

Psychology 668-001
PERSONALITY: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACHES
George Mason University
Fall 2023

Instructor: Reeshad S. Dalal, Ph.D.
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Class Day and Time: Wednesday, 4:30 - 7:10 PM
Class Location: Krug Hall, Room 209

Office Hour: Monday, 3-4 PM, or by appointment
Office Hour Location: Zoom (link will be provided on Blackboard)

PREREQUISITES:

Graduate survey-level statistics courses (PSYC 642 and 643, or equivalent) or instructor permission.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES:

This is a graduate-level survey of research related to personality, situations, and their interplay in predicting behavior. One focus is on basic scientific research, and the readings are therefore primarily peer-reviewed journal articles (including highly cited papers as well as papers that are models of good research design and/or interdisciplinary breadth). So, yes, this is a research-based course. In addition, however, there is an important practical aspect to the course: some of the readings, along with a guest speaker, are intended to emphasize how procedures and findings can be applied in evidence-based fashion in the world outside the confines of the ivory tower. Finally, the readings have been chosen with an eye to provoking the reader and providing ample fodder for informed discussion. Overall, then, the course aims to help students become good developers, consumers, and appliers of research. To facilitate this, I have done my best to keep the number of assigned readings manageable.

I should note that personality psychology is a broad topic. I've tried to cover a lot of ground in this syllabus, but there's a lot of good stuff I just couldn't include. For instance, I reluctantly jettisoned readings on the behavior genetics and neuroscience approaches to personality. As a result, I'd encourage you to check out Brent Roberts'

repository of graduate-level personality psychology syllabi:

<https://pigeewordpress.com/syllabus-repository-for-graduate-seminars-in-personality-psychology/>

COVID-19/FLU/COLD POLICY:

Students are required to be aware of and adhere to the university's [COVID-19 policy](#), which may shift back and forth over time. However, as far as possible I will actively support students in their decisions to be more careful than the university's minimum requirements.

On any given day, if you are exhibiting symptoms commensurate with COVID/flu/cold and/or if you have recently been exposed to COVID, you are required to do *both* of the following if you wish to attend class: (1) take a rapid COVID test and ensure that you test negative prior to coming to class, *and* (2) wear a mask in class. Alternately, you may choose not to attend class on such a day (in this regard, please refer to the attendance policy).

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

One absence during the semester is permitted without any penalty and for any reason, as long as the student summarizes his or her reactions to the week's readings *in some depth* (at least 1,000 words) on the Blackboard discussion board within one week of the absence. A second or third absence for any reason will *each* automatically result in a letter-grade penalty to the participation/attendance portion of the overall course grade (e.g., an "A" becomes an "A-") *unless* the student not only provides reactions to the readings but also performs an additional assignment for each absence (please see me to discuss this). Barring truly exceptional circumstances (as determined by *me*), a fourth absence for any reason will automatically result in a failing grade (i.e., "F") in the participation/attendance portion of the overall course grade.

Frequent instances of late arrival to and/or early departure from class will also result in grade penalties to the participation/attendance portion of the course grade. This is also the case for temporary departures from the classroom while class is in session. Barring emergencies, students are *not* permitted to leave and return mid-class except during official breaks.

It is important for every student to complete all the assigned readings and contribute to the class discussion because the quality of this course will be influenced significantly ($p < 0.01$) by the quality of the discussion. Every student is expected to contribute to the class discussion during every course session. I do empathize with students who are introverted, and so I encourage contributions via the online (Blackboard) discussion

board; however, such contributions cannot substitute completely for in-class participation. If I notice that some students are not participating in class, I will encourage them to do so. A sustained level of low participation will be reflected in poor grades on the participation/attendance portion of the overall course grade.

To facilitate participation, the use of phones is not allowed in class barring emergencies or other situations that are discussed with me ahead of time. I do allow laptop/tablet use, although non-work use (social media, instant messaging, emailing, watching cat videos, retweeting dank memes, etc.) is, sadly, not permitted. I will, moreover, make it a point to direct questions toward students who visibly appear inattentive or disruptive. Moreover, if laptop/tablet use proves disruptive, I reserve the right to disallow use for the remainder of the semester.

Note: *If you are ill, I have a “no questions” (and certainly “no documentation required”) policy that will allow you to attend class via Zoom. The Zoom option is available only in the case of illness (or injury or concerns about physical safety); it is not applicable to work/internship events, family/friend visits, and so forth. Zooming in will not count as an absence and therefore no make-up assignment will be necessary. Ideally, you would inform me about this ahead of time and arrange the logistics with another student who will be attending class that day—and you and that student would ensure that you can hear me and the other students clearly. Alternately, if you are ill and prefer to skip class altogether, that is completely understandable! That will count as an official absence, but I will give you as much time as I can to do the make-up assignment(s). In general, if you are ill, I commit to making things work for you as best I can.*

CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY:

In the hopefully very unlikely event that I myself need to miss class, I will do my very best to inform you via email as soon as possible. Depending on the specific content to be covered in the missed week, the nature of the make-up may differ. For instance, we may switch to a virtual class (over Zoom) or we may have a guest instructor or I may request that you post reactions to the readings to the Blackboard discussion board (and I may use that medium myself to communicate critical information about the readings and/or to respond to your reactions) or we may defer the discussion of the readings until the following week.

COURSE READINGS:

When reading an empirical article, here are some questions to keep in mind:

- Primarily *descriptive* questions:
 - What are the main points in this article? A few examples:
 - What theoretical framework is used? If you were asked to

summarize the theoretical framework in 4-5 sentences, what would you say?

- What are the major hypotheses? How do these hypotheses flow from the theoretical framework used?
- How are the relevant constructs defined?
- What is the research design?
- How are the relevant constructs measured?
- How do the author(s) analyze the data? You are in an advanced graduate-level seminar, and so it's important to sink your teeth into the results sections of empirical papers. Even in cases where the data-analytic techniques are complex, try to emerge with at least a surface-level understanding of the techniques and why they are used (note that this may occasionally require you to read additional sources).
- What are the major findings?
- What are the implications for future research?
- What are the implications for practice in organizations?
- In what ways does this article relate to other articles we have read this week or in previous weeks?
- Primarily *evaluative* questions:
 - What are the strengths of this article? For example, if the article has been cited heavily, why might this be the case?
 - What are the weaknesses of this article? How serious are they, and why do you suppose the article was published despite them?
 - Remember that a common “graduate student disease” (or bias) involves overemphasizing the weaknesses while underemphasizing—and, really, underappreciating—the strengths of published work.
 - Was there anything in this article that you personally found surprising or particularly interesting? Did you obtain any insights that you will apply to your own life (your work, your relationships, etc.)?

Some of the above questions will also apply to a theoretical/review article.

The reading list follows:

Note: An asterisk (“”) indicates a reading that is not required, and that may or may not be discussed in class, but that is warmly recommended for personal development. ☺*

AUGUST 23:
FIRST CLASS MEETING (NO READINGS)

Introductions, discussion of syllabus, assignment of topics for student-selected readings, etc.

AUGUST 30:
PERSONALITY - HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

Barenbaum, N. B. & Winter, D. G. (2008). History of modern personality theory and research. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 3-26). New York: Guilford.

Cervone, D. & Beck, E. D. (2020). Theoretical and methodological issues in personality research. In B. J. Carducci & C. S. Nave (Eds.), *The Wiley encyclopedia of personality and individual differences: Measurement and assessment* (Vol. II, pp. 1-11). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Johnson, J.A. (2020). Big-Five Model. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of personality and individual differences*. Springer. https://doi-org.mutex.gmu.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-24612-3_1212

*John, O. P., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 114-158). New York: Guilford.

SEPTEMBER 6:
CRITICISMS OF, AND ALTERNATIVES TO, THE BIG FIVE

At most one student-selected reading on each of the following topics:

- Empirical study on the generalizability (e.g., across cultures, languages, ethnicities) of the Big Five
- Empirical study on the HEXACO framework (could be a workplace or non-workplace study)
- Empirical study on the Dark Triad framework (could be a workplace or non-workplace study)
- Empirical study on the facet approach to personality (could be a workplace or non-workplace study)

- Empirical study on clinical psychology approaches to personality disorders (If you're having a hard time finding a good reading, something by Thomas A. Widiger or Timothy J. Trull might be a good option.)

Skodol, A. E. (2018). Can personality disorders be redefined in personality trait terms? *American Journal of Psychiatry, 175*(7), 590-592.

*Adler, J. M., Dunlop, W. L., Fivush, R., Lilgendahl, J. P., Lodi-Smith, J., McAdams, D. P., ... & Syed, M. (2017). Research methods for studying narrative identity: A primer. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 8*(5), 519-527.

SEPTEMBER 13:

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT – I

Connolly, J. J., Kavanagh, E. J., & Viswesvaran, C. (2007). The convergent validity between self and observer ratings of personality: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 15*, 110-117.

Rubenzer, S. J., Faschingbauer, T. R., & Ones, D. S. (2000). Assessing the U.S. presidents using the revised NEO personality inventory. *Assessment, 7*, 403-420.

Vazire, S., Gosling, S. D., Dickey, A. S., & Schapiro, S. J. (2007). Measuring personality in nonhuman animals. In R. W. Robins, R. C. Fraley, & R. F. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Personality Psychology* (pp. 190-206). New York: Guilford.

*Song, A. V., & Simonton, D. K. (2007). Personality assessment at a distance. In R. W. Robins, R. C. Fraley, & R. F. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Personality Psychology* (pp. 308-321). New York: Guilford.

*Sztukowski-Crowley, C. A. & Funk, D. R. (2021). Historiometry. In B. J. Carducci & C. S. Nave (Eds.), *The Wiley encyclopedia of personality and individual differences: Measurement and assessment* (Vol. II, pp. 61-65). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

*Unnatural selection. (2009, May 21). *The Economist*, p. 84.

SEPTEMBER 20:

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT – II

At most one student-selected reading on each of the following topics:

- Empirical study on implicit personality

- Commentaries to Drasgow et al. (2010). Note that, because the commentaries are short, two commentaries should be selected.

Bosson, J. K., Swann, W. B., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2000). Stalking the perfect measure of implicit self-esteem: The blind men and the elephant revisited? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 631-643.

Drasgow, F., Chernyshenko, O. S., & Stark, S. (2010). 75 years after Likert: Thurstone was right! *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 3, 465-476.

Johnson, R. E., Tolentino, A. L., Rodopman, O. B., & Cho, E. (2010). We (sometimes) know not how we feel: Predicting work behaviors with an implicit measure of trait affectivity. *Personnel Psychology*, 63, 197-219.

SEPTEMBER 27:

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT – III

At most one student-selected reading on each of the following topics:

- Empirical study on the Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART)
- Empirical study on some other cool/unusual (yet reliable and valid) way of assessing personality

Back, M. D., Stopfer, J. M., Vazire, S., Gaddis, S., Schmukle, S. C., Egloff, B., & Gosling, S. D. (2010). Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization. *Psychological Science*, 21, 372-374.

Ihsan, Z., & Furnham, A. (2018). The new technologies in personality assessment: A review. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 70(2), 147-166.

Naumann, L. P., Vazire, S., Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D. (2009). Personality judgments based on physical appearance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35, 1661-1671.

*Kerr, M. L., & Borelli, J. L. (2020). Linguistic analysis in personality research (including the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count). In B. J. Carducci & C. S. Nave (Eds.), *The Wiley encyclopedia of personality and individual differences: Measurement and assessment* (Vol. II, pp. 73-78). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

*Stachl, C., Boyd, R. L., Horstmann, K. T., Khambatta, P., Matz, S. C., & Harari, G. M. (2021). Computational personality assessment. *Personality Science*, 2, 1-22.

OCTOBER 4:

PUTATIVE OUTCOMES OF PERSONALITY

At most two student-selected readings on each of the following topics:

- Empirical study on non-workplace outcome(s) of personality

Hough, L. M. & Oswald, F. L. (2008). Personality testing and industrial-organizational psychology: Reflections, progress, and prospects. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1*, 272-290.

Soto, C. J. (2019). How replicable are links between personality traits and consequential life outcomes? The life outcomes of personality replication project. *Psychological Science, 30*(5), 711-727.

Walmsley, P. T., Sackett, P. R., & Nichols, S. B. (2018). A large sample investigation of the presence of nonlinear personality-job performance relationships. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 26*(2-4), 145-163.

OCTOBER 11:

APPLIED ISSUES: VARIOUS

Furnham, A. (2018). The great divide: Academic versus practitioner criteria for psychometric test choice. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 100*(5), 498-506.

Holtrop, D., Born, M. P., de Vries, A., & de Vries, R. E. (2014). A matter of context: A comparison of two types of contextualized personality measures. *Personality and Individual Differences, 68*, 234-240.

Weiner, I. B., & Greene, R. L. (2007). Ethical considerations in personality assessment. In *Handbook of Personality Assessment* (pp. 77-98). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

*Duckworth, A. (2019). Self-reports spur self-reflection. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 60*(3), 14-16.

*Shaffer, J. A., & Postlethwaite, B. E. (2012). A matter of context: A meta-analytic investigation of the relative validity of contextualized and noncontextualized personality measures. *Personnel Psychology, 65*, 445-494.

OCTOBER 18:

APPLIED ISSUES: FAKING AND SOCIALLY DESIRABLE RESPONDING – I

Potential date for guest speaker.

At most one student-selected reading on the following topic:

- Empirical study on faking bad (could be in either a workplace or non-workplace setting)

Arthur, W., Hagen, E., & George, F. (2021). The lazy or dishonest respondent: Detection and prevention. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 8, 105-137.

Dalal, D. K., & Hakel, M. D. (2016). Experimental comparisons of methods for reducing deliberate distortions to self-report measures of sensitive constructs. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(3), 475-505.

*Fluckinger, C. D., McDaniel, M. A., & Whetzel, D. L. (2008). Review of faking in personnel selection. In M. Mandal (Ed.), *In search of the right personnel* (pp. 91-109). New Delhi, India: Macmillan.

OCTOBER 25:

APPLIED ISSUES: FAKING AND SOCIALLY DESIRABLE RESPONDING – II

At most two student-selected readings on the following topic:

- Empirical study on any topics (other than faking bad) involving faking or socially desirable responding or impression management

Cao, M., & Drasgow, F. (2019). Does forcing reduce faking? A meta-analytic review of forced-choice personality measures in high-stakes situations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(11), 1347-1368.

LeBreton, J. M., Barksdale, C. D., Robin, J., & James, L. R. (2007). Measurement issues associated with conditional reasoning tests: Indirect measurement and test faking. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1-16.

*Butterworth, J., Trivers, R., & von Hippel, W. (2022). The better to fool you with: Deception and self-deception. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 47, 101385.

NOVEMBER 1:

PERSONALITY VARIABILITY - I: LONG-TERM AGE- AND EVENT-RELATED PERSONALITY CHANGE

- Gao, S., Thomaes, S., Van Den Noortgate, W., Xie, X., Zhang, X., & Wang, S. (2019). Recent changes in narcissism of Chinese youth: A cross-temporal meta-analysis, 2008–2017. *Personality and Individual Differences, 148*, 62-66.
- Infurna, F. J., & Jayawickreme, E. (2019). Fixing the growth illusion: New directions for research in resilience and posttraumatic growth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 28*(2), 152-158.
- Roberts, B. W., & Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 31-35.
- Schwaba, T., Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., Gebauer, J. E., Rentfrow, P. J., Potter, J., & Gosling, S. D. (2021). The impact of childhood lead exposure on adult personality: Evidence from the United States, Europe, and a large-scale natural experiment. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 118*(29), e2020104118.
- Soto, C. J., & Tackett, J. L. (2015). Personality traits in childhood and adolescence: Structure, development, and outcomes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 24*(5), 358-362.
- *Bleidorn, W., Schwaba, T., Zheng, A., Hopwood, C. J., Sosa, S. S., Roberts, B. W., & Briley, D. A. (2022). Personality stability and change: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological bulletin, 148*(7-8), 588-619.
- *Bühler, J. L., Orth, U., Bleidorn, W., Weber, E., Kretzschmar, A., Scheling, L., & Hopwood, C. J. (2023). Life Events and Personality Change: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *European Journal of Personality, 08902070231190219*.
- *Jayawickreme, E., Infurna, F. J., Alajak, K., Blackie, L. E., Chopik, W. J., Chung, J. M., ... & Zonneveld, R. (2021). Post-traumatic growth as positive personality change: Challenges, opportunities, and recommendations. *Journal of Personality, 89*(1), 145-165.

NOVEMBER 8:

PERSONALITY VARIABILITY - II: LONG-TERM PERSONALITY CHANGE INTERVENTIONS

Reaction papers (on autobiographies) are due via Blackboard by 4:30 PM.

At most one student-selected reading on each of the following topics:

- **Empirical study on age- or event-related changes in personality**
- **Empirical study on interventions to change personality**

Allemand, M., & Flückiger, C. (2022). Personality change through digital-coaching interventions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 31(1), 41-48.

Jackson, J. J., Hill, P. L., Payne, B. R., Roberts, B. W., & Stine-Morrow, E. A. (2012). Can an old dog learn (and want to experience) new tricks? Cognitive training increases openness to experience in older adults. *Psychology and Aging*, 27, 286-292.

*Roberts, B. W., Luo, J., Briley, D. A., Chow, P. I., Su, R., & Hill, P. L. (2017). A systematic review of personality trait change through intervention. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143, 117-141.

NOVEMBER 15:

PERSONALITY VARIABILITY - III: SHORT-TERM PERSONALITY VARIABILITY AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN WITHIN-PERSON PERSONALITY VARIABILITY

At most one student-selected reading on the following topic:

- An empirical study on the Cognitive-Affective Processing System (CAPS)

Association for Psychological Science (2017, December 18). *Inside the psychologist's studio with Walter Mischel* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk-5S5vxTp4>

Dalal, R. S., Meyer, R. D., Bradshaw, R. P., Green, J. P., Kelly, E. D., & Zhu, M. (2015). Personality strength and situational influences on behavior: A conceptual review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 41, 261-287.

Fleeson, W. (2004). Moving personality beyond the person-situation debate: The challenge and the opportunity of within-person variability. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 83-87.

Mischel, W. Shoda, Y., & Mendoza-Denton, R. (2002). Situation-behavior profiles as a locus of consistency in personality. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 50-54.

*Jayawickreme, E., Zachry, C. E., & Fleeson, W. (2019). Whole trait theory: An integrative approach to examining personality structure and process. *Personality and individual differences*, 136, 2-11.

NOVEMBER 22:

THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS (AND NO READINGS)

NOVEMBER 29:

SITUATIONS: CONTENT AND STRENGTH

At most one student-selected reading on each of the following topics:

- **Empirical study of situations**

Meyer, R. D., Dalal, R. S., José, I. J., Hermida, R., Chen, T. R., Vega, R. P., Brooks, C. K., & Khare, V. P. (2014). Measuring job-related situational strength and assessing its interactive effects with personality on voluntary work behavior. *Journal of Management*, 40, 1010-1041.

Rauthmann, J. F. (2020). Person-situation interactions. In B. J. Carducci & C. S. Nave (Eds.), *The Wiley encyclopedia of personality and individual differences: Measurement and assessment* (Vol. II, pp. 31-35). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Rauthmann, J.F. (2020). Situational factors. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of personality and individual differences* (pp. 4305-4307). Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.mutex.gmu.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-24612-3_1910

Tett, R. P., Toich, M. J., & Ozkum, S. B. (2021). Trait activation theory: A review of the literature and applications to five lines of personality dynamics research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 8, 199-233.

*Green, J. P., Dalal, R. S., Fyffe, S., Zaccaro, S. J., Putka, D. J., & Wallace, D. M. (in press). An empirical taxonomy of leadership situations: Development, validation, and implications for the science and practice of leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

*Serfass D.G., & Sherman R.A. (2015) Situations in 140 characters: Assessing real-world situations on Twitter. *PLoS ONE*, 10(11), e0143051.

DECEMBER 6:

NO CLASS (AND NO READINGS)

Term Papers are due via Blackboard by 4:30 PM.

Note: A Google Doc signup sheet will be provided to you so that you can form groups for the group assignments. For group assignments, I recommend that you start by creating a [group/team charter](#). Also, for every group assignment, the group must submit a jointly agreed upon Author Contributions Statement (see below for an example).

Here's an example of an Author Contributions Statement:

Author Contributions

RD developed the broad rationale for the paper and some of the research questions. BA, RD, AT, and SH fleshed out the theoretical foundation, improved and added to the research questions, designed the study, and selected the instruments. All authors contributed to data collection. BA, ZS, AM, and SH contributed to data analysis. All authors contributed to the interpretation of the results. BA, RD, and ZS contributed to manuscript writing. AM, AT, and SH provided critical reviews for, and helped with the editing of, the manuscript prior to submission. BA, RD, ZS, AM, and SH contributed to manuscript revisions subsequent to reviewer feedback.

Please proof-read your assignments carefully! Also, please be aware that I have high standards: I believe that you are talented students who will submit high-quality work, and I will be disappointed if you don't. 😊

The following sections provide additional details regarding various aspects of the course.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (INCLUDING ATTENDANCE):

For details, please see the section (above) entitled "Attendance/Participation and Technology Policy."

CLASS FACILITATION (KAHOOT QUIZ CREATION):

This is a group project. You will be working in groups of two people (i.e., dyads). Please include an Author Contributions Statement (see above for example).

The Kahoot quizzes are designed for students to assess their own understanding of the class material in a confidential, non-graded manner. Consequently, when answering Kahoot quizzes, students should use nicknames, not their real names. Grades are assigned for students who create the quizzes, not students who complete them. However, if students who are completing quizzes are routinely not performing well, they

may wish to reevaluate how they are reading the articles—and they should feel free to come to me for advice.

Each group of students should *sign up for **two** weeks* during which they will facilitate (a small portion of the) class. Here, class facilitation involves assessing students' understanding of each assigned reading or video. For this purpose, we will use a gamified learning platform such as Kahoot (or Mentimeter, etc.) to pose multiple-choice questions to the class. *There should be at least **2, 3, and 4 questions** per reading or video for short, medium-length, and long readings or videos, respectively.* Questions should be chosen from all major sections of the reading or video. For instance, for an empirical journal article, all the questions should not be chosen from the Method section. *Please do not include very narrow, picky, or tricky questions:* instead, the goal should be to choose questions to assess students' understanding of the major points of the readings: students who have read an article fairly closely and understood its major points should be able to get almost all the Kahoot questions correct.

So, essentially, each group of students will be responsible for preparing the Kahoot quizzes for *two* weeks during the semester. We will complete the quiz for each reading or video *before* we discuss that reading or video in class.

STUDENT-SELECTED READINGS:

This is a solo project.

Each student will individually present **one (1) reading** of their choice over the course of the semester. Each chosen reading *must be highly relevant to personality psychology (obviously!) and more specifically one of the topics mentioned in the course schedule presented above, must be at least eight (8) pages long in its original form, and must have been published in a peer-reviewed journal article.* Students can certainly choose from the list of recommended readings, but must otherwise choose a reading *published during the last two decades.* These criteria still provide considerable flexibility. This is *your* reading: choose something that *you* believe will be interesting and important!

It is the responsibility of the student presenting a particular reading to “educate” the rest of us because, in all likelihood, neither the other students nor I will have read what you are presenting. Thus, each student should prepare a PowerPoint (or Google Slides, etc.) presentation that includes:

- First slide:
 - The student's name
 - A full reference for the reading selected (in American Psychological Association Style)
- Next slide or two:
 - Information regarding why that particular reading was chosen

- Information regarding how the chosen reading fits in with the topics covered in class and the required readings in the syllabus. Please cite specific required readings to which the chosen reading is similar—and indicate why
- Remaining slides:
 - A summary of the chosen reading. For instance, for an empirical journal article, this should include things like: theoretical framework, hypotheses, methods used, analyses conducted, conclusions drawn, and suggestions for future research and practice. You'll need to think about how to represent the major findings very efficiently (I obviously don't expect you to discuss every statistical test in the results section, but you should present the major findings) yet in sufficient depth to reveal your understanding of the nuances of the data analysis. And, yes, in some cases, you might need to do additional reading (beyond the chosen article) so as to be able to understand and communicate at least the gist of the research design and/or statistical techniques used.

Please make sure that all slides are *numbered*! Please also post your slides and the PDF of the selected reading to the Blackboard discussion board prior to your presentation. Please *practice your presentation* before class, and, while doing so, please *time it* to ensure that it is **11-13** minutes long.

Each presentation will be followed by a brief (**2-4** minutes) question-and-answer session involving the other students and me.

REACTION PAPER:

Submission Deadline: November 8 at 4:30 PM. Submit via Blackboard.

This is a solo project.

Each student will read **three (3)** autobiographies by personality psychologists. These autobiographies will be provided to students ahead of time. Subsequently, each student will submit a short reaction paper on Blackboard. The reaction paper should be at least *1,500 words* long.

The reaction paper should cover the following topics (please use separate sub-sections for each topic, with topic headings):

- Which three autobiographies did you read? Please cite them.
- What connections did you draw between one or more of the autobiographies, on the one hand, and the assigned topics and readings for this course, on the other hand? Please mention at least three connections.

- What lessons did you take away from the autobiographies that you could potentially apply to your own career and/or life? Explain how/why you drew these lessons. Please mention at least three such lessons.
- If you had to choose the *single biggest* contribution to the field of personality psychology associated with *each* of the three personality psychologists whose autobiographies you read, what would that contribution be—and why? (So, 1 contribution per personality psychologist x 3 personality psychologists = 3 contributions in total.)
- What do the autobiographies reveal about the personalities of the authors themselves (i.e., the personality psychologists)? Structure your answer in terms of any of the primary personality taxonomies (Big Five, HEXACO, etc.).
- Which was your favorite autobiography out of the three, and why?

TERM PAPER:

Submission Deadline: December 6 at 4:30 PM. Submit via Blackboard.

This is a group project. You will be working in groups of two people (i.e., dyads). Please include an Author Contributions Statement (see above for example).

You should choose one of the following options for the term paper.

Option A: Research Proposal

Each group of students is required to propose an original research project *explicitly focused on the topic of employee personality*. In other words, personality cannot simply be treated as one variable in the paper: it must be the focus, or at least *one of the major foci*, of the paper. So, in all likelihood, a word/phrase such as “personality,” “conscientiousness,” “faking good,” or something along those lines should be included in the *title* of the paper and/or in the list of *keywords*.

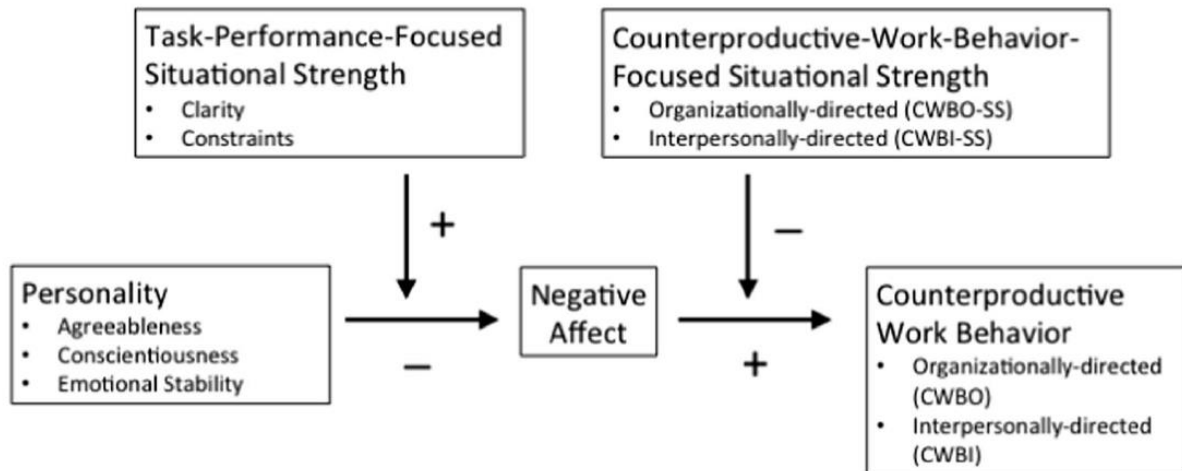
In practical terms, the bulk of the end product will consist of the *introduction, method, and “planned analyses” sections of an empirical journal article*.[†]

- Include an abstract (does not count toward the page limit).
- For the introduction section, you should first review the literature on a particular topic and then propose your own hypotheses. Be sure to answer the “So What?” or “Who Cares?” question: in other words, indicate not only that your paper topic fills a gap in the existing research but also why that particular gap is worth filling! Additionally, the introduction section *must* feature one or more of the major topics we have discussed this semester. In terms of structure, the introduction section (from opening “hook” to hypotheses) should follow Kendall et al. (2000) or similar sources. Each hypothesis should be preceded by a sound

theoretical rationale. Ideally, all the hypotheses would be derived logically from a single theory; certainly, an opportunistic mishmash of theories should be avoided (see Sparrowe & Mayer, 2011). You should plan for 2-3 *hypotheses in total*. You should also include a boxes-and-arrows figure to summarize your hypotheses. An example of a boxes-and-arrows figure is provided below (from Dalal et al., 2020, *Journal of Business and Psychology*).

Kendall, P.C., Silk, J. S., & Chu, B. C. (2000). Introducing your research report: Writing the introduction. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Writing articles for publication in psychology journals: A handbook* (pp. 41-57). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sparrowe, R. T., & Mayer, K. J. (2011). Publishing in *AMJ*--Part 4: Grounding hypotheses. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 1098-1102.



- For the *method* section, you should describe your sample and procedures. As part of describing the sample, you should indicate not only who the participants will be (e.g., demographic information, job types, etc.) and why, but also *how many* participants you will need. The number of participants needed can be estimated either via a formal power analysis (which you should describe *in detail*, along with appropriate citations, and which should be targeted at the most sample-size-intensive of your planned analyses) or, failing that, via a rule of thumb that has been articulated for the analyses you plan to conduct (which you should describe *in detail*, along with appropriate citations). Additionally, please briefly mention the steps you will take to ensure the quality of your data (use of attention check items, etc.).
- The “*planned analyses*” (or similarly titled) section should be as close to a results section as you can get without actually having any data. Basically, you should describe the data-analytic techniques you plan to conduct, along with a brief justification for the use of these techniques. This justification becomes critical if,

as is often the case, there are multiple techniques that could plausibly be used to analyze your data. For every technique you propose to use, please list the outcome variables, the predictor variables, any mediators and/or moderators, and so forth.

- Include a *References* section (does not count toward the page limit).
- Include an *Author Contributions Statement* (see above for example; does not count toward the page limit).

In addition to the above, please take a look at the American Psychological Association's Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS): <https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2018-00750-002.pdf> (Hint: Table 1 in the JARS will be most important for you). Another suggestion is to use a couple of recently published papers in top-tier journals such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology* as models from a structural standpoint.

Note that this is a proposal for *basic* research (meaning fundamental scientific research, not low-level research!). It should focus on psychological constructs and their inter-relationships. Hypotheses should ideally be derived from psychological (or other social science) theories. A paper discussing an applied research problem (e.g., "Here is a description of a consulting project I conducted for *Elegantly Wasted Winery, Inc.*, comparing employee personality before and after achieving a blood alcohol concentration of 0.20") is completely inappropriate and will receive a failing grade.

The idea is for students to use this opportunity to develop research proposals in areas relevant and interesting to them. In the past, some students have gone on to conduct the studies they proposed for this course and have submitted them to well-regarded journals.

Papers should be formatted in American Psychological Association style, as exemplified by the latest edition of the APA Publication Manual.

For both your sanity and mine, the term paper will be fairly short: **10-12** double-spaced pages of text—that is, *excluding* the title page, abstract (limit 200 words) and keywords (limit of 5 words/phrases), references, any tables or figures you may have, and the Author Contributions statement. You do not need a discussion section. You will need *at least 15 references* in the term paper. The short length of the paper does not preclude the need for thoroughness.

I will, of course, provide feedback on the final term paper. The purpose of doing so—even though at that point the semester will be over—is (in addition to justifying the grade) to assist students with their writing/framing skills in general, and to suggest areas for improvement as well as "next steps" in the event that they wish to pursue their projects further (beyond the end of the semester).

†I am potentially open to a theory or review paper instead of an empirical paper. If

students are interested in exploring these options, they should come and talk to me about it *well in advance of the due date*. However, students should be aware that it is—at least in my opinion—harder to write a good theory or review paper than a good empirical paper.

Option B: Animal Personality Assessment

Your task is to figure out how best to measure the personality of *one* particular animal (e.g., a specific household pet to whom you have ready access) in a formal, evidence-based manner—and to then go ahead and do so! Your report should be **7-8** double-spaced pages (using 12-point font in MS Word), *excluding* the executive summary, table of contents, references, “feedback report” (see below), and any tables or figures.

Prior to beginning the assignment, I require that you obtain written (e.g., email) permission from at least one “parent” of the animal even though this is not a research project. Please include this written permission as part of your submission for this assignment.

A few questions for you to answer in an evidence-based manner (please use separate section headings though, if it is easier, please feel free to address more than one question per section):

- Convenience aside, which criteria did you use to decide which particular type of animal (e.g., genus, species, breed) to study?
- What does it mean (conceptually) for an animal to “have” a personality? Going into this endeavor, how confident should you be (and why) that the animal you have chosen actually has a personality?
- Which “structure” of personality (e.g., Dark Triad, HEXACO) did you choose to assess for this animal, and how did you choose this structure?
- Which assessment methods (plural: yes, I want you to use at least two assessment methods) did you choose, and how did you choose them? Please describe the assessment methods in some detail in your report.
- How many raters/coders did you use, and how did you arrive at this decision?
- How did you decide who these raters/coders should be (e.g., psychology graduate students vs. pet owners vs. pet trainers vs. veterinary technicians vs. some combination thereof)?
- How did you train the raters/coders?
- How was the rating/coding conducted (e.g., number of timepoints/situations, duration of each timepoint/situation, use of “canned” vs. naturally occurring situations, whether a situational taxonomy was used to classify situations, specific response scale used for rating or approach used for coding)?
- How did you assess inter-rater/coder agreement/reliability? Did you also assess test-retest reliability (and why or why not)?
- How did you assess the convergence (or lack thereof) across assessment

methods?

- What ethical considerations (beyond obtaining permission to study the animal) were necessary during this assignment, and why?

Evidence-based online personality inventories for humans typically involve a “feedback report” that not only indicates the respondent’s personality “scores” but also provides brief information about the personality dimensions/types themselves (what they mean, etc.) and, in many cases, provides norms (e.g., percentiles) so that the person can compare his or her personality scores to those of others who have taken the same inventory. Of course, you will be assessing the personality of an animal who (presumably) cannot read. Nonetheless, please summarize the results of your personality assessment of this animal using a similar feedback report (e.g., **1-2** pages that will *not* count toward the previously-stated length requirement).

You must cite at least 10 sources in total. Not all of these sources, however, need to be directly on the topic of the assessment of personality in animals. For instance, it may be a good idea to include a couple of sources on methodological topics: how to assess inter-rater/coder agreement/reliability (e.g., r_{wg} , ICC), how to generate themes from qualitative data, and so forth. Similarly, you may choose to include a source or two on assessing personality in humans *per se* (e.g., in the context of settling on an appropriate personality structure to use in the current report) or assessing personality in young children (given that there is some similarity in the methodological problems bedeviling the assessment of personality in young children and in animals). Feel free to be creative, but do ensure that the relevance of each source is very clear to the reader.

Option C: Child Personality Assessment

This assignment is very similar to the previous option, except that you will be assessing the personality of a child rather than an animal. Requirements regarding length, number and nature of citations, specific questions to be answered, and so forth, remain similar but should be tweaked as needed, so as to be more appropriate for children. For instance, please feel free to modify the wording of the questions to be answered.

The child you choose should be no older than 7 years old. In other words, the child should *not* yet have reached the age (~8 years old, apparently) by which children have developed a sense for their own personality.

Prior to beginning the assignment, I require that you obtain written (e.g., email) permission from at least one parent of the child even though this is not a research project. Please include this written permission as part of your submission for this assignment.

You may find the following paper helpful, although you are under no obligation to use it (vs. alternatives):

Shiner, R. L., Soto, C. J., & De Fruyt, F. (2021). Personality assessment of children and adolescents. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology, 3*, 113-137.

Option D: Make Your Pitch!

This is your opportunity to choose an alternative term paper that is important and interesting to you. *At least 3 weeks* before the submission deadline for the term paper, please send me a *one-page* proposal that includes the names of your team members and addresses the following questions:

- What do you want to do, and why?
- Why is your idea appropriate for a term paper in this course?
- To what extent would your idea require a time commitment that is roughly equal to that required for the other options for this assignment?

COURSE GRADING SCHEME AND SCALE:

Class Participation (including Attendance)	30%
Class Facilitation (Kahoot Quiz Creation)	15%
Student-Selected Reading Presentation	15%
Reaction Paper (Autobiographies)	15%
Term Paper	25%
TOTAL	100%

Grade	% Range	Quality Points	Satisfactory/Passing?
A+	100.00% - 96.67%	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A	96.66% - 93.34%	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	93.33% - 90.00%	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	89.99% - 86.67%	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	86.66% - 83.34%	3.00	Satisfactory/Passing
B-	83.33% - 80.00%	2.67	Satisfactory*/Passing
C	79.99% - 70.00%	2.00	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	69.99% - 0.00%	0.00	Unsatisfactory/Failing

*Although a B- is a satisfactory grade for a course, students must maintain a 3.00 average in their degree program and must present a 3.00 GPA on the courses listed on the graduation application.

Note that this is not an “Easy A” course. Poor work will receive a poor grade.

UNIVERSITY 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, as is tolerating such behavior from other students. Please familiarize yourself with the university's honor code (available at <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>) and conduct yourself accordingly. I may use *SafeAssign* or some other plagiarism detection software on your writing. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. Ignorance of the Honor Code does not constitute an acceptable excuse for violating it.

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

Students are not allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) to assist them on graded assignments. Doing so constitutes cheating and will be penalized accordingly. However, AI also has the potential to be very helpful in improving understanding. Moreover, in general I want students to approach this course in a spirit of exploration. Therefore, students should feel free to provide demonstrations of the use of AI to summarize readings, explain relevant statistical techniques, provide best practice recommendations, and so forth. Please feel free to be creative! Obviously, whenever AI is used for these purposes, the fact that and the manner in which it is used should be *fully disclosed* to me and the other students.

TECHNOLOGY USED IN THE COURSE:

All readings (other than the textbook) will be provided via Blackboard. Blackboard will be used to post grades, augment in-class discussion and, occasionally, to make announcements. All other electronic communication will be via email.

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION VIA MASON E-MAIL:

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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should contact Disability Services (ods@gmu.edu or 703-993-2474) at the beginning of the semester and should request accommodations from me at the beginning of the semester.

COURSE ADD/DROP DEADLINES:

Please refer to <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus with reasonable advance notice.