

**PSYCHOLOGY 356: PERSONALITY (WINTER 2014)**

Lecture times and location: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:20 pm in PAS 2083

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Teaching assistants:

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Course description: Personality psychology is the science of measuring and explaining patterned individual differences in behavior and personal functioning. This course examines personality at distinct levels of analysis including: 1) temperaments and traits, 2) values, goal orientations, and personal strivings, and 3) broader meaning systems and self-narratives. Lectures and readings emphasize the cognitive, affective, motivational, and interpersonal processes that generate and sustain personality differences. Topics include behavioral and molecular genetic studies of personality; continuity and change in personality over the lifespan; implicit and physiological measures of personality; sources of accuracy and bias in intuitive judgments of personality; comparative cultural, historical, and cross-species investigations of personality; personality disorders; and personality predictors of well-being.

Required readings (available at the UW campus bookstore, and UW Porter Library Reserve Desk)

- 1) Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Ayduk, O. (2008). Introduction to personality (8<sup>th</sup> edition). NY: Wiley.
- 2) Gosling, S. (2008). *Snoop: What your stuff says about you*. New York. [Resource for Personality Observation Assignment]
- 3) McAdams, D. P. (2011). *George W. Bush and the redemptive dream*. New York: Oxford University Press. [Resource for Writing Assignment]
- 4) Additional academic and popular science articles will be available on LEARN (see below).

Tests and writing assignments: Course grades will be based on a midterm (25%), a personality evaluation assignment (10%), a personality observation assignment (15%), a writing assignment (20%), and a final exam (30%). The midterm and final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions covering material from both the lectures and the assigned readings. Review sessions for the midterm and final will be scheduled on an evening before each testing session. Dates, times, and locations of review sessions will be announced in class and on LEARN. Completed assignments should be submitted to a drop box on LEARN no later than 11:00 pm on the due date. Late submissions will NOT be accepted and will be marked 0.

LEARN Lecture outlines, other course materials, and announcements will be posted on LEARN (<https://learn.uwaterloo.ca>). Links to online personality measures that are relevant to course topics will also be posted on LEARN. Make sure to check LEARN on a regular basis for these updates.

**Additional required readings (Available on LEARN):**

Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2007). Empirical, theoretical, and practical advantages of the HEXACO model of personality structure. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 11*, 150-166. [Resource for Personality Rating Assignment]

Block, J., & Block, J. H. (2006). Venturing a 30-year longitudinal study. *American Psychologist, 61*, 315-327.

Hammack, P. L. (2010). The political psychology of personal narrative: The case of Barack Obama. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 10*, 182-206.

Hare, R. (1994). This charming psychopath. *Psychology Today*, Jan/Feb.

Hyde, J.S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist, 60*, 581–592.

Lilienfeld, S. O., & Arkowitz, H. (2007). What “psychopath” means. *Scientific American Mind, 18*, 80-81.

Oltmanns, T. F., & Turkheimer, E. (2009). Person perception and personality pathology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18*, 32-36.

Siebert, C. (2006, Jan. 22). The animal self. *New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/22/magazine/22animal.html?pagewanted=all>

Twenge, J. M. (2008). Generation me: The origin of birth cohort differences in personality traits, and cross-temporal meta-analyses. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 2/3*, 1440-1454.

## Assignments

Handouts providing further details of the content, expectations, and grading criteria for the writing assignments will be distributed in class and also posted on LEARN.

For the Personality Evaluation Assignment each student and another person will rate the personality of the same person using the HEXACO personality inventory (Ashton & Lee, 2007). After scoring each judge's ratings of the target's personality on the 6 dimensions, the student will submit a paper that analyzes possible reasons for convergences and divergences in the judges' ratings across the 6 dimensions of the target's personality. This assignment will provide experience in using and scoring personality inventories and insights into the value and limitations of this approach to personality assessment. Ashton and Lee's (2007) paper and website will be background sources for this assignment.

For the Personality Observation Assignment each student will examine traces of their personality expression in everyday life. Students will submit a paper that explores traces of their personality that can be found in the contents and decor of their bedrooms, their use of social network media, and/or the ways they use language to express themselves in daily life. This assignment will provide practice using the tools of psychology to recognize how personality reveals itself in everyday contexts. Gosling's (2008) book *Snoop* will be the primary background source for this assignment. You will be expected to have read Gosling's book in preparation for this assignment.

For the Writing Assignment each student will conduct a case study of a popular or public figure in which they assess that individual's personality across the 3 main levels of analysis that were emphasized in the course (i.e., Level 1: Personality Traits, Level 2: Characteristic Adaptations; Level 3: Personal Narratives). As source material for this case study the student may use magazine interviews, published biographical texts, documentary videos, or any other relevant public materials that convey information about the individual's personality. The student's task will be to draw together information about each level of personality expression to construct an integrated profile of the individual person. This assignment will provide experience applying course concepts to understand how the tools of personality science can be used to gain a well-rounded understanding of an individual's life. McAdam's (2011) book *George W. Bush and the redemptive dream* will be the primary background source for this assignment. You will be expected to have read McAdam's book in preparation for this assignment.

Completed writing assignments should be submitted to a drop box on LEARN no later than 11:00 pm on the due date. **Late submissions will NOT be accepted and will be marked 0.**

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS**

(MSA =Mischel, Shoda, & Ayduk)

- Jan. 7: Introduction (MSA: Ch. 1, pp. 1-18)  
Jan. 9: Measuring personality (MSA: Ch. 2, pp. 19-41; Gosling, pp. 9-32)  
Jan. 14: Personality judgment (Gosling, pp. 137-186; Oltmanns & Turkheimer)  
Jan. 16: Personality traits (MSA: Ch. 3, pp. 43-71; McAdams, pp. 15-50; Siebert)  
Jan. 21: Person-situation interactions (MSA: Ch. 4, pp. 72-91)  
Jan. 23: Behavioral genetics (MSA: Ch. 5, pp. 95-110)  
JAN 22: PERSONALITY EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT IS DUE  
Jan. 28: Gene-environment interactions (MSA: Ch. 5, pp. 110-123)  
Jan. 30: Psychophysiology of temperament (MSA: Ch. 6, pp. 124-148)  
Feb. 4: Personality consistency and change over the lifespan (MSA: Ch. 7, pp. 151-176; Block & Block, 2006)  
Feb. 6: Psychodynamics: Defense mechanisms and unconscious motivations (MSA: Ch. 8, pp.177-207; McAdams, pp. 51-97)  
FEB. 11: MIDTERM (IN CLASS)  
Feb. 13: Personality in expressive behavior (MSA: Ch. 9, pp. 209-239)

**FEB. 17-21: READING WEEK**

- Feb. 25: Habits and social learning (MSA: Ch. 10, pp. 241-269; Ch. 11, pp. 270-293)  
Feb. 27: Well-being, life projects, and self-determination (MSA: Ch. 12, pp. 295-322)  
FEB 28: PERSONALITY OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT IS DUE  
March 4: Moral world-views and sociopolitical ideologies (MSA: Ch. 13, pp. 323-345; McAdams, pp. 98-144)  
March 6: Autobiographical narratives (Hammack; McAdams, pp. 145-230)  
March 11: Social cognition (MSA: Ch. 14, pp. 347-378)  
March 13: Self-theories (MSA: Ch. 15, pp. 379-404)  
March 18: Personality coherence (MSA: Ch. 16, pp. 405-436)  
March 20: Self-regulation (MSA: Ch. 17, pp. 437-465)  
MARCH 23: WRITING ASSIGNMENT IS DUE  
March 25: Gender and sexuality (Hyde)  
March 27: Historical change in personality expression (Twenge)  
April 1: Culture and models of selfhood (MSA: Ch. 18, pp. 466-491)  
April 3: Disordered personality: The example of psychopathy (Hare; Lilienfeld & Arkowitz)

### Course policies:

**Students who are requesting accommodation for course requirements** (*assignments, midterm tests, final exams, etc.*) **due to illness** should do the following:

- seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed UW Verification of Illness Form:  
[http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html)
- submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours.
- (preferably) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.

In the case of a missed final exam, the instructor and student will negotiate an extension for the final exam which will typically be written as soon as possible, but no later than the next offering of the course.

In the case of a missed assignment deadline or midterm test, the instructor will either:

1. waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
2. provide an extension.

**In the case of bereavement**, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required. Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** The Access-Ability Services Office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the Access-Ability Services Office at the beginning of each academic term.

**The Official Version of the Course Outline** If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (*i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class*) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

### **Concerns About the Course or Instructor (Informal Stage)**

We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies (*Myra Fernandes from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014*) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor. Contact information is as follows: Myra Fernandes Email: [mafernan@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mafernan@uwaterloo.ca) Ph 519-888-4567 ext 32142  
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 and 71 below for further details.

### **Academic Integrity, Academic Offenses, Grievance, and Appeals**

To protect course integrity, as well as to provide appropriate guidance to students, course outlines in the Faculty of Arts must include the following note on avoidance of academic offenses:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

[Further details: <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>]

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [<http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>], to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline

[<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>].

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4

[<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>].

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals

[<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>].

**Bonus Points for Research Experience [Grade breakdown: 100% course work, 4% bonus credits]**

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience. Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a "bonus" grade of up to 4% in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 4% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%.

The two options for earning research experience grades (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

**Option 1: Participation in Psychology Research, Research Experiences Group (REG)**

Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in lab and/or online (web-based) studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

***Educational focus of participation in research***

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results
- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student want to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which s/he participated.

Participation in LAB studies is worth 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Participation in ONLINE studies is worth 0.25 credits for each 15-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student's participation and will advise the course instructor of the total credits earned by each student at the end of the term.

***How to participate?***

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. You must get started early in the term. For instructions on how to log in to your SONA account and for a list of important dates and deadlines please, as soon as possible go to:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/research-experiences-group/participants/sona-information>

*\*\*\* Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.\*\*\**

More information about the REG program is available at:

[REG Participants' Homepage](#)

**Option 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research**

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students want to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of research articles from empirical psychology journals relevant to the course.

*You must contact your TA to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review.* Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- **Be submitted before the [last day of lectures](#). Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the textbook that are applicable. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.