

# PSY-255: Personality

S. Mason Garrison

August 24, 2020

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Section: A  
Medium: Blended  
Class Room: GREENE 160  
Class Hours: M or W or F @ 9:00a-9:50a

Section: B  
Medium: Asynchronous  
Class Room: Canvas

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## Course Description

This class provides a survey of theory and research on the structure and function of human personality, with attention to the relationship to cognition, emotion, motivation, and behavior. It requires P-PSY 151. In addition, we will discuss other individual differences, such as intelligence.

To do well in the course, you should read the assigned material before class and re-read previously assigned material as the course progresses. By reading the text before class you will be better prepared to ask questions and integrate the content of lectures with what was presented in the text. Also be sure to attend all lectures and arrive on time. Each topic builds directly on the previous one. Thus, if you miss one lecture, you run the risk of being completely lost in the next lecture.

### Broad goals for the course:

- 1. The first is for you to understand what personality psychologists think. We will cover classic and current theories, research, and applications of Personality psychology.
- 2. The second is for you to learn how personality psychologists study their field scientifically. We will discuss the procedures used to test theories and to study issues related to personality.
- 3. The third is to (hopefully) recognize some relevance of personality psychology for your personal and/or professional life.

## Required Materials

[1] D. C. Funder. *The personality puzzle*. Seventh. OCLC: 935283402. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2016. ISBN: 978-0-393-60042-1.

*How to use the required text:*

The text (Funder 2016) is intended to supplement the lectures. The lectures don't follow the order of chapters in the text and the text covers some material that won't be covered in the lectures, i.e., not all the information in each chapter is perfectly pertinent to the course requirements.

## Course Assignments

### Exams

There will be 3 exams in this course. The best 2 out of 3 exam grades will be used to determine your total exam grade. You can drop any of the exams for any reason BUT YOU MUST PASS THE LAST EXAM (held at TBD on Dec TBD). If you do not pass the final exam, your score on that exam will count as one of your 2 grades. If you do pass the final exam, then the best 2 grades will be used (irrespective of your score on the final exam).

*Test Dates*

- Test 1: Friday, 09/25
- Test 2: Friday, 10/30
- Test 3: During Finals Week

### Short Assignments

There will be three (3) short assignments in this course. These assignments will allow you to incorporate some of your own interests into the course. Such interests could be related to your career, another class you're taking, a hobby you're exploring, or some other random fancy. They will typically be approximately two (2) pages. I will provide more specific written guidelines at least two weeks before each assignment is due.

The best two (2) out of three (3) short assignments will be used to determine your total short assignments. You can skip one of the assignments for any reason.

*Short Assignment Dates*

- Assignment 1: Friday, 09/18: Critique of an online personality test.
- Assignment 2: Friday, 11/13: Critique of a personality-related media article.
- Assignment 3: Friday, 12/04: Critique of a personality-related YouTube video.

## Engagement Activities

There will be multiple engagement activities in this course. These activities will allow you engage with the material for each module. Details about the specific activities will be provided on canvas. Students must complete two activities per module. For students in the blended section, they can attend their weekly in-person session and count it as an engagement activity.

## Grading Policy

Typically an A- is defined as 90% of the highest point total in the class, B- as 80% of that total, C- as 70 and D- as 60%. I may shift these values down to provide a better fit to the actual point distribution. By scaling to a % of the highest point total in the class, each student has a much better chance of receiving higher grades than if no re-scaling were done.

- 200 points of your grade will be determined by your best two exams.
  - The final is not optional.
- 50 points of your grade will be determined by completing engagement activities.
- 100 points of your grade will be determined by your best two short assignments.

## Course Policies

### Class Presence and Participation.

In previous semesters, I have had a deliberately hardline attendance policy. In the light of the public health crisis, I have done away with the this policy as it doesn't align with my general philosophy of treating students as junior colleagues.

Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active engagement with the material. You will be rewarded with a perfect score as long as you engage meaningfully with the material and your peers.

### *Excused absences*

As a reasonable and empathetic human, I recognize that life happens. There will be times when your outside life conflicts with scheduled class events. These life events can be any of the obvious things (sports, religious holidays, illness, interviews, etc), but they can also be the less obvious, like spending the entire night looking for your lost pet. My general approach is to work with you. You just need to let me know – ideally ahead of time.

Except in the case of true emergencies, a possible excused absence should be discussed with me as far in advance as possible and must occur beforehand. You should not assume that an excused absence will automatically be granted – but you may assume that I am a reasonable, empathetic person. This discussion should occur via email. If you also discuss your situation verbally, please send a summary of the discussion via email to me. An unexcused absence will result in a zero for any graded work that should have been performed for or during the missed class.

## Academic Dishonesty Policy

All work submitted for credit must be the student's own and is subject to the provisions of the Wake Forest Honor Code. Details can be found at the Student Conduct web site: [studentconduct.wfu.edu/honor-system-wfu](http://studentconduct.wfu.edu/honor-system-wfu).

## Accommodations Policy

If you are (or become) disabled (in any capacity, permanently, or temporarily), and need accommodations in class, reading, or any other work in this course, please contact me to discuss your specific needs as soon as possible. Students who need reasonable accommodations for disabilities also should contact the Learning Assistance Center & Disability Services [lac.wfu.edu](http://lac.wfu.edu).

## Public Health in the age of COVID-19

Each of us shares responsibility for the health and safety of all in a learning space. Maintaining a consistent six feet of distance; wearing a face covering; limiting our gathering sizes; and isolating or quarantining when ill or exposed to someone with the virus are Wake Forest University directives and policies we all must follow. Students are encouraged to visit the Our Way Forward website ([ourwayforward.wfu.edu](http://ourwayforward.wfu.edu)) to stay informed about the latest guidance and review the [Public Health Emergency Addendum to the Student Code of Conduct](#).

Specifically, in this room, we will mitigate the risks of virus transfer and take care of our community by abiding by the following safety directives:

- maintain six feet of distance at all times when feasible.
- wear a face covering for the entirety of class. This face covering should cover your mouth and your nose, and adhere to [our University face covering policy](#) (no face shields without masks; no neck gaiters; no bandanas; and no masks, including N95, with a one-way valve).
- stay out of class when sick or after being exposed to someone who is sick.

In this class, any student who does not follow these requirements will be asked once to follow the safety directives. I will offer you a mask or ask you to find one. If you do not comply, I will ask you to leave the class for that day. [I will also refer the matter to the COVID-19 compliance reporting system](#). Possible disciplinary actions may follow as described in the Wake Forest University Undergraduate Student Conduct Code Public Health Emergency Addendum.

## Classroom Climate

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, political affiliation, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know!
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback (which will lead to me making a general announcement to the class, if necessary to address your concerns).

- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option).

### **Department Statement**

The Psychology Department values, respects, and celebrates the experiences, beliefs, and practices stemming from varied cultures and circumstances (emphasizing, but not limited to, those from historically underrepresented groups), and our deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion plays out through coursework, programming by majors, and research.

### **Tentative Class Schedule**

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. Dates for tests and assignments won't change, barring extraordinary events. However, I reserve the right to modify, supplement and make changes as the course needs arise. I try to avoid changes to the syllabus. Nevertheless, if changes occur, they will always be advantageous to the students.

**Week 01, 08/24 - 08/28 : Introduction and What is Personality**

**Week 02, 08/31 - 09/04 : Research Design in Personality**

**Week 03, 09/07 - 09/11 : Personality Assessment and Testing Controversies**

**Week 04, 09/14 - 09/18 : How do people differ? Trait Approach (Assignment 1)**

**Week 05, 09/21 - 09/25 : Big Five (Test 1)**

**Week 06, 09/28 - 10/02 : Personality over the Lifespan**

**Week 07, 10/05 - 10/09 : Biological and Genetic Approaches to Psychology**

**Week 08, 10/12 - 10/16 : Evolutionary Psychology**

**Week 09, 10/19 - 10/23 : Personality Processes**

**Week 10, 10/26 - 10/30 : The Self (Test 2)**

**Week 11, 11/02 - 11/06 : Freud**

**Week 12, 11/09 - 11/13 : Positive Psychology (Assignment 2)**

**Week 13, 11/16 - 11/20 : Cross-Cultural Psychology**

**Week 14, 11/23 - 11/27 : Personality and Health**

**Week 15, 11/30 - 12/04 : Special Topics (Assignment 3)**

**Final Exam**

- TBD on DEC TBD

## **References**

Funder, David Charles. 2016. *The Personality Puzzle*. Seventh. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.