

PSYCHOLOGY 211 - THEORIES OF PERSONALITY  
Spring, 1993  
Dr. P. Owen-Smith  
316 Seney  
4-8322

Office Hrs.: 2:00-3:00 M,T,W,TH (appointment recommended)

The purpose of the course is to introduce the student to the field of personality theory. Three major components will be explored. First, the student will become familiar with definitions and important issues in the field. Second, the student will review the major theoretical conceptions of personality that serve as the underpinnings of the field. Third, the student will focus on the major contemporary areas of research occupying the attention of today's personality psychologists.

Requirements:

1. Students will read five original works each authored by a major personality theorist. During the course of the reading each student will process her/his reactions by constructing and submitting to the professor a series of questions (in the form of a brief essay). Detailed guidelines for writing questions are attached.
2. An eight page typed analysis of a fictional character's personality will be prepared and submitted at the end of the semester (see course schedule for due date). Detailed guidelines for constructing this analysis are attached. Each student will briefly summarize her/his analysis for the class .
3. A midterm and final examination will be given. Both exams will be essay-type and will cover all readings, lecture notes, films, and discussion.
4. It is expected that ALL students will participate in classroom discussion and attend every class.

The weights attributed to each of the above requirements are listed below:

READINGS 1,2,3,4	(10% ea.) 40%
MIDTERM EXAM	15%
FINAL EXAM	15%
FICTIONAL CHARACTER ANALYSIS & PRESENTATION	20%
CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION	10%

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The plus-minus system of grading will be used in the calculation of final grades.

Absence from an examination is considered serious. Students not present for exams will receive a zero on that exam unless previous arrangements have been made with the professor or a legitimate excuse is given to the professor. The professor reserves the right to deny a make-up exam. Similarly, all written work must be submitted in class on the date designated. No written work will be accepted after the specified date.

The Student Honor Code of Oxford College applies to every member of the class. This professor will not tolerate violations of this code under any circumstances.

#### Required Readings

The four books for this course can be purchased at the Bookstore. The article, as well as one set of the books, will be on reserve in the Library. Each book is REQUIRED for the course. The books and article are as follows:

Freud, S.	<u>On Dreams</u>
Jung, C.	"The Development of Personality" (article on reserve in library)
Rogers, C.	<u>On Becoming a Person</u>
Skinner, B.F.	<u>Beyond Freedom and Dignity</u>
Gilligan, C.	<u>In A Different Voice</u>

### COURSE SCHEDULE

1/13	Introduction to course
1/15	Defining Personality
1/18	MLK HOLIDAY!
1/20	Issues in the study of personality
1/22,1/25,1/27,1/29, 2/1	PART II: Personality Theories Psychoanalytic Theory
2/1	Submission of fictional character's name
2/3	QUESTIONS ON FREUD/JUNG DUE!
2/5,2/8,2/10,2/12	The Trait Perspective Behaviorism
2/15,2/17	Social Learning Theory
2/16	LAST DATE TO DROP WITHOUT PENALTY
2/19,2/22	Feminist Theory
2/24	QUESTIONS ON ROGERS DUE!
2/26	MIDTERM EXAM!
3/1,3/3,3/5	PART II: Personality Processes Intelligence
3/8-3/12	SPRING BREAK!
3/15,3/17,3/19	Anxiety & Stress
3/22	QUESTIONS ON SKINNER DUE!
3/24,3/26	Perceived Control
3/29	NO CLASS!
3/31,4/2,4/5	Aggression
4/7,4/9	Altruism

4/12

QUESTIONS ON GILLIGAN DUE!

4/14, 4/16, 4/19

Sex Roles

4/21

FICTIONAL ANALYSIS DUE!

4/21, 4/23, 4/26

CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF ANALYSES

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING QUESTIONS

To think is to question. If you read the assigned books/article carefully and thoughtfully, questions will come continuously to your mind. Sometimes a concept or idea will not make sense to you. Sometimes it will make sense, but you will disagree with it. Sometimes you will wonder about the evidence for the idea or about its possible applications to real life and real individuals. All such thoughts can be framed as questions. As you read, jot down--in abbreviated form, in the margin of your book or in a notebook if you prefer--some of the questions that come to your mind. As you read along, you may find the answers to some of your questions. Cross off the answered ones. By the time you have completed the book/article you should have jotted down quite a number of questions. Go back and read those questions and think about them. Cross off any that you now can answer or that no longer seem very interesting.

From the questions that remain select five and TYPE them in a more elaborate form to be handed in. Those you select should come from different parts of the book/article to indicate that you read and thought about the ENTIRE book/article. Begin each question by noting the page number(s) where the issue is discussed. Each question should be written in the form of a brief essay (SEVERAL SENTENCES AT LEAST!) and may come from any of the following three categories:

1. Honest difficulty in understanding something. Some seemingly important issue discussed in the book/article is not clear, even though you have tried hard to understand it. In elaborating on this kind of question begin by indicating what you DO understand about the issue and then specify as clearly as possible what you DON'T understand. If you think you might understand it but are not sure, state in your own words what you think to be the case and indicate why you are not sure.

2. Questioning the material--disagreement, challenge, or requests for further evidence. Here you understand the point that the author is making, but you are not sure you agree with it. Begin by stating succinctly the idea you are questioning, and then indicate why you are questioning it. What leads you to think the idea might be wrong? What kind

of evidence would convince you one way or the other about this point?

3. Questions that go beyond the material. Here something in the book/article has stimulated you to ask a question that goes beyond the scope of the chapter. For example, you might wonder if a particular phenomenon described in the chapter would apply under conditions that are not described. Begin by indicating the idea that stimulated your question, and then state the question. Then you might propose a possible answer and indicate the kind of evidence that would allow you to determine if your answer is correct.

Question sets for each book/article will be graded as follows:

0 = didn't do it, or just scribbled something down, or handed it in late.

1 = questions do not reflect careful reading and thought, or are sloppily written, or are difficult to understand

2 = questions clearly show that you have read the book/article, given the issues some thought, and have taken some care in writing

3 = questions reflect a careful reading of the book/article, are very thoughtful, and are well written

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTING THE FICTIONAL PERSONALITY ANALYSIS:**

Students are required to construct an eight page, typed paper which will be an interpretation of the personality of a fictional character from the four theoretical perspectives discussed in class (psychoanalytic, behavioral, humanistic/phenomenological, & feminist).

The student will select a fictional character from a comic strip or a well-known children's story as the subject. Selection of the character should be based primarily on one's familiarity with and liking for the character since a considerable amount of time will be spent analyzing the character's personality according to each of the four theoretical orientations covered in the course. The student may select a person or an animal who may be a superhero, a fictional but realistic character, a fantasy figure or a comic strip character.

The student will need to submit to the professor the name of the character by the third week of the semester (see course schedule for specific date). The chosen character should appear in print, and the source should provide enough information for a credible analysis. Characters who say or do very little (i.e. Woodstock from the comic strip *Peanuts*) are difficult to use.

An example: How would a psychoanalyst describe and explain the personality of Alice-in-Wonderland? Similarly, what would the behaviorist say about her actions? What would be the humanistic approach to Alice? How would a feminist theorist discuss Alice's personality? It is expected that approximately two pages for each theoretical perspective will be allowed.

While this exercise is intended to be fun and intriguing, it is expected that the student will give careful attention to the analysis being certain to use appropriate terminology and phrases. This analysis should be a scholarly paper!!!!