Psychology 101H
Introductory Psychology--Honors

Fall 2008, Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Veronica Dark
Office: Science I Room 374
Phone: 294-1688 (office), 232-7742 (home)
Email: vjdark@iastate.edu

Office Hours: TR 1-1:50, W 11-11:50, or drop in - if I am busy we will set up an appointment
(Unfortunately, I have another class immediately after this one, so I won't be available after class for more than a quick question.)

Class Meeting Time and Room: TT 2:10-3:50 in Lagomarcino (Lago) W162

Instructional Goal
Psychology is a very complex and abstract science with a broad domain: behavior and mental processes. There is no one accepted theory of behavior and mental processes because they are so complexly determined. My goal as an instructor is to introduce you to the many different ways that psychologists have conceptualized behavior and mental processes, but I will emphasize what is called the cognitive approach. At the end of the class, you should have the tools needed to think critically about the behavior of humans and other animals.

Course Format
The course format is formally set up as two hours of lecture and two hours of lab. The lab and lecture portions of the course will be intermixed, however. Thus, for each class section there will be a mix of lecture, discussion, demonstrations, and lab activities. The exact mixture will depend to some extent on the personality of the class. Although I will "lecture" on some (maybe even most) days, the lectures will NOT be a re-presentation of the material in the text. It is your responsibility to ask questions, either in class or at some other time, about material from the text (or class) that you do not understand. What I WILL try to do during class is develop in more detail some of the points/topics introduced in the text. I will use WebCT to communicate with you about assignments, quizzes, etc. Also, I will post additional reading material on WebCT

Attendance
Because there will be a variety of demonstrations, discussions, in-class activities, and homework assignments, I expect you to attend class regularly and contribute to the activities. Much of what is learned will be the result of participating in the activities/experiments/discussion in class. You cannot participate (and learn) if you are not present. Because class attendance is so important, there will be a substantial penalty for missing class: Your course grade will be lowered by one unit for each "unexcused" absence after two such absences. Do not assume that a given reason for missing class will be excused or unexcused; that decision is up to me. If you know you will miss class (e.g., you plan to attend a university function), talk to me before the absence, or I likely will consider it an unexcused absence. If you unexpectedly miss class (e.g., you are ill or there is a family emergency), let me know as soon as circumstances permit. I suggest contacting me via both email and phone. (You may call me at home, but please do not call after 10:00 p.m. or before 7 a.m. unless it is an emergency.) When you go to the student health center or to another doctor, please request a note verifying your visit.
Disability Accommodations
If you have a disability requiring accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to contact Disability Resources, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-6624, to obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) describing the needed accommodations.

Readings
*Psychology: Themes & Variations* (briefer version) is a mid-level introductory text; it is the briefer version of a very comprehensive text. I chose the briefer version because I expect you to read the entire book. You will be responsible for learning most of the material in the text on your own. A book companion website is available for the text at www.thomsonedu.com/psychology/weiten (you will need to click on the briefer 7th edition). A list of learning objectives for each chapter is available on that website. As each chapter is assigned, I will post a modified version of the learning objectives on WebCT that may include some material to be covered in class and that may omit or change an objective. In addition to the learning objectives, there are quizzes for each chapter. Use the website quizzes to test your mastery of the material prior to the course quiz.

"Weekly" Quizzes
As already described, you will be responsible for reading the text on your own. Approximately once a week, we will have a 5-10 minute quiz over the readings for that week. I will announce the day of each quiz (and post it on WebCT) at least one class day before the quiz. Each quiz day, I will give you an opportunity to ask any questions about the material covered by the quiz. When all questions are answered, you will take the quiz. The quiz will be one or two questions (usually short answer but occasionally multiple choice) related to material from class or from the learning objectives for the text. Because each quiz is so short, you should be motivated to be at least somewhat familiar with the material covered! Quiz performance will comprise 35% of your course grade. I will toss the lowest quiz score. This is similar to the scheme that I use in my graduate class to encourage keeping up with the reading. [Note: If there is a final exam, then quiz performance will be 25% of your grade.]

Homework
There are two categories of homework. Homework performance will comprise 45% of your course grade. [Note: If there is a final exam, then it will be 35%.]

Regular. There will be a variety of what I call regular homework assignments that typically are due the next class period. Some will be short assignments, like collecting data from your roommate, and some will be more substantive, like writing an essay on the relationship between mind and brain or writing the introduction to an experiment done in class. Some of these will be graded, but often they will be assigned a verbal label like "excellent" or "fair" or "satisfactory" or "fail". (Actually, I don't anticipate having to assign the "fail" label to anything, but….).

Research Participation. The faculty/graduate students in the Psychology Department are actively engaged in research using human research participants. One of the best ways to learn about research is to participate in it, both as a research subject and a researcher. When we design a project in class, you will be a researcher, but I also want you to be a participant in actual research projects. You will need to participate in four experiments. I will present the details of this assignment in class, after we learn about different types of research. (Research ethics require voluntary participation, so if you do not wish to participate in research, I will provide an alternative assignment.)
Research Paper

As part of the class, you will learn a modified version of APA writing style (APA stands for the American Psychological Association). APA writing style is used to report empirical research in a number of scientific disciplines. The basics of APA style will be covered in the homework, but there will be one major paper. This individually written paper will describe a research project that we design and carry out as a class. Performance on this paper will comprise 20% of your grade.

Plagiarism. All written assignments are to be WRITTEN BY YOU. Assignments should be IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Some students in the past have copied sections almost verbatim from an article while writing the introduction to a paper (e.g., one student copied the method and said "How could I do a better job than the author in describing the method?''). Other students have copied from another student’s paper or copied a paper written by someone else. All forms of copying are plagiarism and are completely unacceptable. Plagiarism will result in a score of 0 on the assignment and likely will result in referral to the Dean of Students.

Final Exam

I do not currently plan on a final exam, but I reserve the right to give one if I believe that it is necessary to motivate the class to meet my instructional goal. If I do give a final, I will hand out an exam study guide a few weeks before the exam. A final exam would be comprehensive, consisting of short answer questions, and would comprise 20% of your grade. According to the tentative schedule of final exams that is on the Web, our final exam time likely will be Tuesday, Dec. 16, 12-2. Regardless of whether or not there is a final exam, we will meet during finals week as required by the university. So, please keep this in mind when making end of the semester travel plans.

Grading

Grades will be based on percentage of total points. Because I do not know exactly how this class will unfold, I cannot specify what the total possible points will be. As already indicated, aspects of the course will be differentially weighted in computing the final grade. Without a final, the weightings are 35% for quizzes, 45% for homework, 20% for the paper. [With a final they are 25% for quizzes, 35% for homework, 20% for the paper, and 20% for the final.] The percentage range for each letter grade is listed below. Be warned that I do NOT round up for As.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>percent</th>
<th>grade</th>
<th>percent</th>
<th>grade</th>
<th>percent</th>
<th>grade</th>
<th>percent</th>
<th>grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94.0-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>81.0-85.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>68.0-72.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>55.0-59.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>77.0-80.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>64.0-67.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50.0-54.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.0-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>73.0-76.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>60.0-63.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>0.0-49.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that this is a form of MASTERY grading. There is no curve--That is, there is no upper limit on the number of As and there do not HAVE to be any Bs, Cs, Ds, or Fs. It is theoretically possible for everyone to make an A by mastering 95% of the material (defined as earning 95% of the weighted points).

A Final Comment

I fully expect you to have fun while learning about psychology and it is likely that most of you will do very well in the class, and will enjoy it. In fact, if I do my job well, several of you will decide on Psychology as at least a minor! But do not let the fun fool you; you likely will find that this is a moderately demanding course. It is, after all, a broad survey of a very abstract science. You will need to commit some time and effort if you want to do well.