**Psychology 471: PERSONALITY**
*2:00 - 3:20 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays*
**Class meets in 146 Straub Hall**
**Professor: Gerard Saucier, Ph.D.**
**Office: 312 Straub**
**E-mail:** gsaucier@uoregon.edu    **Phone:** 346-4927 with voice mail
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 9:30-10:30 am, Thursdays 10:30-11:30 am, or flexibly by appointment
**Text:** Funder, D. C. (2010). <u>The personality puzzle</u> (5th 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 the course on 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 broad, aggregate level. Thus, this course should 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. In addition to the goal of sharpening thinking skills, the course aims to promote knowledge of personality. Such knowledge 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. Moreover, 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:
        4% ...credit for two "connecting with readings" responses
        7% ...for an exploratory paper
        2% ...class attendance credit
        2% ...panel presentation credit
        5% ...grade on outline/abstract of your research paper
       20% ...grade on final version of research paper
       25% ...score on the midterm quiz
       35% ...score on final exam

What follows is more detail on each of these components (a guide to doing well in the course).

The *__exams__* – both midterm quiz and final – consist of a multiple choice section (50% of the point total for the exam) concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them), followed by a

set of mini-essay questions (50% 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. 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 four 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). 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/insight paper*** is intended to help you develop a more personal connection to the subject matter, applying concepts learned in the course to your personal experience of other people. Papers will have two parts: The first will likely involve your comments on personality assessment, based on an experience assessing your own personality. The second will likely involve any one of several alternatives (you choose). Instructions will be placed on blackboard very early in the term. The paper should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, and at least 3 complete double-spaced pages of text. It is due on April 15.

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 more coherent 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. You might 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 OK 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 five 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. But this is not a "critique the article" assignment – 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. Keep focus on that question.

   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. Considers a plurality of views, that is, identifies differing points of view, or a major issue that is unresolved or 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.
6. Applies critical thinking to the research approaches described. This might include: how good is the supporting evidence (or the rationale), how good (relevant, reliable, large effect size, large sample, etc.) is this evidence (or rationale) is, whether some other reasonable interpretation of findings is plausible but has not been ruled out, and other issues.
7. 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)
8. Originality – indications are that (at least) the thinking is your own and (at best) it goes beyond and even challenges the "conventional wisdom" or "commonsense view" on aspects of the topic
9. Includes use of the assigned articles and two additional journal articles
10. The citations and reference list in APA style; see http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/psychology for help on APA styles and on finding articles  –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 motivational and emotional 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) – or the motivational and emotional patterns of the person you know best (who may be a friend, parent, or sibling).

b. Think about times, moments, or situations in your life when you had a very clear motivation 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.

c. Think about times, moments, or situations in your life when you had a very strong emotion, and describe how something in the reading can help in understanding that emotion.

d. Think about times, moments, or situations in which you misjudged another person's motivation or emotion, or those in which someone else misjudged your motivation or emotion, 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 what makes it 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 *nine* due dates -- you need only get in a Connecting response in <u>on time</u>, *at the beginning of class preferably in hard-copy,* 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 *<u>panel presentation</u>* means being part of a <u>panel </u>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 prepare a one-minute-or-so 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 (at most, 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, there will be a discussion forum set up about a week prior to the panel on blackboard to facilitate this.

There is a small bit of credit for attendance (2% 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%, **F**s 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 or fourth 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 APA style), these will be made available via blackboard.
Roberts, B. W., & Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 31-35.
Clark, L. A. (2009). Stability and change in personality disorder. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18*, 27-31.
Dweck, C. S. (2008). Can personality be changed? The role of beliefs in personality and change. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 391-394.
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.
Saucier, G. (2009).  What are the most important dimensions of  personality? Evidence from studies of descriptors in diverse languages*.  Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 3/ 4*, 620-637.
Carver ,C.S. & Scheier, M. F.. (2008).  *Perspectives on personality* (6$^{th}$ ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.([parts of ch. 5, 7, and 16]
Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill. [section from chapter 13]
Riggio, R. E. (2000). *Introduction to industrial/organizational psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Smith, T. W. (2006). Personality as risk and resilience in physical health. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*, 227-231.
 Hampson, S. E. (2008). Mechanisms by which childhood personality traits influence adult well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 264-268.

# PSYCHOLOGY 471 SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

| March 30 | Syllabus; overview of the course |
| | Reading Assignment (i.e., for session listed on next line): Funder chs. 1-2 |
| April 1 | Studying individuals; the crucial, basic sources of data |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder chs. 3-4 |
| April 6* | Design of research; cross-situational consistency |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 6 |
| April 8 | Everyday personality judgments and their accuracy |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 5 and 7; Saucier (2009) |
| April 13* | Tests of personality; which variables are "personality" and which are most important |
| | ***EXPLORATORY/INSIGHT PAPER** is due April 15!* |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 18 |
| April 15 | The structure of personality dispositions, and their relation to disorder tendencies and to worldview, values, belief systems |
| | Reading Assignment: Roberts & Mroczek (2008); Clark (2009); Dweck (2008) |
| April 20* | Personality dispositions: stability/change over time, potential sources of change |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 9; Bouchard (2004); Turkheimer (2000) |
| April 22* | Genetic and environmental influences on personality; molecular genetic findings |
| April 27 | ***MIDTERM QUIZ*** |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 8; Carver & Scheier (2008) ch. 7 |
| April 29 | Personality, biology, physiology, and the brain |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 10-11 |
| May 4* | Psychodynamic personality concepts, with some focus on defense mechanisms |
| | ***OUTLINE/ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PAPER** is due May 6!* |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 12-13 |
| May 6 | Post-Freudian psychodynamic personality concepts; humanistic/existential concepts |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 15 |
| May 11* | Behaviorism and social learning; fundamental motive systems |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 16; Larsen & Buss (2008) ch. 13 |
| May 13* | Emotion, its relation to motivation and to personality |
| | Reading Assignment: Carver & Scheier (2008) ch. 5; Riggio (2000) |
| May 18 | Motivation, explicit and implicit motives, and the 'personality system' |
| | Reading Assignment: Carver & Scheier (2008) ch. 16; Funder ch. 17; |
| May 20* | Self and cognitive processes as part of the personality system; panel presentations |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder ch. 14 |
| May 25 | Culture and personality; panel presentations |
| | Reading Assignment: Smith (2006); Hampson (2008) |
| May 27 | Personality applied to work and health; panel presentations |
| | Reading Assignment: Funder, ch. 19 |
| June 1* | Personality and personal relationships; panel presentations |
| | ***FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER** is due June 3**, at beginning of class!* |
| | Reading Assignment: none |
| June 3 | Review and synthesis; panel presentations |

**June 7 (Monday), 1 pm**, **FINAL EXAM**


**\*** *dates when you <u>could</u> 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 3 on your paper topic, in which case it's due June 4 by noon*

**1.** Personality is best defined as _____

_____

but there are controversies about whether the scientific concept of "personality" should include

_____.

**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, and about the most important dimensions on which individuals differ from one another), the best way to measure personality characteristics would involve _____

_____

_____.

**3.** The strongest argument in favor of a "situationist" view (and a situationist critique of the concept of personality traits) is that _____

_____.

On the other hand, the strongest argument in favor of stable dispositions is that

_____

_____.  Considering these two contrasting arguments (and taking into account research on heritability as well as personality-attribute stability), the best conclusion is that _____

_____.

**4.** The most important findings to date on personality *stability* over time and on the reasons why personality *change* occurs are _____

_____.

**5.** 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 _____.

**6.** In accounting for why people differ in personality attributes, the two most important aspects of the psychological functioning (i.e., the most important parts or mechanisms in the "personality system," which might include processes related to learning and conditioning, motivation, emotion, conscious or automatic mental activity, and aspects or effects of culture) are _____

_____ and _____

_____.

**7.** In terms of helping us understand personality, the most important contributions from psychodynamic (psychoanalytic) theory and/or from humanistic (or existential) theory are

_____

_____ and _____

_____.

*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.*  Numbers 1-4 above are candidates to be on the midterm. Any of the questions above that are *not* included on the midterm are candidates to be on the final exam.