

PSYCH 120: Introduction to Psychology Fall, 2010

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Office Hours:	M & W 9 :45am – 10 :45 am T & TH 10 :15am – 11 :15am (or by appointment)		

Course Overview:

Psychology has assumed an increasingly crucial role in understanding ourselves and others as our society and our world become increasingly more complex. This course is designed to serve as an introduction to the field of psychology. Students should come to a thorough understanding of, and respect for psychology as the scientific study of human and animal behavior and mental processes (e.g., thoughts and emotions). With theory and research as the foundation, we will explore the topics of the course which shed light on the basic processes underlying our thoughts and actions. Consequently, it should provide a framework for students to begin thinking independently about such phenomena, and the implications of these basic processes for themselves and the world around them.

This particular introductory psychology course focuses upon the internal or micro-psychological dynamics (biological bases, sensation & perception, learning, memory, consciousness, etc.) as opposed to Psychology of Adjustment (PS105) which moves more toward more “macro” issues. However, as an introductory course I will try to optimize a balance between depth in exploring the core chapters outlined in the course schedule and breadth of the psychological discipline.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To become knowledgeable of theories, concepts, and principles pertaining to the relevant topics.
- 2) To develop greater critical thinking skills, and a greater ability to ACTIVELY view and interpret phenomena from multiple theoretical perspectives.
- 3) To understand and appreciate the basic workings and essential role of rigorous scientific research, and its contribution to knowledge in psychology and in the social sciences in general.
- 4) To gain a life long interest in exploring, learning, and using psychological insight to better understand, cope, and thrive in our life.
- 5) To improve communication skills (writing, speaking, and listening) through various opportunities offered during the course.

Required text:

Guest, J. (1976). *Ordinary people*. Penguin Books.

Meyers, D. (2007). *Psychology* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
(referred to in syllabus as Modules)

Marcus, G. (Ed.) (2006). *The Norton psychology reader*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
(Referred to in syllabus as Norton)

Some assigned readings may also be distributed in class.

Course Structure & Policies:

1) **Make-up exams:** In order to avoid receiving a zero on a missed exam you must provide notification and verification. Notify me beforehand, or as soon as possible. Notification more than 2 days after the exam is not acceptable. If you miss an exam please provide the appropriate documentation (Drs.' note, court order, etc.). I expect this to be done without my requesting such documentation. Without this documentation you will be penalized by a reduction of 50% of your score. I reserve the right to use essay format for make-up exams. Exams will be re-scheduled on a weekday at 7:30AM.

2) **Cheating and plagiarism** will not be tolerated. ANY EVIDENCE OF CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A FAILURE IN THE COURSE (FINAL GRADE = F). Plagiarism is the intentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own. This includes such instances as quoting directly from a published work without giving the author credit (i.e. proper citation), inserting the author's words as your own, using or "borrowing" another student's work, buying a paper from a professional service, etc. The policy of the department and college is that the student must keep all note cards and rough drafts on a paper until given a grade for that course. The full college policy on this is in the Student Handbook. In the event of a suspected infraction – in fairness to your peers – it is my job to send the materials in question to the Dean's Office at which time you are given the chance to provide your perspective on the matter and challenge my judgment. In this case, you should continue coming to class and completing the work until a definitive judgment is made.

3) **Attendance** - Class attendance is expected. Class lectures and demonstrations will supplement the material in the text. In the event that you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from a fellow student and reviewing them before you see me about questions concerning that material. Excessive absences (more than three) will result in deduction of two points per missed class from your final grade. You do NOT need to contact me, nor e-mail me in the event that you must miss a class. I assume you are a mature adult and can handle the responsibility of missing a class as outlined above.

4) **Late Assignments** - Assignments and projects may be handed in up to two days late (points deducted from the grade each day late) ONLY IF when handing in an assignment

late you indicate the amount of days late on the front cover along with your signature. Assignments may not be handed in after the third day late. Please, do not ask me to deviate from this policy. If you must miss class drop off the assignment earlier, send it with a classmate, or fax it to me (625-7879). In other words, there should be no valid excuse for a late assignment. I encourage you not to procrastinate such that last minute emergencies (e.g. computer down, ribbon broke, etc.) interfere with getting assignments in on time. Also, be sure to back up your files using your space on the X drive!

5) Summary of Grading System:

SEMESTER EXAMS:	3 @ 18% each = 54%
FINAL EXAM:	20%
DISCUSSION & ASSIGNMENTS:	16%
PSYCH CONCEPT PAPER	10%

6) The following **grading scale** will be used in the course. Your final grade will be determined by the Overall Grade posted on Blackboard based on the point allocation above with any extra credit (see policy #7 below) factored in. When transferring your Overall Grade posted on Blackboard to the FINAL GRADE filed with the Registrar, your grade **MAY be adjusted for excessive absences** (see policy #3) **or incompleteness of Research Requirement** (see policy #7 below).

A : 93-100	C : 73 – 76.9
A-: 90-92.9	C-: 70 – 72.9
B+: 87-89.9	D+: 67 – 69.9
B : 83-86.9	D : 63 – 66.9
B-: 80-82.9	D-: 60 – 62.9
C+: 77-79.9	F : Below 60

7) Required Research Participation:

You will be required to participate in two research projects (totaling at least one hour of participation) being conducted by students in PS212, Research Methods (or by Honors/independent study students or faculty research projects). This experience allows you to view the research process (a critical tool for the discipline of psychology) first-hand in various experimental contexts. All the research studies will have been reviewed and approved by a Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) Committee; however, if you have objections to participating in research, you may arrange to complete an alternative, written assignment, which will involve reading a psychological article. In order to do the alternative assignment, you must meet with your professor to arrange it **by Friday Oct. 15th**. After that point, you may still have the opportunity to complete the research requirement by participating in experiment sessions, but you will not be able to do a written assignment to fulfill this requirement. More information about research participation (e.g., how to sign up) will be provided later in the semester, when experiment opportunities start to become available. Failure to complete the required participation (or the alternative assignment) will result in a **reduction of your class grade by 1/3rd letter grade** (e.g., from a B to a B-). The entire required hour needs to be completed to avoid this deduction (i.e., completing ½ hour only will still result in the full deduction).

When you sign up for a research experiment, please be sure to record the time and location of the session, and all other relevant information. This information will need to be completed on a form and submitted toward the end of the semester. As many experiments require that students begin a task at the same time, please plan to show up on-time for your sessions. Showing up late may result in your not being able to participate in the experiment!

If you fail to attend an experiment session for which you signed up, the required hours of research participation will increase to 2 hours. If you then fail to show up a second time for a scheduled experiment session, then you will forfeit all extra credit opportunities (including extra research hours you already completed for extra credit in the course) and will face a **reduction of your class grade by 1/3rd letter grade** (e.g., from a B to a B-).

Extra Credit via Research Participation:

Students may earn up to four hours of **ADDITIONAL** extra credit for participating in research beyond the requirements outlined above. Each hour of credit earned will increase your worst semester exam grade by 3 points (thus capped at 12 points).

8) Excuses and Communication

As articulated in Policy #3, I operate on the assumption that you are mature adults, and therefore, the decision to attend class or not is up to you. You need not e-mail me if you must miss class. Be sure to work with a classmate to get any materials you miss and feel free to make an appointment or come by during office hours to go over material after you get the notes from a classmate. I understand and respect life stressors you may be faced with; but keep in mind that grades reflect essential standards and cannot be adjusted based on extenuating circumstances. Valid obstacles/setbacks may understandably inhibit your performance, but they are not able to influence the course and college standards. I cannot pardon work nor substitute/supplement extra credit other than that which has been built into the course and offered to all. In the spirit of fairness to ALL students I must be consistent with the policies laid out in this syllabus and ask you to be familiar with and respectful of them. If you are thinking of asking for an exception to my policies; first ask yourself – “Am I willing to ask my classmates to support my exception to the rules of the course?”

9) Accommodations - Should you require special accommodations for a disability, please arrange an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Documentation of a disability will be required for special accommodations to be arranged in conjunction with the Learning Services Office. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities and/or ADHD, should contact Mrs. Laurie Roth, Director of Learning Services, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Students who wish to request accommodations for support of other disabilities, should contact Dr. Ron Kline, Director of the Counseling Center, 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

10) Testing – Unfortunately due to increasingly creative attempts at cheating and dishonesty, please abide by the following conditions:

- a) All electronic devices must be turned off and kept put away out of sight, preferably they should not even be brought to the exam.
- b) Once the exam begins, you may not leave the room unless your exam is completed and submitted. Please be sure to use the restroom just prior to an exam.
- c) You can only ask questions of clarification during the exam. I am not able to discuss various interpretations and attempts at fishing.

11) Technology – Unless specifically and directly instructed to by the professor, students may NOT engage with any form of technology during class, lectures, and especially during exams (as stated above, but reiterated here).

Course Requirements:

SEMESTER EXAMS (3 @ 18% each):

The format for the exams during the semester will be multiple choice and short answer. At various points in the semester, you will be required to generate possible multiple choice questions and post them to Blackboard. This process will be discussed in class. You can feel free to offer additional suggestions for the multiple choice section of exams by contributing items on the Blackboard Discussion thread labeled for each exam. Be sure to provide the correct answer. Contributing and reading these are a good study strategy. In addition, you should carefully note the make-up policy above.

FINAL EXAM (20%):

The final exam will consist of four components. It will be cumulative in two ways: 1) a take home portion will require you to complete some reflective, broad-based questions to deepen your understanding of, and appreciation for particular themes (take home questions are attached at the end of the syllabus), and 2) there will be questions drawn from the rest of the material covered during the semester as part of the in-class portion of the exam. A third component of the final exam will be multiple choice and short answer questions on the new material covered since the last semester exam, similar to the semester exam format.

PSYCH CONCEPT PAPER (10%)

This is a two to three page assignment (do NOT exceed three pages, one inch margins, double spaced, title and name centered at the top of the first page, page number and running head in the right hand corner). You will use the library search literacy skills to find two recent empirical articles that explore the psychological concept you are assigned. Guidelines for the paper will be distributed separately and discussed in class. This paper will be worked on throughout the semester with multiple revisions. We will explore using the student papers as a reading assignment for the final exam.

DISCUSSION AND ASSIGNMENTS (16%):

Often we will engage in a semi-formal discussion lab on MOST Fridays, other than exam days. Discussions will be based on modules assigned, lecture experiences, Norton readings, and any philosophical or personal connections to be made. At least once, possibly twice, each student will be part of a small team to lead discussions on class material and readings for that week. This will be further organized in class during the first two weeks.

Some assignments may be given to introduce students to a variety of learning experiences and self reflections that will deepen the understanding and relevance of the material. These may also help to stimulate class discussions. These assignments include a short review of the novel, *Ordinary People*; and the generation of potential test questions posted on Blackboard in the allocated Discussion thread. You will be assigned to lecture/modules for which you will generate two multiple choice questions (one based on lecture notes; one based on non-lecture material in the module).

Your grade for this component will be based on a) your ability to develop high quality discussion questions and lead a stimulating class discussion based on the course material, b) your active participation in the discussions in general, and c) your quality and completion of any assignments, including submitting multiple choice test questions as assigned to you.

Finally, this grade will also be impacted by absences (five points deducted for a second missed lab and thereafter, and after two missed lectures), as well as your active level of engagement, participation, questioning and responding to questions during lectures.

***NOTE:** Any aspect of this syllabus and course sequencing / assignments is subject to change.

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS*
AUGUST		
30 Monday	Introductions, Organizations, and some Brief Notes	
SEPTEMBER		
1 Wednesday	Psychology: Past & Present	Read Syllabus carefully
	Principles of Research: How we advance KNOWLEDGE	Module 1 Module 2
3 Friday	Psychology as a Science: Process & Tools	Module 3; NORTON: Chpt. 2
6 Monday	NO CLASS - LABOR DAY	
8 Wednesday	Neural and Hormonal Systems	Module 4
10 Friday	DISCUSSION #1: The schools, methods, and history of psychology	NORTON: pp 1-2; <i>Freud</i> pp. 12 - 16 <i>Sacks</i> , pp. 70 - 79
13 Monday	The Brain	Module 5 & 6
15 Wednesday	Behavior Genetics & Evolutionary Psychology Environmental Influences on Behavior	Module 11 & 12
17 Friday	DISCUSSION #2 Nature-Nurture	NORTON: <i>Pinker</i> , pp. 39 – 44; <i>Taylor</i> , pp. 273- 281; <i>Harris</i> pp. 291-303
20 Monday	Adolescent Development	Module 15
22 Wednesday	Evolution,& Environment, Development (cont'd)	<i>DUE: Draft of first two sections of Concept paper (Intro & Educational Overview)</i>
24 Friday	*****EXAM ONE*****	Beginning of Celticfest this evening down by south campus!

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS*
27 Monday	Consciousness & the Brain, Waking, Sleeping	Module 7 & 8
29 Wednesday	Hypnosis & Drugs	Module 9 & 10
OCTOBER		
1 Friday	S & P Careers in Psych	Module 17; Appendix A: Careers in Psychology
4 Monday	Vision	Modules 18
6 Wednesday	Perceptual Organization & Interpretation	Modules 21 & 22
8 Friday	DISCUSSION #2: Sensation & Perception	NORTON: Chpt. 5
11 Monday	NO CLASS – FALL RECESS	
13 Wednesday	Classical Conditioning	Module 23
15 Friday	Library Research – PsycLit <i>LOCATION: report to Reeves Library Alcove in groups at group times</i>	
18 Monday	Operant Conditioning	Module 24
20 Wednesday	Learning by Observation	Module 25
		<i>DUE: Two Article abstracts and references for Concept paper</i>
22 Friday	*****EXAM TWO*****	
25 Monday	Intro to Memory, Encoding & Storage	Module 26 - 28
27 Wednesday	Memory: Retrieval & Forgetting	Module 29 & 30
29 Friday	DISCUSSION #5: Memory & Intelligence	NORTON: <i>Schacter</i> , p. 164-176 & film Module 33; NORTON: Chpt. 10

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS*
NOVEMBER		
1 Monday	Motivation Models & Work Psychology	Modules 36 & 39
3 Wednesday	Motivation cont'd & Social Influence	Module 57
5 Friday	DISCUSSION #6: Motivation	NORTON: <i>Csikszentmihalyi</i> , p. 210 – 222; <i>Cialdini</i> , pp.265-272
8 Monday	Motivation: Hunger & Sex	Modules 37 & 38 <i>DUE: Concept Paper DRAFT of sections 3 & 4 (Bring 2 copies)</i>
10 Wednesday	Stress, Health & Coping	Modules 43 & 44
12 Friday	DISCUSSION #7: Stress and Health	NORTON: <i>Sapolsky</i> , p. 223 – 231 & film
15 Monday	Discussion of Concept Paper: Format, Structure & Content	
17 Wednesday	I/O, Social, & Health Psych revisited	<i>DUE: FINAL FULL DRAFT of Concept Paper</i>
19 Friday	***** EXAM THREE *****	
22 Monday	Emotion	Modules 40 - 42
24 Wednesday	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
26 Friday	(cont'd)	
29 Monday	Psychological Disorders	Modules 47 to 51

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS*
DECEMBER		
1 Wednesday	Therapies	Modules 52 to 54
3 Friday	DISCUSSION #7: Disorders & Therapy	NORTON: Chpt. Ordinary People Book Review Assignment Due
6 Monday	Course Evaluations; DISCUSSION #8: <i>Ordinary People</i>	
8 Wednesday	Discussion of Ordinary People Cont'd	
DECEMBER		
<i>Final Exam: WED., 12/15 1:30 – 4:30pm</i>		

PS120 Intro Psych (Brill) -- Fall, 2010**Final Exam Take Home Questions**

1) How has the course contributed to your **DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AND GREATER APPRECIATION** of the following **TWO** themes:

a) Psychology is committed to the **scientific method** as its primary mode of creating knowledge (epistemology).

b) One recurring theme has been – adaptability. Humans are psychologically designed to have the capacity to be able to survive and adapt to the turbulent, changing world around them. With greater knowledge and awareness of psychology, humans can learn, grow, change, and develop constructive ways to realize their potential.

Show support for this concept, integrating specific principles & mechanisms that give evidence to this statement from at least three different topics. Your response to Question 1 (covering both themes) should be no longer than 3 pages.

2) Based on your interests and curiosity, choose **TWO** entries from the Norton Reader that were **NOT** assigned in the course. Read it and provide a 3-4 sentence summary followed by 3-4 sentences on any connection the reading had to the themes mentioned above, or to how it connects to your growing understanding of psychology and yourself, as a psychological being.

Your response to these prompts should not exceed one page.

CRITICAL NOTE: Articulate specific insights from your thinking that show the understanding and appreciation requested; try to use specific, concrete examples from the course to illustrate your points. Responses must be typed, double spaced, and one inch margins around. They are to be submitted with your final exam.