PSYC 5601: Contemporary Research in Personality

2011 Winter Term
Carleton University
Friday 11:30-2:30, 431 TB

Instructor:

Dr. John M. Zelenski
Office: A525 Loeb
Phone: 520-2600, ext. 1609
Email: john_zelenski@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Tue. 12:00-1:00; Thur. 11:30-12:30, or by appointment

Course Description:

As the course’s title implies, it will provide a survey of current personality research and theory. That is, we will consider recent accomplishments, questions, and controversies in personality psychology. The content will provide significant breadth in that we will touch on most prominent approaches in personality (i.e., traits, goals, motives, emotions, the unconscious, genetics, physiology, culture, evolution, development and change, etc.). My experience and expertise often leads to examples in relation to happiness and sustainability, but curiosity and fascinating findings will take us well beyond these topics. I encourage students to bring their own lines of research to the course, and they will have opportunities to consider new ways that personality might fit with their interests.

Course Requirements:

Discussions

In a seminar class such as this, learning is a collaborative process. That is, I expect that students will all come to class having read and reflected on assigned articles. Questions of clarification are welcome, but more often students will come with well formulated ideas, extensions, critiques, etc. As graduate students in psychology, each student will have unique expertise in psychology, and it is essential that all be prepared to share it. In other words, students will learn as much from each other as from the readings or instructor. Our in-class discussions will be a highlight of this course, and I will be surprised if some of the ideas we generate do not eventually find their way into top journals. To encourage this, there are four formal requirements for discussions:

1. Read all assigned articles before coming to class.
2. Generate two discussion questions and post on WebCT before class.
3. Write at least six thought papers and turn in before class (see below).
4. Attend and actively participate in every class.

Wikipedia Projects

A course like this typically requires a major paper (e.g., a comprehensive literature review and/or research proposal). Instead of a single major assignment like this, we will
participate in the Association for Psychological Science’s new Wikipedia initiative. That is, a significant portion of students’ coursework and writing assignments will involve creating and editing widely read Wikipedia pages to reflect the state of the art in psychological science. (Previous Wikipedia experience not required!) Compared to more typical coursework where there is a single reader, students in this course will enjoy knowing that many people will ultimately read and benefit from their work. There are a number of small assignments (due most weeks, see Wikipedia course page) that will facilitate your major Wikipedia contribution(s). With this course structure, students should plan to devote significant time to this course each week (but will have nothing to ‘cram’ for at the end of the term).

**Evaluation:**

Final grades will be calculated using the following weights:

- **Thought papers (minimum of 6)** 25%
- **Class participation (including DQs)** 25%
- **Wikipedia project (assignments collectively)** 50%

Wikipedia contributions will be graded as follows:
- 5% each (x3): 'Participation' grade for early Wikipedia exercises (weeks 2, 3, and 4)
- 15%: Peer reviews and collaboration with classmates
- 15%: Reflective essay (3-5 pages)
- 55%: Quality of main Wikipedia contributions, evaluated in light of reflective essay

Significant activity on course-related Wikipedia pages will be treated, informally, as 'extra credit'.

**Required Readings:**

Readings are a potpourri of scholarly chapters and journal articles. Articles will typically be available online through the Carleton University library (or occasionally WebCT). It will be your responsibility to make/print copies. (You should have a copy during class, even if it is electronic.) Specific readings may depend in part on our in-class discussions (I am willing to make adjustments), and are thus subject to change. A tentative list is provided below.

**Thought papers and discussion questions—What am I looking for?**

Both thought papers and discussion questions should be completed before class and submitted by 5:00 PM the day before class (Thursday). Please post your discussion questions to the public discussion board on WebCT (there will be weekly threads). You may send your thought paper to the instructor electronically to meet the 5:00 deadline. (I prefer that you send them to john_zelenski@carleton.ca and put your name somewhere in the file name of any attachments.) If you are interested in written feedback, please also submit a hard copy. (I am happy to assign grades to electronic copies, but prefer to comment on actual paper.)

Thought papers allow you to practice writing and, more importantly, organize your thoughts before our class discussions. In terms of formal requirements, thought papers should focus on one or two main points and be about 400 words. The content of your thought papers is
mostly up to you (but do not summarize the readings; you can assume your reader is familiar with them). Use these papers to explore any thought, reaction, question, etc. stimulated by the assigned readings. Feel encouraged to integrate your personal experience and expertise. Thought papers will account for 25% of your final grade, and I will mark these papers with ‘plus’ (high pass), ‘minus’ (low pass) and ‘zero’ (no credit) grades only. (I hope to use the later two marks rarely.) Late papers (after class has begun) will not be accepted. You must submit at least 6 papers in 6 separate weeks, to meet the requirements of the class (i.e., to pass). You are welcome to submit more, and I will take this effort into account when determining final grades.

Web Pages and Other Resources

We will use WebCT as a means of communication, particularly for private discussions and announcements. There is also a course page on Wikipedia (linked in WebCT) with details of weekly project assignments. We will have some public discussion regarding our Wikipedia projects on Wikipedia pages (as part of the editing process). Many readings/videos/webpages/etc. are available to assist you in completing the wiki assignments. These will be identified/linked on WebCT or the Wikipedia course page. Finally, the Wikipedia project is new to us all. Please be flexible and patient in facing the inevitable challenges, and generous in sharing what you learn with others.

Wikipedia course page (linked in WebCT):

Schedule Overview

(See below for details of readings, and the Wikipedia page for assignments.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topic</th>
<th>Wikipedia Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>Introductions and Expectations</td>
<td>Wikipedia essentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Overview of Personality Approaches</td>
<td>Editing basics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Personality Development</td>
<td>Exploring topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>TBD (SPSP)</td>
<td>Using sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Traits and taxonomies</td>
<td>Choosing articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W6</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Self, goals, &amp; motivation</td>
<td>Drafting starter articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W7</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Within person variation</td>
<td>Did you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W8</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Implicit Personality</td>
<td>Building articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9</td>
<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Getting and giving feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W10</td>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Evolutionary &amp; Biological approaches</td>
<td>Responding to feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W11</td>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Class discussion; polishing articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W12</td>
<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>Professional issues in research</td>
<td>Due date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings for Class Discussions

Jan. 6  Introductions and Expectations
Course outline, course WebCT page & course Wikipedia page

Jan. 13  Overview of Personality Approaches

Jan. 20  Personality Development

Jan. 27  (TBD, but no discussion reading this week)

Feb. 3  Traits and Taxonomies

Feb. 10  Self, Goals, & Motivation
Feb. 17  Within-Person Variation

Feb. 24  Winter Break

Mar. 2  Implicit Personality

Mar. 9  Culture

Mar. 16  Evolutionary & Biological Approaches
(see: http://www.ehps.net/ehp/issues/2011/v13iss4_December2011/13_4_Yarkoni.pdf)
Mar. 23  Life Stories, Ideology, & Integrating Personality

Mar. 30  Professional Issues in Personality Research

Regulations and Information Common to all Psychology Courses

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION
You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the deadlines published on the [PMC website](#).

PETITIONS TO DEFER
Students unable to complete a final term paper or write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY
The last day to withdraw from fall term courses and any other courses that end this term without academic penalty is December 5th, 2011. The last day to withdraw from winter term courses and two-term courses without academic penalty is April 5th, 2012.

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD
Fall Courses: December 8 to 21 (May Include evenings & Saturdays) 2011.
Winter courses & Full Term Courses: April 11 to 24 (may include evenings & Saturdays) 2012.

PLAGIARISM
The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of "F" for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

GRADING SYSTEM
Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>53-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>50-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Failure. No academic credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>Official deferral (see &quot;Petitions to Defer&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FND</td>
<td>“Failed, no Deferral” – assigned when the student is absent from the final exam and has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

ADDRESSES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)
Department of Psychology (2644) B550 Loeb
Registrar’s Office (3500) 300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre (7850) 302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608) 500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service (1125) 4th fl Library
Learning Commons (1125) 4th fl Library

DEPARTMENTAL DROP BOX POLICY – Located outside B550 Loeb
Mail received prior to 4:30pm will be date stamped with the current date. Mail received after 4:30pm will be date stamped with the next business day’s date.
Please ensure to include your name, student number, course code and instructor’s name. We are unable to distribute without this information.