

Psychology 471: PERSONALITY

8:30 – 9:50 am, Mondays and Wednesdays

Class meets in Knight Library 101

Instructor: Philippe Bou Malham

Office: 320 Straub E-mail: philippe@uoregon.edu (please allow up to 24 hours for response)

Office Hours: Wednesday 9:50 am to 11:50 am, or flexibly by appointment

Text: Funder, D. C. (2010). The Personality Puzzle (5th ed.). New York: Norton (plus other readings listed on class schedule at end of syllabus, made available via blackboard)

Course Objectives: What Is the Purpose of this Course?

Welcome to the course on Personality. The study of personality addresses such fundamental questions as “how and why do individuals differ in their *behavior patterns*?”, “how do these differences impact their lives and relationships?”, “how and why do people change across their lifespan?” By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Answer these and other questions about personality based on evidence
- Think critically about the strengths and limitations of each approach to studying personality and evaluate the quality of its findings about and insights into human behavior accordingly
- Articulate an opinion on core issues in the study of personality
- Use your own voice to reflect on the impact of personality in your life

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 and emphasizes both the biological and social antecedents of personality about equally. *This course has extensive readings; you are expected to read everything assigned.*

Assignments and Grading

Midterm Exam 40 multiple choice items	20
Evaluation and Reflection Paper on the Results of the Big Five Personality Inventory	15
Choice of 5 out of 8 Short Essay Big Questions	25
Final exam 50 multiple choice items	30
Attendance & Participation	10
TOTAL	100

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 concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them). No dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, or electronic devices can be used during the exams, except that a translating dictionary can be allowed for those with English fluency issues, if instructor approves it. Multiple-choice items especially emphasize material covered both in the assigned readings and in class.

The ***evaluation/reflection paper*** is intended to help you develop a more personal connection to the subject matter, apply concepts learned in the course to your personal experience, and articulate an educated opinion. Papers must include: an interpretation of your results, a prediction of what these results might mean about your behavior, commentary about the value and comprehensiveness of these results, commentary on the use of the trait approach in general, and your personal opinion on your results and personality assessment in general. Focus on what you agree with and don't, what you think is well-supported by evidence and what isn't, what seems logical or illogical, and what might be left out. Your commentary must draw on course material from the readings and/or lectures. The paper should have complete sentences, good grammar, reasonable organization, and at least 3 complete double-spaced pages of text. It is due on October 31.

The ***essay questions*** are designed to stimulate deeper analysis into the overarching approaches to studying personality, the controversies, and the core issues. The questions are found at the end of the syllabus. Students may choose any five and write short essay answers (no longer than 1.5 double-spaced pages) to the questions along with the reasoning that led to their answer and the evidence that supports it. The essay questions are due November 21.

Hard copies of the papers above must be turned in at the beginning of the class periods of their due dates. **Late papers** 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 (preferably a week) of an absence or a delay.

There is a small bit of credit for attendance (2% of course grade). You get this credit automatically, unless instructor experiences repeated (i.e., on > 3 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.

List of Psych. 471 additional readings (in APA style), these will be made available via blackboard.

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

Carver, C.S. & Scheier, M. F.. (2008). *Perspectives on personality* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education [from ch. 5]

John, O.P., Naumann, L.P., & Soto, C.J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative big five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O.P. John, R.W. Robins & L.A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research* (pp. 114-158). New York: Guilford Press.

Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill. [section from chapter 13]

McAdams, D.P. (1995). What do we know when we know a person? *Journal of Personality*, 63, 365-396.

Riggio, R. E. (2000). *Introduction to industrial/organizational psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Roberts, B. W., & Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, 31-35.

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

SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

Date	Topic	Readings (before class)	Due
M 9/24	Syllabus; Introduction	Funder ch. 1, McAdams (1995)	
W 9/26	Types and Quality of Data	Funder ch. 2 - 3	Take Big Five Inventory on outofservice.com/bigfive
M 10/1	Measurement, the Big Five, and Alternatives	Funder ch. 5 & 7 (243-256)	
W 10/3	The Big Five Taxonomy	John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008	
M 10/8	Accuracy & Stability	Funder ch. 6 & 7 (257-261) Roberts & Mroczek (2008)	
W 10/10	Person-situation debate Personality and beliefs/ideologies	Funder ch. 4 & 7 (213-243)	
M 10/15	Personality Disorders and Psychopathology	Funder ch. 18	
W 10/17	Recap, summary, group discussion		
M 10/22	MIDTERM EXAM		
W 10/24	Evolutionary & genetic influences on personality	Funder ch. 9 Turkheimer (2000) Bouchard (2004)	
M 10/29	Anatomy & Physiology of Personality	Funder ch. 8	
W 10/31	Culture and personality	Funder ch. 14	Reflection/evaluation paper
M 11/5	Psychoanalytic approach	Funder ch. 10 & 11	
W 11/7	Neo-Freudians & Humanistic theories	Funder ch. 12 & 13	
M 11/12	Behaviorism & Social Learning	Funder ch. 15	
W 11/14	Emotion and affect, in relation to motivation and to personality	Funder ch. 16; Larsen & Buss (2008) ch. 13	
M 11/19	Motivation & Personality	Carver & Scheier (2008); Riggio (2000)	
W 11/21	The Self	Funder ch. 17	Mini-essay questions
M 11/26	Integration	Funder ch. 19	
W 11/28	Recap, summary, group discussion		
Th 12/6	Final Exam at 10:15 am		

Academic Integrity

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students. **If you have any questions about academic integrity, I will be happy to discuss them with you. Please, email me or come to my office hours.**

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me within the first two weeks of class if there are any aspects of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. For more information on assistance, you are also encouraged to contact the following campus services:

- Accessible Education Center, 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1155, aec.uoregon.edu
- University Counseling and Testing Center, Health Center, 2nd Floor, 346-3227, counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/
- Teaching and Learning Center, 68 Prince Lucien Campbell, 346-3226, tlc.uoregon.edu

Diversity

The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community. Freedom of thought and expression is the bedrock principle on which university activity is based. This course is committed to upholding these principles by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of distinct perspectives and diverse identities. please notify me if your feel aspects of the course undermine these principles in any way. You may also notify the Department of Psychology at 346-4921. For additional assistance and resources, you are also encouraged to contact the following campus services:

- Office of institutional Equity and Diversity, 1 Johnson Hall, 346-3175, oied.uoregon.edu
- Center on Diversity and Community, 54, Susan Campbell Hall, 346-3212, codac.uoregon.edu
- Bias response Team, 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1134, brt@uoregon.edu, bias.uoregon.edu

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, the UO home webpage (www.uoregon.edu) will include a banner at the top of the page displaying information about delay or closure decisions for the Eugene campus. Local television, radio, and print media will be notified as well. In the event of a class cancellation, for any reason, I will contact the Department of Psychology as the first point of contact and also send an email via Blackboard to all students.

Exam Make-Ups

A make-up exam will be scheduled only if a student has a legitimate, university-sanctioned reason for missing the exam (see Student Handbook, which can be located through the University of Oregon website). If you can anticipate that you must miss an exam (e.g., participatory UO athletic event, religious holiday), contact me via email at least one week prior to the exam. If you are unable to take an examination on time due to illness or an emergency, notify me before the examination is scheduled to begin by calling the psychology office at 541.346.4921 (leave a message) and sending me an email message. In other words, do not ask for a make-up an exam after the date unless there were EXTREME circumstances contributing to your absence (i.e. death of an immediate family member, hospitalization, etc). Please note that, in such cases, if you do not have documentation of such extreme circumstances, you will NOT be allowed to take the make-up exam and you will receive a 0 on the exam. Be prepared to take the make-up exam at the earliest possible date. When you come to take the make-up, you will need to bring a completed Explanatory Statement of Absence from Class Form and any relevant documentation.

Miscellaneous

You are expected to keep copies of all your work for this course until the end of the term. Please turn off your phones when you enter the classroom. You are welcome to take notes on your laptop provided it does not become a barrier to your active listening and participation in the class.

Big questions: The pool of potential mini-essay questions

1. How is personality defined best? What should or should not be included in the definition and why? Why is the definition of personality important?
2. Given what we know (i.e., 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), what is the best way to measure personality characteristics?
3. What is the argument in favor of a “situationist” view (that behavior is driven mainly by situations, not dispositions)? On the other hand, what is the strongest argument in favor of stable dispositions? Considering these two contrasting arguments (and taking into account research), what is the most convincing conclusion?
4. If someone asks “how stable is personality over time?”, what would the best short answer be? If someone asks “why does personality *change* occur (what leads to change)?”, what would the best short answer be?
5. Based on evidence to date, how do personality characteristics reflect individual differences in biology (e.g., nervous-system function, hormones, molecular genetics)?
6. How can aspects of psychological functioning (i.e., learning and conditioning, motivation, emotion, conscious or automatic mental activity, and aspects or effects of culture) account for individual differences in personality characteristics? Elaborate on the influence of two aspects.
7. In terms of helping us understand personality, what is the most important contribution from psycho-dynamic (psychoanalytic) theory and/or from humanistic (or existential) theory? What is the most important limitation of these two theories in helping us understand personality?
8. What are some of the contributions of the process approach to personality? What do they add that was missing from the contributions of the individual differences approach?

Please remember to include the reasoning and evidence that led you to your answer.