



Psychology 2550A, Section 550
Introduction to Personality Theory and Research
Fall, 2018

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in a 1000-level Psychology course
Antirequisite(s): Psychology 2050, if taken before 2016

Instructors: Anita Feher and Tony Vernon
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Course website:
<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/3c61f159-02f6-4469-b0c7-0fd1242926bc>

Scheduled classes: Wednesday evenings
6:30 PM – 9:30 PM (3 hours)
HC Room V207

Office hours: Immediately following class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course represents a survey of the history, methodology and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include an evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Throughout the course, students will be asked to examine their own expressions of personality while critically evaluating the ways in which common personality traits influence individuals' behaviour and social relationships.

- By the end of this course it is expected that students will be able to discuss the ways in which personality theories have developed and how they are relevant to modern society and social concerns.

- By the end of the course students will be able to critically examine the contributions of the major personality theorists and assess the impact of their work.
- Through discussion and reflection, students will be able to describe the costs and benefits of the most common techniques used to assess and measure personality today.
- By the end of this course, students should be able to explain the behavioural effects of personality and the impact of biology and conditioning on individual differences.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS METHODS

The course format will consist of lectures. There are no labs or tutorials. Material covered in lectures will not always be the same as material covered in the textbook and supplementary readings. These sources should be viewed as complementary and not redundant. As such, **students who want to do well in this course are strongly encouraged to attend lectures on a regular basis.** If students miss a lecture for any reason, it is their responsibility to catch up.

Outlines of the course, supplementary readings, grades, course announcements, and lecture slides will be posted on the course website on OWL. **Please bring a copy of the lecture slides to each lecture**, either in hard-copy form or on your computer. If, by the second week of class, you do not have access to OWL, please e-mail or speak with the instructors. Please be sure to check OWL regularly for announcements or changes to the lecture schedule.

TEXTBOOK

Larsen, R., Buss, D., King, D.B., & Ensley, C. (2017). *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge about Human Nature* (1st Canadian edition). Toronto: McGraw-Hill

The textbook is required for this course. There is no need to bring the textbook to lectures, unless you would like to have it there as an additional reference. In addition to reviewing the textbook, you will be required to read supplementary resources for a number of the lectures. These supplementary resources are intended to provide you with additional information about topics in personality psychology not covered by your textbook. These supplementary readings will be provided to you by the instructors.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Exam 1: 35% (Wednesday October 24, 2018)
 Exam 2 45% (During the exam period: December 10-21, 2018)
 Discussion: 20% (throughout the course)

Students at Huron University College should consider a grade in the range from 70-74 to be evidence of satisfactory performance in a 2100-level Psychology course. Grades in the B+ (75-79) or A (80-89%) ranges will only be awarded for performance that is demonstrably superior to the second-year standard associated with the Major or Minor

modules. A grade of A+ (90-100%) will only be awarded very rarely and only for work that is truly exceptional.

Exams (80%)

Both of the course exams will be closed-book and multiple-choice in format. The first will be written during lecture hours on October 24, 2018; the second will be scheduled by the registrar's office during the exam period (December 10-21, 2018). They will cover the units leading up to that exam session, including textbook material, lecture material, and supplementary readings. The exams are designed to be non-cumulative. However, due to the nature of the field of psychology, there may be overlap in concepts, ideas, and continuity of theory. Students will have two hours to write each exam.

Graded exams will not be returned to the students, although the scoring key for a given exam can be checked with the instructors. Exam grades and the weighting of exams will not be adjusted on the basis of need. If you miss an exam due to medical or compassionate reasons, please follow the procedures outlined in the "Policy on Missed Exams" section of the course website on OWL (*Evaluation Info* tab).

Discussion (20%)

Participation in the course is strongly encouraged and will be assessed through the online discussion forums. Discussion forums for a given unit will open on the first day of the unit (9:00 AM), and they will remain open for a week. Students may reply and respond to discussion forum topics at different times of the week, as long as their contribution is submitted prior to each week's deadline.

The units listed below contain discussion components. The availability of each unit's online forum is also specified.

Unit	Lecture Topic	Discussion Forum Availability
2	Trait Perspectives in Personality	Open: Open Wednesday Sept. 19 (9:30pm) Close: Tuesday, Sept. 25 (11:55pm)
4	Psychoanalysis, behaviorist and learning perspectives, and social learning theories in personality	Open: Open Wednesday Oct. 3 (9:30pm) Close: Tuesday, Oct. 9 (11:55pm)
6	The Dark Tetrad	Open: Open Wednesday Oct. 31 (9:30pm) Close: Tuesday, Nov. 6 (11:55pm)
9	Theories of intelligence	Open: Open Wednesday Nov. 21 (9:30pm) Close: Tuesday, Nov. 27 (11:55p)

Discussion Grading:

Each forum week, you can earn up to 5 points for your participation in the discussion for that week's topic, yielding a course maximum of 20 points.

Posts should be approximately 100-150 words in length, and you can stretch that to 200 words if you need to elaborate on your ideas. Posts longer than 200 words become quite challenging to digest, and you are probably better off breaking up your thoughts into separate posts. Ultimately, we are looking for focused and concise posts. Wordy is not necessarily better. Also, note that your posts do not have to be new conversations to receive full marks. Responses to other students that are thoughtful and original will count toward your post quota each week. So, please feel free to engage with one another on the forums, and to comment on points that have been raised and the ideas that have been discussed. The following rubric is intended to help you to understand how we will be grading the discussion forum posts:

Criteria	Grading			
	<i>Beginning 0 points</i>	<i>Developing 1-2 points</i>	<i>Successful 3-4 points</i>	<i>Accomplished 5 points</i>
<i>Frequency of posts</i>	0-1 posts per discussion week	1-2 posts per discussion week	2-3 posts per discussion week	3 or more posts per discussion week
<i>Engagement with others</i>	You rarely respond to the posts of others, often contributing shortly before the deadline.	You sometimes respond to others. Your responses offer an opinion, but they are brief and sometimes lack relevancy	You often respond to others. Your responses are polite and thorough. You compare your thoughts to what others write and identify areas where you share common interest.	You lead the discussion consistently. You often respond to others politely and in a manner that encourages further discussion. You aim to guide the discussion in new directions.
<i>Engagement with topic</i>	Your post, if present, lacks clarity or focus. You may re-state the question or topic in your own words, but you do not have a clear answer to the question.	Your posts are clear and concise, but often echo the thoughts of others or lack originality. They rarely reflect your own understanding or experience.	Your posts are clear, concise, and thoughtful. You connect your ideas not only to your own experiences, but also to in-class material and/or your own research.	Your posts are clear, concise, thoughtful, and original. You consistently suggest ideas that others have not yet outlined. Your posts encourage us to think about the topic in a novel way.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

The following schedule is a guideline only and may be subject to change. Please ensure that you attend class and monitor announcements on OWL in order to receive updates about any revisions to the schedule

Unit	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings
1	Sept. 12	Introduction to the Course Research Methods in Personality (Feher and Vernon)	Chapters 1 and 2
2	Sept. 19	Trait Perspectives in Personality (Feher)	Chapter 3
3	Sept. 26	Biological and Behavioural Genetic Perspectives in Personality (Vernon)	Chapter 6
4	Oct. 3	Psychoanalysis, behaviorist and learning perspectives, and social learning theories in personality (Feher)	Chapter 9
	Oct. 10	Reading week – no class	
5	Oct. 17	Forensic Psychology (Mary Ritchie)	tba
	Oct. 24	Midterm Exam – in class (2 hours)	
6	Oct. 31	The Dark Tetrad (Rachel Plouffe) Personality and I/O Psychology (Kabir Daljeet)	Chapter 4, pages 81-91
7	Nov. 7	Analyzing and Modifying Behaviour (David Vollick)	Chapter 19
8	Nov. 14	Personality and Politics (Ed Bell)	tba
9	Nov. 21	Theories of Intelligence (Vernon)	Chapter 12, pages 294-297
10	Nov. 28	Emotional intelligence (Don Saklofske)	tba
11	Dec.5	Self and Others' Personality (Feher)	Chapters 14 and 15, selected pages will be announced
	Dec. 10-21	Final Exam (2 hours) <i>to be scheduled by the Registrar's Office</i>	

GENERAL POLICIES

The Huron Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.