

## PSYD30H3 Current Topics in Personality Psychology

**PROFESSOR:** Dr. Oren Amitay, Ph.D., C.Psych. (Registered Psychologist)  
**CLASS TIMES:** Mondays from 3:00 to 5:00 in MW130 **OFFICE HOURS:** TBA  
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**IF YOU DO NOT HEAR BACK FROM ME W/IN 24 HOURS, PLEASE CONTACT ME AGAIN**  
**MSN "LIVE" CHAT:** [ask\\_my\\_prof@hotmail.com](mailto:ask_my_prof@hotmail.com)  
**INTRANET** \*\*\***YOU** are responsible for checking INTRANET frequently for the readings and critical class news/updates/information\*\*\*\*

This course is intended to advance students' understanding of various issues in personality theory and research. Each week we will examine journal articles on different themes in personality psychology to help you recognize the strengths and limitations of the different constructs involved in this field and the methods employed in investigating these phenomena.

### METHOD OF EVALUATION:

|                                       |     |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| Mid-Term Exam (Oct. 20)               | 25% | Covering Sept. 8 – Oct. 6     |
| Class Work/Participation              | 10% | Evaluated over all 11 classes |
| Presentation and Discussion Leader    | 10% |                               |
| Term Paper                            | 25% | Due Oct. 27                   |
| Final Exam (During Final Exam Period) | 30% | Covering Oct. 27 – Dec. 1     |

You are responsible for reading the articles **BEFORE** class and your participation grade will reflect both your attendance (mandatory) and ability to understand and discuss the course material. The **Midterm** and **Final Exams** will be comprised of a variety of types of questions, from short answer to essay to objective measures, and will test your understanding of material/information covered in class and in the journal articles. If you miss either exam, you will have to provide proper medical documentation and petition to be allowed to write a special Midterm Exam (harder than the original) or a deferred Final Exam during the next exam period (up to four months away). I am very strict about medical documentation and do not give make-up exams easily. **\*\*ALL components must be completed to pass this course.\*\***

### TERM PAPER:

**Intranet** contains a detailed document explaining the **Term Paper**. In short, you will be required to choose a "controversial" topic dealing with "personality," explain where the controversy came from, present two (or more) sides to the controversy, and give a solid explanation for why you are more compelled by one side of the controversy than the other(s). This paper should demonstrate your appreciation for some of the problems that limit theory and research in the field of Personality and should go beyond anything you hear in class. This is an **eight- to ten-page paper** (approximately **2500 words**) with at least **ten acceptable references**. **Intranet** contains a step-by-step guide on how to present your work in the "gold standard" of psychology, **APA style**. Make sure to read these documents so you do not unnecessarily lose points.

If you are not comfortable with your writing abilities, or would like a quick refresher on specific topics, then be sure to make use of the following two excellent resources:

**UTSC Writing Centre:** AC 210, <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~tlswweb/TWC/index.htm> (offers 20 min. drop in sessions, or 50 min. 1-1 sessions)

**U of T Advice on Academic Writing:** <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/advice.html> (great source of materials on writing)

### COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS:

**Sept. 8** Introduction to course/overview

NO READINGS

**Sept. 15** The Big Five and Personality Disorders

Bagby, R. M., Costa, P. T., Widiger, T. A., Ryder, A. G., & Marshall, M. (2005). DSM-IV personality disorders and the five-factor model of personality: A multi-method examination of domain and facet-level predictions. *European Journal of Personality, 19*, 307-324.

Miller, J. D., Bagby, M. R., & Pilkonis, P. A. (2005). A comparison of the validity of the Five-Factor Model (FFM) personality disorder prototypes using FFM self-report and interview measures. *Psychological Assessment, 17*, 497-500.

## COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS (continued):

### Sept. 22 Projective Techniques vs Objective Tests in Personality Assessment

Erickson, S. K., Lilienfeld, S. O., & Vitacco, M. J. (2007). A critical examination of the suitability and limitations of psychological tests in family court. *Family Court Review*, 45, 153–170.

Erard, R. E. (2007). Picking cherries with blinders on: A comment on Erickson et al. (2007) regarding the use of tests in family court. *Family Court Review*, 45, 175–184.

### Sept. 29 Projective Techniques vs Objective Tests (continued); Dependency and Self-Criticism

Erickson, S. K., Lilienfeld, S. O., & Vitacco, M. J. (2007). Failing the burden of proof: The science and ethics of projective tests in custody evaluations. *Family Court Review*, 45, 185–192.

Zuroff, D. C., Mongrain, M., & Santor, D. A. (2004). Conceptualizing and measuring personality vulnerability to depression: Comment on Coyne and Whiffen (1995). *Psychological Bulletin*, 130, 489–511.

### Oct. 6 Dependency and Self-Criticism (continued)

Coyne, J. C., Thompson, R., & Whiffen, V. (2004). Is the promissory note of personality as vulnerability to depression in default? Reply to Zuroff, Mongrain, and Santor (2004). *Psychological Bulletin*, 130, 512–517.

Zuroff, D. C., Mongrain, M., & Santor, D. A. (2004). Investing in the personality vulnerability research program—Current dividends and future growth: Rejoinder to Coyne, Thompson, and Whiffen (2004). *Psychological Bulletin*, 130, 518–522.

### Oct. 13 HOLIDAY

### Oct. 20 MIDTERM EXAM

### Oct. 27 Birth Order

**\*\*\*Term Paper is Due Today\*\*\***

Healey, M.D., & Ellis, B. J. (2007). Birth order, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Tests of the family-niche model of personality using a within-family methodology. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 28, 55 – 59.

Nov. 3 Group Presentation 1\*

Nov. 10 Group Presentation 2\*

Nov. 17 Group Presentation 3\*

Nov. 24 Group Presentation 4\*

Dec. 1 Group Presentation 5\*

The articles referenced above are available to PSYD30H3 students for download from Intranet.

\* Each group will provide me with an electronic copy of your article at least one week prior to your presentation, and I will upload it to Intranet for your colleagues. The format and expectations of the presentations will be discussed further in class and on Intranet.

### Policies on academic integrity:

Please review the UTSC Code on Academic Behaviour:

[http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/courses/calendar/University\\_of\\_Toronto\\_Policies.html#Code\\_of\\_Behaviour\\_on\\_Academic\\_Matters](http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/courses/calendar/University_of_Toronto_Policies.html#Code_of_Behaviour_on_Academic_Matters)

### AccessAbility:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. The UTSC AccessAbility Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

*The preceding schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change. Any changes will be discussed in class and agreed upon by students beforehand.*