

# PSYD30 CURRENT TOPICS IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

Prof. Marc A. Fournier

*A significant feature of the human condition  
is that it is not at all clear how to live life,  
yet something must be tried.*

–William Fleeson

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

Seminar Times: Mondays from 15:00 to 17:00 in MW223

Office Hours: Mondays from 17:00 to 18:00 in SW513

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## Textbook

This term we will be reading *Optimal Human Being: An Integrated Multi-Level Perspective* (2004) by Ken Sheldon. First, Sheldon provides an integrative framework in which to locate all of the human sciences. Within this framework, Sheldon then introduces a view of personality as a functional hierarchy comprising traits/dispositions, goals/intentions, self-stories/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 personality functioning.

## Course Overview

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	Chapter 1. Discussion
Week 3	Chapter 2. Presentation & Discussion
Week 4	Chapter 3. Presentation & Discussion
Week 5	Chapter 4. Presentation & Discussion
Week 6	<b>Two-Hour In-Class Midterm Exam</b>
Week 7	Chapter 5. Presentation & Discussion
Week 8	Chapter 6. Presentation & Discussion
Week 9	Chapter 7. Presentation & Discussion
Week 10	Chapter 8. Presentation & Discussion
Week 11	Chapter 9. Presentation & Discussion
Week 12	Chapter 10. Discussion

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### Components of Evaluation

- 20% Individual Participation
- 30% Group Presentation
- 20% Midterm Exam
- 30% Final Exam

**Individual Participation.** I expect you to come to class each week, to pay attention to the comments of your classmates, and to contribute regularly and thoughtfully to the discussion. You will receive course credit for each of these activities. First, I expect you to come to class. Attendance will be taken on a weekly basis (except for Weeks 1 and 6) and you will receive 1% for every class you attend to a total of 10%. Second, I expect you to submit a one-page reaction paper each week summarizing the discussion from the previous week and your contributions to that discussion (you need not summarize Weeks 6 or 12). Third, I expect you to contribute to the discussion. Your comments should demonstrate that you have both read and reflected upon the assigned chapter. My evaluation of your reaction papers and comments in class together will count for an additional 10%.

**Group Presentation.** I expect you to make one presentation that summarizes and elaborates upon the chapter you have selected. You will present in groups of three; each student should speak for approx. 15 minutes, so group presentations should run for approx. 45 minutes in length. I expect you to use PowerPoint as part of your presentation. You will be required to go beyond simply summarizing the chapter. I expect you to provide the class with an expanded perspective and critical analysis of the assigned reading; you can do so by consulting supplementary readings such as journal articles and book chapters. Your presentations will be evaluated individually in terms of your clarity of presentation, your comprehension/organization, and your leadership in the subsequent discussion.

**Midterm Exam.** A two-hour term test will be held in class. The term test will assess your understanding of chapters 1-4 and will consist of short essay questions. Please note that there will be no make-up exams. Students with acceptable documentation for their absence will have the weight of the midterm reallocated to the other evaluative components.

**Final Exam.** A three-hour final exam will be held during the final exam period. The final exam will cover chapters 1-10 (i.e. the entire course) and will consist of one essay question.

**Note.** The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.