

## Psychology 324: Personality Theory Spring 2006

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<b>Office Hours</b>	Wednesdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m., or by appointment
<b>Class Hours</b>	Wednesdays, 7:20-10:00 p.m.
<b>Room</b>	209 Innovation Hall
<b>Text</b>	<b>REQUIRED:</b> Funder, DC. (2004) <i>The Personality Puzzle</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ed

### Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to and overview of the major theories of personality, including an analysis of their individual strengths and weaknesses as well as their interactions with one another. In addition to examining each theory we will also look at some research and applications stemming from each.

### Learning Objectives

1. To become familiar with the major theories of personality and how they interrelate with one another.
2. To evaluate each theory's strengths and weaknesses.
3. To think critically about how different theories of personality apply to "real life" and help to explain human behavior.

### Course Format

Given class size, the format of this course is primarily lecture, although classes will also include discussion, in-class exercises, and other materials. Class lectures will review the material in the text, clarify difficult material, answer questions, provoke discussions, and present information not covered in the text that will be on the exams.

### Course Requirements

**Exams (200 points).** There will be three exams in this course. **The lowest exam grade will be dropped, thus a total of 2 exams will count toward your final grade in the course.** Exams, including the final exam, will primarily cover material since the previous exam, but may ask you to make comparisons or reflect upon new information as it relates to previous course material. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer/fill-in-the-blank, and short essay questions.

**Paper (50 points).** Personality Assessment. For this paper you will conduct a personality assessment using two of the perspectives covered in class. You should describe how this person thinks, feels and behaves, and give specific examples. Write the paper as if the person you are talking to (i.e., me) has no knowledge of this person. Making reference to the person's attributes, development and current behavior, use your chosen theories to explain the person's personality. Following the discussion of the individual from these two perspectives, compare the results of these analyses. Do they come to the same conclusion? Which theory seems more useful? Which analysis seems more plausible? Why? Be sure to reference scientific articles for the theories you choose to utilize for this assignment and incorporate them into your analysis. The paper should be no more than 5 – 7 pages in length (double-spaced, normal margins, 12-pt. font). Your paper will be graded on the quality of your assessment, your understanding of the theories you have chosen, and your ability to support your arguments. Basic writing skills will also be taken into account. Papers are due **in class** on April 19. Papers more than 2 days late will not be accepted. For each day the paper is late, 5 points will be taken off the final paper grade.

**In-Class Assignments (25 points).** There will be a number of graded in-class assignments that will help you to think about the material in a way that will help you prepare for the exams. These in-class assignments will be conducted on a RANDOM basis. Thus, if you miss an in-class assignment, you will not be able to make it up

unless you have documentation of hospitalization, jury duty, death, disability, or a car accident. There may be times when other, less severe circumstances cause you to miss or be late to class (severe traffic, cold/flu, work commitments). In these cases please use the extra credit provision to make-up the assignment.

### Missed Classes and Exams

There is no requirement that you attend class. However, it is not my intention to use the class time to repeat what is in the book. Instead, I will cover themes that the book covers, but sometimes from a very different perspective, and this material WILL be on the exams. In the unfortunate event that you should miss a class, you will have to borrow notes from another classmate. You will also be held responsible for any changes to the syllabus announced in class.

There will be no make-up exams offered in this course. Instead, you will be permitted to drop your lowest exam grade of the three exams. Therefore, if you miss an exam **FOR ANY REASON**, or perform poorly on an exam, you may simply drop that exam in lieu of completing a make-up exam.

### Extra Credit

You will have an opportunity to earn extra credit points for participating in a psychology or related discipline research project **if you are willing to provide me with a write-up regarding your participation**. The write-up should be ~2 paragraphs in length and should include the hypothesis of the research project and a brief statement of what your participation entailed. You can locate studies through the Experimentrix web page on the GMU website ([www.experimentrix.com/gmu](http://www.experimentrix.com/gmu)). Additionally, you may earn extra credit points for attending relevant psychology-related seminars or lectures **if you provide me with a short (~2 paragraphs) write-up summarizing the lecture and your providing your own personal insight into the information provided**. Up to a maximum of 10 points—1 for each hour of research participation or for each seminar attended—can be earned.

### Grading

**Total Points.** (\*\*REMEMBER-there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> exam that will be DROPPED)

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Paper	50 points
<u>In-class assignments</u>	<u>25 points</u>
	275 points (+ Extra Credit)

### Grading Scale

A = 93% +	B+ = 87 - 89%	C+ = 77 - 79%	D = 60 - 69%
A- = 90 - 92%	B = 83 - 86%	C = 73 - 76%	F = below 60%
	B- = 80 - 82%	C- = 70 - 72%	

One additional note regarding grading: As noted above, student evaluations are based OBJECTIVELY on a variety of measures and you will have opportunities throughout the semester to take measures to improve unsatisfactory grades. SUBJECTIVE pleas to alter that evaluation will not be granted.

### Honor Code

All students must follow the guidelines of the GMU Honor Code as described by the GMU catalog (<http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor13>). Exam performances and assignments must be each student's own work. If you have any questions about the honor code or permissible use of materials or collaboration, please see me.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the University to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Such requests will be accommodated within the reasonable constraints of fairness and timeliness with regard to the instructor and the other students enrolled in the course.

### **Policies, Requests and Friendly Suggestions**

I want this class to be a productive and enjoyable experience for all of us. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

- Read before coming to class and make sure to ask clarifying questions if there is something you don't understand.
- My office hours are for you, so stop by! Or e-mail me any questions, concerns or comments that you may have.
- I will not reply to e-mails with exam- or paper-related questions received after 3:00 p.m. the day before, so be sure to ask early.
- We'll be discussing a wide range of topics and some may be controversial. Let's maintain a friendly and respectful environment where we all feel comfortable sharing our ideas and opinions.

### **Reading Assignments**

Note that what follows is a *tentative* schedule of the semester's topics. A specific week's topic may change, and it is the student's responsibility to become informed of any changes, as well as any other announcements or information disseminated in class. Unless otherwise specified, reading assigned for a given week should be completed prior to that week's class.

<b>Class Dates</b>	<b>Lecture Topics</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>
Jan 25	Introduction and Syllabus Overview Introduction to Personality	Chapter 1
Feb 1	Research Methods Personality Assessment	Chapters 2-3 Chapter 5
<b>LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES- Feb 7</b>		
Feb 8	Psychoanalytic Approach: Freudian Theory	Chapters 10 & 11
Feb 15	Psychoanalytic Approach: Neo-Freudian Theory	Chapter 12
Feb 22	<b>EXAM #1</b>	
<b>LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES- Feb 24</b>		
Mar 1	Trait Theory	Chapters 4 & 7
Mar 8	Biological Approaches	Chapters 8 & 9
Mar 15	<b>SPRING BREAK- NO CLASS!</b>	
Mar 22	Humanistic Psychology	Chapter 13
Mar 29	<b>EXAM #2</b>	
Apr 5	Behavioral/Social Learning Perspective	Chapter 15
Apr 12	Cognitive Approach	Chapter 16
Apr 19	Cultural Influences on Personality	Chapter 14
<b>PAPER DUE</b>		
Apr 26	Personality Disorders	TBA
May 3	Current Topics in Personality Psychology	TBA
May 10	<b>** FINAL EXAM ** 7:30-10:15 pm, 209 Innovation</b>	