

HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL
Psychology E-1040 - Personality Theory
Spring 2016: Thursdays, 7:40 – 9:40
Location: Emerson 108

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Course Website: <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k107949>
<https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/8445>

Textbooks:

Undergrads:

- Burger, J.M. (2015). Personality – 9th edition, Wadsworth/Cengage
- Additional coursepack, available from: www.universityreaders.com
- Instructions for accessing coursepack:

Step 1: Log on to <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>.

Step 2: Create an account or log in if you have an existing account to purchase.

Step 3: Choose the correct course pack, select a format and proceed with the checkout process.

Step 4: After purchasing, you can access a digital copy of the first few chapters by logging into your account and clicking "**My Digital Materials**" to get started on your reading right away.

- Other assigned readings: Must be accessed under “Homework” section of the course website

Grad students:

- All of the above **AND**
- Friedman, H.S. & Schustack, M. W. (2008). Personality Reader, 2nd Ed. Allyn & Bacon – *this book is optional for undergraduates but required for grads.*

Optional Study Guide: Wilson, T. (2008). Study Guide for Burger's Personality, Wadsworth

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the major theories of personality and the research methods used to test these theories. Several perspectives on personality will be introduced and critical evaluation of these perspectives will be encouraged. From each of these different perspectives, we will address questions such as: What is personality? How do individuals differ and in what ways are they the same? What influences personality development? How is personality studied? What are the implications and consequences of our theories of personality? This is a survey course, which means that the depth in which

each theory is covered will be moderate; you are encouraged to find out more about the theories that particularly interest you.

A major aim in this course is that you will become comfortable enough with the theories to begin to apply them in the 'real world', and to find interesting new ways to think about your everyday experiences. As you progress through the course, I hope you will find yourself noting ways in which the theories apply to yourself and people in your life outside the classroom.

Classes will consist of lecture and discussion on topics that parallel and relate to the information covered in the textbook, but will not duplicate the textbook. Class time will be used to expand on and clarify concepts from the book, so completing reading assignments in a timely fashion will significantly enhance the usefulness and your enjoyment of class time. Exams will cover material both from class and from the reading; therefore attendance is crucial. *Students are responsible for **all** information presented in class and all information from the reading, and should obtain notes from a classmate for any lectures missed.*

Course Grade Components:

Exams: There will be three exams throughout the semester; they will be essentially non-cumulative, but may refer to general principles from previous sections. The lowest of the three exam grades will be dropped; thus, the best two of the 3 exam grades will count toward your final grade. Combined, the two exams will make up 60% of your course grade. The format of the exams will be multiple-choice plus some short and long essay questions. Because I am dropping one exam grade, there will be **no** make-up examinations for any reason. Only one exam will be dropped. If you miss two exams, you will receive a 0 for 30 % of your final grade in the course.

Final paper: The final paper will account for 20% of your final grade (see detailed assignment at end of this syllabus). The final paper will be due **April 28th**. If your paper is late you will lose from ½ to 1 letter grade on it, and **no papers will be accepted after May 5th**. If you are having difficulty meeting this deadline, it is essential that you contact me **in advance** to make arrangements. Absolutely no exceptions will be made after the deadline has passed.

Rough draft : Students are strongly encouraged to turn in a rough draft of the first part of this paper (sections A and B, see paper description) by **March 31st**. This draft will not be graded, but if you do turn it in you will receive 5 'bonus' points added to your final course grade. Rough drafts turned in later than April 9th will receive fewer points, and you will be receiving the feedback later, leaving you less time to make changes. I will provide feedback on the rough draft that will help you in preparing the final paper. Because it means automatic points added to your grade, and because turning in a rough draft will be your only way of knowing if you are on track with the paper assignment and getting valuable feedback, turning in the rough draft is very strongly encouraged; it will greatly enhance your success in this class. Rough drafts turned in early are very welcome! **We cannot be responsible for giving feedback on paper drafts that are turned in after April 7th.**

Homework: For every Burger textbook chapter read, students will be required to turn in 1 comment or observation regarding the chapter material. Optimally, I would like to see students relating the material to their own experience as much as possible, and thinking in an abstract and critical way about what they are reading. Homework will constitute 15% of your final

grade. I will not be grading these observations and comments; you will get full credit for simply turning them in on time. However, I will be reading them and will often provide feedback on your answers. For almost every Burger chapter, a list of thought questions is available on the course website. You may choose to take your homework items from this list but are free to devise your own comment without using these questions. Although 15% seems like a small proportion of your grade, it will be easy to earn the full 15 points, so you might as well do the homework. Also, I consistently receive feedback from students that while they find the homework tedious to do at times, it is valuable in helping them keep up with their readings.

Because the homework portion of the grade is very generous, and due to the high volume of homework I will be reading each week, **I cannot accept any late homework.** If you know you will be missing a week of class, you can turn the homework in early, either in the previous class or by e-mail. We strongly prefer that you turn your homework in on paper. If you must e-mail your homework assignment, it must be turned in by the end of that evening's class or it will not receive credit.

In addition to Burger chapters, there are a few required readings for each course topic; you can download these files from the "Homework" section of the course website. If you would like to substitute one comment on one of these readings for the comment on one of your Burger chapters, you may do so.

Undergrads: there will be sixteen Burger chapters assigned, and thus you will need to turn in 16 comments or observations. **Grad students:** In addition to the assignment that the undergrads are doing (see above), you will be reading additional chapters in Friedman and Schustack every week, and must submit one comment on each of those chapters, in addition to the Burger chapters. There are thought questions in the Friedman and Schustack book after each chapter to give you ideas, but you are not limited to those.

Class sessions:

Lectures: All students are required to attend class lectures regularly. Since not all of the material from the textbook will be in the lectures and vice versa, it will be important **both** to do the assigned reading **and** to attend class and section meetings. While I will not be formally taking attendance at lectures, by the end of the course it will have been noticeable to me if you have not been attending class regularly.

Sections: There will be two discussion section meetings held each week before class in our classroom (Emerson 108). Students must choose on the first night of class which section they will attend (5:30-6:30, or 6:30-7:30). There will be an equal number of spaces in each section, and sign-up will be first-come, first-served, to avoid overcrowding in the 6:30 section. Sections will typically be led by the teaching assistant, but will occasionally be led by me. In addition to discussing course material in further depth, sections will also be used for exam preparation, term paper guidance, and reviews of the latest exam. For graduate students, section is mandatory. For undergraduate students, section is optional but will enhance your class participation grade, so attendance at section is strongly encouraged. Attendance will be taken at each section meeting, and students arriving more than 15 minutes late will not receive credit.

*Students are encouraged to submit questions for discussion in sections or lecture by each **Monday** afternoon. Submitting questions is one way of indicating that you are involved in the course (see “class participation”, below). Questions can be submitted by e-mail to Dr. Sogg or Dr. Gorman.*

Class participation: Even though this is a relatively large class, student participation will be a very important part of this course. By participating in class and section discussions, students can become more engaged in learning the material, shaping the focus of the class so that it meets their needs, and—most importantly—critically assessing the ideas presented. Especially because this is a long, evening class time, it will be important to keep class more dynamic, interesting and rewarding—we will all need to stay awake! Class participation (of one type or another) will constitute 5% of your course grade.

I understand that some students are more comfortable with speaking up in class than others. **If you feel shy about participating in class, it is important to let me know this early in the semester**, so that I can judge your level of participation through other means besides speaking in class or section discussions. While everyone will be encouraged to contribute to class and section discussions, there will be other ways to show that you are participating in the learning process beyond simply doing the assignments and showing up for lectures and section. Students who take the time to talk to me or Dr. Gorman outside of class about class material will also be demonstrating involvement. You might also bring in a relevant article, or set up a meeting to talk to me or Dr. Gorman about class material. You are encouraged to use the “online discussion” feature of the course website, as well.

GRADING COMPONENTS

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|----------------|-----|
| Exams (2): | 60% |
| Paper: | 20% |
| Homework: | 15% |
| Participation: | 5% |

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| Total: | 100% |
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Office hours: Because I do not teach full-time at Harvard, it is difficult for me to set regular office hours on campus. I will be available for approximately 30-45 minutes in a classroom near the one in which lecture/section are taking place (Emerson 106) before each class session, in addition to making myself available over e-mail and by telephone, or to meet individually outside of class. Please feel free to call or send me e-mail at my office, where I am available during business hours. Please consider me (and Dr. Gorman) a resource for assisting in understanding material from the book, lecture or exams, or for problem-solving any difficulties arising in the course. Any other advising questions are also welcome (course choices, career planning, etc.).

Important Note: If at any point a student is having difficulty completing assignments or attending class, it is strongly recommended that he or she meet with me immediately to discuss the situation. Often difficulties can be solved in advance but by the end of the semester less can be done to overcome the problem.

Extra Credit: Extra credit is reserved for students in good standing, who have been attending class and sections and making a consistent effort during the semester. Extra credit is not for raising the grades of students who have not been attending or who have been doing poorly in the course due to lack of effort.

Graduate vs. Undergraduate Status: The main differences between the workload for graduate and undergraduate students is that graduate students are required to attend section meetings every week, read selected chapters from the Friedman and Schustack book, and turn in homework assignments on those chapters in addition to the ones in the Burger text. Graduate students are also expected to write a more sophisticated paper, using original source material in addition to the text and lecture material (see below for more details). Also, all graduate exams will be graded by me and will be held to a higher standard.

Learning Differences/Accommodations: The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. Instructors are not permitted to grant or create accommodations for students with disabilities at our own discretion. To obtain accommodations or services, students must work through the Accessibility Office, which offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility for more information.

Paper Assignment for Psychology E-1040

Overall assignment:

One 10-12 page paper in which you: a) describe either a person you know, a celebrity, a historical figure, or a character from a book, movie, or other medium; b) describe and examine this person from a **psychoanalytic** perspective (either Freud or one of his followers); c) describe and examine this person from another (**not psychoanalytic**) theoretical perspective we've covered in this course; d) summarize and present your critical opinion about how well (or not!) these theories serve in examining the person in question.

For part a: This part should be a strictly descriptive, without any interpretation. That is, describe what this person does, says or feels, not why he or she does these things. Try to paint a rich picture of this person; make sure you capture his or her idiosyncrasies and let the reader really get to know him or her. **If you do know the person, please write the paper as if you do not; if you include yourself in the paper it will seem less academic and call the writer's objectivity into question.**

For parts b and c: Go back over your description in part a and provide an explanation for these characteristics using each of the theories you have chosen. ***For those taking the course for graduate credit: Your paper is expected have more depth and sophistication. For each of sections b and c I want you to read one additional source and use that source in your analysis. This should be an original source, written by the theorist you are discussing, such as The Interpretation of Dreams by Sigmund Freud. You can use the references at the end of each Burger chapter and choose a source from among them, or find your own. You may not use any Friedman and Schustack chapter as your required 'additional primary source', but you can use them in the paper the way you would use material from Burger or our class lectures. Be sure to use proper citation and reference procedures for your sources so that you are not inadvertently plagiarizing.***

It may help to briefly review the main thrust of the theory first (e.g. "Freud emphasized unconscious conflict as the determinant of behavior") and then proceed with your application of the theory. You should be explaining and analyzing the person's behavior in these sections, answering the question "why is this person like this, according to this theory?" Be sure to explain any inconsistencies in behavior or in the theories' explanations of behavior.

For part d: In part d you are critically evaluating the theories, stating your own opinion about how well (or poorly) the theories you have used explain and account for the personality of your subject. State your opinions and the reasons behind them. This is your opportunity to have a voice - there are no wrong opinions. Just be sure to provide the reasons for what you think so that the reader can understand your reasoning.

Suggestions For Final Papers

Content

Remember to focus on personality, describe how a person is and *then* why that may be the case. If you are using a story or a film, be sure to be analyzing a character, not the film as a whole. Please avoid simply retelling the plot of the story or film. Identify specific characteristics of your subject and then explain those same characteristics in the theory sections.

Be specific about which theory you are using when you are writing about the theories.

Apply the theory comprehensively. That means using several elements and integrating them into a cohesive, unified whole. If there are inconsistencies, be sure to address them and attempt to reconcile them in your paper.

Don't simply take each section of a theory and apply it (for example – "These characteristics would indicate fixation in the oral stage; these characteristics would indicate fixation in the phallic stage; these defense mechanisms are used). Instead, integrate these parts: There is evidence that some traumatic event may have occurred during the oral stage...(provide evidence). These unresolved conflicts lead to an excess of unacceptable id impulses, requiring the use of many defense mechanisms (give examples of defense mechanisms the subject uses).... Also, this fixation may have led to subsequent developmental difficulties. For instance in the phallic stage....") Don't use that example verbatim--it is just to give you an idea of how to integrate different parts of the theory.

Specific Sections of the Paper

For character description (part A):

- Be sure to talk about what person is like, not only what the person has done. You want to give the reader a sense of this individual's personality, not just a biographical sketch. (Sometimes adding biographical information will be helpful, though – for instance commenting on how your subject's personality has changed over time or in response to particular events.)
- Focus on personality characteristics, not psychiatric symptoms.
- Organize your comments so that the reader can follow the points you are making. Develop your characterization – don't simply provide a list of attributes. Connect them to one another, group similar characteristics together, and reconcile any inconsistencies in your description. (In other words, be sure the reader isn't left thinking "but wait, I thought you said he/she was...")
- Examples of subjects people have chosen in the past: family members and friends (can be risky – will discuss this in class); Michael Jackson; Jim Morrison; Holden Caulfield; Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer; Adolph Hitler.

For analysis sections (parts B & C):

- Don't assume the reader knows the theories. Be sure to explain all the elements of the theories you use. Papers generally work best when analysis is preceded by a brief overview of the theory.
- Be sure to capture the overall main themes of the theory, not just focus on a couple of small aspects of it. Papers are most effective when the reader is given a good sense of

the theory and then taken through several ways in which the theory helps explain the personality characteristics highlighted in part A.

- Be sure these sections explain the “why” of the personality characteristics. This means that just describing how the individual uses defense mechanisms isn’t enough – address why these defense mechanisms may be needed.
- Be careful not to overstate your analysis. Using words like “may” or “possibly” help put your proposed interpretation in the appropriate frame. Also, if you’ve described someone who is fairly well adjusted, don’t overstate his or her difficulties in this section (it’s particularly easy to do this with Freud’s theory.)
- Your analysis should explain all of the aspects of the personality you’ve described in part A, or you should acknowledge those parts that you don’t think fit well within the theory.
- Use your own words as much as possible, rather than direct quotes from the book, but always indicate when you are using someone else’s ideas – see below.

For whole paper:

- Read it over out loud and see if it makes sense and if one idea flows into the next.
- Check grammar and spelling!
- You must cite any books or articles that you use in your paper. **PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT PLAGIARISM IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE THAT MAY RESULT IN FAILING THE COURSE OR EVEN REMOVAL FROM YOUR HARVARD PROGRAM.** Not all plagiarism is intentional. If you use someone else’s words, you must indicate this by using quotations and a citation. If you use someone else’s ideas, even if you put them into your own words, you must credit your source. You must do this in two ways: First, after you either quote or paraphrase someone else’s ideas in the body of the paper, put in parentheses the author’s name and the year of publication of the source material (e.g., “(Burger, 2004)”. Second, list each source in a “References” section at the end—do not use footnotes. A correct citation is as follows:

For a book:

Burger, J. (2015). *Personality*, 9th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Author (year). Book Title. City of publishing company: Name of publisher.

For an article:

Davidson, R. (1988). A critical appraisal of self-report defense mechanism measures. *Journal of Personality*, 66, 965-992.

Author (year). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume number, page numbers.

Please see the course website for more information on correct form for citing outside sources. Additional help can be found in the “Writing with Sources” booklet available from the Harvard Coop and under “Paper Aids” on the course website