

Psychology 105
Psychology of Human Adjustment
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, before and after class.
If these times are not convenient, please feel free to email me to set up an appointment.

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday from 2:20-3:30
Class Room: PPHAC 233

Course Overview and Objectives:

The basic theoretical principles of psychology provide a solid foundation for developing an understanding of adjustment and coping. In this course, we will demonstrate the applicability of these theories to your life. Students will:

- Understand and discuss the study of behavior in relation to the challenges of adjustment in today's complex world
- Develop greater self knowledge and awareness through the understanding of psychological principles
- Gain knowledge of theories that guide the field of psychology
- Apply critical thinking skills to concepts and self

Examinations:

There will be three exams given during the term. All exams will be non-cumulative. The first two exams will be given during class time. The third exam will be given during final exam week. Questions will test your knowledge of both lecture and textbook material. Exams will be given only on the days scheduled. The only excuse for missing an exam is documented illness or death in the family. All makeup exams will be given at 7:30 AM. Any inexcusable absence from an exam will be recorded as a zero.

Critical Thinking Projects:

Critical thinking provides you an opportunity to analyze your assumptions, consider alternatives and develop deeper self-understanding. You are required to complete both Critical Thinking projects. Please note that late

papers and journals will be dropped $\frac{1}{2}$ a letter grade for each day after paper is due. Work that is emailed after the class period ends is considered 1 day late and will be dropped $\frac{1}{2}$ a letter grade.

Learning Journal: Maintain a weekly journal to stimulate self-understanding and personal growth. Explore classroom topics and their relationship to your life. You are encouraged to utilize the attached topical questions or the questions (Exercises or Questions for Self-Reflection) at the end of each chapter of your textbook. Journals will be collected periodically and will be reviewed in regard to critical thinking about classroom topics.

Adjustment Project: See attached information at end of syllabus.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Attendance for all classes is expected. You are responsible for the material and activities presented in class, as the lecture material is meant to supplement your readings. You are expected to read assigned texts prior to each session, as your participation in classroom discussion is encouraged. Missed classes will lower your grade in the course. You will have an opportunity to assess your participation grade in the class at mid-term.

Evaluation:

Your grade for this course will be comprised of exams, Critical Thinking papers and your class participation. The breakdown is as follows:

Exams	60% (3 at 20%)
Journal	15%
Adjustment Project	15%
Participation	10%

Policy on Plagiarism:

The Psychology Department has set policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes various situations such as quoting directly from a published work without properly acknowledging the author, having someone write a paper for you, "borrowing" from fraternity or sorority files, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. The policy in the department is that students must keep all note cards and rough drafts on a paper until the grade is assigned. The course instructor may request these materials at any time. Evidence of

plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the College Policy on academic honesty, copies of which are available at the departmental secretary's desk.

The Subject Pool:

You are able to receive extra credit for participation as a subject in Psychology student research. Each student is able to earn up to 6 points of extra credit. Each hour of participation is equal to 2 points.

Required Texts:

Duffy, K.G. & Atwater, E. (2008). Psychology for Living: Adjustment, Growth & Behavior Today. (9th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Any additional readings will be on reserve in the library or handed out during the class.

Class Schedule

(Please note that class schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be noted in an addendum to the syllabus and explained by the instructor)

Week 1: Introduction to Course

August 26: What is Adjustment?

August 28: Critical Thinking Activity

Week 2: Self-Direction in a Changing World

September 2: **Chapter 1**

September 4: Adjustment Project Planning/ **Journal**

Week 3: The Journey Begins—Childhood

September 9: **Chapter 2**

September 11: Critical Thinking Vignette/ **Journal**

Week 4: Affirmative Aging—Adulthood

September 16: **Chapter 3**

September 18: **Journal**

Week 5: Seeking Selfhood

September 23: **Chapter 4**

September 25: **Journal/Journal Due**

Week 6: Exam I & Group Exercise
September 30: **Exam I**
October 2: Group Exercise/**Journal**

Week 7: Adjustment Project Meetings
Oct 7: Fall Recess—Enjoy!
Oct 9: **Adjustment Project Meeting, no class**

Week 8: Leader or Follower
Oct 14: **Chapter 9**
Oct 16: **Journal /Submit Adjustment Project Plan**

Week 9: Making and Keeping Friends
Oct 21: **Chapter 8**
Oct 23: **Journal**

Week 10: Stress!
Oct 28: **Chapter 13**
Oct 30: **Journal/Journal Due**

Week 11: Exam II & Career Development Presentation
Nov 4: **Exam II**
Nov 6: Career Development Presentation/**Journal**

Week 12 At Work and Play
Nov 11: **Chapter 10**
Nov 13: **Journal**

Week 13: Love and Commitment
Nov 18: **Chapter 12**
Nov 20: **Adjustment Project Presentations/ Journal/ Paper Due**

Week 14:
Nov 25: **Adjustment Project Presentations**
Nov 27: Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 15: If You Go for Help
Dec 2: **Chapter 15**
Dec 4: **Journal Due**

Week 16: Closure

Dec 9: Critical Thinking about Self

Finals Week

****Final Exam TBD****

Sample Journal Questions

(Remember: There are many questions at the end of each chapter in your text to choose from for your weekly journal)

- This course has a focus on gaining insight into your own patterns of adjustment. How do you feel about what lies ahead for you in this course? What kinds of life experiences may have influenced your attitude—whether excited or guarded—about exploring aspects of your being?
- Construct a list of 5 or 6 characteristics that you think are an enduring part of your make-up as a person. As you look at this list, consider the following about your self-reflection: Do you always behave in ways that are consistent with these traits? Would your closest friends agree with your characterization? Were your descriptions realistic or idealistic?
- To what degree do physiological concerns contribute to the stress you perceive in managing all that you must in order to succeed in college? Which biological systems tend to fall victim to the strains in your life?
- Have you developed reasonable ways to vent your frustration and solve problems early in their development? If so, what are your mechanisms for coping? If not, what do you think you could do to help cope with life stressors?
- Who have been your role models? In what ways have they influenced your identity? Are your role models very similar to you? How did they become your role models?
- What is your style of leadership? Are there certain situations or circumstances in which your flair for leadership emerges? Or are you still waiting to discover situations in which you could exercise true leadership?
- As a child, how did you respond to the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Is there a pattern of values and interests present in your early career fantasies that still exists in your current goals?

ADJUSTMENT PROJECT

Step 1: Select your activity.

As a group, you need to develop a two-week program to improve some aspect of handling stress. Think about how you can best improve your adjustment. Select an activity that you can all do that you feel will help you relax/handle stress in your life. You may choose one of the following examples or you may come up with your own idea.

Examples:

breathing and relaxation techniques
participate in a hobby or activity
exercise

Step 2: Create your program.

Write a program overview and be specific. Be sure answer the following questions: What are you going to do? How often will you do the activity and for how long?

While your group should follow the same program, you may do a variation of the activity. For example, if you chose to do an aerobic exercise; you do not have to do the same type of exercise.

Step 3: Select a method of assessment

With your group, select a method to assess the effectiveness of your stress relieving technique. Be sure to use the assessment before and after implementing your program. This will allow you to have a baseline to measure your adjustment against. Examples of assessments can be a daily mood logs, sleep log, or a questionnaire. If you are looking for a great site for questionnaires, take a look at

<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/default.aspx>

Step 4: Submit Adjustment Project Plan

Write a project plan as a group. You will need to submit your group's plan on October 16th for review and approval.

Once your program has been approved, you can complete the following steps.

Step 5: Implement your program.

Be sure to keep a log of what you do and when you do it, and measure your improvement during and/or after your program (your "outcome" measure).

Step 6: Write individual paper.

Write your individual paper which is due on November 20th. Your paper should be 3-5 pages and contain the following (**please use these subheadings in your paper**):

1. Rationale for the program.
2. Design of the program.
3. Effect of the program on the group and on you individually.
4. Discuss the effects of the program and how your experience compared with your group members. Would you choose to repeat your program or select something else? Why?
5. Future plan. Will you continue in this program? Why or why not?

Step 7: Group Presentations.

Present the results of your program to the class. You will have 12 minutes which should be equally shared by all members of your group. Presentations will be held on November 20th and 25th. You may structure your presentation any way you wish, but your presentation should clearly communicate:

1. A description of your program and why you chose it.
2. What was it like to do your program? Easier or harder than you thought? More or less fun?
3. The effects of the program on your group's adjustment. Did it work? Why or why not?
4. Discuss whether you would recommend this program to others. If not, why not?