



SSC2063

**The Psychology of Individual Differences:
Personality and Intelligence**

2017 – 2018

Course Manual



Preface

Welcome to the course The Psychology of Individual Differences!

This course will provide you with knowledge on the most important scientific theories and empirical findings on personality and intelligence. You will learn why and when a person behaves in a different way than someone else and how personality impacts what will happen to us in our life. We will also discuss practical applications of theory and research findings and learn to apply measurement techniques for assessing individual differences.

You will learn about different theoretical conceptualizations and measurement approaches of personality and intelligence. Based on the purpose of the assessment, different methods may prove more or less useful. You will also discover different explanations for why people differ in their personality and their level of intelligence. We will look at physiological, evolutionary-genetic as well as contextual explanations. Further, you will take a closer look at the relationship between personality, intelligence and meaningful life events. What personality traits are important for marital satisfaction and what characteristics make us become a criminal? But also – how does becoming a parent or getting a new job change our personality? Lastly you will be introduced to real life applications of knowledge on personality and intelligence. Specifically, we will discuss how this knowledge is used in clinical settings (e.g., when having patients with a personality disorders) and in organizational settings (e.g., for personnel selection purposes).

Why is it relevant?

Personality psychology is relevant in all kinds of work setting. This course will help you to gain a better understanding of how personality and intelligence are defined, why people behave in different ways, and how personality assessment can inform employers and health care providers.

We are very much looking forward to the course! 😊

Have fun!

Phil Brüll (course coordinator)
Faculty of Psychology and Neurosciences
Department of Work and Social Psychology
phil.brull@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Section 1: Work Format

Tutorials

This course includes 10 tutorial meetings applying the problem-based learning (PBL) method. You will find the tasks for each meeting after Section 2 of this course manual. Each task contains 1 question (not a learning goal) that you will have to answer during the post-discussion. To do so, you will need to formulate learning goals and search for relevant academic literature (e.g., academic journal articles) self-sufficiently. The information contained in the course book will provide you with a solid foundation of knowledge, but it will not be enough to answer the question of each task. All information for the pre-discussions will be provided by means of a short video-clip, lasting between 3 and 9 minutes, depending on the tutorial. These clips can be found in the section “course material” of the EleUM page belonging to this course.

Lectures

This course includes one introductory lecture that will provide you with an overview about the organization and exams as well as the topics covered in this course.

Exams

A **midterm paper** due in week 4 of period 5 will count for **30% of your final grade**. As part of the assignment, you must find a topic on your own. This means, finding a research question that really interests you and that can be answered by applying the knowledge and understanding you gained until week 4. Your paper should be carefully prepared according to the style recommended by the American Psychological Association or APA (www.apastyle.org). This style is not merely an advice, but should be treated as a strict set of rules. APA style may not appear very important to a fresh-starting scientific writer, but it is a widespread style in academia and any scientific writer should thus abide to these guidelines, and this especially applies to literature citations and references.

The **final course exam** counts for **70% of your final grade** and will take place in week 7 of period 5 (please check your timetables). It will be an open book exam, consisting of open questions that need to be answered in essay style. The exam probes if you understood the theories and concepts and are able to apply them. You are allowed to bring your books, papers, and notes to the exam. All devices that are able to connect to the internet (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) are not allowed.

Course Book

For all tasks, students are expected to get a first understanding by studying the relevant chapters in the course book:

Larsen, R. J., Buss, D. M., Wismeijer, A., & Song, J. (2017). *Personality Psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature*. Berkshire, UK: McGraw Hill Higher Education.

However, as stated above, the course book does not provide all necessary information to answer the question that is provided for every task. To answer it, you need to come up with learning goals and search for relevant scientific literature individually. This can be done by using one of the academic data bases available at the official website of Maastricht University's library (see below). One recommended data base is Web of Science. Google scholar is only of limited value, as many publications are not listed there yet.

The eLibrary

In general, good journals are the best source of information. Another great opportunity to learn more about personality and individual differences is also simply to go to the eLibrary and scan the table of contents of leading journals in our field for interesting articles. Particularly relevant journals for personality and individual differences (PAID) are the following journals:

- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (The journal is the largest journal of the APA in terms of volume and is splitted into three sections. The last articles of each issue are articles in the PAID section and are exclusively devoted to PAID)
- Journal of Personality
- Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
- Intelligence
- Journal of Research in Personality
- Journal of Applied Psychology
- Psychological Assessment
- Personnel Psychology

Additionally, the major general psychology journals—American Psychologist, Psychological Bulletin, Psychological Review, and Psychological Science—also frequently publish important papers on PAID. The journals Current Directions in Psychological Science and Social and Personality Psychology Compass publish excellent short summaries of articles, also frequently on PAID-topics.

Each student must upload the articles (s)he found interesting to the discussion board of the relevant task. Each student is supposed to upload at least 2 articles per task. You can find the discussion board in the folder of the respective task under the main menu point "course material". This means that all students of the course, independent of the tutorial group they are in, will have access to the individual literature that is used by all groups.

Section 2: Rules and Arrangements

Communication

Announcements

Potential schedule changes or general announcements on the course will be posted on Eleum. It is consequently advisable to regularly check the course page on Eleum for announcements

concerning the course. Further, as a student you are requested to check your student e-mail account at least daily to make sure not to miss important information.

Subject-Matter Questions

For questions or suggestions about the subject matter or organization of the course, please address your respective tutor FIRST. Tutors will communicate questions to the coordinators. In addition, you can ask questions at the end of the lectures.

Administrative Questions

Questions of an administrative nature, like attendance obligation and so on, should NOT be directed towards the course coordinator but should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs.

Mandatory Attendance

Tutorial Groups

For the **10 tutorial groups** a mandatory attendance of 85% is required (9 meetings). If you missed two tutorial meetings, you may take the exam, but the validity of the score on your exam will be conditional. Only if you succeed in writing a catch-up assignment, your exam score will be registered as valid.

If you want to qualify for an additional assignment, you may not have missed more than 30% of the group meetings (2 meetings) and must submit a completed request form 'additional assignment because of insufficient attendance' to the Office of Student Affairs, within 10 working days after completion of the course. After collecting and checking all the forms, the Office of Student Affairs will send the request forms to the respective coordinators. The nature and volume of the assignment will be proportional to the number of tutorials that were missed more than the attendance requirement allowed for. The assignment must be completed and submitted to the coordinator concerned within 20 working days. Students who receive a pass for an additional assignment will be regarded as having met the attendance requirement and their provisional final grade will be declared valid.

If you missed three or more tutorial meetings, you automatically fail the course. In that case, you are free to take this course again next academic year.

Task 1: Personality in the wild

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 1 folder in the folder “course materials” on EleUM.

Can you deduct what kind of a personality individuals have just by watching them walking around in their daily life?

For the **post-discussion**: please observe people on the street (e.g. by drinking a coffee on a terrace or by looking out of the window) and link your observations to the answers of the question above (and to the answers of the learning goals you will define after the pre-discussion).

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 1 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 1 and 3.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 2: A quick measurement... or not?

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 2 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

You are on an expert panel of a data mining company. The executive board asked you to provide the company with tools to reliably measure the personality of the 4 individuals seen in the video clip. After watching the video file, please form 2 groups. Group 1 is responsible for providing a personality test to measure the first 2 individuals. Group 2 is asked to provide a test for individuals 3 and 4.

How can you reliably measure the personality of these different people?

For the **post-discussion**: please sit together as group 1 and group 2 and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 2 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 4 and 7.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 3: Is this really important?

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 3 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

Concerning a current field study, the department of anthropology of your beloved university has asked you to provide them with a valid and reliable test battery that their scientists can use to determine the personality traits of both individuals. After watching the video file, please form 2 groups. Group 1 has to provide a personality test to measure the first individual, whereas group 2 is supposed to provide a test for the second individual.

How can you reliably measure the personality of both individuals? What do you have to consider?

For the **post-discussion:** please sit together as group 1 and group 2 and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 3 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 16 and 17.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 4: Why on earth did they do that?

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 4 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

You are a forensic expert requested by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. In preparation for the trial of a former African warlord, the presiding judge asks your informed opinion about why people commit Gross Human Rights Violations. The judge wants to know if these people have special personalities or if their cognition and motives are not different from ordinary people.

Do the individuals presented in the video clip have special personality traits in common?

For the **post-discussion:** please sit together and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 4 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 10 and 11.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 5: Now, that's smart!

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 5 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

DeepMind's Alpha Go Zero seems to be pretty successful with neuronal network learning. Their leading developers ask you to develop an intelligence test to actually test Alpha Go Zero's artificial intelligence.

How would you test artificial intelligence and how, if at all, would these tests differ from those used for humans?

For the **post-discussion:** please sit together and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 5 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapter 12.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 6: A bit of personality, please!

Pre-discussion: No video file for this task.

Think back of DeepMind's Alpha Go Zero of the previous task. Again, you are approached by the leading developers. Now they ask you to make their computer more human-like, meaning providing it with emotions and a sense of self and agency. Think of what you have learned in the previous tasks, maybe that could be helpful.

How would you provide Alpha Go Zero with a sense of self?

For the **post-discussion**: please sit together and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 6 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 13 and 14.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 7: And here they hit again... those genes. Or... wait!

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 7 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

A research facility is currently working on two different projects that seem to touch upon the same basic question. The Mission to Mars founder asks how he can assure that the people starting the journey will not only get along well together but will also produce offspring that will be peaceful and pro-social, which is a prerequisite to make the project successful.

Concerning the second project, the Georgian government asked how they can influence future generations of the remote village with nearly no contact to the outside world. As the research facility has some background knowledge about the influence of environment on genetics, they asked you as an expert to explain them what they could advise their clients. After watching the video file, please form 2 groups. Group 1 works on the Mission to Mars project, whereas group 2 works on the Georgian request.

How, if at all, will personality traits of people living in these groups be influenced by their environment and, if possible, how could they make sure to increase the number of pro-social group members?

For the **post-discussion**: please sit together as group 1 and group 2 and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 7 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 6 and 8.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 8: Speaking about the future...

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 8 folder in the folder “course materials” on EleUM.

Being a psychologist, a new online dating website called “Dating-for-Life” asks you to counsel them on how they have to set-up the algorithms of their match-database to ensure that only individuals are paired whose personalities will remain in harmony for their entire life-span.

How can you make sure, if at all, that the personalities of the paired individuals remain at sync for their lifetime?

For the **post-discussion:** please sit together and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 8 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapters 5 and 15.

Notes:

Learning goals:

Task 9: How is this possible?

Pre-discussion: video file in the task 9 folder in the folder "course materials" on EleUM.

Both cases presented in the video show signs of a personality disorder. Use the knowledge gained in the previous tasks and combine it with new insights from this task to explain how it was possible to develop the disorder they present.

How can you use the knowledge gained in the previous tasks to explain what happened or what did not happen to their personalities?

For the **post-discussion:** please sit together and exchange your approaches in a plenary session.

Find at least 2 academic articles that help you explain your observations and upload them to the discussion board in the task 9 folder on EleUM.

Basic readings: course book chapter 19.

Notes:

Learning goals:

