

Syllabus, Psychology 421-0

Personality Theory

Spring, 2008

Dr. Brian T. Tschanz

Office: # 423 Ed

Class Meets: 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays. Merrill-Cazier, 164

Text: The Personality Puzzle (4th ed.) D. C. Funder, W.W. Norton & Company. Interesting Matisse on the cover.

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Office Hours: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment.

Course Objectives: My goal for this course is to provide the student with a broad, yet fairly sophisticated, overview of extant research and theory in personality. Because the study of personality has been approached from biological, clinical, social-psychological, and developmental perspectives, it is an area that tends to offer something interesting for everyone.

My general modus operandi will be to follow a particular topic matter within personality (e.g., psychodynamic personality) from its early-to-mid 20th century roots up to its relatively recent past (as recently as possible).

Below, I present the course objectives in the standardized format to which you have become accustomed.

The student will become knowledgeable about:

1. type, trait, and interactionist approaches, as well as controversies surrounding these approaches.
2. research and theory on the anatomical, physiological, and genetic bases of personality.
3. Freudian and post-Freudian psychodynamic theory and research.
4. social-cognitive theoretical and empirical approaches to personality.
5. phenomenological theoretical and empirical approaches to personality.
6. self, cross-cultural, and goal-pursuit approaches. These approaches tend to blend the psychodynamic, social-cognitive, and phenomenological approaches.

The student will find that I tend to have equal enthusiasm for psychodynamic, social-cognitive, and phenomenological approaches to personality. I tend to see them as providing complementary rather than competing perspectives on the person.

Course Structure: By and large, this will be a conventional class in which I lecture and you listen, take notes, and ask questions. However, I should note that typically in this class my students and I have indulged in the both the planned and spontaneous having of fun. I see no reason why this class should be different in this respect.

I would also like to say a few things about the textbook readings at this point. The first thing that I'd like to note is that the textbook is, in my judgment, the best one available. It is eminently readable and, for the most part, comprehensive. That said, I really should have ordered another supplementary text. However, I just couldn't bring myself to have you folks fork out another 30 or 40 bucks for this class. If you find this class to be especially interesting, I list below two excellent supplementary texts that you might consider purchasing.

Pieces of the Personality Puzzle (4th ed., 2007). David C. Funder & Daniel J. Ozer (Eds). W.W. Norton & Company.

Current Directions in Personality Psychology (2005). Carolyn C. Morf & Ozlem Ayduk (Eds). American Psychological Society.

You'll note that the textbook readings also tend to "jump around" a little bit relative to the order of the lectures. That is to be expected. No textbook author will organize his or her book in precisely the same manner that any given instructor prefers to organize his or her course. I hope that this imperfect correspondence does not lead to too much confusion.

Cheating policy: If discovered, cheating on an examination and/or plagiarizing on a paper will result in an automatic failing grade and immediate notification of the appropriate university authorities.

Electronic Device Policy: The use of cell phones, I-phones, Blackberries, and the like will not be tolerated during class time. If you are using a laptop, I will assume that you are taking notes and nothing else.

Course Grading: Your grades will depend upon your performances on the below listed five bases of evaluation:

1. Four examinations (four midterms). Each examination will be worth 20% of the total course grade (i.e., 100 points each).
2. Your Superego Versus Conditions of Worth analysis of a "friend." This will also be worth 20% of your course grade (i.e., 100 points).

I would like you to consider someone whom you know very well - a "friend," if you will – from the perspective of two conceptually related personality constructs, Freud's superego and Roger's conditions of worth. For Freud and Rogers respectively, these structures more or less inevitably come into conflict with innate biological structures and mechanisms that the person cannot

ignore. For both of these theorists, the manner in which the person deals with this conflict is a crucial determinant of his or her personality functioning.

I will take time later in the semester (see course schedule below) to discuss these papers in greater detail.

Grade Scale

A: 470 to 500 points
A-: 450 to 469
B+: 430 to 449
B: 390 to 429
C+: 370 to 389
C: 350 to 369
C-: 330 to 349
D+: 310 to 329
D: 290 to 309
F: 289 and below.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 6th and 8th). Introduction and types, traits, and interactionism.
Reading: Chapters 4 and 7.

Week 2 (January 13th and 15th). The genetic basis of personality.
Reading: Chapter 9.

Week 3 (January 20th and 22th). The biological basis of personality.
Reading: Chapter 8.

Week 4 (January 27th and January 29th). Freud's legacy: The psychoanalytic perspective.
Reading: Chapter 10.

Week 5 (February 3rd and 5th). Unconscious and Defense: Freud Updated and Revised.
Reading: Chapter 11.

“Many aspects of Freudian theory are indeed out of date, and they should be: Freud died in 1939, and he has been slow to undertake further revisions.”

Drew Westen

“A prophetic madman is at least amusing; a superannuated fuddy-duddy is merely pathetic.”

Steven Jay Gould

February 5th: Midterm I. Covered material will be specified precisely at a later

date.

Week 6 (February 10th and 12th). Post-Freudian Psychodynamics.
Reading: Chapter 12.

Week 7 (February 19th. Go to Monday's classes on the 17th).
Reading: Give Chapters 10 through 12 a rereading☺.

Week 8 (February 24th and 26th). Social Cognitive Conceptions.
Reading: Chapter 15 and Chapter 16, pages 516 – 530.

Week 9 (March 3rd and 5th). Social Cognitive Processes.
Reading: Chapter 17, pages 569 – 570.

March 5th: Midterm II. Covered material will be specified later at a later date.

Week 10 (March 9th through 13th). SPRING BREAK. Ski/Snowboard often.

Week 11: (March 17th and 19th) The Phenomenological Perspective.
Reading: Chapter 13.

Week 12 (March 24th and 26th): Phenomenological Perspective.
Reading: Chapter 13 (again – your textbook author doesn't do this well).

Week 13 (March 31st and April 2nd. Remember to wear a kilt to class on April 1st): The Phenomenological Perspective. *Talk about Superego Vs. Conditions papers on the 2nd.*
Reading: Chapter 13 (just stay with it ***and please don't wear a kilt on April Fools Day***).

Week 14 (Apr. 7th and 9th). Personality in the Pursuit of Goals.
Reading: Chapter 16, pages 531 - 555.

April 9th Midterm III. Covered material will be specified precisely at a later date

Week 15 (Apr. 14th and 16th). Self-Regulation and Related Topics.
Reading: Chapter 17.

April 16th: Superego Versus Conditions Papers Due.

Week 16 (April 21st and 23rd). Personality in its Context and Culture.

Reading: Chapter 14.

Tuesday, April 28th, 1:30 - 3:20 (Midterm IV - Final, if you will) Covered material will be specified precisely at a later date.

