

Psychology 324 Personality Theory

Online

Course Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/personality-theory/home>

Piazza Discussion Board: <http://piazza.com/gmu/summer2020/psyc324>

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Office Hours: By appointment
(via Skype or Hangouts)

Course Description: Think of personality as *an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanism—hidden or not—behind those patterns* (Funder, 2001)¹. Therefore, personality psychology is the study of these thoughts, emotions, behaviors and, importantly, the mechanisms behind them—the “why” and the “how”. In this course you will learn about and apply the principles of personality psychology. You will learn both a theoretical and empirical perspective of personality; centered around how our personalities are formed, maintained and changed across the lifespan. You will be given the tools to understand and critique personality psychology research and various theoretical approaches.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand what *personality* is and what *personality* is not
- Integrate theories of personality into everyday life
- Identify and apply basic research design to personality related topics
- Critically evaluate personality research

Course Materials: There is no required textbook for this course. However, you will be required to read journal articles every week. If you see personality in your academic future, I'd recommend the following textbook:

Funder, D.C. (2016). *The Personality Puzzle* (7th Ed). Norton & Company. New York, NY.

Course Overview

This course is divided into **5** weekly modules. For each weekly module you will be required to do the following:

1. *Attentively* watch the online lecture
2. Read assigned articles
3. Respond to the Piazza discussion
4. Complete quiz (password to quiz will be given during online lecture)

Given the asynchronous nature of the class, weekly assignments will **not** be accepted after the due date. *If you are having technical difficulties, these should be communicated to at least one day before the due*

¹ See Funder DC. 2001. *The Personality Puzzle*. New York: Norton. 2nd ed.

date. This course is designed to give you autonomy, while ensuring accountability for your course responsibilities.

- This class is taught entirely online. This course is also designated as “asynchronous” meaning that there is no appointed “class time” when everyone needs to be online together. The schedule is somewhat self-paced.
- This course is divided into weekly modules- each module will be due on *Sunday at 11:59 pm EST*. You may complete the required components at any time prior to the module due date. Module due dates and start dates are listed in the [Course Schedule](#).
- While the ability to have this course be self-paced allows for flexibility, it can also make it easier to procrastinate and fall behind. I highly recommend NOT waiting until right before due dates to start working on the assignments or do the required readings.

All course materials will be stored within Google Drive; however, access to these documents will be provided through Blackboard.

Required readings and lectures: Each week I will release an online lecture—these lectures are meant to supplement your understanding. Additionally, you will also need to complete the assigned reading each week ([you can find the readings here](#)). Lecture slides will be posted corresponding to each week ([you can see the lectures here](#)). **Quizzes will address material discussed in the readings and lecture.**

Required Discussions: Each week I will post a thought question on the course’s [Piazza website](#). Like weekly assignments, both a discussion post and a reply to someone else’s post will be required. All posts and responses will be anonymous. I just ask that you **do not troll** one another, please see the [Technology Policy](#) for more information on how to behave within *Piazza*.

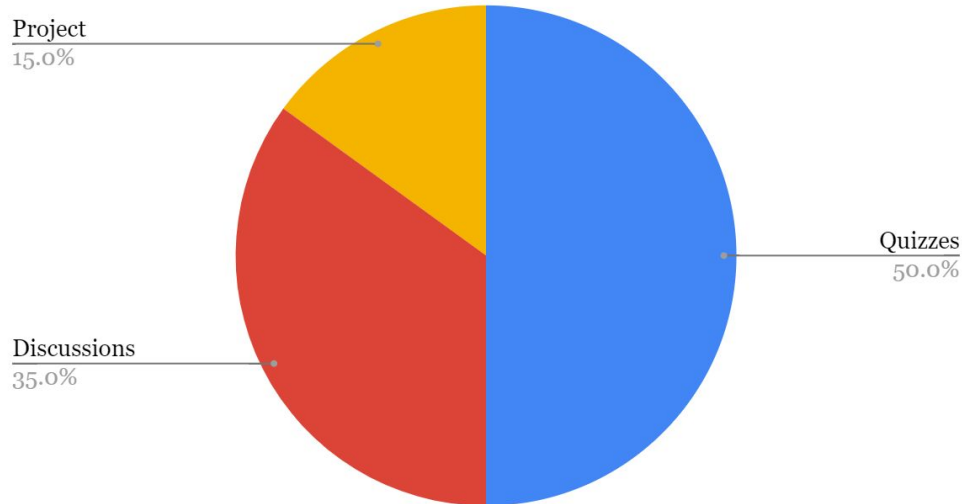
Required Assignments: You will be required to complete *2 weekly assignments*. These will be a combination of multiple-choice quizzes and short-answer questions. I am not an instructor that enjoys giving assessments that require memorization. Much of the assessment content will evaluate high-order thinking— so be prepared.

Note: All weekly assignments will be open-note, password protected, and timed. Passwords will be given during the lecture. Assignments will need to be completed in a single sitting, this is to prevent cheating.

Required Personality Measure Project: Students are required to submit a final project, which will involve creating their own personality assessment. I will discuss this assignment in greater detail after the second week of class.

Grading Policy

Grade Breakdown



Weekly Assignments (50%): Each week you will have to complete 2 weekly assignments that will assess your understanding of the reading and lecture. These will be timed assignments.

Piazza Discussion (35%): Each week you will have to post an answer to a discussion question, as well as reply to a classmate's question.

Personality Measure Project (15%): Student's will be required to develop their own "unidimensional" personality assessment of at least 5 items. They will produce supplemental text to their scales that provide research justification for their content as well as describe how they went about developing their items. Supplemental writing will need to be 2 to 6 pages (double-spaced).

Grade Breakdown

A+	97-100%	A	93-96%	A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%	B	83-86%	B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%	C	73-76%	C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%	D	63-66%	D-	60-62%
F	below 60%				

Attendance Policy

Attendance: Students should ensure they have a reliable way to complete course assignments. I understand that technological issues can happen (e.g., internet outages, spilling wine on your laptop); however, *these issues should be brought up at least one day before a weekly deadline.*

Scheduling Policies

Enrollment: Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes (available from the Registrar's Website: registrar.gmu.edu).

- Last Day to Add: June 3rd
- Last Day to Drop without tuition penalty: June 3rd
- Selective withdrawal period: June 16 – June 23

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Please see the following webpage for more details about the new Add/Drop policy: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/drop-withdrawal-deadlines-faqs/>

Changes to Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes to the syllabus with reasonable advance notice.

Student Policies

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity refers to honest and ethical behavior in all aspects of academic activity. This includes not cheating on in-class assignments (e.g., copying the work of others or using), not passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), not engaging in dishonesty of any kind regarding your class participation and assignments.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, or another person's assistance. *Unless otherwise stated, all work done for courses is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work.* Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will fail the assignment, and, depending upon the severity of the violation, you may fail the class.

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. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See honorcode.gmu.edu for detailed information.

Classroom Needs: Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in the Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Diversity and Psychological Services: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students. Any faculty or staff member at Mason is required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator, but please know that such reports will result only in someone reaching out to you directly to let you know about available services and to determine if you wish to take any action. That said, you can also contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380) to speak to someone confidentially, as individuals who work in those offices are not required to report disclosures. You may also seek assistance directly from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Class Etiquette: Though this class is online, this course is a "safe space", which means we commit to: (1) Making our class a welcoming, open space for everyone; (2) Being aware of our prejudices and insecurities and how our words affect others; (3) Providing room for each of us to explore our own identities; (4) Allowing others to define their own identities and to speak for themselves; (5) Respecting the privacy of others by maintaining confidentiality.

Technology Policies

Official Communications via GMU Email: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. If class is canceled, I will notify you via email; this email will include information about making up the missed class.

Technology: Please check Blackboard and your email regularly. Regarding electronic devices in class (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your grade. I reserve the right to modify seating if laptops and/or cellphones become distracting. If a problem reoccurs, I may prohibit the use of laptops, tablets, or mobile devices during class-time.

Course Schedule

NOTE: Your instructor reserves the right to make edits to this schedule based on several factors, including the progression of lecture. Any changes will be announced in class.

[Click here for Course Schedule](#)