

**Personality Theory
Psychology 4210
Spring 2009
M 8:00 PM – 10:30 PM**

- Professor:** Dr. Christopher Johnson
Office: Social Sciences 207-D (Snow College Campus)
Office Hours: W 8:00PM – 10:00PM (held online via Blackboard/Wimba)
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Email: christopher.johnson@usu.edu
Contact Policy: I am as accessible to my students as possible through phone, email, and online video chat.
- You may contact me: (a) at any time via email and (b) from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM Mon. – Fri. by phone.
 - Regarding email, I prefer that you contact me at christopher.johnson@usu.edu rather than using the email features in Blackboard. You will receive a more timely response. Begin each email message with a salutation and end with a complimentary closing.
 - Additionally, regular weekly chat and video chat sessions are held online via Blackboard/Wimba to clarify any questions that you may have during the semester.
 - I encourage you to seek help or bring to my attention any issues that arise during the semester. I am committed to your intellectual development and scholarly success!

GENERAL INFORMATION

Required Reading:

1. Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Ayduk, O. (2008). *Introduction to Personality: Toward an Integrative Science of the Person* (8th ed.). New York: Wiley.
ISBN-13: 978-0470-08765-7

Additional Readings: Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be available via Blackboard (<http://bb.usu.edu>).

Course Description & Objectives:

Personality comprises those aspects of an individual that make him or her unique from others. In this course, you will gain an understanding of how various theorists have pursued the concept of personality. That is, we will be examining different perspectives on what personality is and how it is measured. This course will cover a number of classical and current

personality theories and by the end, you should be able to think about personalities from several different theoretical approaches. Along the way, we will examine some basic concepts of personality, the methods researchers use to study personality, and the details of several different personality theories.

I have set the following primary objectives for you this semester:

1. Integrate theory and research to develop a comprehensive understanding of personality
2. Explain and differentiate the major theories in the field of personality psychology
3. Understand the history and evolution of personality psychology
4. Critically evaluate conclusions drawn from research in personality psychology
5. Demonstrate how theory and research of personality can be applied in everyday settings
6. Understand how personality psychology is a ***scientific*** approach to exploring the many facets of human thought, behavior, and social interactions
7. Become familiar with the specific aspects of the approaches and techniques that psychologists use to study personality
8. Gain a working vocabulary and understanding of the key concepts important to understanding personality psychology

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be calculated from several areas, as detailed below. Your final evaluation will be comprised of exams (contributing 75% to your final grade) and response papers (contributing 25% to your final grade). Final grades will be determined by the number of points earned during the course and assigned a letter grade according to the scale shown in the table.

Percentage	Grade
94 - 100	A
90 - 93.99	A-
87 - 89.99	B+
83 - 86.99	B
80 - 82.99	B-
77 - 79.99	C+
73 - 76.99	C
70 - 72.99	C-
67 - 69.99	D+

1. EXAMS (75%):

One pretest (5%) and four regular exams (70%) will be given throughout the semester. I will drop your lowest exam grade. If you miss an exam that is the one that will be dropped. Make-up exams will NOT be given. Your

total exam average counts towards 75% of your final course grade. Regular exams are not cumulative. However, they are based on material from your readings as well as lecture material. My lectures draw from various resources and may only partially overlap with the book. ANY material that is covered in lecture or class discussion may be on the exams. Thus, attending lecture is HIGHLY recommended. Exam items may be multiple-choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, or essay.

Exams will be administered outside of regular class time. Exams will be completed online via Blackboard and therefore can be taken at your convenience. In most cases, you will have 90 minutes to complete each exam once you have begun.

PRETEST: You are required to take a pretest for this class during the first week of classes. You will NOT be penalized in any way for having a low score or a high score. You will receive credit equating to 5% of your grade just for taking the exam, no matter what your score. Do the best that you can—you are not expected to know everything covered on the pretest. Your grade will NOT be affected in any way by the difference between the pretest and the other exams.

2. RESPONSE PAPERS (25%):

You will be required to write response papers throughout the course.

Assignments turned in after the due date will not be accepted and will not receive credit. Please turn your work in on time. Requirements and details for the response papers will be available via Blackboard at a later date during the semester. I will notify you when the requirements are available through Blackboard.

Typically, response papers will involve reading an assigned peer-reviewed scientific journal article and then writing a brief (2-3 page) paper about the article. Generally, I will be looking for **evidence of original thought** and **comprehension** of the issue posed/researched in the paper. Simply summarizing the article or offering your opinion will earn you low marks on these assignments.

3. EXTRA CREDIT:

Extra credit assignments will NOT be given under any circumstance. However, I may occasionally include bonus questions on your exams that will count as “extra credit” on that exam’s score.

4. CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class will start promptly each day, barring any unforeseen and/or uncontrollable circumstance. I do not have an attendance policy (i.e., you

will NOT get points “just for showing up”) for this course. However, I will take roll. Additionally, you will not do well if you miss class regularly. **This course is an INTERACTIVE course, not an online course.** Therefore, attending lectures/discussions is expected. If excessive absences (including arriving late or leaving early) become a problem, I will first notify you so that you may make the appropriate efforts to attend class. If absenteeism remains a problem, I may refer you to the USU Administration or drop you from the course according to any existing USU policy.

Should circumstances result in your missing a class, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain information presented or materials distributed while you were absent. This is particularly important because lecture material will come from sources other than your textbook. Although I do not share my personal lecture notes or PowerPoint files, I am available to discuss any borrowed notes obtained from classmates that you may not fully understand.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE

1. Read BEFORE coming to class. This will improve your exam average as well as prepare you for intelligent class discussions. You will be called upon to participate during class.
2. Attend lecture and be punctual. Missing lectures and/or being late will disturb the instructor and your classmates. Please arrive on time.
3. Ask questions. This is an interactive course. Student participation is highly encouraged. Don't be afraid to ask questions where you need clarification or don't understand something.
4. Get to know your classmates. This will improve your learning as you discuss the material/course. Your classmates are also a good resource for getting lecture notes should you miss a class.
5. Stay up to date. Come to class prepared for discussion every day.
6. Study several times per week rather than cramming the night before an exam.
7. See the instructor should you have problems with the course or need special accommodations.

MI SCELLANEOUS

1. Please be courteous to your classmates and the instructor by **TURNING OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS** before coming to class.
2. Any instances of academic dishonesty are taken seriously. By participating in this course, you agree to abide by USU’s Honor System and Honor Pledge as outlined in the Student Code (<http://www.usu.edu/studentervices/pdf/StudentCode.pdf>).
3. In coordination with the Disability Resource Center, reasonable accommodation will be provided for qualified students with disabilities. Please contact the instructor during the first week of class to make arrangements.
4. You will work hard in this course, but you will also learn a lot!

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a **tentative** schedule for the course. **The schedule may change.** Because success in this class is partially dependent upon informed class discussion, it is critical to remain up to date with the reading.

Week	Date	Lecture Topic/** Assignments	Reading
1	January 5, 2009	**Pretest (to be completed on or before January 11) Orientation to Personality	Ch. 1
2	January 12, 2009	Data, methods, and tools; Types and traits	Ch. 2, Ch. 3
3	January 19, 2009	NO CLASS - MLK HOLIDAY	--
4	January 26, 2009	Expressions of dispositions	Ch. 4
5	February 2, 2009	**Exam 1 (to be completed on or before February 8) Heredity and personality; Brain, evolution, and personality	Ch. 5, Ch. 6
6	February 9, 2009	Psychodynamic theories, Freud	Ch. 7
7	February 17, 2009	**NOTE: THIS CLASS MEETS ON TUESDAY Psychodynamic applications and processes, post-Freudian psychodynamics	Ch. 8, Ch.9
8	February 23, 2009	Behavioral conceptions	Ch. 10
9	March 2, 2009	**Exam 2 (to be completed on or before March 8) Analyzing and modifying behavior	Ch. 11
10	March 9, 2009	NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK	--
11	March 16, 2009	Phenomenological-Humanistic approach, Internal view	Ch. 12, Ch. 13
12	March 23, 2009	Social cognitive conceptions	Ch. 14
13	March 30, 2009	**Exam 3 (to be completed on or before April 5) Social cognitive processes	Ch. 15
14	April 6, 2009	Integrating the levels of the personality system	Ch. 16
15	April 13, 2009	Self-regulation	Ch. 17
16	April 20, 2009	Personality in its social context and culture	Ch. 18
Finals Week	April 27, 2009	**Exam 4 (to be completed during regular class time)	--