

PSYD30

CURRENT TOPICS IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

Prof. Marc A. Fournier

An intensive examination of selected issues and research problems in personality psychology.
The specific content will vary from year to year.

Class Times: Mondays from 10am to 12pm in MW223.
Office Hours: Mondays from 1pm to 2pm or by appointment.
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Overview. This year, we will be reading *Optimal Human Being: An Integrated Multi-Level Perspective* (2004) by Ken Sheldon. This recent publication summarizes and elaborates upon the 3-tiered framework that was introduced to you in PSYB30 (traits—characteristic adaptations—integrative life stories). Sheldon first provides a comprehensive framework in which to locate all of the human sciences. He then introduces a new way of viewing personality as a 4-tiered “functional hierarchy” comprising traits, goals/intentions, selves/self-concepts, and species-typical characteristics. Finally, Sheldon portrays how these levels of analysis combine and interact inside the individual, and in so doing invites us to reconsider our understanding of “optimal human being.” Here is a breakdown of the evaluation scheme.

Chapter Summaries — 20%. I expect you to submit a summary of the assigned chapter each week. Chapter summaries should be 1-page long with 1-inch margins and written using a standard 12-pt Times New Roman font. Your name, your student number, and the chapter number should all be clearly indicated at the top of the page. Please submit a hard copy of your summary to me at the start of class; late summaries/e-copies will not be accepted. You will write 10 summaries in all (one for each chapter), and each summary will be worth 2 points. You will receive 1.0 point if your summary is adequate, 1.5 points if your summary is fair/good, and 2.0 points if your summary is excellent.

In-Class Oral Presentation — 30%. I expect you to make one in-class oral presentation that summarizes the assigned chapter. You will present in groups of 3; each student should speak for 10-15 minutes, so group presentations should run 30-45 minutes in length. Transparencies, StarOffice, or PowerPoint should be used as part of the presentation. You are encouraged (but not required) to supplement the chapter you have chosen with 1-3 outside sources (i.e., journal articles); you can do so by searching your topic on the U of T Libraries PsycInfo database (<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/resources/index.html>). Although you must collaborate to determine who will present what, I will evaluate all but one component of your presentations individually. I will be looking to answer each of the following questions to determine your grade:

- COMPREHENSION & ORGANIZATION
 - Did the student clearly understand all of the relevant issues?
 - Did the student discuss each issue with appropriate emphasis?
- CLARITY OF PRESENTATION
 - Did the student use interesting examples to illustrate the relevant issues?
 - Did the student devise clear and effective slides to illustrate the relevant issues?
- DISCUSSION
 - Did the group of produce engaging post-presentation discussion questions (≈5 in all)?

Midterm Exam — 20%. A 2-hour midterm will be held in class.
The midterm will cover chapters 1–4 and will consist of both short answer and essay questions.

Final Exam — 30%. A 3-hour final will be held during the exam period.
The final will cover chapters 5–10 and will consist of both short answer and essay questions.