

Psychology 100: Basic Concepts in Psychology
Spring 1995

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

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|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Instructor: | Otto Wahl | Teaching assistant: | Jason Freeman |
| Office: | 2044 King Hall | Discussion group leaders: | |
| Phone: | 993-1361 | | Rhonda Campagna |
| Office hours: | | | Mary Cook |
| Wed. 9:30-10:30 AM | | | Devra Dang |
| Thurs. 1-2 PM | | | Faye Fortunato |
| | | | Jennifer Lee |
| | | | Michelle Maher |
| | | | Barbara Evans |

CONTENT AND FORMAT OF THE COURSE: The course will involve lectures by the instructor on Mondays and Wednesdays, with occasional video presentations on these days as well. Lectures will closely follow the textbook, both underscoring and expanding on text material. There will be material in the text which is not covered in class and material presented in lecture which is not in the text.

On Fridays, smaller discussion groups will be held during class time (but in different locations). Each student will be assigned to one of six discussion groups led by volunteers from Psi Chi. In these discussion groups: Students may ask questions about material covered in class and text during the week. Group leaders will initiate exercises/discussions related to course material. Quizzes will be given, returned and discussed. Discussion group time will also be used for reviews prior to the exams and for clarifying answers following exams.

ATTENDANCE: In keeping with University policy, attendance at each class session is not required. However, you are responsible for all information from class meetings, including dates of tests and experiments, information not contained in the text, etc.. In addition, quizzes during discussion group time will be used in determining course grade (see below).

EXAMS AND GRADING: There will be three exams, two in-class exams and a final (given during the final exam period set by the University). The first two exams are not cumulative, but the final exam is cumulative. The best two of three of these exams will be counted toward your final grade; the lowest grade will be dropped. If you miss an exam for any reason, that exam will be the one grade to be dropped; there will be no makeup exams. If you are satisfied with your grade after the first two exams, you may choose not to take the final.

Exams will be multiple choice. Each exam will involve 50 items which you will have a full class period to complete (longer for the final, but still only 50 items). You will need Scantron answer sheets (which you may purchase at the GMU Bookstore) and number 2 pencils.

PSYC 100
EXAMPLES OF TEST QUESTION TYPES
DR. SMITH

In this course, all exams will be multiple choice. Questions will be of a number of types. Examples of these types (correct answers are starred) include:

Match a definition to a term:

1. A person is said to be physically dependent on a drug if he or she
 - a. finds it difficult to break the drug habit
 - b. experiences an altered state of consciousness after taking it
 - *c. becomes tolerant to it and suffers withdrawal without it
 - d. has learned to use it to reduce anxiety

Define a concept

2. You have just completed a psychological experiment, and the results are "statistically significant". What does this mean?
 - a. the results are probably due to chance factors
 - b. the results have some theoretical significance
 - c. the results have some practical significance
 - *d. the results would be likely to occur again if the experiment were repeated

Match symptoms with a disorder

3. _____ would be very difficult for a person with significant damage to the hippocampus.
 - a. performing coordinated motor acts like handclapping while speaking
 - *b. summarizing yesterday's new events
 - c. recognizing an old friend
 - d. distinguishing visually between two objects

Factual research finding

4. Harlow's studies suggest that the most important attribute of a 'mother' for an infant monkey is
 - a. rocking
 - b. warmth
 - c. food
 - *d. contact comfort

Apply a definition or method

5. Suppose you are interested in the effect of background noise on people's ability to concentrate. You study this by varying the amount of background noise while subjects are reading and measuring your subjects' scores on a reading comprehension test. You are using

- a. correlational techniques
- b. the survey method
- c. the case study method
- *d. the experimental method

Apply psychological principles in understanding behavior

6. The more often Nancy's mother scolds her for throwing a temper tantrum, the more tantrums Nancy throws. In this example, the mother's scolding serves as a _____ for her tantrums.

- a. punishment
- b. negative reinforcement
- c. cue for extinction
- *d. positive reinforcement

Summarize the results of a research study

7. Which of the following is the best summary of the findings of the study in which some orphanage infants were assigned older girls as 'surrogate mothers' to help play with and care for the infant?

- a. only boys were helped by having a 'surrogate mother'
- *b. infants without surrogates dropped out of school much earlier than those with surrogate mothers
- c. social behavioral were helped by having a 'surrogate mother', but intellectual development was not affected
- d. there were no effects of the presence of 'surrogate mothers'

Select best statement summarizing research area.

8. Which of the following is the best statement on perception?

- a. Most perceptual abilities are 'hard-wired' into the brain at birth
- *b. Perception is the result of ways in which we have learned to organize stimulus input in ways that make sense to us
- c. Perceptions are essentially a pictorial representation of the visual world inside our brain
- d. Perceptions are always accurate; other factors such as expectancies rarely influence our perceptions

Reason from data

9. If one of a pair of identical (monozygotic) twins is schizophrenic, it is probable -but not certain- that the other twin will also become schizophrenic. This indicates that

- a. similar environments caused the schizophrenia
- *b. there is a genetic influence in schizophrenia, but environmental factors are also important
- c. there is very little genetic influence in schizophrenia
- d. schizophrenia is inherited

Understand reasoning of researchers

10. Psychologists are often reluctant to accept the existence of parapsychological phenomena because

- a. none of the studies shows statistically significant results
- b. the methodology of the experiments is too complex
- *c. results of studies cannot be reproduced by other researchers
- d. personal prejudice; there is no valid basis for questioning it

Demonstrate understanding of psychological theory.

11. If Albert is prejudiced toward Zenia's ethnic group, an effective strategy to reduce his prejudice is for the two of them to work together on a common goal, such as raising money for science equipment for the school their children attend. Why does this reduction in prejudice occur?

- *a. an observation that Zenia's goals and hopes are similar to his, creates cognitive dissonance with his existing beliefs that Zenia's group is very different from his own
- b. in determining who we like, proximity overrides all other factors; by just being around Zenia, he comes to like her group more
- c. the cooperative effort results in Albert's self-perception that he must like Zenia enough to work with her
- d. the tendency to make a dispositional attribution in describing one's own behavior, causes Albert to believe that he is working with Zenia because he likes her and her group, not because they share a common situation and common goals

Integrate and compare information from different lectures.

12. Which of the following ranks drugs correctly from least dangerous to **most** dangerous, in terms of deaths per year (not including drug-related accidents)?

- *a. marijuana -> heroin -> cocaine -> alcohol
- b. alcohol -> cocaine -> heroin -> tobacco
- c. alcohol -> tobacco -> marijuana -> heroin
- d. marijuana -> tobacco -> alcohol -> cocaine

Rule out incorrect alternatives

13. Which of the following is NOT an effective coping skill?

- a. Spend some time each day relaxing and doing things you enjoy
- *b. If you are having problems that don't seem to go away, 'tough it out'; you can eventually work things out without involving other people
- c. Develop friendships with people you can have fun with and talk to
- d. If you don't seem to be able to resolve some of your problems, seek professional help

Please note that you will be asked to select the best answer. Incorrect options may have **some** truth to them (e.g., #2, Statistical significance often means theoretical or practical significance, but not always; option D is the best answer.)

Note also that **memorizing exact words and definitions will do you little good on exams**. It is much more important that you be able to **understand** information well enough that you can reason from it, apply it, and recognize similar meanings even when exact phrasing is different from the text or lecture.

Finally, note that some questions require that you combine several items of information. For example, #11 requires that you know the definition of cognitive dissonance, you understand that the situation described would produce a state of cognitive dissonance, and that cognitive dissonance can underlie changes in behavior and attitude. It also requires that you understand what a dispositional attribution is, what self-perception theory is, and how proximity influences liking. I would not expect any of you to be able to answer this question before we cover this material, even if you can reason your way through some of the other questions.