

Personality Psychology 356

S2018 Syllabus

Instructor

Professor Ian McGregor 3048 PAS
ian.mcgregor@uwaterloo.ca
www.imcgregor.ca
Office Hour, Wed 4-5

TAs (office hours by appointment)

Emily Britton e2britto@uwaterloo.ca (content, participation, tests, grades)
Abdo Elnakouri abdo.elnakouri@uwaterloo.ca (assignment grading for A-M)
Emma Green e3green@uwaterloo.ca (assignment grading for N-Z)

Staff

Konstantyn Sharpinskyi ksharpin@uwaterloo.ca (online experiential learning, ELINs, data)

Room EV3 1408, 11:30-2:20, Mondays (*with two exceptions*)

May 7 Big Picture
May 14 Freud
May 22 Illusion * *Note the change to Tuesday*
May 28 Traits 12% Test
June 4 Biology*
June 11 Goals*
June 18 Grit*
June 25 Love 24% Test
July 9 Power*
July 16 Meaning*
July 23 Virtue*
July 25 Wisdom 24% Test. *Note the change to Wednesday*
July 31 Success 30% Assignment due during Exam Period

Final Grade

60% from 3 in-class MC Tests + **30%** Success Assignment + **14%** Class Participation (2% from each lecture with an *) = **100% Max**

Course Description and Objectives

Personality psychology is the study of how biology, environment, and intentions combine to shape enduring patterns of feeling, thinking, hoping, and acting. The academic objective of this course is to foster facility with personality science methods and findings. The pragmatic objective is to enable you to apply this knowledge for wise success in your life and in helping those you encounter along the way. Empirically rigorous personality science began less than 100 years ago. Before that, theories of personality existed only as introspectively-derived mythological, philosophical, and religious explanations. Introspection can be powerful, but can also be perilously deluded. This course will compare introspectively and empirically derived conclusions about personality in an attempt to disentangle the power from the peril. In doing so, it will reveal the basic motivational foundations of personality; how they affect important life outcomes related to love, work, and morality; how parenting, heredity, and neurophysiology affect personality; processes by which personality remains stable and changes; how unconscious processes related to conflict, anxiety, and desire shape personality and life outcomes; how they can be controlled (or not) by goals and willpower; how personality and relationships are inter-related; how abstract values and meaning can affect personality processes and inspire success; and how personality knowledge can help people organize their lives for balanced success in love and work.

Your key objectives will be to:

1. Understand and recognize key facts, findings, and ideas from various perspectives on personality.
2. Compare and contrast conclusions across perspectives.
3. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of evidence for different perspectives.
4. Interpret cultural phenomena and goals related to loving and working through the lens of personality science.
5. Apply personality science to practical questions about how to succeed in your own life (relationships, work, parenting, and flourishing).
6. Use norms and correlations among your and your classmates' anonymized personality scores and personal projects to inform conclusions based on course material about personality, personality processes, and flourishing.

Readings and Content

There is no textbook. Free readings will be provided on LEARN within a day after each lecture.

14% Class Participation

There will be a 2% grade for participation in seven of the weekly class meetings (the ones marked with asterisks beside the red-font topics, in the list above). In each of these class meetings, one mark will be for attendance and the other for experiential participation in exercises that allow you to engage the course material in a more active way than listening and note-taking. These exercises will typically focus on key topics and items especially likely to appear on upcoming tests. Your participation will be recorded via LEARN and/or your signature.

60% Tests

All tests will be completed in-class via LEARN on your laptop, will begin at 11:35, and will cover all course material since the previous test. You may have only the test window in LEARN open on your laptop. All other windows and programs must be closed. Student-cards must be displayed, and attendance will be taken. You must be in class to take the test. Otherwise, you will receive a grade of zero.

- **12% Test One, May 28.** There will be around 20 multiple choice items, and you will have around 30 minutes to complete the test.
- **24% Test Two, June 25:** There will be around 40 multiple choice items, and you will have around an hour to complete the test.
- **24% Test Three, July 25:** There will be around 40 multiple choice items, and you will have around an hour to complete the test.

Laptops, Phones, Devices

Laptops are great, and we'll be using them for designated class activities and test-taking in most lectures. But...

About Me: I have a hard time teaching when people are multitasking on laptop and phone activities. I find it disorienting and discouraging.

About Your Classmates: Solid research indicates that your screen contents distract and impede the learning of classmates sitting beside and behind you. In one study, students sitting in view of others' multitasking laptop screens performed 17% worse than classmates out of view. (The multitaskers themselves performed 11% worse—study to be described in class).

About You: Devices in class detract from your own learning, too. All studies show this. It is partly because temptation to “multi-task” is hard to resist and multitasking often really just boils down to not paying attention. Beyond this temptation for distraction, however, solid research indicates that even though students take a higher quantity of notes on laptops, they take a lower quality of notes, which reduces learning and grades due to the shallow information processing it encourages. Conceptual information processing suffers most (study to be described in class).

Request: If you plan to use your laptop or devices during class time for note-taking or multitasking, please consider sitting in the back row.

Uploading, Recording, and Sharing Course Content Violates Intellectual Property Rights

Lecture content (spoken, written, electronic, or any audio/video recording), power-point slides, and the content of assignment and quiz questions are all the intellectual property of the course instructor. Sharing it online without permission is a serious academic misconduct offense that can result in academic penalties and suspension.

Audio, video, or image recordings of lectures or activities must be approved by the professor prior to the beginning of the scheduled session. Recordings may only be used for individual study of materials presented during class and may not be published or distributed without the consent of the professor. Videos or images of the professor or other students may not be published or distributed without consent of those depicted.

30% Success Assignment (2500 words), Due July 31th at 11p

This written assignment will give you a chance to apply and integrate knowledge and ideas from the course to the question how to thrive, going forward in your own life. Grades will be based on the extent to which you show evidence of integrating four sources of information:

10 marks. A *personal sketch* summary of how you see your own unique personality, how you think you got that way, and how you imagine it will shape and be shaped by your life course.

10 marks. A reflective *best self* exercise, in which you solicit and integrate information from family-members and peers regarding your unique personality strengths.

10 marks. An *interpretation of correlations* between some of your extreme or personally interesting trait scores and other variables in the class data set, and how they might inform choices to maximize your success (broadly defined).

40 marks. *Integration of personal reflections (questions, insights, speculations, observations, hypotheses) with course content* related to five or more weekly themes, and application to your future life success, broadly defined. Students often do best when they start early and do a little bit each week, by keeping a journal of ideas to draw on at the end of the term when putting together the final project.

30 marks. Coherent and clear integration of the above elements.

To encourage you to get parts of the assignment done gradually rather than leaving it all to the end, you will be able to hand in optional progress elements every few weeks that, if adequately done, will earn 100% of a part of your final grade. The final assignment will be worth 30% minus whatever course percentages have already been earned by handing in these progress elements. So, for example, if you handed in all of the elements below on time and adequately done, then your final assignment would be worth only 17% of your final grade (and you would have gotten 100% on the other 13% of your final grade).

- 2% By May 15th, 11p, submit a 300-word “personal sketch” life-story summary via Drop-Box, of the story of how you see your own unique personality, how you think you got that way, and how you imagine it could evolve and thrive over the course of your life. Who are you, really?! What inspires you? Have fun with this, and try to paint an evocative picture of who you really are as a person and who you might become. Feel free to be poetic and creative in this self-portrayal. It does not need to be scientifically or formally written. See Lecture 1 notes for some tips.

- 4% By May 22nd, 11p, complete the five confidential “Your Personality Questionnaires” (links will be emailed and available on LEARN) about your personality. Each should take less than half an hour and must be done in a single session without interruptions. Based on your responses you will get your personality percentile scores that will tell you how much higher or lower than your classmates you are on various traits (neither your TAs nor your professor will be able to match your identity to your responses on these questions).
- 2% By June 19, 11p, submit a 300-word summary to Drop-Box about how 4 of your more extreme or personally interesting scores from the online survey results data set relate to course material, correlate with other variables of interest in the data set, and might be relevant to future life choices. Excel sheets with your percentile scores, and with correlations among all the variables assessed will be provided in LEARN.
- 2% By July 3, 11p, submit an (at least) 300 word summary to Drop-Box of an integration from your Reflected Best Self Project. For this project you will gather information from at least 3 diverse people in your life (family, friends, peers, co-workers), asking them the following questions: a) From knowing and observing me, what do you think are my most important talents, strengths, or gifts that I could contribute to the world? b) Please relate a story or two of when you have seen me at the heights of excellence, performing to my full potential. What most impressed you? c) What makes me most passionate, alive, and engaged? d) What activities most inspire my genuine enthusiasm and joy? e) What potential career and professional paths could you see me becoming great at, and why? Your summary will integrate what they say with how you see yourself.
- 3% By July 17, 11p, submit an (at least) 1000 word collection to Drop-Box of reflections on course content from at least four of the previous weeks. It must include at least 200 words, each, related to four of the weeks. These reflections should be grapply attempts to make sense of the material in the course, as it relates to things in your life and personality that you care about, wonder about, and find interesting.

Final Assignment submissions will be penalized 10% for each 24 hours late, and those over 96 hours late will receive a grade of zero. All assignments will be submitted via Turn-It-In plagiarism software. Students who do not wish to have an assignment submitted through turn-it-in will be required instead to submit copies to their TA of rough drafts that demonstrate independent development of the ideas presented.

Experiential Learning Personality Questionnaires and Identification Number (ELIN)

The five experiential learning questionnaires (see the second bullet point, above) will assess personality traits directly related to course content. The class data file will be compiled and anonymized with only numerical ratings, not containing any identifying information. A staff member not involved in grading your assignment will send you your own Experiential Learning Identification Number (ELIN), which you will use to identify yourself on the questionnaires that you participate in so that you can receive your credit for completing the survey, and so that you can access your anonymized personality scores from the class data file (i.e., to see whether you are relatively high or low on the various traits assessed as compared to your classmates).

Exact instructions for how to access and complete in the questionnaires will be given in the first two lecture sessions. The questionnaires will be available on LEARN. The grading TAs and your professor will have access to anonymous class-aggregated (i.e., all students' together) responses, only. We will accordingly not be able to match student identities with specific responses or scores on the experiential learning questionnaires (i.e., neither your names nor student numbers will be stored in the data files).

The questionnaires will assess traits related to the course themes, e.g., Illusion (need for cognition); Psychoanalysis (neuroticism, aggression); Traits (extraversion); Biology (caution, approach motivation); Desire (personal goal characteristics); Grit (self-control; conscientiousness) Love (relationship attachment security); Power (self-esteem, power, efficacy); Meaning (meaning in life, search for meaning); Virtue (compassion, honesty, virtue motivation, hope); Wisdom (wisdom, religious beliefs). Opportunities for written responses will also be available for richer understanding of the phenomenology associated with various personality traits and states. Only summaries of general trends in responses from these written responses, as indicated by numerical scores, will be discussed in class (students and grading TAs will have no access to what any particular student wrote—only anonymized numerical scores will be in the data set). You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.

As part of your 30% Success Assignment you will have the opportunity to analyze and interpret statistical trends in your own scores and the anonymized class data set. This experiential participation component of the course is designed to give you hands-on experience with aspects of contemporary personality research that will be discussed in the course. This is unlike other classes in Psychology in which students can choose from a range of research participation options for credit. My hope is that completing these specific-course-related activities will give you a more interesting and personally relevant appreciation for the course material, and serve as a bridge to self-understanding, hypothesis testing, and your own research ideas. Specific instructions will be given in-class.

Alternate Assignment Focus for Students Not Wishing to Focus on Personal Life

The course is set up to benefit students by allowing them to apply the course information to their own lives, and the Success Assignment is set up with that goal in mind. If any student feels uncomfortable submitting elements and a final assignment that integrate personal information and reflections, however, then you may still submit the 2% June 19 installment focusing on the correlations among variables in the class-data set, and the 3% July 17 installment focusing on course-related phenomena of interest. The final assignment would then focus on integrating course information with a non-personal phenomena of interest.

Voluntary Consent to Use Data for Scientific Research Purposes

You will have a chance to provide or deny consent for your anonymized experiential participation data to be used for scientific research purposes. You will use your anonymous ELIN number to indicate consent. You are completely free to allow or deny scientific use of your data for any reason and your course grade will in no way be affected by your decision either way. Your course instructor or TAs will never know of your decision. The online consent form

will be administered by a staff-member with no ties to the course grading, and will be kept confidential from your TAs and instructor. Once the class is over, this arms-length individual will delete data from ELINs that chose not to give consent, so that data associated with those numbers will never be used in any scientific research publications. Your decision to grant or deny consent for scientific use of the data will have no link whatsoever to the course—it is completely voluntary and just for the good of science should you like to contribute.

Some Popular Books Related to Course Content You Will Might Find Interesting if You Like the Course

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Dummies (Brown & Gillard, 2016)
Behave: The Biology of Humans at our Best and Worst (Sapolsky, 2017)
Born to be Good: The Science of Meaningful Life (Keltner, 2009)
Drive: The Surprising Truth of What Motivates Us (Pink, 2011)
Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success (Grant, 2013)
iGen; Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood (Twenge, 2017)
Gilgamesh: A New English Version (Mitchell, 2004)
Grit: The power of passion and perseverance (Duckworth, 2016)
Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead (Sandberg, 2013)
Me, Myself, & Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being (Little, 2014)
Mindlessness: The Corruption of Mindfulness in a Culture of Narcissism (Joiner, 2017)
Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy (Sandberg & Grant, 2017)
Quiet (Cain, 2013)
Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2017)
Self-Regulation and Self-Control: Selected works of Roy F. Baumeister (2018)
The Art and Science of Personality Development (McAdams, 2016)
The Marshmallow Test: Why Self-Control is the Engine of Success (Mischel, 2014)
The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence (Keltner, 2016)
The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live by (McAdams, 2013)
The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion (Haidt, 2012)Who Are You, Really: The Surprising Puzzle of Personality (Little, 2017)

Statements and Links Mandated by the Department to be Included on All Course Outlines

Academic Integrity. In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information. Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, 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](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Concerns About a Course Policy or Decision. 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 Affairs (Richard Eibach) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca; Ph 519-888-4567 ext. 38790. 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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca. Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com. Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin®.

Accommodation for course requirements. Students 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 uWaterloo [Verification of Illness Form](#); submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours; (if possible) 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, midterm test, or quiz, the instructor will either: 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 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. Elective arrangements such as travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting accommodations to course requirements per the [uWaterloo Examination Regulations and Related Matters](#).

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.