Psychology 215:
Personality Psychology
Fall Semester 2017, MW 9:00-10:30am, Sharpless 430

Professor
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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. 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!
- To *develop your scientific research, writing, and oral presentation skills* within the context of the field of personality psychology.

Required Readings
- All readings are (or will be) available on Moodle. You are expected to have completed the readings assigned for each day prior to class and to be prepared to actively summarize, evaluate, apply, discuss, etc. their contents in class.

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 (94-100% = 4.0; 90-93% = 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
- Final paper = 100 pts
- Thought Papers = 40 points (20 points each)
- Group Presentation = 60 points

Exams
There will be two take-home exams in this course. The first exam will be distributed in class on Monday, 10/9 and due by 5 pm on Thursday, 10/12. Both exams will be closed-book and self-scheduled within the timeframe provided. Details regarding content, format and grading of exams will be provided in class.

Thought Papers
Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write 2 1-2 page informal thought papers about your reactions to topics covered in class. The goal of the thought papers is to become actively engaged with thinking analytically, critically, and creatively about topics in personality psychology, and to facilitate discussion with your peers. Further information regarding the thought papers, including content, due dates, sharing, and grading, will be provided in the second week of class.

Group Presentation
During the last two weeks of class, we will conclude the semester with group presentations. I will organize you into groups of 3 or 4 based on common topics of interest. The goals of the group presentation are to develop skills of oral presentation, explore the primary literature, and extend and amplify your classmates' exposure to interesting topics in personality psychology. Details about the group presentation will be provided in class.

Final Paper
The final assignment for this course will be a 10-15 page research paper due Friday, 12/22 at noon. Details about this paper assignment will be provided in class. As per college policy, there will be no extensions to the deadline of this paper unless arranged through your Dean well ahead of time.

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.
  ● Conduct and tech use in class: In-class activities will involve a combination of lecture and discussion and will focus heavily on the assigned readings for the day. My expectation is that you will come to class having completed the readings (and any other preparations I've asked of you) and ready to participate and be fully engaged during class time. While I do not ban laptops in my classroom, I assume and expect that you will use your laptops appropriately (i.e., for taking notes, looking at the readings) and not for emailing, doing social media, shopping, etc. If that is how you would like to spend your time, please do not come to class! Also, you should know that research shows that taking notes by hand leads to better retention of course material than taking notes on one's laptop. However, I respect your choice to take notes in your preferred manner!
  ● Late work: My policies regarding the grading of late work are as follows:
       » Exams: Late exams will typically not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with me involving unavoidable scheduling conflicts, etc. If you think you have an unavoidable conflict, please talk to me as far in advance as possible. Please do not hesitate to talk to me regarding any issues that may affect your ability to turn in your exams on time.
       » 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.

● <u>Permissions</u>: 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.

<u>Accommodations for disabilities</u>
Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (https://www.haverford.edu/oar/) and the Office of Access and Disabilities Services (https://www.haverford.edu/ads/). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, please contact Sherrie Borowsky, Coordinator of Accommodations, Office of Access and Disability Services at hc-ads@haverford.edu. If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (*within the first two weeks if possible)* with your verification letter.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings
1	9/6	Course overview and conceptual framework	•McAdams & Pals (2006). *A New Big Five*
		Level 1: Traits	
2	9/11	The Big Five Traits and the Validity of Self-Report	•Funder chapter excerpt, Overview of the Big Five traits •Case study from *Adolescent Portraits* •Vazire & Carlson (2010). *Self-knowledge of Personality*
2	9/13	The Incremental Validity of Traits in the Prediction of Life Outcomes	•Conrad (2006). *Aptitude is Not Enough: How Personality and Behavior Predict Academic Performance* •Stephan (2009). *Openness to Experience and Active Older Adults' Life Satisfaction*
3	9/18	Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory and the Biological Basis of Extraversion and Neuroticism	•Dobbs (2007). *The Gregarious Brain* (NY Times) •Smillie (2008). *What Is Reinforcement Sensitivity? Neuroscience Paradigms for Approach/Avoidance Theories of Personality*
3	9/20	Trait Development I: Nature and Nurture	•Kandler & Zapko-Willmes (2017). *Theoretical Perspectives on the Interplay Between Nature and Nurture in Personality Development* •Lemery-Chalfant et al (2013). *Childhood Temperament*
4	9/25	Trait Development II: Stability and Change Across the Lifespan	•Robins et al (2001). *A Longitudinal Study of Personality Change in Young Adulthood* •Roberts & Mroczek (2008). *Personality Trait Change in Adulthood*
4	9/27	Traits and Relationships	•Cuperman & Ickes (2009). *Big Five Predictors of Behavior and Perceptions in Initial Dyadic Interactions: Similarity Helps Extraverts and Introverts But Hurts "Disagreeables"* •Robins et al (2000). *Two Personalities, One Relationship*
5	10/2	Traits, Stress, and Coping	•Lee-Baggely et al (2005). *Coping with Interpersonal Stress: Role of Big Five Traits* •Pai & Carr (2010). *Do Personality Traits Moderate the Effect of Late Life Spousal Loss on Psychological Distress?*
5	10/4	Traits and Culture	•Church (2008). *Current Controversies in the Study of Personality Across Cultures* •Ramirez-Esparza et al (2009). *Are Mexicans More or Less Sociable than Americans?*
6	10/9	Culture and the Extraverted Ideal *Distribute take-home exam #1; exam due by 5 pm on Thursday,*	•Excerpts from *Quiet* by Susan Cain

		10/12; No class on 10/11	
		Fall Break	
		Level 2: Contextualized Personality Processes	
7	10/23	The Social-Cognitive Approach to Personality	•Mischel & Shoda (2002). *Situation-Behavior Profiles As a Locus of Consistency in Personality* •Downey & Feldman (1996). *Implications of Rejection Sensitivity for Intimate Relationships*
7	10/25	Carol Dweck's Social-Cognitive Theory: Implicit Theories of Intelligence and Personality	•Dweck & Leggett (1988). *A Social-Cognitive Approach to Motivation and Personality.* •Yeager et al (2014). *The Far-Reaching Effects of Believing People Can Change: Implicit Theories Shape Stress, Health, and Achievement During Adolescence*
8	10/30	Social-Cognitive Perspectives on Contemporary Social/Cultural Challenges	•London et al (2012). *Gender-based Rejection Sensitivity and Academic Self-silencing in Women* •Cheng et al (2006). *Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Cultural Frame-switching*
8	11/1	Motivation I: Psychodynamic Theory and Defensive Processes	•Newman & McKinney (2002). *Repressive Coping and Threat Avoidance* •Gleiberman (2007). *Repressive/Defensive Coping, Blood Pressure, and Cardiovascular Rehabilitation*
9	11/6	Motivation II: Implicit Motives and the Picture Story Exercise	•Hofer & Busch (2011). *When the Need for Affiliation and Intimacy are Frustrated* •Wirth et al (2006). *Salivary Cortisol Changes After Winning or Losing a Dominance Contest Depend on Implicit Power Motivation*
9	11/8	Motivation III: Self-Determination Theory: Theory and Research	•Ryan & Deci (2000). *Self-determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-being* •Deci et al (1993). *The relation of mother's controlling vocalizations to children's intrinsic motivation*
10	11/13	Developmental Perspectives I: Identity Development and Emerging Adulthood	•TBA •Konik & Stewart (2004). *Sexual Identity Development in the Context of Compulsory Heterosexuality*
10	11/15	Developmental Perspectives II: Ego Development: Complexity, Coping, and Growth in the Face of Life's Challenges	•Suchmann et al (2008). *Ego Development, Psychopathology, and Parenting Problems in Substance-Abusing Mothers* •King & Raspin (2004). *Lost and Found Possible Selves, Subjective Well-being, and Ego Development in Divorced Women*
		Level 3: Narrative Identity	
11	11/20	Narrative Identity I: Introduction	•McAdams & McLean (2013). *Narrative Identity* •McAdams (2013). *Life Authorship: A Psychological Challenge for Emerging Adulthood, as Illustrated by Two Notable Case Studies*
11	11/22	Narrative Identity II: Research	•Lilgendahl & McAdams (2011). *Constructing Stories of Self-Growth* •Dunlop & Tracy (2013). *Sobering Stories*
		Thanksgiving	
12	11/27	Case Study Discussion / Review and Distribute Exam #2	•Case study from *Adolescent Portraits, Part II*
12	11/29	***No class; Take-home Exam #2 due by 5 pm on 11/30***	
		Group Presentations	
13	12/4	Schedule TBA	
13	12/6	Schedule TBA	
14	12/11	Schedule TBA	
14	12/13	Schedule TBA	

			Final papers due at noon, 12/22