

**Introduction to Personality, 85-251**  
**Fall 2020, Tuesday and Thursday 3:20 – 4:40**  
**CMU Remote**  
**Final Schedule**

**Instructor:** Michael F. Scheier  
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**Teaching Assistants (URL's for Zoom office hours\* are on Canvas):**

Alex Adams <a href="mailto:afadams@andrew.cmu.edu">afadams@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hour: Wednesday, 10:30 – 11:30	Ashley Hong <a href="mailto:jahong@andrew.cmu.edu">jahong@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Friday, 2:30 – 3:30
Sarah Maya (Head TA) <a href="mailto:smaya@andrew.cmu.edu">smaya@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Tuesday, 11:30 – 12:30	Virginia Qian <a href="mailto:vqian@andrew.cmu.edu">vqian@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Monday, 4:00 – 5:00
Varshitha Talakola <a href="mailto:vtalakol@andrew.cmu.edu">vtalakol@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Wednesday, 5:00 – 6:00	Cynthia Xu <a href="mailto:cgx@andrew.cmu.edu">cgx@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Friday, 12:00 – 1:00
Agnes Zhou <a href="mailto:ayzhou@andrew.cmu.edu">ayzhou@andrew.cmu.edu</a> Office hours: Thursday, 11:20 – 12:20	

\*All office hours are between the hours of 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Pittsburgh time zone.

**Remote Course Structure:** This course will be taught remotely for the Fall Semester. Lectures will be given remotely using Zoom during the assigned class time. These lectures will be recorded and be made available for viewing by others at a later time. Office hours will also be held remotely using Zoom. Finally, exams and assignments will be administered and submitted remotely. The URL's needed to connect to Zoom for these various activities are provided in the Zoom Links module on Canvas. Specifics about how all this will work will be described in class.

**Course Description:** The primary purpose of personality psychology is to understand human uniqueness--how and why it is that one person differs from others, in terms of the way he or she thinks, feels, and acts. Personality psychology also seeks to understand the underlying processes that support these individual differences. Students in the course will learn about several broad theoretical perspectives, each of which attempts to capture and understand the origins and consequences of individual distinctiveness from a slightly different vantage point. Included among these approaches are the trait, motivational, biological, psychoanalytic, psychosocial, learning, phenomenological, and cognitive self-regulation perspectives. The course will also consider how personality factors and processes can influence physical health (e.g., who lives and dies). This is a beginning level survey course and is intended to provide

students with a basic background in theory and research in the area. Class meetings will primarily consist of lectures. The course will provide students with the opportunity to assess aspects of their own personalities that are relevant to the topics the course will consider.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Successfully completing this course will enable students to:

- Define personality
- Describe how psychologists think about personality, measure it, and do research in the area
- Identify and explain the features that characterize the major theoretical perspectives that organize current theories of personality
- Describe and explain the major theories of personality and personality functioning
- Communicate what is known about personality research to others
- Understand some of the origins of personality
- Evaluate evidence that links personality characteristics and functioning to physical health (e.g. mortality)
- Apply theories of personality to inform a more complete understanding of human behavior
- Identify some of your personality characteristics and understand how they might impact your experience the world

**Development of PowerPoint Slides for Lecture:** I want to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Michael Bridges and Dr. Erin Dunne in the development of the PowerPoint slides for this course. They each kindly offered the slides they were using for their courses in personality. I have adapted them for use here. I thank them for their contributions.

**Textbook (Required):** Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (2017). *Perspectives on personality* (8th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Available in both eBook and printed format.

**Canvas:** There is a Canvas website associated with the course: <http://canvas.cmu.edu/>. Information about the course will be posted there, e.g., performance on exams, important dates, and assignments.

### **Grades:**

Nature and number of tests—Four equally weighted tests are given during the semester. The tests are non-cumulative. The only exception is if we revisit some issue or question in class at a later point in time. Tests will consist of objective questions (multiple-choice questions and true/false) along with short answer questions. Students will have some choice over the short answer questions they answer—i.e., you will see four short answer questions and be asked to pick three to answer. There is no formal midterm or final.

Grading tests—The grading scheme for the course relies on percentage wrong on each test, adjusting for overall class performance. Here's how it works. Each test is worth 100 points. I use the top score obtained on each test to determine the grades for that test. If the top score is less than 95, I compute the difference between that highest score and 95 (a mid-level A). That difference (up to a maximum 5 points) is then added to everyone's grade. If the top student scores 95 or above, no extra points are added. Using these adjusted grades, 90 – 100 is an A; 80 – 89 is a B; 70 – 79 is a C; 60 – 69 is a D; 59 and below is an R. This procedure is followed for each test. At the end of the semester, the points on the 4 exams are added together, and an overall exam grade is computed.

Extra credit—There is a provision for earning extra credit. An important goal of the course is to

acquire the ability to use concepts from the course to enhance your understanding of every day events. To earn extra credit, you should keep a personality log. A template for this log and some sample entries can be found on the Canvas website for the course, under the “Personality log examples” tab. In this log, you should note interesting happenings in the world that relate to concepts being discussed. This could be an advertisement that relates to personality, the behavior of someone you know well, your own behavior and experiences, something that a celebrity does or whatever that you think relates to the material in the course. For each entry, you should include the date the observation occurred, the nature of the event, and a brief, explicit statement about how the event relates to the material being presented. You should create your own Word template to make your entries (just use the categories in the example). You can get extra credit for up to 4 episodes in each of the 4 parts of the course (i.e., each test period). Each episode is worth 1 point, which allows you to earn up to 4 extra credit points per test session. You cannot get more than 4 points per test session. Extra credit points will be added to your score on the exam. The extra credit logs are due on the day that the exam for that part of the course is due. You will submit your personality logs by uploading a PDF version of your document into the relevant entry within the Assignment Module for the course on Canvas.

Posting of grades—Grades will be posted on Canvas. I will also use Canvas to interact with the class and send updates.

Review sessions/Studying for exams—Several days before each exam, a study guide for the upcoming exam will be posted on Canvas. I will review this study guide in class on the last scheduled class prior to the exam. Students can also ask questions about the material at that time.

Grading summary—how course grades are computed:

A = 90% and above = 360 and above  
B = 80% to 89% = 320 to 359  
C = 70% to 79% = 280 to 319  
D = 60% to 69% = 240 to 279  
R = 59% and below = 239 and below

### **Missing Class/Missing Exams:**

Missing class—You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements made. If you miss class, you should look at the recording of the lecture, as well as the separate file containing the PowerPoint slides for the lecture. After reviewing the material, if specific questions remain, you should contact one of the TAs during a regularly schedule office hour to answer the specific questions you might have.

Missing exams—Students are expected to take each of the 4 exams during the time periods within which the tests are scheduled. You will be given 48 hours to take the exam, allowing you to work around difficulties (e.g., being in a different time zone). Make-up exams will not be given unless there are extreme mitigating circumstances (e.g., a family emergency). Unless an emergency arises at the last moment, permission to make-up a test **MUST** be obtained from the instructor **BEFORE** the day that the test is scheduled. The circumstances underlying the conflict must be documented in some fashion. When a make-up exam is allowed, only the objective portion of the exam will be administered. A score on the short answer portion will be extrapolated for those doing a make-up from the performance of others taking the entire test and whose objective score falls within  $\pm 3$  points of the person doing the make-up. Those with disabilities that require special accommodations should see the “Equal Opportunity Accommodations” section below.

## Research Participation Requirement:

In addition to the 4 exams and pop quizzes, there is one further requirement that will only affect your grade if you fail to meet it (assuming you have not satisfied the requirement in previous courses). The additional requirement is designed to help you better understand the material in the text and concerns participation in psychological research. This will be explained more fully during one of classes.

## Self-Administered Personality Scales (Strongly recommended):

This is a course on personality. To help you better understand how personality is measured and to provide feedback on your own characteristics, it is highly recommended that you complete a set of personality scales that will allow you to self-assess aspects of personality that we will be talking about in class. Your responses will remain anonymous, both to me and to other students in the course. You can access the assessment packet by going to the **Self-Assessment Module** on Canvas. You alone will be able to interpret your responses. Information on how to maintain your anonymity is provided in the Self-Assessment Module when you activate the *Qualtrics* link provided in the module. The assessments are not required, but if you do take them you will be able to understand the subject matter and assigned readings, as well as learn something potentially interesting about yourself. It is not graded and is not part of your course grade. If you want to take the assessment, **you need to have the survey completed by 5:00 PM (Pittsburgh time), Saturday, September 12, 2020.** Your scores (only identifiable by you) will be presented in the "Personality Scales – Results" file within the Self-Assessment Module, along with information about how to compare your scores to others who have taken the tests. Note: Once you begin your self-assessment, you will have 1 week to complete the questionnaires. Your responses will be automatically saved when you log out of the site. You just need to use the same URL to return to the site to continue. In addition, you **must use the same computer each time you return.** The self-assessment will take 30-45 minutes to complete.

## Course Policy/Procedures/Expectations:

- This course is offered remotely only. Please contact me immediately, if you anticipate having problems participating remotely (e.g., bad internet connection, no computer, or no access to computer camera)
- Listen to the lectures live or view the recorded session. You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements made.
- Read assigned material before class.
- When this course was taught face-to-face, students were not allowed to use computers or tablets to take notes, but rather had to use paper and pen. The reason for this policy is that Research has clearly shown that taking handwritten notes is more effective in enhancing learning and memory than typing on an electronic device. [Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25, 1159-1168. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>.] I would encourage you to do the same in our remote environment.
- I will provide you with the PowerPoint slides that I use for lecture within a few days of completing the lecture. These slides can be used to embellish and/or clarify the notes you've taken during class using paper and pen.
- Exams will be administered via a special browser that you will access at the time of the

exam through Canvas. The browser will lock down all functionality on your computer except for accessing questions on the exam and submitting your answers. Your computer camera will record your activities. Access to LAPTOP COMPUTERS/CELL PHONES/TABLETS are not allowed during exams. Hats of any kind cannot be worn during exams. Laptops, cell phones, and tablets have to be stored out of reach and view. If you leave your computer during an exam, you need to notify the proctors first via the chat function on Zoom. We will have a practice exam prior to Exam 1 to make sure everything is in working order.

- If you need help with the course, contact me or one of the TA's
- Contact me immediately if you anticipate missing or have missed a test
- I am available to talk to students about anything related to the course or otherwise

*Maintenance of academic integrity:* In this course, as in all others, you are bound by Carnegie Mellon's standards of academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism are not allowed. You are responsible for understanding the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. Information on this policy can be found here: <http://www.cmu.edu/academic-integrity/>. All instances of academic integrity violation must be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and to the Head of the Department of Psychology and will usually result in a 0 (zero) for the relevant assignment and a lowering of 1 (one) letter grade in the overall, final course grade (with the zero factored in).

*Respect in the classroom:* I want to create an environment in this class in which students are free to express their points of view and free to ask questions that pertain to the subject matter. Let me remind you that it is important to respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from our own. In addition, it is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful to the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students in the classroom. You should feel free to let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. You should also feel free to talk directly to the Chair of the Department of Psychology Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Jessica Cantlon ([jcantlon@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:jcantlon@andrew.cmu.edu)), if you have any ideas that you would like to express.

*Equal Opportunity Accommodations:* If you have a disability that requires special accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify me as well as the staff at the Disabilities Resources office as early as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. Contact Disability Resources at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

### **Resources External to Class:**

*Take care of yourself:* Do what you can to maintain a healthy lifestyle via good nutrition, exercise, rest, and relaxation, and I will try to do the same. Maintenance of a healthy lifestyle will help us achieve our goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available, so please reach out to us if you need help connecting with them on campus or virtually. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, please seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is available at 412-268-2922 or via <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, me, another faculty member, or family member you trust for assistance with getting connected to the support that can help. If you're feeling suicidal, go to the ER, or use one of the following resources:

- Diagnostic Emergency Center (DEC) at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic: 412-624-1000 (or toll free at 1-877-624-4100). The clinic is located at 3811 O'Hara St.
- re:solve Crisis Network (24/7): 1-888-796-8226
- Carnegie Mellon University Police: 412-268-2323

## Course Schedule

The schedule of course topics and readings is listed below. If changes to the schedule occur, the class will be notified via Canvas. Please be sure to check regularly for postings on Canvas.

### Schedule:

WEEK	DAY	DATE	CHAPTER	TOPIC
1	Tuesday	9/1	None	Introduction to course/Review syllabus/Requirements
	Thursday	9/3	1	What's personality?
2	Tuesday	9/8	2	Personality methods
	Thursday	9/10	2—3	Personality methods (cont'd)/Assessing personality
3	Tuesday	9/15	3	Assessing personality (cont'd)
	Thursday	9/17	4	Types, traits, and the Big 5
4	Tuesday	9/22	4	Traits, situations, and their interaction
	Thursday	9/24	None	The Big 5 and physical health/Review
5	Tuesday	9/29	EXAM I (Chapters 1—4 and material from class)	
	Thursday	10/1	5	Needs and motives
6	Tuesday	10/6	5—6	Central motives/Behavioral genetics and personality
	Thursday	10/8	6—7	Evolution and behavior/ Early biological perspectives
7	Tuesday	10/13	7	The biology of personality
	Thursday	10/15	None	Hostility, BIS/BAS and physical health/Review
8	Tuesday	10/20	EXAM II (Chapters 5—7 and material from class)	
	Thursday	10/22	8	Freud's ideas about the mind
9	Tuesday	10/27	8—9	Defense mechanisms/Psychosexual development
	Thursday	10/29	9	Rise of the ego/Psychosocial development
10	Tuesday	11/3	10	Simple learning
	Thursday	11/5	10	Complex learning
11	Tuesday	11/10	None	Suppression, loneliness & physical health/Review
	Thursday	11/12	EXAM III (Chapters 8—10 and material from class)	
12	Tuesday	11/17	11	Self-actualization, the self, and self-esteem
	Thursday	11/19	12	Schemas and identity/Personal constructs and life
13	Tuesday	11/24	12	Personal constructs and life (cont'd)/Self-regulation
	Thursday	11/26	None	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS</b>
14	Tuesday	12/1	13	Self-regulation (cont'd)

	Thursday	12/3	13	Optimism, coping, and health
15	Tuesday	12/8	14	Putting it back together/Review
	Thursday	12/10	EXAM IV (Chapter 11—14 and material from class)	

## SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

DATE	DAY	EVENT/HAPPENING/OCCURRENCE
9/12	Saturday (5:00 PM)	Self-assessment survey is closed
9/29	Tuesday	Exam I/Personality logs due
10/20	Tuesday	Exam II/Personality logs due
11/12	Thursday	Exam III/Personality logs due
12/10	Thursday	Exam IV/Personality logs due