

PERSONALITY THEORY– PSYC 324-002 SPRING 2012

Sarah Klein

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Class Location: East Building 201
Class Time: Mondays 7:20-10:00 pm

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10-10:55 am
Office Location: Aquia Building 337
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REQUIRED TEXT

Funder, D.C. (2010). *The Personality Puzzle (5th Ed)*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
ISBN: 9780393933482

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

Understanding personality can give us insight into who we are: personality affects our actions, our relationships, our level of well being, and how we perceive the world. This course emphasizes the key psychological approaches to personality: Psychoanalytic, Trait, Humanistic-Existential, Learning/Cognitive, and Biological. We will investigate these models, the theories and famous theorists associated with them, and explore how they try to explain the structure, process, and development of personality. We will also look at how cross-cultural influences can affect personality and how we view it. Finally, we will bring in abnormal psychology to help us understand the fascinating world of personality disorders.

FORMAT OF COURSE:

The format of the course will be primarily lecture and discussion. You should have already read the assigned material that will be covered on that day: keeping up with readings will facilitate your understanding of the lectures and make discussion flow more easily. Lectures will review material in the text, clarify difficult material, answer questions, provoke discussions and present information not covered in the text that will be on the exams. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from a classmate. I reserve the right not to provide students with copies of my lecture notes. If you miss class on a regular basis, it is unlikely that you will gain an adequate conceptual understanding of the material to perform well on the exams.

TECHNOLOGY:

It is expected that you will check your Mason email account frequently (e.g. once per day), especially on the days before class. Email is the easiest way to reach me outside of class, and I may send you information about what to focus on or updates to the syllabus via email. For the final presentations (see Assignments and Grading below) it is expected that you incorporate visual elements to enhance your presentation, like PowerPoint or a poster (more details to follow). I may also utilize Blackboard to post updated syllabi, assignments, or activities: I will of course alert you to any changes I make by email.

DISABILITY RESOURCES:

I will do all I can to make reasonable accommodations for students with special needs. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and call the Disability Resource Center at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE STATEMENT:

The University has established a clear Honor Code which you may read at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>. The take home message: do NOT cheat, do NOT plagiarize, do NOT lie and do NOT steal. Any academic dishonesty including plagiarism will result in severe consequences, including the possibility of receiving a failing grade for the course. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. If you have questions about any aspect of proper conduct, please ask me.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY DEADLINES:

Last day to add: Tuesday January 31st

Last day to drop with no tuition penalty: Tuesday January 31st

Last day to drop: Friday February 24th

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

- Exams:

There will be three multiple-choice exams in this course. Exams will primarily cover material since the previous exam, although you may be asked to make comparisons or reflect upon new information as it relates to previous course material. Only two exams will count towards your grade – you may drop your lowest exam grade. Students must bring a scantron (dark green) and two #2 pencils to each exam.

- Final Project:

You will work in groups to apply one of the major personality theories to an individual of your choosing. The individual may be real or fictional, from a book or movie (however, you may not analyze any students, faculty or staff affiliated with George Mason University!). Your group will present your analysis to the class and give me an outline of your presentation. The presentation should last approximately 15 minutes (this is subject to change based on class size). Each presentation should include important background information about your chosen individual, as well as examples from the book and lecture to support your analysis. Be sure to include aspects of the character's personality that are *not* adequately explained by the theory you have chosen. Further detail will be provided in a handout. *Attendance during all presentations is required out of respect for your fellow classmates.* Failure to attend class during presentations will affect your grade. Failure to fully participate in your group's work will also affect your grade. (To ensure no group members are unfairly burdened or relieved, the majority of your grade will be determined by the group's grade for the entire presentation, and the remainder of your grade will be determined by your group members' assessment of your contribution.)

- Make-up work:

The system of dropping the lowest grade on the exams is in place solely to help with an unexpected need to miss an exam. Because of this, I will not entertain any requests for make-up exams.

Exams (2 x 100 pts)	200 points
Final Project Presentation	100 points
TOTAL:	300 points

- Extra Credit:

You may earn up to 2% (6 points) of extra credit on your final grade for up to 2 hours of participation in psychological research (3 points/ 1% per hour). Sign up on Sona Systems at <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/> and indicate that you would like to assign your credits to this course.

Grade Guidelines

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	97 – 100	B+	87 – 89	C+	77 – 79	D+	67 – 69
A	93 – 96	B	83 – 86	C	73 – 76	D	63 – 66
A-	90 – 92	B-	80 – 82	C-	70 – 72	D-	60 – 62
						F	0 – 59

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND EXAMS:

DATE	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS DUE THIS DAY *readings may be changed and assigned during semester*
1/23	Introduction; What is personality psychology? / Research Methods in Personality	Chapters 1 & 2
1/30	Personality Assessment	Chapters 5 & 6
2/6	Trait Theories	Chapters 4 & 7
2/13	Exam 1	
2/20	Biological Approaches to Personality	Chapters 8 & 9
2/27	Psychoanalytic Theory and Psychoanalysis	Chapters 10 & 11
3/5	Psychodynamic Theory	Chapter 12 *Group choice for final presentation due*
3/12	SPRING BREAK—No class!	Enjoy!
3/19	Humanistic and Existential Theory	Chapter 13
3/26	Exam 2	
4/2	Learning, Social and Cognitive Theories	Chapters 15 & 16
4/9	The Self	Chapter 17 *Group choice for character and theory due*
4/16	Cross Cultural Perspectives	Chapter 14
4/23	Personality Disorders	Chapters 18
4/30	Exam 3	
5/14	FINAL PRESENTATIONS (During our final exam time) 7:30-10:15 pm	Attendance Required

** Schedule, office and hours, assignments and grade system are subject to change at discretion of instructor. Any substantive changes to the syllabus will be announced in class, posted on Blackboard, and distributed via gm.u.edu email addresses **

****The GMU Honor system and Code will be adhered to in this course****