons value arguments that are logical. If your message is not a question, it should contain a logical argument. Conclusions should be clearly stated and supported by premises, reasons, evidence, or grounds for belief.

Novelty: Messages should introduce new ideas, issues, or questions that are relevant to the discussion. This shows that you not only understand the material, but that you also are able to relate it to other issues.

Tips for successful posts
- KISS-keep it short (or within a designated boundary, for example 200 words or less), simple and to the point.
- Check grammar and spelling. Use the spell check. Read or preview your message before posting it.
- Use a subject line that is short, descriptive, and distinctive so as not to confuse the class. For example, if a message’s subject line in week 3 reads simply "week 3," it provides no clue as to content. A subject line that reads "Social Norms at the Movies" at least tells us what the message is about.
- Change the subject line if the conversation has changed or if the focus has shifted.
- Format the message. Use lists and spaces between paragraphs to make the message easy to read and respond to.
- Reference other messages from your classmates.
- Use citations and references if you are quoting another author or your textbook, or any ideas that are not originally your own.
- Avoid file attachments. Keep file attachments to a minimum because the conversation stops while the file is downloaded. It can also be difficult to respond to a message that has only a file attachment and no text. You are welcome to compose your message in Microsoft Word but please do not post it as an attachment in the discussion, instead copy the text and then paste it into the thread. Keep in mind that you might loose your formatting. If a file is attached, be sure to explain briefly in the message what the attachment contains to facilitate the conversation. Article attachments are ok.
- Think value-added. To reduce anxiety about the number of messages, ensure that your message adds value to the discussion. Messages that are appropriate face-to-face yet do not add value to online discussions include the common courtesies of saying "Thanks" and "You're welcome." In an online course, everyone does not need to read these. When replying you may reply to the sender or to the discussion topic, so use reply to the sender privately when appropriate so that the number of non-value-added messages is kept to a minimum.
Add links. Reference your research just as you would in a written paper. For example, use quotation marks for direct quotes and cite sources as appropriate. Also test the URL by previewing your message. To test links you may have added, formatting, and spelling, preview the message before posting it.

Course Sequence and How to Submit Assignments
The course is divided into a number of modules or weeks. For each module students are expected to do the reading first, then the writing or activities. When you have finished the activity, turn it in via the turnitin link posted in the module. You can see feedback on your work by clicking on the icon next to the grade in the “grade center.”

Please utilize the collective intelligence of the people taking this course. If you have a question or need perspective please use the discussion board. Also, you can learn more by explaining concepts and activities to others. Go to the discussion board labeled “Question and comment forum” and ask for help.

Keep in mind the following standards/practices for submission of assignments
- All course assignment and activity files that will be submitted to the instructor should be in Word or RTF
- Be sure to put your name at the top of each page header
- Always keep a copy of all the work you submit so that you won’t need to re-do it if it should get lost in cyberspace.

Instructor and Course Feedback: Please feel free to submit your comments, suggestions or feedback regarding class activities. Send me an email, call my office, or set up a Blackboard/Gmail chat or Skype meeting. If you wish to remain anonymous, please post your note in the general comments message board and make yourself anonymous.

Course survey and extra credit. At the end of the course, I will ask that students complete a teaching evaluation provided by UTPB, and a more learner-oriented survey about what you learned in the class. This feedback helps me improve my practices and therefore if at 85% of the class responds to the survey everyone will receive 2 extra credit points.

Suggestions for Success
There is a lot of reading and writing required in this course. Manage your time well. Schedule reading times throughout the week and estimate that you will spend approximately 16-20 hours reading and writing for this class per week. If you fall behind on the reading, your grade will suffer. If you don’t understand the reading, your grade will suffer. Please speak with your classmates, send me an email, or call me during my office hours if you do not understand something.

Writing takes a lot of time, practice, persistence, and patience. Even if you are a fast writer, you must also be a patient writer. Estimate that for each paper you complete, you will spend half the time it took to write, revising. I recommend completing a paper at least 3 days before the due date. This will allow sufficient time to let the paper “rest” before picking it up to revise it. In addition to practicing good time management, you may also benefit from services at UTPB such as SMARTTHINKING online tutoring for math, science, and writing (more information about this can be found at http://aa.utpb.edu/reach/smarthinking/).

Late Work
Due to the fast paced nature of this course, I will not accept late assignments. All materials (reading checks, activities, discussion board responses, papers, etc.) must be completed by the due date (usually the by end of week ending on Mondays). There are NO EXCEPTIONS. Note, the due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is expected of the entire community of students at UTPB. Academic integrity assumes honesty about the nature of one's work in all situations. Academic dishonesty is treated by me with utmost seriousness. Plagiarism is forbidden and is considered one form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is representing another person’s work as your own, and can take many forms (e.g., copying from another source, not citing an idea, etc.). It is also academically dishonest to turn in your own work to different instructors for the same credit. For example, if you complete a paper for Experimental Psychology and then turn it in for credit in Senior Seminar this is considered academically dishonest and will result on a zero on the assignment. If any form of academic dishonesty has occurred I will follow the prescribed procedures and recommendations of the university and at the least, award the student a failing grade on the assignment. It is each student’s responsibility to fully understand what plagiarism and to develop methods to avoid it. For more information, please refer to www.plagiarism.org. This site will help you determine if you have committed plagiarism. Please note that I use TURNITIN.COM, a site that helps instructors determine if plagiarism has been committed. Students committing acts of academic dishonesty risk automatic failure in the course and disciplinary action by the Dean of Students.


Americans with Disabilities Act
Students with disabilities that are admitted to The University of Texas of the Permian Basin may request reasonable accommodations and classroom modifications as addressed under Section 504/ADA regulations. Students needing assistance because of a disability must contact the Director, Programs Assisting Student Study (PASS) Office, 552-2630, no later than 30 days prior to the start of the semester. The definition of a disability for purposes of ADA is that she or he (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantively limits a major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment or, (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Students who have provided all documentation and are eligible for services will be advised of their rights regarding academic accommodations and responsibilities. The University is not obligated to pay for diagnosis or evaluations nor is it obligated to pay for personal services or auxiliary aids.

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor, or if you need special arrangements in the case the building must be evacuated, please inform the instructor immediately. I am available to meet with you on the phone, via chat, or in person to discuss how I can help you succeed in the course.

Withdrawals
To withdraw from this class, you must complete a withdrawal form with the registrar. Students will not be automatically dropped from the class for any reason. In other words, if you haven't done the paperwork, you are still enrolled in the class.

Incompletes
Students may request an incomplete grade if he or she has a documented illness or prolonged absence due to reasons outside of the student’s control. However, students must have ‘substantial equity’ in the course. Further, it is up to the instructor to determine what substantial equity in a course means and what that might look like. Thus, if something arises in your life that interferes with your ability to do your best in this class, talk to me about it ASAP. Many students wait until the end of the semester (or after finals week) to tell me about these kind of difficulties and there is little or nothing I can do at that point. The sooner you talk to me, the more options we will have to handle an issue.

Netiquette:
Anything you type in the discussion area is public – which means that every student in this class (including your professor) will see what you write, unless otherwise noted. Please pay attention to the language you use and adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Do not post anything too personal;
2. Do not use language that is inappropriate for a classroom setting or prejudicial in regard to gender, race, or ethnicity;
3. Do not use all caps in the message box unless you are emphasizing (it is considered shouting)
4. Be courteous and respectful to other people on the list
5. Do not overuse acronyms like you would use in text messaging. Some of the list participants may not be familiar with acronyms.
6. If the posting is going to be long, use line breaks and paragraphs
7. Fill in a meaningful Subject Line
8. Write your full name at the end of the posting
9. Be careful with sarcasm and subtle humor; one person’s joke is another person’s insult.
10. Postings that do not follow these guidelines and are considered inappropriate will be deleted from the discussion board and you may be denied any further posting privileges.

Refer to the following link for additional help on netiquette:
• http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

Technical Requirements
This course is designed as a web-based class, which necessitates specific computer expertise on the part of the student, specific computer equipment or programs, and a commitment on the part of the student beyond that of most other courses. Ensuring you have the proper hardware and software is vital to your success in an online learning environment.

Computer Setup - Every student who is taking an online course must perform the following three steps to ensure his/her computer is set up, your computer has a compatible browser and all necessary plug-ins and helper applications. 24/7 Help Desk - When you need technical support contact information for our 24/7 Help Desk at 1-877-633-9152 (toll free) You can access this information by going to the Technical Help button on the course menu while in the course. Microsoft Word is the recommended word processor application for completing assignments. Because you are taking this course from UT Permian Basin, you can get software at a significant discount. For more information, please see the UTPB site page on Microsoft Select.

Preparation for Computer Problems and Emergencies
Computer Crash: Not having a working computer or a crashed computer during the semester will NOT be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing course activities at a scheduled time. NOTE: Identify a second computer before the semester begins, that you can use when/if your personal computer crashes.

Server Problems: When the Blackboard server needs downtime for maintenance, the Blackboard administrator will post an announcement in your course informing the time and the date. If the server experiences unforeseen problems your course instructor will send an email.
Complete Loss of Contact: If you lose contact with me completely (i.e. you cannot contact me via Blackboard or email), you need to call me at my office, 432-552-2347, and explain the reason you cannot contact me and leave me a way to contact you. Please keep in mind that I am not in my office every day and it may take me a day or two to return your call, so as soon as you have access to email again you may want to email me as well.

Lost/Corrupt/Disappeared Files: You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external disk or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g., Blackboard server crash or virus infection, students own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc) or any contradictions/problems, I may/will request you to resubmit the files. In other words, if you submit a document to me, and I either do not receive it (lost in cyberspace) or it is corrupted when I open it, it is incumbent upon you to resubmit it to me, corrected, with little or no “downtime” in regard to the timeline for submission.

**Student support services**
ADA Accommodation/Support Programs Assisting Student Study (PASS) 432-552-2630

Admissions & Registration & Transcripts (432) 552-2605

Blackboard Technical Support 1-877-633-9152 (toll-free)

Bookstore (432) 552-0220

Counseling/Advising (432) 552-2661

Financial Aid and Scholarship (432)552-2620

UTPB Library (432) 552-2370

**Student Services**
Tutoring & Learning Resources: If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services: Smarthinking Online Tutoring(provides tutoring services), SmarterMeasure (measures learner readiness for online course).

**Course and Instructor Evaluations**
Every student must complete end-of-course evaluation provided by UTPB. You will be informed on how to access the evaluation near the end of the semester.

**Rights and Disclaimer**
Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the professor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wk1: 06/29-07/06</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate topic: Do positive illusions promote mental health?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus and Course Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a topic you are interested in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce yourself on the discussion board and describe what you’d like to learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk3: 07/14-07/20</td>
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<td>Wk4: 07/21 – 07/27</td>
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<td>Wk5: 07/28-08/03</td>
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<td>Wk6: 08/04-08/10</td>
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<td>Wk7: 08/11-08/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk8: 08/18-08/24</td>
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**Week 3: 07/14-07/20**

- **Read**: O'Sullivan (2007)
- **Activity**: Information literacy assignment*: turn in a list of at least 7 articles you could possibly use in your literature review

**Week 4: 07/21 – 07/27**

- **Read**: Bushman & Anderson (2001) and “what is a meta-analysis?”
- **Activity**: Information literacy assignment*: turn in a list of at least 7 articles you could possibly use in your literature review

**Week 5: 07/28-08/03**

- **Read**: Freedman (2002)
- **Activity**: Information literacy assignment*: turn in a list of at least 7 articles you could possibly use in your literature review

**Week 6: 08/04-08/10**

- **Read**: Bushman & Anderson (2001) and “what is a meta-analysis?”
- **Activity**: Information literacy assignment*: turn in a list of at least 7 articles you could possibly use in your literature review

**Week 7: 08/11-08/17**

- **Read**: Freedman (2002)
- **Activity**: Information literacy assignment*: turn in a list of at least 7 articles you could possibly use in your literature review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional activity</th>
<th>Turn in draft of proposal for feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk8: 08/18-08/20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td><strong>Final proposal due by 08/20 at noon central time</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Note. In week 2 there are two assignments—the information literacy and plagiarism quiz—in which student must demonstrate mastery before moving forward in the course.*