

PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY  
Psyc 553, section 02  
MWF 11:10-12:00  
Hamilton Smith Hall, Room 216

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Textbook

Mayer, J. D. (2002). Personality psychology: A systems approach. Pearson Custom Publishing.

Course description

Many students sign for a course in psychology because they want to better understand either themselves or other people. Good news is that personality psychology is a discipline that has the same goal. You will notice my enthusiasm for the study of personality and I hope we will be able to share it. We will examine various parts of personality, such those dealing with emotions, motivation, thinking, or relating to other people. We will answer questions such as "Are emotions and thinking complete opposites?", "What are happy people like?", or "Why do intelligent people do stupid things?". We will discuss how these characteristics are expressed in our everyday lives and how various personality attributes come together in making us the way we are. Class activities and labs will illustrate how personality is studied, while the assignments will challenge you to apply what you are learning about personality in observing yourself, other people, and popular culture.

Grading

Exams: 50%  
Final paper: 15%  
Lab experience: 15%  
Journal: 15%  
Class participation: 5%

Exams

There will be 4 exams. You will have an option to explain your answers for up to three questions marked as incorrect. If you can find support for your original answer in the course readings or notes, or if the way the question was worded was unclear or misleading, you can earn credit for your answer(s). If you have any questions about the test or your performance, please come to see me, and we will talk about possible ways of improving your performance.

Note that not all the material you will be tested on is covered in the textbook. Therefore, you are advised to come to class. In addition to presenting some material not covered in the textbook, lectures will help you organize the information and give you additional examples.

Make up tests will be available for students with a legitimate reason for missing one regular exam. In case you plan to use this option, please come to see me and we will discuss your reasons for taking an exam at this alternative time. For example, a documented medical condition will be a valid reason for missing an exam, while travel plans will not be considered as a legitimate excuse.

### Determining your exam grade

Your exams will be graded on the following scale:

93-100	A	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	73-76	C	63-66	D
87-89	B+	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
83-86	B			59 and below	F
80-82	B-			Not completed	(0)

### Final paper

The purpose of the final paper is to make you integrate what you learned about personality. In this paper you will describe the personality of someone you know well. You will be given a series of questions that will guide your analysis. Each question will ask you to describe one personality characteristic and then illustrate your claims with examples from the person's life.

You will receive a sheet that will specify detailed grading criteria. The paper will be graded for clarity and style of writing, accuracy in defining personality attributes, and originality of ideas.

### Lab experience

The lab experience is an important component of this course. You will participate in five lab sessions offered at different times through five consecutive weeks. This lab experience will give you the opportunity to see how personality research is done and what are some important tools for personality measurement. The labs will bring to life many course topics. You will get feedback on how you scored on some of these measures and will discuss your experiences in your journal.

You may elect not to participate in the lab experience. As an alternative to your participation, you will have an option of writing a 5 page research paper in which you would explore the topics covered in the labs. If you elect this option, please come to see me and we will work together to select the topic for your paper.

### Journal entries

There will be 3 journal assignments. For each assignment you will get a booklet with questions that will ask you to find examples for personality attributes discussed in class from your own life and to imagine practical applications for research on personality. The journals will be graded for the goodness of examples in illustrating personality attributes and originality of ideas.

### Class participation

Class discussions will be an important aspect of the course. In order to get the most out of the course, you should read the chapters before class meetings. You are encouraged to share your observations about people. You are especially encouraged to ask questions, either clarifying the material or relating it to everyday life. Also, I will periodically ask you for brief one-minute papers relating to that day's class. These activities are not graded, but your active involvement will be recorded and will count towards your participation grade. If you miss one one-minute paper or class activity, your participation grade will be A; if you miss two activities, your grade will be A-, if you miss three activities, your grade will be B+, and so on.

### Extra credit

You will have an opportunity to earn up to five extra points on each of the exams. In order to earn this extra credit, you will have to answer five bonus questions. The material in these questions will be drawn from the extra readings that will be provided for every chapter. Extra readings are optional (but interesting, related to the course material, and beneficial for your grade). The readings will be available as a packet at the Durham Copy Place on Main Street.

### Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating:

Plagiarism involves taking parts from some published material (e.g., book, web site) without identifying the source. The department policy on plagiarism is simple: It is not tolerated! If you do it, you will fail the course. Ignorance is no excuse. Cheating can have various forms, like copying an assignment from someone else or copying answers from someone else's exam. Cheating is not tolerated. If you do it, you will fail the course.

### Resources

In the spaces below, list the names of two fellow students. These can be your resources in case you have to miss a class meeting and need notes or other course materials.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICAL COURSE OUTLINE:

Date	Topic	Chapter
9/4 9/6	Introduction Syllabus/introduction to the course What is personality?	1
9/9 9/11 9/13 9/16	Perspectives on personality Systems perspective Biological and social perspectives Psychodynamic and humanistic perspectives Trait and social-cognitive perspectives	3
9/18 9/20 9/23	Reading and evaluating personality research What would it be like to be a personality psychologist? Strategies for personality research What is psychometrics?	2
9/25	EXAM 1	
9/27 9/30 10/2 10/4 10/7 10/9	Motivation and emotion in personality Introduction to motivation and emotion Discovering human motives; sexual motivation Social motives The role of emotions in personality Depression Happiness and satisfaction with life	4
10/11 10/14 10/16 10/18	Interior selves; interior worlds What are internal models? FALL BREAK, NO CLASSES!!! Models of the self Models of the world and relationships	5
10/21 10/23 10/25	Thinking with intelligence Intelligence in everyday life Different kinds of intelligence Intelligence and emotions	6
10/28	EXAM 2	Journals due
10/30 11/1	The conscious self and autonomous parts of personality Personality agencies... ... and their expression in everyday life	7
11/4 11/6	How the parts of personality fit together The Big Five model Functions of personality	8

11/8 11/11 11/12 11/13	The dynamics of motivated action What are personality dynamics? VETERANS' DAY, NO CLASSES CLASSES FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE Motivational dynamics Feeling and thinking dynamics	9
11/15	EXAM 3	Journals due
11/18 11/20	The dynamics of self-control Self and self-control Reality and illusion of the self	10
11/22 11/25 11/27 11/29 12/2	Personality development - childhood How does development happen? Temperament and personality; what changes and what doesn't CLASSES FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE Adolescent identity THANKSGIVING, NO CLASSES!!! Gender and development	11
12/4 12/6	Personality development: Focus on adult personality Expression of personality in everyday life Towards a healthy personality	12
12/9	EXAM 4	Journals due
12/11 12/13	Wrapping up - a creative personality FINAL PAPER	