Psychology of Normal Personality
Psyc 360 (Fall 2007)

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Th 1 – 2pm

Class Times: 1:10 – 2 pm, MWF
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Webpage (WebCT):

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this course is to blow your mind. Well, that is at least the hope for the course. The topic of personality is perhaps one of the most fascinating topics to study: we think about personality (our own and others’) all the time, use personality concepts to understand behavior of people and even animals, and make important decisions based on the conclusions we make about others’ personalities (e.g., “I will not date this person ever again!”). This course is designed to introduce students to personality psychology, a field that employs the scientific method in order to understand persons and their lives. By the end of the course, students should (a) have a firm grasp on what personality psychology is and what methods it employs to ask and answer questions about personality, (b) be familiar with overarching theoretical approaches that have been used to study and develop knowledge about human personality, and (c) build up a knowledge base of classic and contemporary research findings and facts regarding personality. Long-term, the goal of the course is to enhance students’ understanding of their own and others’ personalities, and to improve how students relate to themselves and others.

Course Format

Given the introductory nature of the course, most meetings will involve lectures. The lectures, however, will involve multiple occasions for student involvement and discussion—everyone is expected to be actively engaged. This should not be difficult; everyone usually has something to say about the topic of personality! Several times throughout the semester, class exercises and video material will be included. Detailed schedule of the course is included below. Material from the textbook and original sources (from the reader and WebCT) also forms an important component of this class.

Students’ Responsibilities

This course is not required for anyone at this university. It is thus assumed you are interested in the course topic and are eager to learn about it. By enrolling in this course, students explicitly agree to adhere to the following guidelines. First, class attendance is strongly encouraged, as it will be the primary factor determining the overall success in the course. Students are expected to arrive on time and to stay until each class meeting is over (as in actually over, not one, three, or five minutes earlier). Arriving late or leaving early on a regular basis is disrespectful and distracting both to the instructor and your fellow students. Second, students are
expected to be attentive, respectful, and engaged during class. Please ask questions if the lecture is not clear. People who benefit most from a course such as this are those that attend regularly, listen carefully, and ask thoughtful questions. This should be achievable for every single student in this course, regardless of their personality. Finally, you are responsible for any material or announcements presented in class, even for classes that you miss. If you miss class, please do not email me asking what we covered--That is like asking me to give you the lecture in an email response!! © Rather, you should check WebCT for announcements and slides, ask to read the notes of another student in the class, and seek clarification from me either after class or during office hours.

**Contact Procedures**

Besides taking question during class, I will also usually be available immediately after class to answer any questions—feel free to come down and chat. You are also encouraged to attend my office hours or schedule an alternative appointment if you have class-related issues you would like to discuss. Otherwise, **e-mail is the preferred mode of communication;** I will usually get back to you within 24 hours. Please use discretion when employing e-mail. Many times logistic information students are inquiring about will be included in the syllabus or will be posted on the course web-page—always consult these sources first. **All important announcements will be posted on WebCT.**

**Evaluation**

Multiple tools will be used to assess student learning, and they will evaluate both the factual knowledge of concepts/findings and comprehension of theories/principles. These tools include three mostly non-cumulative exams and two mini-papers.

- **Exam 1 (50 pts, 25%):** Purpose and methods, trait and biological approaches
- **Exam 2 (50 pts, 25%):** Psychodynamic, humanistic, and phenomenological approaches
- **Exam 3 (50 pts, 25%):** Learning and social-cognitive approaches, psychopathology

- **Mini-paper 1 (25 pts, 12.5%):** Personality of Music
- **Mini-paper 2 (25 pts, 12.5%):** Playing Freud

**Total: 200 pts (100%)**

**Exams**

Each exam will consist of 33 multiple-choice questions (1.5 pts each, to be completed in 50 min) that test both the knowledge of facts and concepts, and the comprehension of principles and theories. Each exam is non-cumulative, and will cover all the material since the previous exam. This will include material presented in lecture, assigned chapters in the textbook, and assigned original-source readings. Note that there will be substantial overlap across these three sources of information. The final will require some integration of material across the entire course, however.

**Mini-paper 1: Personality of Music**

Have you ever wondered whether certain types of people like certain types of music and why? The assignment requires that you complete an anonymous on-line survey about music preferences and personality. You will get immediate feedback, and will also be contributing to the database of the researchers conducting the project. The assignment will also require reading the empirical journal article in which this research was first published. The assigned paper must
include summary of the original research, summary of your feedback from the on-line survey, and your evaluation of the feedback. Exact details will be announced later.

**Mini-paper 2: Playing Freud**

This assignment will give you the opportunity to play Freud and apply the principles of psychoanalysis to explaining your own or others’ behavior (Freud regularly did both). You will use the knowledge from the course and assigned readings to explain and discuss an instance of human behavior you have observed by employing psychoanalytic principles. Exact details will be announced later.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on the percentage of points you have accumulated in the class. Earning a certain amount of points will guarantee you the grade associated with that number of points (e.g., if you earn 80% of the points you are guaranteed a B-, regardless of how others in the course do). Grades will be based on the following scale (there will be no rounding):

- **A+** = 98 – 100%
- **A** = 92 – 97.9%
- **A-** = 90 – 91.9%
- **B+** = 88 – 89.9%
- **B** = 82 – 87.9%
- **B-** = 80 – 81.9%
- **C+** = 78 – 79.9%
- **C** = 72 – 77.9%
- **C-** = 70 – 71.9%
- **D+** = 68 – 69.9%
- **D** = 62 – 67.9%
- **D-** = 60 – 61.9%
- **F** = 0 – 59.9%

**Disability accommodations**

If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor or the Course Information Office early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to contact the Disability Resources (DR) office, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-6624, to obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) that describes the needed accommodations.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Cheating is not tolerated. Any person observed cheating on an exam will receive a zero score on the exam and will be referred to the Dean of Students as described in the Academic Dishonesty section (pages 38-40) of the *Iowa State University Catalog*. Plagiarizing any of the paper assignments will lead to similar consequences.

**Cell-phone Policy**

Cell phones and pagers must be on silent mode during class. Cell phones and pagers must be put away outside of arm’s reach during exams. If a student is found using a cell phone or another electronic device during an exam, the device will be taken from the student and procedures for cheating may be followed.

**Student Complaint Procedures**

Complaints about the instructor or teaching assistant should ordinarily be resolved with the instructor or TA first. Otherwise, students may contact the department of psychology chairperson, Douglas Bonett at 294-1975, dgbonett@iastate.edu, who will recommend further courses of action.