

# PSYCHOLOGY 324-001: PERSONALITY THEORIES

Fall 2017

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-10:30, 1014A David King Hall or by apt, (571) 766-8461

## Course Overview:

Personality encompasses the idea of “who we are” at the core and studies how people feel, think, and behave over time and across situation. This course is an overview of the field of personality and covers a wide set of material. The purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of personality theories, current research on personality, and how personality applies to everyday life.

## Course Objectives:

Students will learn:

1. To identify how the major classical theories inform our current understanding of personality and apply it to novel situations.
2. To articulate the strengths and weaknesses of our current system to assess personality and to critically evaluate non-scientific personality assessment.
3. To understand concepts of consistency and change of personality over time and the lifespan.
4. To articulate how personality theories and research apply to every day life.

## Required Materials:

The Personality Puzzle, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. David Funder (2016) W. W. Norton & Company, New York, ISBN-13: 978-0393600438, ISBN-10: 0393600432

**Assigned Reading and Lectures:** Class participation is critical. By participating in class, you engage in the learning process with your peers and instructor. Students’ comments, questions, and critiques are important contributions to the classroom environment and increase student learning. You are expected to come to class having read the assignment materials and to be prepared to discuss. Lectures will cover some material from the book and some outside the book (e.g. related podcasts) to enhance understanding and provide related material important to the field. The instructor may periodically monitor if students have read or listened to the material.

## Assignments, Exams and Grade:

You earn your grade based on your completion of the components outlined below:

**Class Meetings: (10% attendance/participation)** Your grade is based on consistent attendance and active participation discussed above. Missing more than two classes will significantly impact your grade. If you miss class for a medical reason, inform ahead and provide documentation (doctor’s note, etc.). Students with a religious observance or participation in a university activity that interferes with class must provide me the dates of major religious holiday or university activity within the first two weeks of the semester. Consistent with attendance policies stated in the syllabus, students will be provided a reasonable alternative opportunity to make up missed work. Students requesting an excused absence for participation in a university-sponsored activity must provide me a letter from a university official stating the dates and times that participation in the activity would result in the student missing class.

**Exams (20% each = 60%):** There will be four exams, which will be non-cumulative, and occur in the same room and time as class. Your **three** best scores will constitute 60% of your overall grade. As you may drop your lowest score, there will be **no** make-ups for missed exams. Exams will cover class covered material and information in the book. No student may begin an exam once another student has completed it. Late entering students will still be required to complete the exam by the scheduled completion time. Exams will draw both from the book and the lectures.

**Personality Projects (10% each = 30%):** These projects will provide you the opportunity to participate with and reflect on common personality tests and provide you with increased understanding about personality and

your every day life. Project Due Dates are provided on the schedule below. There is a 10% per day penalty taken from the maximum possible score for each day the assignment is late. Assignments are due at the **beginning** of class so any assignments that arrive after that time will be late. You will lose the 10% lateness, if you arrive at the **end** of class with the assignment. **Paper copies must be turned in for this assignment.** They may **not** be emailed to the instructor. If an emergency situation arises that prevents you from completing your work on time, this will be dealt with on an individual basis. Please keep in mind that per university policy, you must provide documentation of all emergencies (car accidents, illness, funerals, etc.) in order to be excused from the late penalty. The most important step you can take is to proactively alert the instructor as soon as a situation arises that may interfere with your ability to complete the class work.

**Educational Use of Technology:** Please refrain from using technology other than for note taking during class. If use of technology in class is problematic, the instructor reserves the right to remove participation/attendance points or to disallow its use.

### **GMU Email Account**

All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages will not be rejected for being over quota. You may forward GMU emails to other accounts, but emails to the instructor should come from your GMU account, to allow verification of your identity.

**Punctuality:** Attendance is based on the full class period. If the student arrives late, the instructor reserves the right to mark the person absent. If classroom attendance is becoming problematic and/or students are habitually arriving late, brief, surprise quizzes may be administered at the start of class to reward extra credit to those who arrive punctually and consistently.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** This class will entail frequent use of email, blackboard, PowerPoint, etc. Please check blackboard and your email regularly, particularly if there is inclement weather. If class is cancelled, I will notify you by email/blackboard and how we will make the time up. The instructor reserves the right to post a video lecture to replace class if needed, if class needs to be cancelled last minute.

**Grading Scale:** Your grades will be tracked on Blackboard. You can check your grades that way at any time and compute your grade utilizing the information in this syllabus.

60% Exams

30% Personality Projects

10% Class Attendance/Participation

A+ (98%+); A (93-97%); A- (90-92%);

B+ (87-89%); B (83-86%); B- (80-82%);

C+ (77-79%); C (70-76%); D (60-69%); F (59% & below).

Grades that are .49 and below are rounded down. Grades that are .5 and up are rounded up.

Psychology majors must earn at least a 75% in this course for it to count towards your degree.

### **Honor Code**

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. The Honor Code is available at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. This instructor will take action against any honor code violations up to and including failure in the course.

## Student Support Services

GMU offers services to support students' academic and emotional development. Learning Services offers workshops in academic skills and a tutor referral program. (<http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices>) The Counseling Center, located in SUB 1 Room 3129 (703-993-2380) offers stress management training, as well as individual and group counseling for students who would like help with social, emotional, or educational concerns (<http://caps.gmu.edu>).

## Accommodations

If you are a student that qualifies for academic accommodations, please contact me the first week of classes and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at [709-993-2474](tel:709-993-2474). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## Important Dates

- 9/5 last day to add/drop with no tuition penalty
- 9/19 last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty
- 9/29 last day to drop with 67% tuition penalty

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
8/29	Syllabus & Intro	-----
8/31	Study of Person	Ch. 1
9/5	Science of Personality (Ch 2)	Ch 2
9/9	Assessment & Ethics	Ch 3
9/12	Personality Traits	Ch 4
9/14	Personality Traits: Situation and Criticism	Invisibilia: "The Personality Myth"
9/19	EXAM 1	
9/21	Judging Others' Personality	5 – Project 1 Due
9/26	Using Traits to Understand Behavior	6
9/28	Personality Development	7
10/3	Personality Change	Invisibilia: "The New Norm"
10/5	NO CLASS (M is T)	No Class
10/10	EXAM 2	
10/12	Biology of Personality	8 – Project 2 Due
10/17	Behavioral Genetics & Personality	9
10/19	Freud & Personality	10
10/24	Neo-Freud & Personality	11
10/26	EXAM 3	
10/31	Humanism & Personality	12
11/2	Flow & Positive Psych & Personality	12
11/7	Culture & Personality	13 – Project 3 Due
11/9	Learning to Be a Person	14
11/14	Personality Processes	15
11/16	Catch Up Day – Personality Activities	
11/21	No Class – T-giving	
11/23	The Self	16
11/28	Personality and Health	17
11/30	Personality & Health Part 2	The Dark Triad (Paulhus (2014))
12/5	EXAM 4	