

## Psych 201A, Myths in Psychology: Leland Swenson

Here are some ideas from the instructor:

- We only use 10% of our brains, or Most people use only 10 percent of their brainpower
- “Opposites attract” is more true than “birds of a feather flock together” (we are more attracted to people different from ourselves in romantic relationships)
- You can tell how accurate a witness is by noting how confident they seem – looking you in the eye and not stammering etc.
- Parents are most responsible for how their teen age children behave
- Familiarity breeds contempt / absence makes the heart grow fonder (we like people less if we know them better and spend more time with them)
- Dreams reliably predict the future
- Expressing anger has mainly good psychological effects and is necessary to reduce the anger
- Expressing grief helps you get over it faster
- Our memories are faithful recordings of events similar to those on a videotape or DVD and we can potentially remember everything that has ever happened to us with the help of hypnosis or memory recovery therapy.
- What we remember is almost always what really happened and memory does not change over time (Check the false memory effect and Elizabeth Loftus’s work)
- Hypnosis is a way to accurately bring back buried memories
- People with schizophrenia have multiple personalities.
- Only depressed people commit suicide. (Or the more depressed someone is the more likely they are to commit suicide)
- People tend to behave oddly during a full moon.
- All successful psychotherapy forces people to confront the "root causes" of their problems from childhood.

Using **EBSCOhost** for this assignment:

- Do not use the CINAHL nursing/medical module, or popular magazines
- Use **Academic Search Elite** in preference to **MasterFile Premier**

A few useful keyword and subject searches found in *EBSCOhost*:

- “Brain usage” – gets you a great article on myths of neuroscience
- “common fallacies” with descriptor (i.e. neuroscience, psychology, etc) works well. Entry would look like this: **“common fallacies” AND psychology**
- “psychology myths”

*50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior* by Scott Lilienfeld has been ordered and will be placed on **Reserve** (at the desk in the lobby of the library). This excellent book delves into the subject of psychological myths.

The following links are to reputable web pages that will help you find a topic:

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-140513111X.html> you can read an excerpt from the book here, to get you started

[http://media.wiley.com/product\\_data/excerpt/1X/14051311/140513111X-1.pdf](http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/1X/14051311/140513111X-1.pdf) Table of Contents from the book *50 Great Myths*: the chapter headings are ideas for papers.

<http://www.mind-meditations.com/myths/debunking-pop-psychology-myths/> a nice blog with a few different myths listed

<http://www.nursingschools.net/blog/2011/01/12-most-pervasive-pop-psychology-myths/> a nursing school blog with a page called “12 Most Pervasive Pop Psychology Myths.”

[http://www.psychotherapybrownbag.com/psychotherapy\\_brown\\_bag\\_a/2009/10/50-great-myths-of-popular-psychology.html](http://www.psychotherapybrownbag.com/psychotherapy_brown_bag_a/2009/10/50-great-myths-of-popular-psychology.html) a blog by doctoral students on the subject of psychological myths.