

Personality (Psychology 225)

Syllabus for Spring Semester, 2011 (Section 001)

Professor: Dr. Melissa Himelein

Email: himelein@unca.edu

Class time: M, W, & F, 11:25 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Class room: CH 230

Office: Lipinsky 201C

Office telephone: 250-3896

Home page: <http://facstaff.unca.edu/himelein/>

Course page (Moodle): <http://learnonline.unca.edu>

Why Study Personality?

Human beings would doubtless get along with each other better, and would approach each other more closely, were they able to understand one another better.

-Alfred Adler, 1927, p. 21, *Understanding human nature*

If I let myself really understand another person, I might be changed by that understanding.

-Carl Rogers, 1961, p. 18, *On becoming a person*

Psychology cannot tell people how they ought to live their lives. It can, however, provide them with the means for effecting personal and social change.

-Albert Bandura, 1977, p. 213, *Social learning theory*

Course Description

This course is organized around a primary question: How and why are people different from one another? (For example, why are *you* drawn to taking this class and why are *other* students interested in quite different areas of study?) We will study the ideas of nine different theorists who developed theories of personality, including psychoanalytic/psychodynamic (Freud, Jung, Adler), social/life-span (Horney, Erikson), humanistic (Maslow, Rogers), and cognitive/behavioral (Skinner, Bandura) perspectives. We will conclude our study by examining the ideas of a modern, related discipline in psychology: positive psychology. Overall course objectives include:

- understanding the basic concepts and principles of each theoretical perspective,
- using the personality theories to better understand your own unique development, characteristics, and behaviors, and
- learning to apply the theories to the lives of others, in order to gain greater insight into their personalities and experiences.

This is a writing-intensive class, which means that you will demonstrate your mastery of these objectives in large part through writing assignments. We will also devote a significant portion of class time to writing instruction and practice, with the goal of improving writing over the course of the semester. Please see the "Relevant SLOs" handout posted in Moodle for information about student learning outcomes in Psychology, writing-intensive courses, and cluster courses. (This course is one of the Social Sciences courses in ILS Topical Cluster 10: Identity and Its Expressions.) The only prerequisite for Psychology 225 is Psychology 100 (Introductory Psychology).

Office Hours

I know that email and telephones are handy for quick questions, but please don't hesitate to come see me *in person!* I enjoy getting to know my students.

- Drop-in hours (no appointment necessary - I will be in my office during this time unless I announce otherwise in class): Monday & Wednesday, 4:15-5:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Appointments (schedule in advance so I'll be sure to be in my office): Best times this semester will likely be Tuesday and Thursday mornings, but other times can be arranged as well.

Other Means of Communication

The best way to get in touch with me quickly is through email (address above). I check email frequently on weekdays and at least once on weekends. I check voice mail less often.

If I need to relay a message to the entire class, I will use Moodle, which directs email to your official email address (your unca.edu address). If you do not check your unca.edu email, please be sure that you forward email from this address to your preferred email address.

Readings/Course Materials

- Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2009). *Theories of personality* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (You are also welcome to purchase the 8th edition [2005], which will be significantly cheaper. Chapter numbers have changed, but content is very similar.)
- At least one biography about your individual psychobiographical subject.
- On-line readings and review of relevant websites (will be posted on Moodle).
- One film (VHS or DVD format) about the subject of your group psychological application project.

Course Requirements

1. Exams. There will be three primarily non-cumulative exams (a few concepts may carry across the entire semester, but these will be clarified in advance of exams), consisting of a combination of objective and essay questions. Material from all aspects of class (lectures, discussion, small group activities, presentations, readings, and movies) will be tested. Should you miss an exam for any reason, make-ups will be scheduled on Reading Day or during the first two days of final exam week. Exam dates, as well as the dates of all course assignments, are listed on the course calendar (the last page of this syllabus).

2. Self-Application Writing. To encourage your application of personality concepts to your own life, I will ask you to write a series of brief essays (maximum of one page each) over the course of the semester, in which you will apply the personality theories to your own development. Essay prompts – one per theorist - will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle, and your essays should be submitted on Moodle.

3. Group Psychological Application Presentation and Paper. We will engage in a variety of applications exercises in class this semester in the effort to help you learn how to use personality concepts to better understand others. The group application project will be an extension of this effort. Working with two classmates, I will ask you to watch a popular film about the life of a famous person. You will then choose one or two personality concepts studied in class and apply them to the subject's life, presenting your analysis to the class in a brief (10-15 minute) presentation. Following your presentation (and with the benefit of class feedback), your group will then jointly submit a brief paper (2-3 pages) summarizing your analysis. Papers will be due within one week of the presentation.

4. Psychobiography Paper. This 8-10 page paper involves using personality concepts to examine and explain the life of a well-known person. You may choose any person who interests you as your subject provided that (a) there is sufficient information available and (b) no one else has made the same selection. (Choices are "first come-first served," so the earlier you can commit to a subject, the better chance you have of "locking in" your selection.) Some categories to consider to get you started: a childhood hero/heroine, politicians, writers, filmmakers, musicians, artists, philosophers, scientists, journalists, celebrities, historical figures, or activists.

To begin this paper, you will need to locate and read a good biography (or possibly autobiography) about your subject's life. Please start this process soon, because an inability to find necessary information about your subject may well cause you to choose another. (The final date to choose your subject and biography is noted on the course calendar.)

First drafts of psychobiographies will be peer-reviewed in class; specific instructions for the peer-review process will be provided. I am also happy to give feedback on outlines or rough drafts of papers during scheduled appointments. In addition, another excellent campus resource you should be aware of is the UNC Asheville Writing Center (251-6596, Ramsey Library Room 136). I will discuss the psychobiography in class within the next two weeks and will give you a detailed handout at that time. In the meantime, and throughout the semester, please do not hesitate to ask me questions about the assignment. Please make this assignment a high priority for this class! Late papers will be penalized.

5. Psychology and Life (PAL) Reports. Please attend a minimum of three PAL events over the course of the semester. Submit one paragraph (*maximum* of 1 doublespaced page) about each event, within one week of attending the event, in which you (a) summarize the content, and (b) explain its relevance (if any) to personality psychology (stretch – almost anything can be related to personality!).

6. Class Attendance/Participation. Regular attendance is essential in this class. We will engage in a variety of experiences, many of which cannot be duplicated by borrowing a classmate's notes. Attendance will be noted, with exceptionally good (0-2 absences) or poor (5 or more) attendance, as well as participation, figuring into a nominal portion of your final grade (~4%). In addition, I will consider attendance in the calculation of borderline final grades, and I reserve the right to make a 5% grade deduction in final grades for more than 8 absences (i.e., missing more than 20% of the class).

Academic Dishonesty

Any documented instance of academic dishonesty (cheating, conspiring, or plagiarizing) will result in an automatic failing grade on the relevant assignment. A second episode of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course. Keep in mind that plagiarism is an especially important concept to understand in a writing-intensive class; we will discuss the importance of careful reference practices in class, but please ask me if you have any questions or confusion about this critical issue.

Evaluation

Points are distributed as follows:

Assignment	Points Possible	Points Earned
Exams (3 x 50 pts.)	150	
Self-application essays (11 x 5 pts.)	55	
Group project presentation	15	
Group project paper	15	
Peer review	5	
Psychobiography	80	
PAL reports	15	
Attendance & participation	15	
Total points possible	350	

Final grades are determined by your cumulative point total over the semester:

Grade	% of Possible	Pts.
A	93+	325-350
A-	90-92	315-324
B+	87-89	305-314
B	83-86	291-304
B-	80-82	280-290
C+	77-79	270-279
C	73-76	256-269
C-	70-72	245-255
D	60-69	210-244
F	<60	<210

Personality Course Calendar, Spring 2011

Dates subject to revision. Please be flexible about possible changes, given that snow days may well disrupt our schedule. Should class be canceled for any reason, assignments to be submitted on Moodle are due as scheduled; presentations or exams will take place in the next class period (updates will be posted on Moodle).

Dates and Assignments	Topic	Reading
Part I: Introduction & Psychodynamic Theories		
M 1/10, W 1/12, F 1/14, W 1/19 <i>(No class M 1/17, M. L. King Day)</i>	Introduction & Assessment	Schultz & Schultz (S & S), Introduction (9 th) or Chap. 1 (8 th)
F 1/21, M 1/24, W 1/26, F 1/28, M 1/31 Self-Application 1 due F 1/21	Freud	S & S, Chap. 1 (9 th) or Chap. 2 (8 th) Demonstration presentation
W 2/2, F 2/4, M 2/7	Jung Group #1 presentation	S & S, Chap. 2 (9 th) or Chap. 3 (8 th)
W 2/9, F 2/11, M 2/14 Self-Application 2-4 due F 2/11	Adler Group #2 presentation	S & S, Chap. 3 (9 th) or Chap. 4 (8 th)
W 2/16	Exam 1	
Part II: Social/Developmental & Humanistic Theories		
F 2/18, M 2/21, W 2/23, F 2/25 PsychoB selection due F 2/18	Horney Group #3 presentation	S & S, Chap. 4 (9 th) or Chap. 5 (8 th)
M 2/28, W 3/2, F 3/4 <i>(No class 3/7-3/11, Spring Break)</i>	Erikson Group #4 presentation	S & S, Chap. 6 (9 th) or Chap. 8 (8 th)
M 3/14, W 3/16, F 3/18, M 3/21	Maslow Group #5 presentation	S & S, Chap. 9 (9 th) or Chap. 11 (8 th)
W 3/23, F 3/25, M 3/28 Self-Application 5-8 due F 3/25	Rogers Group #6 presentation	S & S, Chap. 10 (9 th) or Chap. 12 (8 th)
W 3/30	Exam 2	
Part III: Cognitive/Behavioral Theories & Positive Psychology		
F 4/1, M 4/4, W 4/6, F 4/8 Psychobiography (1st draft) due F 4/8	Skinner & Bandura Group #7 presentation	S & S, 9 th -Chap. 12 (pp. 374-388) & 13 (pp. 400-411) or 8 th -Chap. 14 (pp. 379-393) & 15 (pp. 405-416)
M 4/11, W 4/13, F 4/15, M 4/18 Peer Review due M 4/11 Psychobiography (final draft) due F 4/15	Positive psychology: Happiness & positive emotions	Readings on Moodle
W 4/20, F 4/22, M 4/25 Self-Application 9-11 due M 4/25 Last day to submit PAL reports	Positive psychology: Gratitude & forgiveness	Readings on Moodle
W 4/27, 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Exam 3	