

PSYC*2740, Course Outline: Fall 2015

General Information

Course Title: Personality Psychology (PSYC*2740)

Course Description:

This course explores the theory, assessment procedures and research findings related to the major personality constructs. Personality research, methodology, and design will also be covered. Applied issues and real-world implications of research will be emphasized throughout the course. Students are encouraged to think critically about course content and issues discussed in lectures. Over the term, students will also have the opportunity to apply their own ideas in the development of personality theories.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): University of Guelph, Main Campus

Semester Offering: Fall 2015

Class Schedule and Location: Mon, Wed, & Fri 8:30AM – 9:20AM in Alexander Hall (ALEX) 200.

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Alexis Arbuthnott

Instructor Email: aarbuthn@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: Mackinnon Extension Room 3016; Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00AM until 11:00AM and by appointment

GTA Information

GTA Name: TBA

GTA Email: TBA

GTA office location and office hours: Please contact TAs for individual office locations and hours.

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

Following successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe personality traits and major trait taxonomies.

2. Describe six domains of human knowledge (dispositional, biological, psychoanalytic, cognitive-experiential, socio-cultural, and adjustment) in the context of personality.
3. Describe research approaches (correlational, experimental, case studies) used to study personality.
4. Identify issues related to reliability, validity, and measurement in personality.
5. Identify real-world implications of personality research in each domain of knowledge (e.g., how personality may affect health and mental health).
6. Develop a unique and specific operational definition for a voluntary human behaviour.
7. Develop two distinct personality theories to account for a voluntary human behaviour.
8. Explain theoretical, empirical, and real-world implications that would stem from a personality theory being completely true (i.e., accounting for ALL instances of a voluntary human behaviour).

Learning Outcomes 1 through 5 are taught via the readings and the lecture content outlined below. These outcomes are assessed by 2 midterm exams and a final exam at the end of the term. Learning Outcomes 6 through 8 are taught via lectures (especially September 11 and November 2), consultation with your instructor and teaching assistants as needed, and the detailed paper outline (below). The paper due on November 16 will assess these latter outcomes.

Lecture Content:

CONTENT COVERED	READINGS
Introduction to Personality Psychology	Course Outline Chapter 1
Personality Assessment and Research Design	Chapter 1 Chapter 4
Personality Traits: A Good Theory	Chapter 2
Personality Traits: Practical Matters	Chapter 3
MIDTERM 1: October 2	
Intrapsychic Foundations of Personality	Chapter 5
Self and Identity	Chapter 6
Genetics	Chapter 7
Neuroscience of Personality	Chapter 8
MIDTERM 2 (Non-cumulative): October 30	
Paper Review: November 2	NA
Regulation and Motivation	Chapter 9
Cognitive Foundations of Personality	Chapter 10
PAPERS DUE: November 16	
Personality, Gender and Sexual Orientation	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
Personality, Health and Mental Health	Lecture Slides
FINAL EXAM (NON-CUMULATIVE); December 11 7:00PM to 9:00PM; LOCATION TBA	

A tentative schedule for lecture content will be posted on Courselink and updated as needed.

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Midterm Examination #1	October 2 (in class)	25%	1 through 5
Midterm Examination #2 (non-cumulative)	October 30 (in class)	25%	1 through 5
Paper	November 16 (by end of class time)	20%	6 through 8
Final Examination (non-cumulative)	December 11 (7:00PM to 9:00PM)	30%	1 through 5

Final examination date and time: December 11, 2015 from 7:00PM to 9:00PM (Location TBA)

Final exam weighting: 30% (our final exam is not cumulative)

Course Resources

Required Texts:

Title: Personality Psychology: Foundations and Findings, Canadian Edition.

Authors: Marianne Miserandino and Stephen Porter

Publisher: Pearson (2016)

Other Resources:

Classes follow a lecture/discussion format with discussion questions and in-class activities. They are designed to review, compliment, and augment text material. Some material presented in lectures will not be covered in the textbook and vice versa.

Lecture slides will be posted on Courselink by 5pm the day prior to the lecture.

Course updates and announcements will be posted on Courselink; please check this regularly.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

Examinations

The two midterms and the final exam will consist of material from the textbook as well as lectures. Students are responsible for text AND lecture material. We will do reviews for midterms and the final exam at the end of the class prior to the exam.

General Information for Midterms and Final Exams

- All exams will be in multiple-choice question format.
- No text, notes, or other class material will be permitted at any pointing during the exam.
- Midterms and the final exam will cover text AND lecture material.

Midterm Exam Information

- Midterm 1 is on October 2; Midterm 2 is on October 30.
- You will have the entire class time to write your exam (i.e., 8:30AM to 9:20AM).
- Each midterm is 40 questions long and worth 25% of the final mark.
- Midterms cover material up to AND INCLUDING the last lecture before that exam.
- Midterm 2 is non-cumulative (i.e., it will not cover Midterm 1 material).
- However, materials build throughout the term; what we cover early in the term facilitates understanding of newer material.

Final Exam Information

- Our final exam is December 11, 2015 from 7:00PM until 9:00PM.
- The final exam is not cumulative but it is more comprehensive than the midterms as it covers more material; it covers all material since Midterm 2
- The final will be 80 questions in length and is worth 30% of the final grade in the course.

Missed Exams

- **Missed Midterm Examinations:** When a midterm is missed, contact your instructor via email. Consistent with University Policy, students who miss a midterm must provide an original copy of appropriate documentation. Reasons for a missed midterm can be found through the link below (University Policies: Academic Considerations). Without appropriate documentation, you will receive a grade of 0% on that exam. If you know you will miss a midterm ahead of time, please contact me in advance. I am usually understanding of extenuating circumstances.
- **Missed Final Examinations:** According to University policy, final exams are rescheduled via Academic Counselling. Hence, you should contact them directly should you not be

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able to write the final exam. Please be sure to review your exam schedule prior to making travel arrangements for the end of term; this does not constitute a reason for missing a final exam according to University Policy.

Papers

More information about the personality papers (including an overview, guide, requirements and grading rubric) is found in the additional course information later in this course outline.

Paper Submission & Deadline

- Everyone must submit papers in BOTH printed and electronic formats.
- A typed and printed copy MUST be submitted to the instructor by the end of class (i.e., 9:20AM) on November 16.
- Students must also submit an electronic copy on the due date via Dropbox on Courselink. The e-copy must be submitted no later than November 16 at 11:59PM, and should be identical to the hardcopy.
- YOU CANNOT SUBMIT AN ELECTRONIC COPY BUT NOT A PAPER COPY OR VICE VERSA.
- Papers must reflect your own work. Please see University Policy section of syllabus regarding academic misconduct. Students are responsible for knowing this information.

Late Papers

- Papers received after the deadline (9:20AM on November 16) will receive a reduction of 10% per calendar day. After 5 calendar days, the grade received will be 0%.
- If you submit a hardcopy OR an e-copy (without having already submitted your hardcopy) after 9:20AM on November 16, the paper is considered late.
- As the paper is assigned at the start of the term, extensions are not permitted.

Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted, they are solely for the use of the authorized students and may not be reproduced or transmitted to others without the express written consent of the instructor.

University Policies

Academic Consideration

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or see the website: [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

Course Evaluation Information

Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#) .

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, November 6, 2015. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Academic Calendar: [Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)

Additional Course Information

PERSONALITY PAPERS

Overview

The purpose of the paper is to develop **your own** theories to account for a behaviour of your choosing; from here, you will “argue from” one of these theories. Lecture material and Chapter 2 of your text contain information that might be useful when developing a theory, and many of our class discussions may help prompt ideas. When writing the paper, you will learn the following skills, namely, to, a) operationally define a voluntary human behaviour, b) apply critical thinking skills and develop personality theories to explain or account for that behaviour and, c) argue from **one** of the theories as described below by discussing implications for the theory should it be 100% true (explained further below). Writing this paper will also allow you to think about how course content has real-world implications. Thus, you will learn to think about how personality matters in the real world.

Help for Papers

All students in the class will be assigned a TA. You are invited to contact either your instructor or your TA if you wish to ask questions about the paper and/or meet about your paper as you work on it. We will also have a paper review session on November 2 (in class). Assigned TAs will be confirmed and posted on Courselink during the week after the course add-period (i.e., once course enrollment is confirmed).

Paper Drafts

Due to the size of our class, paper drafts will NOT be reviewed. However, you are encouraged to ask questions and run your ideas by your instructor or your assigned TA. We are **always** happy to answer questions and help guide your paper if you are having difficulty with it.

Guide to Starting Your Paper

First, pick a behaviour

- First, choose a voluntary human behaviour. Non-voluntary acts (e.g., yawning, laughing) cannot be the focus of your paper. Similarly, you should not write about the absence of

an explicit act – that is not doing something (e.g., avoiding situations, procrastinating).

Only voluntary acts are permitted for this paper.

- Mental illnesses (e.g., anorexia nervosa), emotions (e.g., sadness) or thoughts (e.g., doubting oneself) are not behaviours and cannot be the focus of your paper. However, if you wanted to use a clinical topic in your paper, you could write about something someone with a certain mental illness might do (e.g., hoarding, binge-eating, purging). If you elect to do this, be sure to take focus away from the mental illness itself and simply focus on the behaviour. If you have questions about your paper topic, please ask your instructor or assigned TA.
- When selecting your behaviour, you are encouraged to pick something that interests you. For example, you might be interested in running, painting, shopping, or doing yoga. Maybe you are interested in a more clinical behaviour such as self-injury, drug use, drinking, gambling, or binge-eating. It can be anything at all—not just these examples. More **complex behaviours** are better suited for the paper and will make your task much easier. Writing about something mundane (e.g., having a bowl of cereal in the morning) may not lend itself well to critical thinking and the development of unique theories (using a mundane act may make your task more difficult than necessary).

After selecting a behaviour, ALL papers must adhere to the following 4-paragraph format.

Paragraph 1: 4 Points out of 20

- In the first paragraph, provide your own narrow (i.e., specific) operational definition for your behaviour. This is an important skill to develop in psychology. Indeed, researchers need to have a very clear and specific definition for a topic of interest. When you define your behaviour, you should avoid being broad/general. Rather, be **VERY SPECIFIC** with your definition. The definition must be **your own** (not from another source). To make your behaviour specific, you will need to address various features of the behaviour (e.g., how often it occurs, how long it lasts, where it occurs, etc.). These are just some questions you should address when applying them to your own definition.
- **EXAMPLE:** If you selected drinking alcohol you would need to go beyond saying that your behaviour is “drinking alcohol.” Rather, you would narrowly define drinking alcohol so that others know **exactly** what you mean. **Again, the key is to be specific and to make the definition your own.** Taking this example, you would want to address the features of the behaviour. As such, you would want to consider the following questions: Exactly how much alcohol is consumed (e.g., 1 drink, 6 drinks, or 12 drinks...the number you choose is up to you, but be specific)? How often does it occur (e.g., daily, monthly)? What type of alcohol (e.g., beer, liquor or wine)? In what contexts does it occur (e.g., socially, alone)? By addressing these features of your behaviour, you will have a specific and clear definition.

- **The more specific you are, the better quality your definition, and the easier it will be to develop good theories.** You should not focus on consequences of the behaviour or reasons for the behaviour at this stage of the paper.

Paragraphs 2 and 3: 3.5 Points each out of 20 (Total = 7 Points out of 20)

- **Here, pick TWO DISTINCT personality traits.** There will be a list of trait-adjectives on Courselink to help you if you get stuck. However, this list is far from exhaustive; there are literally thousands of possible trait-adjectives from which to choose. If you are unsure whether you have selected a trait, please contact your instructor or your assigned TA.
- From here, you will use one trait in Paragraph 2 and the other in Paragraph 3. The objective in each paragraph is to discuss how the trait works to explain or account for the behaviour you selected and defined in Paragraph 1. It is insufficient (and incorrect) to say that the trait alone leads to or causes the behaviour. As we will discuss in class, no one trait causes behaviour. Rather, traits work with other variables/factors to lead to behaviours. By putting the trait together with different variables/factors to explain how YOU think the behaviour could occur, you are developing theories. Your task is to develop 2 **DISTINCT** theories – one for Paragraph 2, the other for Paragraph 3. Thus, the factors in each theory should not overlap at all (aside from the behaviour, of course).
- It may help to think of your theory as a pathway. Adopting this view, the destination is the behaviour. The trait is just one of several different steps along the path leading to the behaviour. So, if you are making 2 theories, think of them as two different paths to the same destination.
- Many theories will begin with the trait (as in the example, below). However, this is not necessary. Some theories will have the trait implicated later in the theory (such that other variables precede the trait). This is perfectly fine; what you do depends on your ideas. It is also okay to use more than 1 trait in either (or both) of your theories. However, if you do this, you will want to make sure you avoid overlap. For example, if you use gregariousness and impulsivity in your first theory, you would not use either trait (or similar traits!) in your next theory. Bear in mind that theories will also require more than just traits.

A Guide to Writing Good Theories:

- **Theories need to apply to multiple people.** Avoid referring to one individual when writing your theories. Instead refer to *people* or *individuals* when writing your theories. Theories should apply to more than one person—otherwise you have a case study.
- **Theories must be based on your own ideas; no outside sources or references can be used.**
- Good theories must be clear and coherent. Theories should logically outline how the behaviour you defined in Paragraph 1 occurs. Thus, readers should be able to clearly see

how different variables (including your trait) work together to lead to the behaviour. For instance, in the example below, if we did not have “susceptibility to peer pressure” as a final variable in the theory, there would be a missing step (it wouldn’t be entirely logical). Indeed, not all people who are pressured by peers succumb to this pressure.

- To help link together theory components, “if, then” statements may help. For example, you could say that *if X happens, then this may lead to Y*. And *if that happens, then this may lead to Z*. However, using “if, then” statements alone may not yield a good theory. The variables you are linking together must logically and clearly cohere. **Again, you will need more than just traits in your theories.**
 - EXAMPLE: Using drinking alcohol as the behaviour, you might write about how the trait of gregariousness (a component of extraversion) leads to drinking alcohol (in the way it was defined). You could say that since people with high levels of gregariousness tend to be quite social, they may also have more friends. If this is the case, then they may want to socialize more in public places. As bars are often a venue for people to socialize, this may represent one place that the individuals go. When there, these individuals may see others drinking; they may also have friends who start to drink heavily. If this occurs, they may experience peer pressure to drink (in the way it was defined). However, not everyone is susceptible to peer pressure. Thus, if drinking were to occur (as defined), these individuals must also be susceptible to peer pressure. *As you can see, it’s not just the trait that leads to the behaviour; other variables also play a role.*
- Putting this together as if it were a pathway: If people are high in gregariousness (Step 1), then this might lead to having more friends (Step 2) as gregarious people are social and outgoing. If this happens, then these individuals may go to bars with their friends, as bars represent a common place for people to socialize (Step 3). When out with these friends, individuals high in gregariousness may see others drinking at the bar. Some of the friends may also be drinking heavily. If this happens, then individuals who are high in gregariousness may feel pressured to drink (Step 4). If these individuals experience peer pressure AND they are also susceptible to peer pressure (Step 5), then this might lead to drinking alcohol in the way it was defined (Step 6).

Paragraph 4: 4.5 Points out of 20

- Now, pick just ONE of your two theories. Your task here is to write about what it would mean if THIS theory were actually true and thus accounted for ALL instances of the behaviour you defined in Paragraph 1. Of course, no theory will truly account for all instances of any behaviour; but, what if it did? What might this mean? Arguing from theory is a difficult, albeit critical, skill in psychology. This is not just repeating the theory—you will want to address the issues outlined below.

A Guide to Providing Good Arguments From Theory (in Paragraph 4)

- Please use the future tense in this paragraph, as you should be speculative here (i.e., say what it could or might mean if your theory were true). When writing this paragraph, first indicate which theory you are assuming to be one hundred percent true (and that accounts for every occurrence of your behaviour, as it was defined). Next, and in order to effectively argue from theory, you must discuss ALL of the following (note that there are 2 key questions to address for each of the theoretical, research, and real-world issues below):

Theoretical Issues

- What does it mean if your theory is 100% true? In other words, assume that your theory accounts for ALL instances of your behaviour. Adopting this perspective, what would this conclusion logically suggest about the theory (and its components)?
- What does this mean about the other theory (or any other theory)?

Research Issues

- What might you expect research to indicate if the theory you chose to write was 100% true (i.e., if your theory were researched, what are some of the findings you might expect)?
- If the theory were true, what would you NOT expect research to indicate?

Real-World Implications

- What are the consequences associated with the theory and behaviour you wrote about? For instance, if the behaviour is positive (i.e., studying), what are the possible (and logical) outcomes that might come from people doing this? If it is negative (e.g., cocaine use), what are the possible (and logical) outcomes that might come from people doing this?
- What are the real-world (and again, logical) implications stemming from your theory? If your theory leads to a positive behaviour, how can you go about promoting it? If your theory leads to a negative behaviour, how might you go about discouraging (and even stopping) the behaviour?
- EXAMPLE: Let's say you have now developed 2 theories leading to drinking and that you've picked the theory on gregariousness to focus on in this paragraph. First, you would need to state that this is the theory you chose to write about. From here, you will want to address the above items. As noted above, keep in mind that it is not just the trait that leads to the behaviour—it is all of the components of your theory (not just one or two). So, if all of the steps in the theory were to lead to all instances of drinking (in the way it was defined), what would this mean from a theoretical perspective (drawing on the above items)? What would it mean in terms of research implications (drawing on the above items)? And, what are some of the real-world implications that would stem from your theory (again, drawing on the above items)? When coming up with ideas, keep in mind that it is the ENTIRE theory that leads to the behaviour and you are

assuming that this theory is the ONLY way for the behaviour to happen (in the way it was defined).

Grammar/Style/Quality of Writing: 4.5 Points out of 20

As with any paper in university, proper grammar, style and quality of writing (including clarity, concision and good flow of ideas) are important. Please refer to paper requirements (below) for additional information on grammar, style and writing.

Recap of Paper Evaluation	
Paragraph 1	4.0
Paragraph 2	3.5
Paragraph 3	3.5
Paragraph 4	4.5
Grammar/Style/Quality of Writing	4.5
Total	20.0

Paper Requirements

LENGTH:

- **The paper should be approximately 4 double-spaced pages** (NOT including the title page).
- **Do NOT add extra spaces between paragraphs or skip to a new page to start a new paragraph.**
- **Do not exceed 4 paragraphs, even if you have a paragraph that seems long (please refer to the paper format on previous page).**
- **You do not need an introductory and/or closing paragraph (just the 4 paragraphs noted above).**
- **Do not use broad, philosophical introductory sentences** (e.g., “People have consumed alcohol for centuries...” “People from all over the world engage in behaviour...”)

FORMAT:

- Please use 12-point font (**Times New Roman or Arial**) and print in **black** ink only.
- All margins **MUST** be 1-inch (2.54 cm).
- **There should be no headings in the paper** (e.g., no headings for paragraphs).
- Please number each page (including the first page).
- **All papers must adhere to the 4-paragraph outline above.**
- **An APA Title Page is required** (this is NOT part of the 4-pages noted above). Each title page must include: title, name, student number, course name & number, running head). Please consult an APA manual (6th Edition) if you have any questions. No elaborate title pages with large fonts, colours, or imagery.

STYLE:

- Write in **third person only** (there should be NO first or second person at all).
- Papers are to be **formally written**. Psychology is a science so please write as such (i.e., no colloquial statements, no slang, no contractions, the paper should not read like a

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story, etc.).

- Do not list the steps in your theories as steps (as in the examples, above) – this was done in the example to illustrate different theory components.
- Please do not use past tense when writing your theories or arguing from theory in the final paragraph. Since you are developing theories and arguing from one of them, you should be more speculative when you write. **Please use future tense.**
- **You cannot use the above example or an analogous one (e.g., changing behaviour but keeping the rest of the theory, or slightly modifying a step or two). All theories MUST reflect YOUR ideas.**

CITATIONS:

- **You CANNOT (and there is no need to) use references or outside material** for any part of this paper.
- As you are developing your own definition and theories, you should not need to consult outside material (nor should references to other theories or definitions be present in your papers). Please note that actual research findings may not support what you write about. This is 100% fine.

E-COPIES:

- **E-copies of papers are required by 11:59PM on November 16.**
- **They must be submitted via Dropbox in .doc, .docx, or .pages format only.**
- **Please do NOT submit the paper as a PDF.**
- Hardcopies must be submitted to the instructor by the end of class (i.e., 9:20AM) on November 16.