

2130 M, Personality Psychology, January 2015

Professor Ian McGregor ianmc@yorku.ca

Objectives:

1. Integrate historical roots, classic theories, and contemporary science of *personality*.
2. Understand why and how personality science is conducted and how knowledge evolves through cycles of theory and research.
3. Apply personality psychology knowledge to better understand your life and social issues.

Prerequisite: PSYC 1010 6.0 with the minimum grade of C

Time and Location: Mondays 7:00-10:00, CLH-E (Curtis Lecture Hall E)

Teaching Assistants: Julia Riddell jriddell@yorku.ca (for course content, quiz, and assignment queries); Alex Tran trana@yorku.ca (for research study participation, grades posting).

Lecture and Assessment Schedule

Week 1, Jan 5: Myth

Week 2, Jan 12: Religion

Week 3, Jan 19: Psychoanalysis (*Online Assignment 1, Due 9:59p the night before lecture, 10%*)

Week 4, Jan 26: Traits (*Quiz 1, 10%*)

Week 5, Feb 2: Biology (*Online Assignment 2, Due 9:59p the night before lecture, 10%*)

Week 6, Feb 9: Desire (*Quiz 2, 10%*)

Reading Week, Feb 16

Week 7, Feb. 23: Illusion (*Online Assignment 3, Due 9:59p the night before lecture, 10%*)

Week 8, March 2: Security (*Quiz 3, 10%*)

Week 9, March 9: Pride (*Online Assignment 4, Due 9:59p the night before lecture, 10%*)

Week 10, March 16: Meaning (*Quiz 4, 10%*)

Week 11, March 23: Love (*Online Assignment 5, Due 9:59p the night before lecture, 10%*)

Week 12, March 30: Wisdom (*Quiz 5, 10%*)

Email Protocol: Please put your course code, section, and email topic in the Subject/Title of emails to the TA or professor, e.g., “2130M, lecture 2,” and indicate your full name and York ID# at the end of your email.

Readings: There is no textbook. PDFs of weekly readings will be provided for free in Moodle.

Lecture Timing: Lectures will begin 5 minutes after the scheduled start time, and end at least five minutes before the scheduled end time. There will be a 10 minute break near the middle.

Lecture Attendance: Lecture attendance is necessary because material will be presented in lectures that will not be in the readings. Students who attend all lectures do much better in this course than those who attend irregularly. Come on time, take notes with a pen and paper during the lecture, and do not fool yourself into thinking you are “attending” just because you are sitting there. Keep your mind focused on the material and free from distractions (see next section on technology). You should also exchange contact information with a classmate for notes-sharing in case one of you have to miss a lecture.

Technology Regulations: Laptop use during lectures for email, face-book, or other non-course-related activities is not permitted. It is distracting for me and the other students (and you). Please wait for the break, or step outside the lecture hall if you need a social-media fix, or to call or message. Phones and other devices must be off during lecture. I recommend (and appreciate) no laptops at all during lectures. The temptation to distract yourself is too high and although students often (wishfully) think they can effectively multitask during lecture, in fact, empirical studies consistently show that students who use laptops during class earn far lower grades than those who do not. Studies also show that pen-and-paper note-taking is more effective and leads to higher grades than laptop note taking. If you insist on using a laptop for note-taking, then please sit near the back of the class so that other students (and me) will not be bothered by your clicking, screen contents, and distracted behavior.

Drop Date: To drop the course without receiving a grade, you must do so before March 6th.

Grades

How To Do Well: Attend to the end of all lectures, pay attention while there, take notes with a pen (not laptop), review your notes afterwards while running through the online slides.

Overall Grade Computation: *80% (from best 8 of the 10 assignments or quizzes) + 17% (from final assignment) + 3% (from research participation).*

Quizzes: Five short quizzes, each with around 25 multiple choice items, will each be worth 10% of your grade, and will be administered at the beginning of every second lecture (starting week 3) via power point. Each quiz will cover material from two previous weeks’ lectures/readings.

Short Online Assignments: Five short online assignments will each be worth 10% of your grade. Each assignment will consist of either two questions that require short answers (each question with a 300 word limit) or one question with a 600 word limit for the answer. Each assignments will focus on the two previous weeks' lectures/readings. Assignments must be submitted online, the before 9:59 the night before the next week's lecture. Late assignments will have one mark out of 10 deducted for every hour late, with a maximum of 3 late marks deducted. Assignments over 24 hours late will receive a grade of zero. Anything over 600 words will not be read, so be sure to keep under the 600 word limit, because your first 600 words is what will be graded.

Assignment One due Sunday January 18 at 9:59pm
Assignment Two due Sunday February 1 at 9:59pm
Assignment Three due Sunday February 22 at 9:59pm
Assignment Four due Sunday March 8 at 9:59pm
Assignment Five due Sunday March 22 at 9:59pm

Best 8 of 10 Quizzes/Assignments: Missed quizzes/assignments will receive a zero regardless of the reason, and there will be no opportunity to write make-ups. Instead, all students will be allowed to drop two missed or lowest quiz/assignment grades, and only the top 8 out of 10 quiz/assignment grades will count toward the final course grade. This solution is a replacement that provides more flexibility and convenience than make-up tests/assignments.

Research Participation: 3% of your grade will come from participation in three research studies directly related to course material. The first two will be completed online. The third requires that you sign up online and then participate in person at Room 007 BSB Central Square (i.e., in our laboratory in the basement underneath the Scott Library). The grading TAs and I will have access to aggregated, anonymous data, only, and will not match your personal identifying information to your responses (i.e., neither your names nor student numbers will be stored in the data files). The research participation is designed to give you hands-on experience with aspects of contemporary personality research that will be discussed in the course. You will also be given the opportunity to see where your personality scores stand in relation to those of the other students taking the course. My hope is that this will give you a more interesting and experiential appreciation for the course material. The research participation TA, Alex Tran, will email you your own Research Identification Number, which you will use to identify yourself in the studies that you participate in. Links to Studies 1 and 2 will be available on Moodle for you to access by January 12th, with a participation deadline, January 27th. In-Lab Study 3 participation will also begin on January 12th with a deadline of February 26th. Each study will be around an hour long. Make sure to sign up early for the in-lab Study 3 to get a time for participation that suits you best. If you sign up for the lab study but then fail to show up without a day's notice you will not be given another opportunity to participate. As an alternative to research participation, students may choose to make their final assignment worth 20% instead of 17%. If you wish to do so, however, you must declare your intention to opt out of the research component by January 20st. Please note that at the end of the term you may email to ask the TA to delete your responses if for any reason you object to the research and do not wish to have your data used for research purposes.

Final Assignment Worth 17% (3000 word maximum): Due Tuesday April 14th at 2p:

Wisdom is practical virtue—the capacity to live a “whole life” well. Sages and psychologists perennially emphasize two hurdles to living wisely: knowing and being oneself amidst the multiple motivations and priorities that can bewilder us, and being able to love others well along the way. In your final assignment, please describe how you might (or already do) apply some aspects from 9 of the weeks’ readings and lectures to your own life to make, or keep, your life wise. Use 9 of the week’s topic headings to organize your assignment into 9 sections—each section will be graded out of 2 for a total of 18 marks (you get a bonus mark ☺). Top marks will be awarded to answers that show evidence of *integrating course material with your own personality characteristics and life experiences*. You can divide your maximum of 3000 words however you like, but keep in mind that each section will be graded out of 2 marks, so you won’t want to skimp too much on any section.

By the end of the term I will have posted your scores on several personality scales related to each week’s theme on the Moodle site. Reflecting on any patterns in your personality scale scores and relating them to your self-understanding and main themes from each week’s material could be one way to approach this final assignment. You don’t have to use those personality scale scores, however. Introspection and reflection are also welcome, as long as what you come up with is integrated with a demonstrated understanding of the course material. Top marks will be awarded for evidence of a clear understanding of the *course material—appropriate application of the course material to your own life and personality will be one way to demonstrate this clear understanding*.

For each of the nine sections in your final assignment, one of the two marks will be awarded for an accurate and clear explication of some core element of the course material. The other mark will be awarded for appropriate *application* of that course material to your personal characteristics, insights, experiences, or reflection, and how it relates to your capacity to live wisely. It is important to keep in mind that this is not just an exercise in telling about your life. The purpose of the exercise is for you to *apply course material to your self-understanding*.

For those of you who may be uncomfortable disclosing information about yourself on this assignment, you may instead complete the assignment with reference to someone else that you know well. That said, it would probably be more enjoyable and useful if you did it about yourself—as the saying goes, “Know Thyself.” Your assignment will be strictly confidential and its content will not bias the way you are graded.

Medical Notes: If medical issues cause students to miss more than two quizzes or assignments, provisions can be made for make-up quizzes or assignments, but only if students have physician-signed documentation saying that they were *medically unable to complete 3 or more of the quizzes/essays on their specified dates*.

Grade Bump-Ups: Every year dozens of students come to me after the course is over and say something like, “I missed my B by .3%, please bump me up—my whole life depends on it!!!” Because one in six students are always in the position of missing a higher grade category by a fraction of a mark, indulging all such requests would result in unacceptable grade inflation, and

granting selective bump-ups would be unfair to other students. Accordingly, I am sorry that I will not agree to bump you up.