

PSYD20: CURRENT TOPICS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Course Instructor: Dr. Stefano I. Di Domenico

This seminar is an intensive examination of selected topics and research problems in developmental psychology. Our focus will be **personality development**.

The main goals of this seminar are to provide students a solid foundation in contemporary research on personality development, to encourage their critical thinking, and to provide them with opportunities to develop and practice their presentation skills.

Instructor Office Hours: TBA (by appointment only)

Seminar Times: Mondays from 11:00 to 13:00 in HLB 108

Email: stefanoddmn@gmail.com (*Please include “PSYD20” at the start of the subject line*)

Office Hours Policy. Office hours are by appointment only.

Course Website. This course will use the University of Toronto *Quercus* online teaching and learning environment.

Copyright. For the protection of privacy and copyright, any unauthorized video/audio-recording of this class is strictly prohibited.

Seminar Schedule

Week 1	Jan. 6	Course Overview
Week 2	Jan. 13	Introduction to Personality Development
Week 3	Jan. 20	Temperament and Personality
Week 4	Jan. 27	Mean-Level Change
Week 5	Feb. 3	Rank-Order Change
Week 6	Feb. 10	Narrating Personality Change
Week 7	Feb. 17	***** <i>Reading Week</i> *****
Week 8	Feb. 24	Cognitive Aging
Week 9	Mar. 2	Behavioral Genetics and Epigenetics
Week 10	Mar. 9	Gene × Environment Interactions
Week 11	Mar. 16	Parenting
Week 12	Mar. 23	Change Through Intervention
Week 13	Mar. 30	Final Exam

Components of Evaluation

30%	Individual Participation
30%	Group Presentation
40%	Final Exam

Individual Participation. Active student participation is essential to the success of a seminar course. To encourage your involvement in all aspects of this seminar, your participation will be incentivized in three ways:

1. **Reflection Papers (10%):** For Weeks 2 through 12, you are asked to submit a one-page (double-spaced) reflection paper each week summarizing your comments and questions concerning a reading assigned for that class (see **Reflection Paper Template**, page 8). I will not be formally grading your reflection papers. Instead, I will be reading your reflection papers to ensure that you have made a good faith attempt to grapple with the assigned reading. Please note that you must submit your reflection papers at the very beginning of class each week. You will receive 1% for each reflection paper. To accommodate unexpected personal circumstances (e.g., illness, family-related emergencies) I will accept a maximum of two email submissions per student. Email submissions must be received before the start of class.
2. **Seminar Participation (10%):** You are asked to play an active role in advancing the seminar by making constructive contributions to class discussions each week (see **Guidelines for Seminar Participation** on page 9). I will be evaluating the overall

quality and quantity of your class involvement each week, as well as your overall contributions to the seminar throughout the semester.

3. **Pop Quizzes (10%):** Three pop quizzes (i.e., short tests without advanced notice) will be held at the beginning of class. These quizzes will be scattered throughout the semester between Weeks 2 and 12. Each quiz will consist of true-or-false and/or multiple choice questions. I will only count your two best quiz performances toward your final grade. Missed pop quizzes will receive a grade of zero.

Group Presentation (30%). You will be asked to select a topic from the seminar schedule and present the reading material for that week. You will be asked to present the material with one or two other students (i.e., students will present in groups of two or three). You and your group mates should speak for approximately 30 minutes each. Group presentations should therefore run for approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length. The class will use the remaining 60 to 30 minutes of time to discuss and debate the presented materials. Because the use of multimedia is now generally expected in the delivery of oral presentations, you are asked to construct and use PowerPoint slides as part of your presentation. Although you will be presenting in a group, your presentation will be evaluated on an individual basis. I will be using the **Presentation Grading Scheme** (see page 10) to grade your presentation in terms of its organizational clarity, how well you support the group discussion and, of course, your command of the subject matter.

Final Exam (40%). You will be asked to write a two-hour exam. Exam details will be discussed in class.

Academic Integrity. The University of Toronto treats academic offenses very seriously. Offenders are caught and sanctions can be severe (a grade of zero, suspension, expulsion). Students are expected both to know and to follow the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. Additional information can be found at

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>.

The Writing Centre. Your performance in this class will depend in large part upon your ability to communicate clearly and effectively. The Writing Centre supports student learning at any stage in the writing process, from planning an outline to polishing a final draft. Their services include online resources, drop-in hours, one-on-one consultations, and writing workshops. Additional information can be found at <https://utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/writing-support>.

AccessAbility Services. The principal function of AccessAbility Services is to ensure that the policies, practices, procedures, and programs at UTSC are inclusive to ensure the equal access to students with disabilities. The office thus provides accommodations to students with a

documented learning, physical, sensory, or mental health disability or medical condition. Additional information can be found at <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/>

Seminar Readings

Week 1. Course Overview

Instructor and student introductions. Please carefully read the syllabus.

Week 2. Introduction to Personality Development

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. Jr. (2008). The Five-Factor Theory of personality. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 159-181). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Roberts, B.W., et al. (2008). The development of personality traits in adulthood. In O.P. John, R.W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 375-398). New York, NY: Guilford.

Boutwell, B. (2015). Why Parenting May Not Matter and Why Most Social Science Research is Probably Wrong. *Quillette* (<https://quillette.com/2015/12/01/why-parenting-may-not-matter-and-why-most-social-science-research-is-probably-wrong/>)

Week 3. Temperament and Personality

Shiner, R. L. & DeYoung, C. G. (2013). The structure of temperament and personality traits: A developmental Perspective. In. P. D. Zelazo (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Developmental Psychology* (Vol. 2: Self and Other).

Week 4. Mean-Level Change

Roberts, B. W., et al. (2006). Patterns of mean-level change in personality traits across the life course: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132, 1-25.

Jackson, J. J., et al., (2009). Not all conscientiousness scales change alike: A multimethod, multisample study of age differences in the facets of conscientiousness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 446-459.

Week 5. Rank-Order Change

Roberts, B.W., & Del Vecchio, W. F. (2000). The rank-order consistency of personality traits from childhood to old age. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 3-25.

Low, et al., (2005). The stability of vocational interests from early adolescence to middle adulthood: A quantitative review of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 713-737.

Week 6. Narrating Personality Change

McAdams, D. P. (2013). The psychological self as actor, agent, and author. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8, 272-295.

Lodi-Smith, J., et al. (2009). Narrating personality change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 679-689.

Week 7. Reading Week

Be conscientious and get a head-start on the readings for future weeks.

Week 8. Cognitive Aging

Deary, I. J., et al. (2004). The impact of childhood intelligence on later life: Following up on the Scottish Mental Surveys of 1932 and 1947. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 130-147.

Tucker-Drob, E. M. (2019). Cognitive aging and dementia: A life-span perspective. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology*, 1, 177-196.

Week 9. Behavioral Genetics and Epigenetics

Plomin, R., et al. (2016). Top 10 replicated findings from behavioral genetics. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11, 3-23.

Vukasovic, T., & Bratko, D. (2012). Heritability of Personality: A meta-analysis of behavior genetics studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 141, 769-785.

Zhang, T., & Meaney, M. J. (2010). Epigenetics and the environmental regulation of the genome and its functions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 439-466.

Week 10. Gene × Environment Interactions

Briley, D. A., & Tucker-Drob, E. M. (2000). Explaining the increasing heritability of cognitive ability across development: A meta-analysis of longitudinal twin and adoption studies. *Psychological Science*, 29, 1704-1713.

Tucker-Drob, E. M., et al. (2008). Genetic and environmental influences on cognition across development and context. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22, 349-355.

Tucker-Drob, E. M. (2017). Motivational factors as mechanisms of gene-environment transactions in cognitive development and academic achievement. In A. J. Elliot, C. S. Dweck, & D. S. Yeager (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application* (pp. 471–486). The Guilford Press.

Week 11. Parenting

Bindman, S. W., et al. (2005). Do children's executive functions account for associations between early autonomy-supportive parenting and achievement through high school? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107, 756-770.

Ayoub, M. et al., (2018). Genetic and environmental associations between child personality and parenting. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 10, 711–721.

Week 12. Change Through Intervention

Roberts, B. W., et al. (2017). A systematic review of personality trait change through intervention. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143, 117-141.

Ritchie, S. J., & Tucker-Drob, E. M. (2018). How much does education improve intelligence? A meta-analysis. *Psychological Science*, 29, 1358-1369.

Week 13. Final Exam

Two-hour cumulative final exam written in class.

Reflection Paper

Name: _____ **Student Number:** _____

Week _____, **Topic:** _____

<Begin summarizing your reflections here.>

Suggested format:

Paragraph 1: Briefly describe the content of the readings.

Paragraph 2: Briefly describe the content that you found interesting. Explain why you found this content interesting.

Paragraph 3: Briefly describe what you think you did not understand. You may also share your constructive criticisms of the material.

Guidelines for Seminar Participation¹

Prepare to contribute by carefully reviewing the syllabus and locating the current readings and topics in relation to the course as a whole. Know why you are discussing this particular topic at this juncture in the course. Use the syllabus and lecture material to generate questions and comments in advance.

Explicitly relate or link your observations and comments to course objectives, central themes and main topics.

Ask a question that encourages someone to clarify or elaborate on a comment.

Make a comment to **link two people's contributions**.

Explain that you found another person's ideas interesting or useful, and describe why.

Build on what someone else has said. Be explicit about the way you are extending the other person's thought.

Paraphrase a point someone has already made and build on it.

Summarize several people's contributions, taking into account a recurring theme in the discussion. "It seems we have heard variations on two main points of view; on the one hand..."

Ask a question that relates to that week's course topic—for example, "Can you explain how this example illustrates the concept (course topic) of ...?"

Find a way to **express appreciation for the insights you have gained** from the discussion. Be specific about what it was that helped you understand something better.

Disagree with someone in a respectful and constructive way. You might reflect the comment back to the speaker to indicate that you have listened well. If possible, point out what is interesting or compelling in someone's comment before explaining why and how you disagree.

¹ Adapted from: <http://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/for-students/class-participation-contr/>

Presentation Grading Scheme

Percentage	Grade Definition
90-100	Excellent: Strong evidence of subject mastery; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base; <u>advanced the group discussion by preparing well-constructed questions</u> ; elaborated on the topics and problems of previous weeks.
77-89	Good: Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature; <u>provided enough content material for a worthwhile group discussion</u> .
67-76	Adequate: Student who is profiting from his/her seminar experience; understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
50-66	Marginal: Some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
0-49	Inadequate: Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; with limited or irrelevant use of literature.