**Personality Psychology**

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| **Instructor: Jessica Williamson, Ph.D.**  **E-mail:** [jessrwill@ksu.edu](mailto:jessrwill@ksu.edu)  **Classroom: Bluemont Hall 487**  **Days: M** | **Time: 12:30 – 3:00**  **Office:** Bluemont Hall, Room 472  **Student hours: W: 1:30 – 2:30; Tuesday: 1:30 – 1:30; Friday F: 11:30 – 12:30**  **Or by appt** |

**Objectives of the Course**

Personality Psychology is a survey course designed to introduce students to various topics and aspects of personality psychology research and theory. Readings include fundamental research articles, reviews, and book chapters focusing on the scientific findings in the field of personality psychology. We will discuss topics of personality including the history of personality psychology, dispositional, biological, intrapsychic, personality development, cognitive/experiential, social and cultural, as well the relationship of personality psychology with wellbeing and personality disorders. By the end of the semester, students will also write an APA style proposal for an experimental project designed to examine aspects of personality and its relationship with other constructs or outcomes.

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| Item |  | Percent of grade |
| **Research Study Proposal** |  | **50%** |
| *Brief Proposal Topic Presentation* | *5%* |  |
| *Proposal Draft* | *15%* |  |
| *Peer Review of Proposal* | *10%* |  |
| *Final Paper* | *50%* |  |
| *Final Presentation* | *20%* |  |
| **Discussion (Participation and leading)** |  | **30%** |
| **Reflection Papers** |  | **20%** |

**Textbook and materials:**

There is no required textbook for the course. All materials will be made available online; however, students ***are not allowed to bring laptops to class***. Students are expected to print off the readings, their questions, etc., and bring them to class. Special exceptions are made for students leading discussion as they may need laptops for planned activities.

# Class Discussion and Discussion Leaders

Students are expected to both lead and participate in class discussions.

Students will sign up to lead multiple weeks of discussion (depending on how many students are enrolled).

Students will be randomly paired each week to lead the following week’s discussion.

## Discussion Leaders (look on the last page of the syllabus for discussion leader tips)

Discussion leaders should:

1) Prepare an agenda outlining class activities that will be announced to students the day of the discussion. This simply means outlining the order in which readings will be covered and any activities planned.

2) Prepare a summary of each reading. Leaders will go over major highlights of each reading before we start to discuss readings.

3) Submit a list of their discussion questions to the instructor the day of their discussion.

***ANY VIDEOS OR ACTIVITIES LASTING LONGER THAN A TOTAL OF 15 MINUTES OF CLASS TIME MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR BEFOREHAND.***

**Reaction Papers**

## For students not leading discussion.

Students not leading discussion are expected to:

**(1)** Write at least ***one*** discussion questions for **each reading**. Questions are submitted to designated discussion boards created for each week. NOTE: In addition to posting questions on the board, you are also expected to discuss them in class. Students are expected to actively engage in discussion.

These should be analytical questions that delve into the meat of concepts presenting in the readings, not questions asking for clarification or definitions.

These are due 11:59 PM the night before class.

**(2)** Turn in a reflection paper: Students will write 1-2 pages of reflections for the week’s readings (note, this is 1-2 pages for the entire week – not for each individual reading). Examples of things students might talk about would be what they learned from these readings. Did you learn anything you didn't know before? Did you disagree with anything said in these readings? Each week’s readings are provided in the assignments section – this is also where students will turn in their reflection papers.

These are due 11:59 PM the night before class.

Students will receive an overall grade of 0-3 for their weekly contribution (0 = fail, 1 = needs a great deal of improvement [i.e., lacks thoughtfulness, insight, clear student did not read material], 2 = satisfactory, 3 = excellent). – This same grading rubric applies to reflection papers.

Students missing class without a doctor’s excuse or notification of a school-related activity will automatically be deducted 50% of their weekly discussion grade. As this class only meets one day a week, missing a single class is a big deal. Attendance is half the weekly grade.

Readings will be made available on course website.

Discussion questions will be posted on a discussion board on the course website. All questions/comments are due by 11:59 PM the night before we cover the topics.

# Research Proposal

A major component of the current course is to write a research proposal. The paper should address an area of research in Personality Psychology. This can include a proposal on examining some area of dispositional personality research, biological personality research, intrapsychic (psychoanalytic) personality research, cognitive/experiential personality research, social or cultural personality research, or adjustment personality research (e.g., stress, coping, health, personality disorders).

***Final paper is due 5/9***

***The research proposal should be no longer than 15 pages. This includes title page, abstract, actual paper, and references. Students will be deducted 2.5% of their paper grade for each page they go over 15.***

## Proposal of Topic – 3/7

We will spend a class period talking about topic ideas. This is expected to be a collaborative process with class members helping each other to refine ideas. Students must also turn in an electronic version of the topic proposal. This includes: goals of the proposed research, hypotheses, list of IV(s) and DV(s), and proposed statistical test.

***Proposal Draft 4/11 and Peer Reviews 4/18***

Students must turn in a draft of their proposal. This must be as complete as possible (treat the draft as though it is the final product).

***Proposal Presentation 5/2***

During the last week of class, students will give a powerpoint presentation of their paper. We will discuss presentation order and time limits later on in the semester.

**Course Schedule (readings provided on Canvas)**

# Week 1 (1/18)

No class

# Week 2 (1/25)

**Introduction**

**Syllabus**

**Topic: Introduction, history, and measurement issues**

# Week 3 (2/1)

**Topic: Introduction, history, and measurement issues cont’d: The Person-Situation Debate**

# Week 4 (2/8)

**Topic: Introduction, history, and measurement issues cont’d: Knowing Ourselves, Knowing Others**

# Week 5 (2/15)

**Topic: Trait Taxonomies: The Emergence of the Big Five**

# Week 6 (2/22)

**Topic: Personality Development, Coherence, and Stability: Change as Natural Life Course and Cohort Change**

# Week 7 (2/29)

**Topic: Psychoanalytic and Neo-, and Post Freudian Approaches**

# Week 8 (3/7)

## Topic Proposals

# Week 9 (3/14)

## SPRING BREAK

# Week 10 (3/21)

**Topic: Cognitive Approaches to Personality**

# Week 11 (3/28)

**Topic: Biological bases of Personality (Genetics and Evolution)**

# Week 12 (4/4)

**Topic: Personality, the Self, and Social Interactions**

# Week 13 (4/11)

## Proposal Draft Due

**Topic: Culture and Personality**

# Week 14 (4/18)

## Peer Reviews Due

**Topic: Personality and Psychopathology**

# Week 15 (4/25)

**Topic: Personality and Health**

# Week 16 (5/2)

## Final presentations for research proposal

# Week 17 (5/9)

## Final Paper Due

***\*I reserve the right to change the syllabus/schedule during the semester. Students will be notified of changes and a revised syllabus will be uploaded on the course website.***

**Discussion Leader Tips:** Each of you will be responsible for leading class discussions for about least six classes during the semester. You will be graded on your organization, on your presentation of material, and on your ability to lead discussion. You should view this as an opportunity to be creative. Feel free to do demonstrations, organize a debate, show brief videos, assign additional readings, etc. At the very least, you should prepare an outline (you don't need to turn this in - it's for your use) of how and where you want the discussion to proceed as well as a list of issues or questions you want the class to discuss.

* Being a discussion leader requires being extremely prepared in advance. It is not something people can “wing.”
* I am willing to meet with you to help you prepare your discussion. However, you must arrive prepared for the meeting. After all, YOU are responsible for preparing the discussion. Thus, I will make suggestions regarding your ideas for your discussion. This means that you need to read the articles and prepare an outline of what you plan to cover BEFORE we meet. Coming to our meeting unprepared makes a bad impression and I am very likely to cancel the meeting. We should meet no fewer than 2 days before you are discussion leader.
* The best way to lead a discussion is to know in advance the topics you want to cover, the responses you want to elicit, and the discussion questions that specifically elicit those responses. You don’t need to know the answers to the questions you ask, but you should have thought about the answer. Questions like, “What did you think about the article by Baumeister and Leary?” are poor discussion questions and tend to elicit blank stares or brief, uninformative responses. Your discussion questions should be brief and stated in your own words.
* One of the toughest things about being a discussion leader is the pause that follows the question. It can take up to 10 seconds between when you ask a question and receive a response. People must digest what you said, think about it, formulate a response, and then speak. Typically, however, the 10 seconds seems like several minutes. Be patient. If there is a problem with the question, people will ask you to repeat it or I will ask you to reword the question.
* There is a tendency for discussion leaders to dominate the discussion. This is not surprising. As a discussion leader you probably know the topic better than any other student in the class. You have thought about it more and probably have the answer written down in front of you. Avoid the temptation to dominate discussion. The best discussion leaders pull the answers from others in the class.
* As noted earlier, this is an opportunity for you to be creative. Feel free to do demonstrations, organize a debate, show brief videos, assign additional readings, develop and administer a questionnaire, etc.