

Psychology 471: PERSONALITY

4:00 - 5:20 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Class meets in 250 CLS (Clinical Services)

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Text: Funder, D. C. (2007). The personality puzzle (4th ed.). New York: Norton (plus other readings listed on class schedule at end of syllabus, made available via blackboard)

Course Objectives: What's the Purpose of This Course?

Welcome to Psychology 471: Personality. The study of personality addresses how and why *individuals differ in their behavior patterns*, if we define 'behavior' broadly to include thoughts, feelings, motives, intentions, and action tendencies. Personality concerns human behavioral tendencies at a rather broad level, and the purpose of this course is to help you learn ways of thinking usefully and critically (i.e., carefully) about human behavior, through the most important concepts and findings of personality psychology. The course has two interlinked goals: promoting knowledge of personality and sharpening thinking skills. Knowledge of personality psychology can aid one in thinking usefully and critically about human behavior patterns, useful not only in psychology and human services professions, but also in any pursuit in life that deals with people,

Personality psychology is a "crossroads" field with links to many other disciplines. It includes both the study of individual differences and the study of the processes within a person that lead to stable behavioral patterns. This course addresses both. Biological and social antecedents of personality are emphasized about equally in this course. The course format is primarily a series of talks (i.e., lecture), with some discussion, in-class exercises, and some student presentations. *This course has extensive readings; you're expected to read everything assigned.*

Assignments and Grading

Your **final course grade** is based on the following:

- 6% ...credit for two "connecting with readings" responses
- 7% ...for an exploratory paper
- 4% ...grade on outline/abstract of your research paper
- 20% ...grade on final version of research paper
- 1% ...class attendance credit
- 2% ...panel presentation credit
- 25% ...score on the midterm exam
- 35% ...score on final exam

What follows in this section is more detail on each of these components.

The exams – both midterm and final – consist of a multiple choice section (40% of the point total for the exam) concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them), followed by a set of mini-essay questions (60% of the point total for the exam). The mini-essay questions are drawn from among the “big questions” listed at the end of this syllabus, which are presented as “fill-in-the-blank” items. In fact, they are the exact questions, except they could be revised during the term to make them clearer to students. The mini-essay questions on the midterm exam will be drawn from among the first 6 big questions. Those on the final exam will be drawn from all of the big questions that did not appear on the midterm. Mini-essay responses typically fill one page or less (unless one has very large handwriting) – you fill in the blanks at the top of the page and then go on to explain why you answered that way. No dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, or electronic devices can be used during the exams, except that translating dictionaries can be allowed for those with English fluency issues, conditional on instructor permission. Multiple-choice items especially emphasize material covered both in the assigned readings and in class.

The exploratory paper is intended to help you develop a more personal connection to the subject matter, by applying concepts learned in the course to your personal experience of other people and of yourself. There are three choices for how to focus this paper (see end of syllabus). It should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, and at least 3 complete double-spaced pages of text. It is due on April 22.

The research paper is designed to better traditional term papers in terms of advancing student learning. I have found that students learn more from the writing experience when they have the opportunity to make use of feedback and to present or at least be part of a presentation to an “audience.” The topic for the paper is chosen by you, within the constraints that you must choose a topic from a limited “menu,” and there will be no more than approximately ten different topics done by members of the whole class. Having a limited number of topics allows us to have some student presentations at the end of the course, encouraging greater depth of exploration.

Research-paper topics will be focused on some issue on which there are different points of view or approaches that can be compared. For each topic, typically two articles will be assigned, and at least two additional articles are chosen by you. Multiple students will be working on the same topic, but there is no joint or group product and no group grade for the research paper. Because papers on one topic are evaluated simultaneously, be sure that, if you are influenced by the thoughts of other students, you acknowledge that contribution accurately and openly (so as to avoid “plagiarism” – see note below). Originality is one of the grading criteria (see below).

The first step is to read the assigned articles. It is a good idea to develop a very carefully thought-out response to it (or them) – what you agree with and don’t, what you think is well-supported by evidence and what isn’t, what seems logical or illogical, what might be left out. In your best judgment, identify what you think is the most essential issue on your topic that is incompletely addressed by the assigned article(s). Next, find other sources, and for each source (article) ask similar questions about each of them. Having done this, you are ready to start working on your research-paper outline or abstract. This outline must all fit on one side of one sheet of paper. For the outline/abstract only it is acceptable to use single-spacing if you wish. In

all other respects, the same criteria as for the final research-paper are useful to determine how good your outline is.

As for the *final research-paper*, bear in mind what Gracián wrote in 1647: “good things, when short, are twice as good.” The aim is to create a paper that packs a lot of valuable thinking into a relatively brief space. It should be a minimum of three full double-spaced pages in length (not counting reference list), and at a maximum it should not exceed 7 full double-spaced pages in length, not counting reference list, it must be double-spaced throughout, and with a size 12 font. You should include (cite, discuss) also the two best additional journal articles you could find; you are free to change what you identify as the best additional articles after you turn in the outline. These must be journal articles, not a book, book chapter, or internet site or page (Why? Because you should identify a scientifically peer-reviewed source.). You can include more than two additional articles or sources, but especially important for grading purposes is quality of the first two, best additional ones you introduce, so it pays to consult multiple articles and choose or prioritize the two that do the most for your paper. This is not a “critique the articles” assignment where you read articles and react to them – instead you are to use these articles in the course of trying to answer in the best possible way the basic question posed by the research-paper topic.

The final research-paper is graded on the following criteria:

1. Is typed, readable, free of gross spelling and typographic errors
2. Is well-organized and focused (not rambling, or with irrelevant sections)
3. Addresses what makes this issue (or paper topic) important, practically and/or scientifically
4. Defines key terms clearly, especially ambiguous terms, and/or identifies key assumptions
5. Includes use of the assigned articles and two additional journal articles.
6. Considers a plurality of views, that is, identifies more than one point of view, or a major issue on which there is disagreement. Sets out clearly and effectively the arguments in favor of and against varying (at least two) approaches, or varying different ways of thinking about an issue, or varying ways of answering the main question.
7. Addresses, for each way of thinking or approach, how good is the supporting evidence (or the rationale) and how good (relevant, reliable, large effect size, etc.) is this evidence (or rationale) is.
8. Attempts to synthesize and (even better) actually effectively synthesizes the arguments and evidence, combining all of the discussion into a reasonable conclusion (which may include recommendations for future research work).
9. Originality – (at least) the thinking is your own and (at best) it goes beyond (even challenges) the “conventional wisdom” or “commonsense view” on some aspect of the topic.
10. The citations and reference list in APA style; for help see UO Libraries’ Citation Style Guide <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/citing/apa.html> –on the more mundane side, do not include binders or covers on the papers when you turn them in, and no title page is necessary.

Papers above (exploratory paper, or the outline/abstract or final version of the research paper) turned in **late** lose 10% of their points for each weekday they are not turned in (starting with the due date). In general, with *some* course requirements, alternative arrangements for due dates may be possible with an authoritative excuse *if* presented in advance of an absence.

“Connecting with reading” responses are responses to assigned readings. Their purpose is to stimulate students to actively engage with readings and thus also be earlier and better prepared for class (and exams). To get full credit, you must complete two of these satisfactorily during

the term. The length for a Connecting response is exactly one (full, can be single- or double-spaced) page of typed, machine-printed, or clearly handwritten text for each. Each Connecting response must be based on the assigned readings corresponding to a due date for the Connecting response. For each Connecting response, you must refer to the content in the assigned reading for that due date (citing specifically one or more pages in the reading). You are free to choose what you write about, but here are some suggestions of things that work well for this assignment – any of these approaches might work well for structuring one Connecting response:

- a. Think about how content in readings can be applied to understanding the personality patterns of significant others in your life (boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, partner, etc.) both in present and in past (i.e., those with whom your relationship ended).
- b. Think about how content in readings can be applied to understanding the personality patterns of the person you know best (who may be a friend, parent, or sibling).
- c. Think about times, moments, or situations in your life when you had a very clear motivation, emotion, or way of thinking that led you to a clear course of action or reaction, and describe how something in the reading can help in understanding the reactions and actions you had.
- d. Think about times, moments, or situations in which you misjudged another person (their personality), someone else misjudged you (your personality), and describe how something in the reading can help in understanding what was going on.
- e. Describe an idea or finding you think is very important and explain why you think it important.
- f. Describe an idea or finding that you think is very questionable and explain why you think it is questionable.

It will help you in preparing these assignments if you approach your reading for this course continually asking yourself “How does this apply to my life experience, the experience of those I know well, and my experience in human relationships, and how does it relate to what I already know?” Obviously, you can use personal anecdotes in Connecting responses. It is often useful to compare two people, or two times or situations or emotions; you need not focus on just one.

You are assigned to turn in two (2) Connecting responses. The due dates for these are provided in the syllabus (there are *seven* due dates -- you need only get in a Connecting response in on time to the course TA for *two* of these dates). These papers should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, at least two paragraphs, and fill a page (but not go beyond one page); you are free to use single- or double-spacing (or anything in between, such as 1.5 spacing, etc.). Connecting responses are graded on a “pass versus no-pass” basis. Late Connecting responses are not accepted for credit, since a late paper would defeat part of the purpose of a Connecting response as defined above. If you miss the deadline for one Connecting response, you are advised to simply prepare a Connecting response for the next due-date deadline.

Participating in the panel presentation means being part of a panel of people with your same topic talking to the class briefly about your research paper (in the last two weeks of class). You are encouraged to provide a one- to two-minute presentation that focuses on identifying some issue or finding that you think is very important, with the goal of stimulating thinking and discussion among class members. Such a presentation does not summarize your paper, but rather extracts some key idea or two from it, that you think the class might find interesting. To get credit, you must physically appear in front of the class with other panel members and be/appear willing to talk or answer questions. Panel-presentation participation itself is 2% of the course grade. If you would like to discuss the panel presentation with other members of your panel, a

discussion forum will be set up about a week prior to the panel on blackboard to facilitate this.

There is a small bit of credit for attendance (1% of course grade). You get this credit automatically, unless the instructor experiences repeated (that is, on three or more occasions) difficulties finding you in class sessions.

Your ***final grade*** in the course will be based on the total of your points from papers, exams, and sufficient participation. **A** range is 90% or better, **B** range is 80% to 90%, **C** range 70% to 80%, **D** range 60% to 70%, **Fs** are less than 60%. '+' and '-' are added to grades if they fall in the top 1/3 or bottom 1/3, respectively, of A, B, C, and D range.

Special Requirements for Graduate Students (Psychology 571)

There will be special requirements for graduate students taking the course as Psychology 571. 571 students will meet at additional times outside the class time, either in-person or electronically. 571 students are expected to attend an in-person graduate student meeting with the instructor early in the quarter (typically in about the third week of the term).

Academic Integrity

This instructor takes academic integrity seriously. Insuring the "validity" of grades requires seeing that they reflect honest work and learning rather than cheating. **Cheating** is defined as providing or accepting information on an exam, plagiarism or copying anyone's written work. Students caught cheating will be given an **"F"** for the course, and UO's student conduct coordinator will be informed. The instructor retains the right to assign seats for tests, to change individual's seating for test security purposes, to require and check ID for admission to tests. **"Plagiarism"** is basically a form of theft: putting your name on work that is (in any part) not yours, where you have not fully identified the source from which you borrowed. Even taking someone else's ideas or paraphrasing their expression, without acknowledgment, is plagiarism. Be aware that the instructor is knowledgeable about computer-age plagiarizing techniques and how to diagnose their use. "Your responsibility, when you put your name on a piece of work, is simply to distinguish between what is yours and what is not, and to credit those who in any way have contributed" (quote is from Nancy Cotton of Wake Forest U.).

List of Psych. 471/571 additional readings in order, in general these are made available via blackboard.

Saucier, G. (in press). Crucial semantic and linguistic aspects of personality. In G. J. Boyle and G. Matthews (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of personality*. London: Sage.

Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill. [sections from chapter 5]

Bouchard, T. J. (2004). Genetic influence on human psychological traits. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 148-151.

Turkheimer, E. (2000). Three laws of behavioral genetics and what they mean. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9, 160-164.

McAdams, D. P. (1994). *The person: An integrated introduction to personality psychology*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt. ([parts of ch. 8])

Friedman, H. S., et al. (1995). Psychosocial and behavioral predictors of longevity: The aging and death of the "Termites." *American Psychologist*, 50, 69-78.

PSYCHOLOGY 471 SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

April 1	Syllabus; overview of the course <u>Reading Assignment</u> (i.e., for next session): Funder chs. 1-2
April 3	Studying individuals; the basic sources of data <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder chs. 3-4
April 8*	Design of research; cross-situational consistency <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 6
April 10	Everyday personality judgments and their accuracy <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 5; Saucier (in press)
April 15*	Tests of personality; which variables are “personality” and which are most important <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 7 and 18
April 17	The structure of personality dispositions and their relation to disorder tendencies <i>EXPLORATORY PAPER is due April 22!</i> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Larsen & Buss (2008)
April 22	Personality dispositions: stability/change over time <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 9; Bouchard (2004); Turkheimer (2000)
April 24	Genetic and environmental influences on personality
April 29	<u>MIDTERM QUIZ</u> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 8
May 1	Molecular genetics of personality; personality, physiology, and the brain <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 10-11
May 6*	Psychodynamic personality concepts, with some focus on defense mechanisms <i>OUTLINE/ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PAPER is due May 8!</i> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 12-13
May 8	Post-Freudian psychodynamic personality concepts; humanistic concepts <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 14
May 13*	The relation between culture and personality <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 15
May 15	Behaviorism and social learning <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 16
May 20*	“Personality processes”, including emotion and motivation <u>Reading Assignment</u> : McAdams (1994)
May 22	The “personality system”; measurement of implicit motives <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 17
May 27*	Self processes as a part of the personality system; panel presentations
May 29	Self processes (continued); panel presentations <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Friedman et al. (1995)
June 3	Personality applied to work and health; panel presentations <i>FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER is due June 5 at beginning of class period!**</i> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder, ch. 19
June 5*	Personality and personal relationships; panel presentations
June 12, Thursday, 1 pm, <u>FINAL EXAM</u>	

* *dates when you could turn in a Connections to Reading response, based on the assigned reading for that day, or for some future assigned reading (only two need to be completed for credit during term)*

** *unless you present in-class June 5 on your paper topic, in which case it's due 6/6 by noon*

Big questions: The pool of potential mini-essay items for midterm and final exams

1. Personality is best defined as _____
_____.
2. Given what we know (about when personality judgments are most and least accurate, about the relative advantages of different assessment methods and types of data), the best way to measure personality characteristics would be the following _____
_____.
3. The strongest argument in the “situationist” critique of the concept of “stable personality traits” is that _____. The strongest argument in favor of stable dispositions is that _____. Considering these two contrasting arguments, the best conclusion is that _____.
4. The most important dimensions on which individuals differ from one another, in what might be considered personality attributes, are _____ and the relation of these dimensions to psychological disorders can be described as _____.
5. The most important findings to date on personality *stability* over time and on the reasons why personality *change* occurs are _____.
6. People have often argued about the question “does personality has a genetic basis or an environmental basis?” Given how heritability is accurately defined and the way personality is best defined, the best answer to this question is to say that _____.
7. Based on evidence to date, the two most important ways in which personality characteristics reflect individual differences in biology (nervous-system function, hormones, molecular genetics) have to do with _____ and _____.
8. Culture is best defined as _____, and culture is related to personality in that _____. The most important differences in personality between cultures are _____.
9. In accounting for why people differ in personality attributes, the two most important aspects of the psychological functioning (among the parts or mechanisms in the “personality system,” which might include processes related to learning and conditioning, motivation, emotion, conscious or automatic mental activity, and effects of culture) are _____ and _____.
10. In terms of helping us understand personality, the most important single contribution found within psychodynamic (psychoanalytic) theory is _____ and the most important single contribution found within humanistic theory is _____.

Mini-essays should first have a single sentence completing blanks, then a longer description (1-2 paragraphs) explaining why you think that's the best way to complete the sentence.

CHOICES FOR THE EXPLORATORY PAPER (due April 22; choose 1 of these 3 exercises)

1. After making for yourself a list of the several (e.g., 3 to 5) people you know best – the ones whose habits, way of thinking, opinions, goals and wants, emotional patterns, and interactional styles are best known to you – choose just two of these people, two who you find differ very markedly on one of these 8 dimensions:

- A. One of them you observe and judge to be short-tempered, impatient, and/or stubborn, the other to be easygoing, calm, and tolerant.
- B. One of them you observe and judge to be cruel, corrupt, and/or wicked, the other to be quite the opposite – a decent, benign, socially acceptable person.
- C. One of them you observe and judge to be self-disciplined, tidy, and/or hard-working, the other to be inconsistent, absent-minded, and/or disorganized.
- D. One of them you observe and judge to be self-assured, brave, and/or resilient (in face of stress), the other to be fearful, frustrated, and/or gloomy.
- E. One of them you observe and judge to be sociable, talkative, and/or cheerful, the other to be reserved, silent, and/or withdrawn.
- F. One of them you observe and judge to be talented, original, and /or wise, the other to be ordinary, ignorant, and/or unintellectual.
- G. One of them you observe and judge to be religious, the other to be nonreligious.
- H. One of them you observe and judge to be materialistic and/or hedonistic, the other to be not very materialistic and/or hedonistic at all.

...Begin your paper by indicating on which one of these 8 dimensions the two people you selected differ the most. Then, describe what you notice is most different about these two people in regard to: (i) everyday habits and typical behaviors, (ii) preferences – things they especially like and dislike, (iii) beliefs about the world and about other people in general, (iv) specific skills, competences, and abilities, (v) what they want and need, (vi) what emotions they show a lot or don't show, and (vii) what effects they characteristically have on other people around them. Finally, discuss what you think could be the relation between these specific differences in psychological tendencies (in [i] through [vii]) and that one dimension (among the 8 dimensions, A through H above) you selected as distinguishing most between these people. Keep these two selected people anonymous throughout your paper.

2. Describe how you would define "virtue." Then describe what kinds of traits might be related to having virtue, and give a real-life example of how a person who had these traits (or had virtue) actually developed them. Indicate whether you think "virtue" is the same thing that as "moral character" or is something different. Go on to describe the goals, values, standards, beliefs, and skills you think one is likely to observe among those who have "virtue." Next (do *not* do this step until you have followed instructions in the previous 4 sentences) read the webpage <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue> carefully. After reading this webpage, write one paragraph describing what previous views of virtue (described on the webpage) come closest to the one you did. Then write another paragraph describing which of the previous views of virtue was both (a) *not* very much related to your own initial view but (b) is nonetheless a view that you think is very important (describe why).

3. Abraham Maslow defined a "peak experience" as the best moments of the human being, moments in which one feels especially whole, integrated, and aware of both self and world, thinks more clearly, is more accepting and loving, has less anxiety, and is more able to put energies to constructive use. Describe the three to five events or experiences you've had in your life that best qualify as peak experiences. On a separate sheet, make a note of whatever themes that you see running through the 3-5 events/experiences (including what brought it on or what the effect was). Then find another person (keep this person anonymous in your write up), show him/her your brief descriptions and ask him/her what themes seem to run through these events/experiences. Compare this to what you wrote on the separate sheet. Next, read the sections on flow (page 423-424 in the text *The Personality Puzzle*) and on self-actualization (pages 414-415 in same text) and note whatever seems similar between your experience and what Csikszentmihalyi and Rogers are describing. Describe in writing (as your paper) the results of the whole process, and comment on what you think any of this suggests about you or about people in general.