

Psychology 471: PERSONALITY

4:00 – 5:20 pm (1600-1720), Mondays and Wednesdays

Class meets in 128 Chiles Center

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:15 to 3 pm, Wednesdays 5:20-5:35 pm (at 128 Chiles Center, right after class) -- or flexibly by appointment

Course TA: Brett Mercier, 365 Straub Hall, bmercier@uoregon.edu, office hours 12 – 2 pm Tuesdays

Text: Funder, D. C. (2013). *The personality puzzle* (6th ed.). New York: Norton – obtainable at Duckstore -- *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. 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. Biological and social/cultural antecedents of personality are both given emphasis in this course. The course format is primarily a series of talks (i.e., lecture), with in-class exercises, many discussions (sometimes structured). *The 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 three "connecting with readings" responses	Submitted via email
2% ...class attendance credit	
6% ...discussion-group participation credit (for evidence of participation in at least three)	
6% ...for an exploratory/insight paper	Handed in
4% ...grade on outline/abstract of your research paper	at class
20% ...grade on final version of research paper	in hard-copy form
24% ...score on the midterm quiz	
32% ...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 (60% of the point total for the exam) concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them), followed by a set of mini-essay questions (40% 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. They are these exact questions, though they may be revised during the term to increase clarity. 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;

a translating dictionary for those with English fluency issues may be OK, if instructor approves it. Multiple-choice items 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, 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 multiple alternatives (you choose among these). 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 January 21.

The research paper is designed to better traditional term papers in terms of advancing student learning. The topic for the paper is chosen by you, although from a “menu” of possible topics affected by level of overall class interest. Topics are in the form of a question, and your paper is a statement of what you think is the best answer to the question, the answer *best informed by the research* evidence you reviewed. For each topic, to help you get a good start, two articles will be assigned; at least two additional articles are chosen by you. Although multiple students may be working on the same topic, there is no joint or group product; you work entirely independently. 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 below); remember that originality is one of the grading criteria.

You are free to write the paper how you want, but here is a recommended format: First, state the topic question, and why it is an important question. Second, state what you think is a typical *uninformed* answer to the question, such as what many or most people think, or what you thought before you started working on the paper. Third (and this will be longer and more detailed than the earlier sections), describe several lines of research evidence suggesting good ways to answer the question – with ample reference to articles you read. Fourth, discuss any important limitations you see in research evidence you just discussed. Fifth, discuss how these lines of evidence relate to each (e.g., do they agree, do they contradict each other, can they be synthesized and if so how, are they just differing point of view). Sixth, state the position you arrived at based on what’s come here, and why you came to hold that position (about how best to answer the question). And seventh, summarize the main points of the paper in a paragraph.

For the one-page outline or abstract (due February 18) you need not worry about the format just mentioned. It is enough to identify your topic, its importance, common uninformed answers, what your reading so far suggests may be at least one good way to answer the topic question, and sketch out whatever else you foresee for the paper. You can present your initial ideas regarding the paper in outline form, with bullet points, or in standard prose like an abstract, or whatever gets the message across.

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.

The final research paper is graded on the following TEN criteria: (a) Is typed, readable, free of gross spelling and typographic errors. (b) Is well-organized and focused, free of rambling or irrelevant sections. (c) Addresses what makes this issue (or paper topic) important, practically and/or scientifically. (d) Defines key terms clearly, especially potentially ambiguous terms that will be used frequently in the paper, and/or identifies key assumptions. (e) Considers a plurality of views, not just one way of thinking about an issue, or ways of answering the main question. (f) Applies critical thinking to the research approaches described, and 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. (g) Attempts to synthesize and (even

better) actually effectively synthesizes the arguments and evidence, combining all of the discussion into a reasonable conclusion. (h) 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. (i) Includes use of the two assigned articles and two additional journal articles -- the two best additional journal articles you could find, and 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.). Bear in mind, 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. (j) The citations and reference list in APA style (see next page for examples). For article-finding help see <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/psychology/index.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 three of these satisfactorily during the term. The length for a Connecting response is exactly one (full, can be single- or double-spaced) page. These should be sent as an attachment, electronically via email to the course TA, by 2 pm on the day of class. 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). The due dates for these are provided in the syllabus (there are *many* due dates -- you need only get in a Connecting response in on time, for *three* 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. 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, just do a Connecting response for the next due-date.

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) describing an idea or finding you think is very important and explaining why; (b) or an idea or finding you think is very questionable and what makes it questionable; (c) describing how content in readings relates to times, moments, or situations in your own life, such as the motivational or emotional or behavioral patterns you see in significant others in your life or in yourself, or instances where someone misjudged someone else and the content in readings helps explain how or why that happened.

There is some credit (6% of course grade) for participation in discussion groups during class sessions. Said discussion groups will be convened five times during the course, each involve about 15 minutes of small-group discussion. You get 2 (of the full possible 6 percentage) points for each one you participate in fully, as evidenced by your name signed to the discussion-groups results-sheet. You could afford to miss two of these without penalty – credit for only three of five are necessary to get full credit.

There is a small bit of credit for attendance (2% of course grade). You get all this credit automatically, unless instructor experiences repeated (i.e., on > 3 occasions) difficulties finding you in class sessions. Attendance at more than three discussion groups is noted, and helps ensure you get all attendance credit.

Final grade in the course will be based on the total of your points from papers, exams, etc. **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, with exact thresholds (e.g., over 86.66 for a B+). A = awesome/outstanding, B= bueno (good!), C=acCeptable, D=deficient but creditable, F=failed the first 4 standards.

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 additional readings (in APA style), all to be made available via blackboard:

- Bouchard, T. J. (2004). Genetic influence on human psychological traits. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 148-151.
- Diener, E. (2012). New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research. *American Psychologist*, 67, 590-597.
- Dweck, C. S. (2008). Can personality be changed? The role of beliefs in personality and change. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, 391-394.
- Hampson, S. E. (2008). Mechanisms by which childhood personality traits influence adult well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, 264-268.
- Hogan, R., & Bond, M. H. (2009). Culture and personality. In P. J. Corr & G. Matthews (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 577-588). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Leary, M. (2003). Commentary on self-esteem as an interpersonal monitor: The sociometer hypothesis (1995). *Psychological Inquiry*, 14, 270-274.
- Neal, D. T., Wood, W., & Quinn, J. M. (2006). Habits – a repeat performance. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15, 198-202.
- Roberts, B. W., & Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, 31-35.
- 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.
- Smith, T. W. (2006). Personality as risk and resilience in physical health. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15, 227-231.
- Turkheimer, E. (2000). Three laws of behavioral genetics and what they mean. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9, 160-164.
- Vazire, S., & Carlson, E. N. (2011). Others sometimes know us better than we know ourselves. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 104-108.

PSYCHOLOGY 471 SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

January 5	Syllabus; overview of the course <u>Reading Assignment</u> (i.e., for session listed on next line): Funder chs. 1-2
Jan. 7*	Studying individuals; the crucial, basic sources of data <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder chs. 3-4
Jan. 12*	Design of research; cross-situational consistency <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Vazire & Carlson (2011); Funder ch. 6
Jan. 14*	Everyday personality judgments and their accuracy; <i>discussion groups</i> EXPLORATORY PAPER is due Jan. 21! <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 5
Jan. 21*	Accuracy of personality judgments and their accuracy; tests of personality <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 7 pp. 196-220; Saucier (2009)
Jan. 26*	Which variables are “personality” and which are most important; language of personality <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 7 pp. 220-236 and Funder ch. 18
Jan. 28*	The structure of personality dispositions, and their relation to ‘other units of personality’ (disorder tendencies, interests, values, worldview beliefs) <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch.7 pp. 236-243; Roberts & Mroczek (2008); Dweck (2008)
February 2*	Personality dispositions: stability/change over time, sources of change; <i>discussion groups</i> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 9; Bouchard (2004); Turkheimer (2000)
Feb. 4*	Genetic and environmental influences on personality (sketching their relative magnitude)
Feb. 9	MIDTERM QUIZ <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 8
Feb. 11*	Molecular genetics, personality, biology, physiology, and the brain <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 10 pp. 340-353, ch. 11 pp. 376-393
Feb. 16*	Psychodynamic personality concepts, contrasted with earlier views; <i>discussion groups</i> OUTLINE/ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PAPER is due Feb. 18! <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 12-13
Feb. 18*	Post-Freudian psychodynamic personality concepts; humanistic/existential concepts <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 15; Neal, Wood, & Quinn (2006)
Feb. 23*	Habit acquisition and maintenance; behaviorism, social learning; motivation <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 16; Diener (2012)
Feb. 25*	Emotion and affect, in relation to motivation and to personality; <i>discussion groups</i> <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 17; Leary (2003)
March 2*	Self and cognitive processes as part of the personality system <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder ch. 14; Hogan and Bond (2009)
March 4*	Culture and personality; personality and politics, and religion <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Smith (2006); Hampson (2008)
March 9*	Personality applied to work and health, and personal relationships; <i>discussion groups</i> FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER is due March 11 at beginning of class! <u>Reading Assignment</u> : Funder, ch. 19
March 11*	Final considerations; review, summary, and synthesis
March 16 (Monday), 2:45 pm, FINAL EXAM	

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

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

1. What is the typical way that scientists define personality? What are the most important controversies regarding how personality is defined (e.g., what kinds of variables “personality” includes and what it does not)? What do you think is the best way of defining personality (whether it is the typical way or not)?
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 very best argument (or two) in favor of a “situationist” view (that behavior is driven mainly by situations, not dispositions) ? What is the very best argument (or two) in favor of stable dispositions (that behavior is driven mainly by tendencies intrinsic to individuals)? What is more important for explaining behavior, situations or dispositions?
4. How stable is personality over time? As far as we know, why does personality *change* occur (what leads to change)?
5. Based on evidence to date, what are the most important ways in which personality characteristics reflect individual differences in biology (e.g., nervous-system function and/or anatomy, hormones, molecular genetics)?
6. *Why* do personality differences arise? That is, if we want to account for why people differ in personality attributes, what are the most important aspects of psychological functioning (or the most important personality process or mechanism) that we should consider? (Examples of candidate processes include learning and conditioning, motivation, emotion, conscious or automatic mental activity, and aspects or effects of culture, but be as specific as possible in your answer.)
7. For purposes of understanding personality, what has psycho-dynamic (psychoanalytic) theory contributed that is the most important, and what has humanistic or existential theory contributed that is the most important? Given the shortcomings of each theory (describe any major ones you see), which do you think is the better theory?
8. What are some important things that you would argue every wise person should know about how personality (or character or temperament) is relevant to major human fields of activity like work, close relationships, religion, and politics?

*Mini-essays should include somewhere a brief summary of the main points of your answer, in the form of four or five main points. This summary should be either in CAPS or underlined or circled. Most of your response should be an explanation/justification for those four or five main points (why they are the best way to answer the question[s]). Questions number 1-4 above are candidates to be on the midterm quiz. Any of the questions above that are *not* included on the midterm are candidates to be on the final exam.*