

Psychology 215:

Introduction to Personality Psychology

Fall Semester 2014, T-TH 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, Sharpless 410

Professor

- Jennifer Lilgendahl
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Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to examine the fundamental issues and questions addressed by the field of personality psychology, including: What is personality, and how do we best characterize personality differences? What are the psychological processes and mechanisms that explain personality? How does personality develop and change over time? What constitutes a “healthy” personality? This course will explore these questions by considering evidence from several major theoretical approaches to personality (e.g., trait, social-cognitive, motivational, developmental, narrative), and it will encourage students to develop a dynamic understanding of human personality that is situated within its biological, social, and cultural contexts. Over the course of the semester, we will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- To develop a working command of the different *theoretical frameworks* used to address personality and the nature of the empirical support available for each
- To become acquainted with the different *methodological procedures* used to study personality, along with their strengths and weaknesses
- To *think critically* about studies of personality, in terms of their theoretical significance, methodology, and empirical findings
- To *apply* personality psychology to your understanding of *real-world situations, experiences, and events*; in other words, to think like a personality psychologist!

Required Readings

- Funder & Ozer (2010). *Pieces of the Personality Puzzle: Readings in Theory and Research, 5th edition*, New York: Norton.
- Additional readings are (or will be) available on Moodle.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following course requirements and my overall impression of your participation in the course. First, your points will be totaled and an initial grade will be determined (93-100% = 4.0; 90-92% = 3.7; 87-89% = 3.3; 83-86% = 3.0; 80-82% = 2.7; 77-79% = 2.3; 73-76% = 2.0; 70-72% = 1.7; 67-69% = 1.3; 63-66% = 1.0; 60-62% = .7; 59% or below is a failing grade). Second, I will evaluate this initial grade in the context of my impression of your participation, including attendance patterns, in class participation and attitude, effort put forth, and whether or not your performance displays a pattern of improvement. Depending on my assessment of these factors, I may adjust your grade one step upward or downward. Participation factors may be especially influential when your point total is on the border between two grade levels.

- Exam 1 = 100 pts

- Exam 2 = 100 pts
- Exam 3 = 80 pts
- Final paper = 100 pts

Exams

There will be three in-class administered exams in this course. The first exam will be on Tuesday, 9/30, the second exam will be on Tuesday, 11/11, and the third exam will be on the last regular day of class, Thursday, 12/11. Exams will involve a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Further details regarding the content, format, and grading of the exams will be provided in class.

Final Paper

The final assignment for this course will be a 10-15 page research paper due by Friday, 12/19 at noon. Details about this paper assignment will be provided in class.

Course Policies

- Attendance: A good pattern of attendance is expected in this course. In general, I will not penalize you for the occasional missed class (e.g., 1 or 2); however, it is best to email me to let me know if you are going to miss class because you are sick or have some kind of conflict. This is especially true for athletic conflicts, which should be communicated to me as far in advance as possible. You are responsible for staying on top of announcements made in class even if you are not present. If I notice a pattern of poor attendance, I will contact you to discuss the issue, and it may be reflected in your final grade.
- Late work: My policies regarding the grading of late work are as follows:
 - » Exams: Because exams will be administered during class time, turning them in late should not typically be an issue. If you miss an exam without prior arrangements being made, you will receive a 0. If you think you may have a legitimate conflict with an exam date, please let me know as early as possible. With enough advance warning, an exam make-up time may be scheduled.
 - » Paper: Because the final paper is due at the very end of the semester, you will receive a zero on the paper if it is late unless prior arrangements have been made involving your dean.
- Permissions: All of the materials made available to you in this course, including the syllabus, all handouts, the exams, and the PowerPoint slides, are my intellectual property as the professor of this course and should not be shared with anyone outside the course or posted anywhere without my permission. Also, lectures should not be recorded without my permission.

Accommodations for disabilities

Students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the semester. Students should also contact Rick Webb, Coordinator, Office of Disabilities Services (rwebb@haverford.edu, 610-896-1290) to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations as soon as possible. Early contact will help to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and delays.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings
1	9/2	First day – overview of course	
1	9/4	Conceptual and Methodological Intro to Science of Personality	P ³ : McAdams, <i>What Do We Know When We Know a Person?</i> , pp. 4-14 P ³ : Vazire & Mehl, <i>Knowing Me, Knowing You</i> , pp. 32-47
		Level 1: Traits	
2	9/9	The “Big Five” Traits: Validity and the Prediction of Life Outcomes	P ³ : McCrae & Costa, <i>The Five-Factor Theory</i> , pp. 97-118 P ³ : Ozer & Benet-Martinez, <i>Personality and the Prediction of Consequential Outcomes</i> , pp. 126-140
2	9/11	The Biological Basis of Traits I: Traits and the Brain	M: Dobbs (2007). <i>The Gregarious Brain</i> (NY Times) P ³ : Canli, <i>Functional Brain Mapping of E and N</i> , pp. 156-166
3	9/16	The Biological Basis of Traits II: Genes, Environments, and Their Interactions	P ³ : Pinker, <i>My Genome, My Self</i> , pp. 234-238 and pp. 243-245 P ³ : Borkenau, et al, <i>Genetic and Environmental Influences on Observed Personality</i> , pp. 170-180 M: Caspi, et al (2002). <i>Role of Genotype in the Cycle of Violence in Maltreated Children</i>
3	9/18	Traits Over Time: Patterns and Mechanisms of Personality Stability and Change	P ³ : Roberts & Mroczek, <i>Personality Trait Change in Adulthood</i> , pp. 119-125 M: Neyer & Asendorpf (2001). <i>Personality-Relationship Transaction in Adulthood</i>
4	9/23	Culture and Traits: Questions, Answers, and Complexities	P ³ : Ramirez-Esparza, et al, <i>Are Mexicans More or Less Sociable than Americans?</i> , pp. 457-467 M: Schimmack, et al., (2002). <i>Culture, Personality, and Subjective Well-being</i> P ³ : Oishi, <i>Personality in Culture: A Neo-Allportian View</i> , pp. 482-487
4	9/25	Extraversion vs. Introversion: An In-depth Look	M: Cain (2012). Excerpts from <i>Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking</i>
5	9/30	Exam 1	
		Level 2: Contextualized Personality Processes – Cognition, Motivation, and Development	
5	10/2	The Social-Cognitive Approach	P ³ : Mischel, <i>Personality Coherence and Dispositions in a Cognitive-Affective Personality System (CAPS) Approach</i> , pp. 517-532 M: Downey & Feldman (1996). <i>Implications of Rejection Sensitivity for Intimate Relationships</i>
6	10/7-10/9	Social-Cognitive Approach II: Dweck's Implicit Beliefs Model	M: Dweck & Leggett (1988). <i>A Social-Cognitive Approach to Motivation and Personality</i> . M: Dweck, Excerpt from <i>Mindsets</i>
		Fall Break	
7	10/21	Motivation I: Psychodynamic theory and defensive processes	P ³ : Baumeister, et al, <i>Freudian Defense Mechanisms and Empirical Findings in Modern Social Psychology</i> , pp. 280-293 P ³ : Edelstein, et al, <i>Individual differences in emotion memory</i> , pp. 298-307 M: Newman & McKinney (2002). <i>Repressive Coping and Threat Avoidance</i>
7	10/23	Motivation II: Implicit Motives and the Picture Story Exercise	M: McAdams, Ch 7, pp. 279-292 M: Wirth, et al., (2006). <i>Salivary Cortisol Changes After Winning or Losing a Dominance Contest Depend on Implicit Power Motivation</i>

8	10/28	Motivation III: Humanism and Self-determination Theory: Theory and Research	P ³ : Maslow, <i>A Theory of Human Motivation</i> , pp. 320-326 P ³ : Ryan, Huta, & Deci, <i>Living Well: A Self-determination Theory Perspective on Eudaimonia</i> , pp. 396-409 P ³ : Sheldon, et al., <i>The independent effects of goal contents and motives on well-being</i> , pp. 537-548
8	10/30	Self-determination Theory, continued: What factors can undermine self-determination?	P ³ : Csikszentmihalyi, <i>If we are so rich, why aren't we happy?</i> , pp. 346-356 M: Deci, et al (1993). <i>The relation of mother's controlling vocalizations to children's intrinsic motivation</i>
9	11/4	Developmental Approaches I: Psychosocial Development	M: McAdams, Ch 9 (pp. 346-371) M: Arnett (2000): <i>Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Early Twenties</i>
9	11/6	Developmental Approaches II: Ego Development	M: McAdams, Ch 9 (p. 371-382) M: Lilgendahl, Helson, & John (2013). <i>Does Ego Development Increase in Midlife? The Effects of Openness and Accommodative Processing of Difficult Life Events</i>
10	11/11	Exam 2	
10	11/13	No class – special exercise TBA	
		Level 3: Narrative Identity	
11	11/18	Narrative Identity I: Introduction	M: McAdams & McLean (2013). <i>Narrative Identity</i> M: McAdams (2013). <i>Life Authorship: A Psychological Challenge for Emerging Adulthood, as Illustrated by Two Notable Case Studies</i>
11	11/20	Narrative Identity II: Research	M: Lilgendahl, McLean, & Mansfield (2013). <i>When is meaning-making unhealthy for the self? The roles of neuroticism, implicit theories, and memory telling in trauma and transgression memories.</i> M: Cox & McAdams (2012). <i>The transforming self: Service narratives and identity change in emerging adulthood.</i>
12	11/25	Case study discussion	M: Case study from <i>Adolescent Portraits, Part I and Part II</i>
		Topics in Personality	
13	12/2	Healthy Self-esteem vs. Narcissistic Personality	P ³ : Baumeister, et al., <i>Self-esteem, Narcissism, and Aggression: Does Violence Result from Low Self-Esteem or from Threatened Egotism?</i> , pp. 550-554 M: Buffardi & Campbell (2008). <i>Narcissism and social networking websites.</i>
13	12/4	Personality and Bereavement	M: Pai & Carr (2010). <i>Do personality traits moderate the effect of late-life spousal loss on psychological distress in old age?</i> M: Baddeley & Singer (2010). <i>A loss in the family: Silence, memory, and narrative identity after bereavement.</i>
14	12/9	Politics and Personality	M: Oxley, et al (2008). <i>Political Attitudes Vary with Physiological Traits.</i> M: McAdams, et al (2008). <i>How conservatives and liberals narrate their lives.</i>
14	12/11	Exam 3	
			Final papers due at noon, 12/19