

**Course Description
for
Introduction to Psychology as a Social Science
(PSY 205)**

Mark B. Evans, Instructor
Offc. Hrs: Th. 1:30-2:30 & by appt.
Class Logistics: UH 3:30 -4:50
138 Gilbert

John Bundy,
Christine Winter, Tching Fellows

INTRODUCTION

This course offers a survey of some of the issues and methods in the social science of psychology. As a survey course it covers a broad field, including: human development, social psychology, personality, consciousness, psychotherapy, and abnormal psychology. Ideally students will leave this course with an understanding of what psychologists in the human sciences do, how they think, and what sort of topics they think about and study.

A physicist recently said that "the human brain...represents the minimum entropy structure in the universe." (J.M. Malville, The Fermenting Universe) Another way of saying this is that human beings are the most complicated organisms in the *known* universe. Therefore, it should not be surprising that in its attempt to study human beings scientifically, psychology has encountered numerous practical difficulties, theoretical conundrums, and, occasionally, fascinating and relevant results. In this course we will confront both the difficulties as well as the insights. At the same time the instructor will attempt to highlight the obvious and perhaps not so obvious relevance of many of the course topics to our own lives, for ultimately psychology is the study of ourselves and our interrelationships with others and the world.

In this light, some of the questions that we will consider are: how do people come to be who they are? In what sense does the mind construct the world? What is the unconscious and how does it effect our lives? Does psychotherapy work, and if so, how? What is "madness" and are such people different from the rest of us? Hopefully, by consciously and critically immersing themselves in these and other questions students will acquire some insights and methods for deepening their psychological understanding of the world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion Sections

Students sign up for one of the discussion sections. The purpose of the discussions is to permit students to express, question, and apply their evolving knowledge of psychology. The format of these sections will vary from week to week including such activities as presentations, class exercises, small and large group discussions, etc. Expect that discussions just prior to the exams will focus on review.

Attendance of the discussion sections is optional, week by week. Students who do attend are expected to participate in whatever activity is planned for that week. Students will receive 5 extra-credit points for each week attended. Missed discussion sections cannot be made up, except under unusual circumstances with the prior approval of the section leader (and this would be by attending another section within the same week).

Reading

The text for the course is **Psychology (2nd Ed.)** by Henry L. Roediger III and three other authors. This text has been used widely so you may be able to find a second hand copy either from a friend or a bookstore (be sure it's the 2nd edition). Students are responsible for the reading and should not expect this material to be covered in the lectures.

While there are no formal prerequisites for this course, students who have not taken PSY 204 or its equivalent would be advised to read Chapters 1 and 6 in the text, in addition to the assigned reading.

Research

The Department requires that each student in this course participate as an experimental subject in ongoing psychological studies or else fulfill an alternative research assignment. To meet this requirement students participate in three one hour experiments. Each student will receive a handout describing this requirement in further detail.

In spite of any fantasies you might have, these experiments are likely to be interesting and cause minimal discomfort. Students always have the option of withdrawing from an experiment at any time (of course, forfeiting any credit for that session).

Research (cont.)

Students who would prefer to fulfill this research requirement in some other way, such as writing a short (3-5 typed page) paper on some area of research, must speak to the instructor by the end of the fourth week of the course to establish a mutually agreed upon assignment. Students who fail to meet this research requirement in any way will receive an incomplete in the course.

Examinations

There will be three examinations in the course, two mid-terms and one final. The exams will be non-cummulative and will be given equal weight in determining the course grade. In light of the large class size, these exams will have an objective format, e.g., multiple-choice, matching, etc. The material covered will come from the reading and the lectures.

Journal

Students have the option of substituting a structured journal in place of any one of the exams. In the journals students will write their thoughts about a specific issue or question assigned in class.

The reason for this optional journal is to in part correct the over-emphasis on memorization to the exclusion of thinking imposed by the large lecture/examination format. This assignment is designed for students who like to think and feel comfortable with their writing skills.

Journals will consist of a single entry each week (no more than one typed page). These entries should be bound only by a staple or paper clip (no notebooks or other binders please--since we have to carry them!) Journals will be collected initially on April 25 to provide feedback and then again on the last day of class. Students will inform me that they are electing this option by turning in a journal on April 25 (after which this option is no longer available). Grading of the journals will be subjective, based entirely on the quality of the student's thinking and apparent effort.

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Grades

Grades for the individual assignments will be computed according to the following point system. Final grades for the course will be curved based on each students total number of points.

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | 3 Examinations (100 pts. each) | 300 pts. |
| or: | 2 Examinations | 200 |
| | Journal | 100 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 300 pts. total |

"We are all standing on a whale
fishing for minnows."

Polynesian Saying

**Syllabus for
Introduction to Psychology as a Social Science
(PSY 205)**

Professor Evans

Spring '89

| <u>Class Dates:</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Reading/Exams</u> |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| March 28 | Introduction to Psychology | Ch. 1 |
| April 4 & 6 | Development | Ch. 9 |
| April 11 & 13 | Social Psychology | Ch. 17 |
| April 18 & 20 | Consciousness | 1st Exam 4/18 Ch. 5 |
| April 25 & 27 | Stress & Healing Intro. to Personality Theory | Ch. 13 pp. 476-91 Begin Ch. 14 |
| May 2 & 4 | Personality: Freud & Jung | Ch. 14 |
| May 9 & 11 | Humanistic Psychology | 2nd Exam 5/11 |
| May 16 & 18 | Abnormal Psychology | Ch. 15 |
| May 23 & 25 | Psychotherapy | Ch. 16 |
| May 30, June 1 | Death & Dying; Transpersonal Psychology | Ch. 10 |
| | | 3rd Exam June 6, 8 a.m. |

Some Suggestions Regarding Your Journal for PSY 205

While there is no universal formula for writing the journal (just as there is no recipe for thinking!), there are some strategies you might wish to consider in approaching the assignment. These suggestions are likely to be especially useful when you are not given specific guidelines in class.

One strategy would be to take a position in the first sentence or two and to devote the rest of your entry to offering reasons for your position. You might also wish to consider limitations, exceptions, and weaknesses in your position as well. The more clearly and succinctly you are able to define your position, the easier it will be to defend.

Another strategy would be to cast the issue as a debate between two (or more) sides, allowing each side a voice. You may wish to identify yourself with one of these voices, or you may prefer to suspend your own personal conclusions.

Another option that may work for some entries would be to illustrate a psychological principle from your own experience, discussing how the concept fits or does not fit your experience.

These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive. But regardless of the strategy you adopt for each entry, the purpose of the journal is for you to exercise your minds. I am less concerned with your taking the "right" position (as if there is one!), than in your showing me that you have seriously thought about the issue. Of course your work will be evaluated more favorably to the extent that you can present your labors in a coherent, articulate, and thoughtful way. It is my view that this grappling is what gives rise to consciousness and allows our consciousness to be transformed.

| STAGE | CHARACTERIZATION |
|--|---|
| 1. Sensorimotor (birth–2 years) | <p>Differentiates self from objects</p> <p>Recognizes self as agent of action and begins to act intentionally: for example, pulls a string to set a mobile in motion or shakes a rattle to make a noise</p> <p>Achieves object permanence: realizes that things continue to exist even when no longer present to the senses</p> |
| 2. Preoperational (2–7 years) | <p>Learns to use language and to represent objects by images and words</p> <p>Thinking is still egocentric: has difficulty taking the viewpoint of others</p> <p>Classifies objects by a single feature: for example, groups together all the red blocks regardless of shape or all the square blocks regardless of color</p> |
| 3. Concrete operational (7–12 years) | <p>Can think logically about objects and events</p> <p>Achieves conservation of number (age 6), mass (age 7), and weight (age 9)</p> <p>Classifies objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension, such as size</p> |
| 4. Formal operational (12 years and up) | <p>Can think logically about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically</p> <p>Becomes concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems</p> |

Study Guide for the First Exam

Psychology 205

Prof. Evans

Following are a list of terms and concepts from the lectures that are likely to appear on the first exam. You would do well to study by preparing to define these concepts, to provide an example of them, to distinguish them from related concepts, etc., as appropriate. This study guide covers material from the lectures only, and not the text readings.

Introduction

Relevance of the Duck/Rabbit for approaching psychological theories
Jung's theory of the four functions: Thinking-Feeling, Sensing-Intuiting,
-how they might relate to the different psychological theories,
-cultural biases
Union Model of Human Psychology (represented by concentric circles)
-how this might help us to organize the various theories

Developmental Psychology

The Nature-Nurture Debate--what is it?
Twin Studies--what do they try to show? What's the basic method?
Correlation: positive and negative
Formula for IQ score
General findings regarding Nature-Nurture & intelligence
Nature vs. Nurture & Criminality
Freud's Determinism
Bowlby's Theory of Attachment
Ways to observe attachment
Mahler's continuum of development: symbiosis-individuation
Emotional Refueling
Regression--what is it, what causes it, what forms does it take?
"Bootstrapping Model" of development
Anthropomorphism & Animism
Egocentricity in Children's Thinking
Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development
Accommodation and Assimilation
Equilibration
Stages of Cognitive Development and fundamental qualities/
accomplishments of each (see handout)

First Study Guide
page two

Developmental Psychology (cont.)

Piaget (cont)

Object Permanence, Centration, Conservation

Identity and Adolescence

changes at puberty

childhood identity images--sources of

peer culture and pressure--why is it so powerful?

negative identity

psychological reasons for the formation of cliques

group intolerance of differences & psychological projection

Children's Art

stages of children's art: scribbles, geometric shapes, mandalas,

first object representations, pictures, concern with realism

reasons for decline in artistic abilities after 7

Social Psychology

origin of social influence in dependency

Television as a social influence

Reasons for Television Viewing: Control, Belonging, Vicarious Experience,
Emotional Escape, etc.

Television and Perceptions of Reality, e.g., crime incidence

T.V. watching and fear of victimization

"Salience", and its relevance for television viewing

possible effects of television on children's cognition

Mindful vs. Mindless T.V. Watching--Piper & Langer's study

Obedience to Authority: the Milgram Experiment

Kelman's three processes of social influence: compliance, identification,
internalization

JOURNAL #2

Psychology 205

Mark Evans

In this journal entry I want you to address obedience to authority as described in the film, Obedience, and in the lecture. Think of a real life example of obedience, either a situation you have been involved or one that you are familiar with. What is your considered view about why you or the individuals involved were obedient in this situation? Can you imagine factor(s) that, if present, might have mediated obedience on this occasion by reducing it (either situational factors or changes within the individual)?

Again I am interested in your thinking about the issues rather than in your merely repeating what you might have heard in class.
