

Personality Psychology • 165b • Spring '05

Marc A. Brackett, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Yale University

Office: SSS 309
Phone: 2-2332
Email: marc.brackett@yale.edu

Times: Tu & Th: 11:30 to 12:45
Room: SSS 114
Office Hours: Immediately after class
or by appointment.

Course Description

Who am I? Is my personality pre-determined or learned? Can my parents or peers judge my personality accurately? Do extraverts have more fun? Do our emotions and thoughts work together or are they in conflict? What role does intelligence have in choosing a career or a partner? What is the role of the unconscious? Are personality characteristics related to getting good grades or a better job? Do personality traits predict everyday behavior?

These are just a few of many questions that we will explore in our personality class through lectures, discussions, activities, and film clips. Furthermore, the experiential component of the class (i.e., surveys that you will fill out and receive feedback on) will help you learn more about yourself and how personality psychologists collect and analyze data. My goal is to provide you with a broad introduction to the exciting field of personality psychology. In particular, I will emphasize the “dynamic interrelatedness” among the many parts of personality (e.g., motivation, emotion, intelligence, etc.) that together make us who we are.

General Expectations

I am passionate about the field of personality psychology and will come to class prepared and eager to share what I know about the field. I expect to have a great time and I sincerely hope that all of you do too. My hope is that you will come to class on time, prepared, and in the right frame of mind for learning.

It is worth mentioning that I will share many of my own life experiences (to the dismay of many of my relatives who will remain anonymous, of course). Your personal experiences are also highly valued (but not required) and will often make our discussions lively and interesting. By the way, disagreements with me are not frowned upon, but encouraged; they often lead to great conversations and an increased understanding of the material.

Our class meets twice per week and there is no discussion section. Grades will be based on (a) three in class exams, (b) a student workbook, (c) attendance at 3 labs, (d) class attendance, and (e) one 6-8-page paper. An optional 5-page research proposal on emotional intelligence can be written to replace the grade of either your first or second test. This paper is due at the end of the reading period. There is no final exam.

Books and Readings

1. Mayer, J. D. (2004). *Personality psychology: A systems approach*. Pearson Custom Publishing. These “class notes” have been revised recently. I strongly discourage using older versions of this book.
 - a. Brackett, M. A., Ivcevic, Z., & Schneiderman, E. (2005). *Exploring personality: Student activity handbook*. New York: Pearson. (This is packaged with the text book)
 - i. There will be about 13 readings to accompany the text and the workbook. These readings will be posted on the classes server
2. An authorized biography, autobiography, or historical biography of your choice.
3. Salovey, P., Brackett, M. A., & Mayer, J. D. (2004). *Emotional Intelligence: Key readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model*. New York: Dude Press. (Recommended)

Detailed Overview of Course Requirements

Final grades will be determined as follows:

1. Exams (3) = 60%
2. Workbook = 10%
3. Autobiography = 25%
4. Lab Participation and Attendance = 5%
5. Optional Paper: Emotional Intelligence Proposal

Exams

Each exam will contain multiple-choice, short answer questions, and one or two essays. Exams will be based on course readings and on what I present in class. Make sure you attend all examinations. There are no make-ups. The only exceptions that will be made are in cases of documented illness or other extreme, documented, emergencies that are accompanied by a Dean's excuse. If you plan to miss an exam for a legitimate reason, please see your TF to discuss an alternative time/plan. All make-up exams are in essay format.

I will weight the first two exams slightly less than the last exam (15%, 20%, and 25%, respectively) to encourage a sense of hopefulness, rather than fatalism, in those who don't do well early in the semester. Also, the last exam covers the most amount of material.

Fair Grading Policy

To optimize fairness and to encourage you to learn the most you can from exams, I will employ the following test/grading system:

1. Each exam will be administered at the beginning of class and you will have 50 minutes to complete it.
2. After completing the exam, your answer sheets will be collected and I will provide the correct answers to the multiple choice and short answer questions.
3. You will be allowed to contest two questions that you feel were overly difficult or unclear. Legitimate reasons include: an answer is in (or not in) the book/notes or the question/responses were ambiguous. Essay questions cannot be contested.
4. You will then email your TF with an explanation of why credit should be given for the two questions. You must provide a thorough explanation.
5. The TFs and I will then choose up to 3 questions that we will credit. Of note, the TFs and I retain the right to refuse any nominated answer that is, in our judgment, simply incorrect.
6. At the beginning of the next class I will announce the questions for which credit was given.

Workbook

The workbook, which was designed to accompany the textbook, is designed to help you learn more about the field of personality psychology and your own personality. There will be specific questions for you to explore that pertain to your personal life, the course readings, and the different questionnaires that you fill out.

Grading: Your workbooks are due in class on the day of the exam. That way they can be used to help you study for the exams. The grading procedure is as follows: Great (95%), Good (85%), Poor (75%), Not handed in (0%). Your grade is based on your general effort to complete the assignment carefully, thoughtfully, and creatively. Outstanding workbooks will get 100 points.

Autobiography, Authorized Biography, or Historical Biography

The goal of this assignment is to integrate what you have learned about personality this semester by analyzing a biography or autobiography of your choice. You will select a biography that must be approved by your Teaching Fellow and then write a 6 to 8 page paper analyzing the person's personality. You should read the book from the perspective of a personality psychologist: Identify the person's personality traits, motives, emotional style, key intelligences, and dynamics; also, pay attention to significant life events and key figures in the person's life that may have contributed to the formation of the person's adult personality. What is it about this person that got them to where they are? How does this person get along with others? The best paper will provide rich examples from the book that demonstrate your assessment of the person's personality characteristics.

Introduction: Start off with a one-paragraph introduction. Who is this person? Why is this person famous? Give a brief background – where did this person grow up, etc.?

Then, in the following paragraphs describe the following aspects of this person's personality. Please make sure that you back up your claims about this person's personality. Make sure you provide quotes from the book that illustrate how these aspects of his/her personality are expressed or viewed by others. The best paper will weave these components into an interesting narrative.

1. Motivation
What motive(s) drive(s) this person? Describe.
 2. Emotion
Is this person characterized as having positive or negative affect? Describe.
Is this person generally calm or aroused? Describe.
 3. Intelligence
We've studied a number of different intelligences: Analytical, practical, creative, and emotional intelligence. What kind of intelligence is most apparent in this person's life? Describe.
 4. Models of self, world, and relationships
What is this person's self-concept like? What kinds of relationships has this person had? How does this person see the world? Describe.
 5. Traits
How do you think this person would score on the NEO? What Big Five traits are most apparent? Describe.
Does this person have a cardinal trait? If yes, what is it? Describe.
 6. Dynamics
Are there interesting dynamics in this person's life? Any conflicts, struggles, etc.? Describe.
 7. Development
Has there been a significant life event that has affected this person? That is, did this person experience something that (a) dramatically changed his or her way of thinking about the world or (b) influenced what he or she wanted to do in life? Describe.
Was there someone who had a huge impact on this person's life? Describe.
- Finally,** Integration (final paragraph or two):
Can you see a pattern in this person's personality? Do you see any connections among this person's motives, emotions, intelligence, traits, dynamics, and development? Describe.

Grading:

Please keep this paper to 6-8 pages (not including a cover page and references). Also, please use double spacing and Times New Roman 12 point font. The paper is due in class on April 12th. Your paper will be graded for accuracy in defining the attributes that are presented (with references, if necessary) and your ability to describe the person's personality and provide clear examples of how the person's personality is expressed (or not) in his or her behavior and personal surroundings. Your name, your TF's name, and the title of the paper go on the cover page.

Lab Experience

Your lab experience is an important and major component of this course. In the labs you will be administered personality scales and have other tasks to perform. This will give you first-hand experience with personality assessment. Your responses will be used to (a) provide you with feedback about certain aspects of your personality, (b) provide real examples for class instruction (i.e., issues in measurement and data analysis, and (c) to help you write entries in your workbook. The surveys will also show you how personality tests are used in employment selection, which may give you an edge on the job market. It will be a lot of fun!

All information you provide in the lab will be anonymous (i.e., no one will be able to identify you). You will create a code and receive feedback with that code. There will be two outside of class lab sessions (45 minutes each) and one in-class lab. The labs will be scheduled in the beginning of the semester, one lab per week for the 3rd and 4th weeks of the semester. In order to accommodate various schedules, labs will be offered three different times per week. If you don't participate in the lab, you will not get any feedback. There is an alternative assignment if you do not want to participate in the labs – a scholarly paper (4 to 5 pages). See me during the first week of classes if you choose paper option.

Attendance

During the course of the semester I will periodically ask you for brief one-minute papers that reflect on my teaching and the course materials. These activities are not graded, but your attendance will be recorded and contribute to your participation grade.

Grading: 100 = all, 90 = 1 missed, 80 = 2 missed, 70 = 3, 60 = 4, 50 = 5 or more papers missed

Optional Emotional Intelligence/Personality Research Paper

Your grade on this paper can replace your grade on either the first or second exam. There is no guarantee, of course, that your grade will be higher. Importantly, you must notify your TF before Spring Break if you are going to write this paper (no exceptions!)

For this assignment you will write a brief 4-page paper proposing research on Emotional Intelligence and how it relates to a person's personality or behavior. You can design (a) a correlational study or (b) an experiment. It's up to you. To write this paper you will (a) use the information in the *Key Readings Book*, and what you have learned in (b) the methods chapter in the text, (c) my class on methods, and (d) my class on emotional intelligence. You will also need to reference at least 2 published articles (from Psych Info, other than the one's in the EI readings book). More specific guidelines for this paper will be available later in the semester. The goal is to prepare you to write a mini-grant/research proposal (a very useful tool nowadays).

Your paper will have four parts:

1. Specific Aims (1 to 2 Paragraphs)
2. Background (3 to 4 Paragraphs)
3. Methods (as needed, but not more than 1 1/2 page)
4. Summary and Significance (1 to 2 Paragraphs)

Grading:

The best proposal will be clearly written, have a strong theoretical rationale, clear and testable hypotheses, a solid research design and expected results, and a clear intention to bring the EI field to new level. Please use Times Roman 12 point font, double spacing, and 1" margins. Your name and your TF's name go on the cover page with the title.

Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating

There is a departmental policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism in simple terms is taking quotes from the material you read or any other material (e.g., book, website) without identifying the source. Plagiarism also includes the re-use of your own written work without appropriate modifications and/or without permission of your instructor. The policy can be summarized as follows: Don't do it! It's illegal! You will fail the course. Ignorance is no excuse.

Cheating in this class consists of: a) letting someone do an assignment for you, b) copying an assignment from someone else, c) copying answers from someone else's exam, and d) using someone's else's materials as your own (e.g., not giving credit to an author). Avoid the temptation --you will fail the course.

Potential Deviations from the Syllabus

This syllabus is only a guide for the course. I reserve the right to change the schedule, grading procedures, and so forth, on an as-needed basis in order to insure the educational quality and fairness of the course. Most changes, if any, will be minimal and I will always provide you with the details.

Additional Important Resources

Writing Papers

PsychInfo - <http://resources.library.yale.edu/online/viewrecorddetpublic.asp?whatcaseedit=247>

APA Writing Style – <http://info.med.yale.edu/library/nursing/education/apa.html>

A Fellow Colleague

In case you are absent from class and need notes, or in case you just want to contact a fellow student, list the name and address of one fellow student that you do not know well.

Name: _____ Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Teaching Fellows

Teaching Fellows (TF) have office hours throughout the semester and are available at other times by appointment, if necessary. The office hours for all TFs will be posted on the classes server. You can either call or visit a TF during office hours. Please note: they will only be answering the phone during office hours, and won't be receiving voice mail messages. Email is probably the best way to communicate with a TF. Please be considerate when emailing or calling a Teaching Fellow.

You will be assigned a primary Teaching Fellow that will keep track of your grades and progress in the class. You should always consult your TF about your progress in the class before you schedule an appointment with me.

Please write the information on your Teaching Fellow here:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Office: _____ Hours: _____

General Outline for Course

Date	Topic	Text (Article)
1/13 – R	Welcome to Personality Psychology!	
1/18 – T	What is personality?	Chapter 1 (McAdams)
1/20 – R	<i>In Class Data Collection Day</i>	
1/25 – T	Perspectives - Part 1	Chapter 3 (Westen)
1/27 – R	Perspectives – Part 2	“ ”
2/1 – T	Methods - Part 1	Chapter 2 (Gosling)
2/3 – R	Methods – Part 2	“ ”
2/8 – T	<i>Exam 1 (Bring Workbook to Class)</i>	Chapters 1, 2, & 3
2/10 – R	Motivation	Chapter 4 (Bem)
2/15 – T	Emotion	“ ”
2/17 – R	Interior Selves	Chapter 5 (Oyserman)
2/22 – T	Thinking and General Intelligence	Chapter 6 (Sternberg)
2/24 – R	Emotional (and other alternative) Intelligences	“ ” (Brackett)
3/1 – T	Creativity	
3/3 – R	<i>Exam 2 (Bring Workbook to Class)</i>	Chapters 4, 5, & 6
3/4-20	Spring Break – see you in two weeks	
3/22 – T	Consciousness and Agencies	Chapter 7 (Kihlstrom)
3/24 – R	Structure & Organization (Big Five plus)	Chapter 8 (Robins)
3/29 – T	Dynamics – Part 1	Chapter 9 (Ekman)
3/31 – R	Dynamics – Part 2	Chapter 10 (Adams)
4/5 – T	Development - Infant/Child	Chapter 11 (Caspi)
4/7 - R	Development - Adult	Chapter 12
4/12 – T	Personality Disorders (<i>Autobiography due</i>)	
4/14 – R	Personality’s Expression at Work	
4/19 – T	The Pursuit of Happiness	(Diener)
4/21 – R	<i>Exam 3 (Bring Workbook to Class)</i>	Chapters 7 to 12
	<i>Optional Emotional Intelligence Paper is due</i>	