
PERSONALITY & INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES in Fall 2018 (PY2022)

Course Code	PY2022	Professor(s)	Irene Strasser, Martin Dege
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	PV-202
Class Schedule	W: 10:35-13:30 in PL-1	Office Hours	Wednesday, 9-10 and by appointment
Credits	4	Email	istrasser@aup.edu, mdege@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

Personality addresses central psychological questions on how persons think, feel and act. This course provides students with a solid foundation in the basics of theory and research in personality psychology. Students will learn about classic and contemporary perspectives in the field, continuing controversies and debates and the rationale and techniques for personality assessment. In detail, this course introduces students to

a) the major theoretical perspectives on personality, including personality assessment and applications of personality psychology
and

b) explanations of individual differences with a focus on personality, intelligence and measurement of individual differences, also from a life span and gender perspective.

Teaching/learning methods: inputs, discussion, group discussions, close reading, team work, short presentations, assignments, written reflections, group tasks, lab sessions.

PY1000 is recommended as a prerequisite.

Course Learning Outcomes

Knowledge of the major perspectives on human personality

The ability to compare and debate the strengths and weaknesses of personality theories

Knowledge of the empirical and theoretical basis of the major instruments to assess personality

Ability to apply personality theories to the study of human lives.

Strengthen skills reading and critiquing primary source materials

General Education

This course can be used to fulfill the Mapping the World requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

- helps students understand how human experience has been organized in and across time and space
- helps students to learn how various forms of social experience emerge

Course Outline

1) What is Personality? (September, 12)

"What does "personality" mean?" is the first question we will raise. Is there a simple answer? Do psychologists agree on a specific approach to describe personality?

An overview at the vast field of personality research is provided, students are asked to discuss their personal theories, applications and reflections on "personality", and together we will try to identify commonalities and differences concerning personality theory on the one hand and our everyday experiences on the other hand. Students are invited to engage in item construction for a "friendliness scale" in class.

2) Goals of personality research and ethics (September, 19)

Why is the experiment the "gold standard" in science? Is this a useful perspective on psychological research? What kind of data is collected to investigate personality?

We will hear about different ways to collect data, and different types of data. Together we will complete different measurements ourselves and discuss advantages and disadvantages of particular forms of data. We will also further develop our friendliness scale.

3) The Big Five in the wake of Cambridge Analytica - traits, stability, continuity (September, 26)

Why do some people enjoy presentations in front of a large audience and others not? What does OCEAN stand for and what has Cambridge Analytica to do with it?

In this session we will learn about one of the most prominent perspectives on personality, the "Big Five". We will ask ourselves what we can learn from the person-situation debate and discuss issues of personality development, stability and change.

4) Psychoanalysis - Freud and beyond (October, 3)

We all know the terms id, ego, superego, and maybe even use them in everyday conversations. But what were Freud's ideas about "personality"? And how did Psychoanalysis approach the subject in terms of methodology? What happened after Freud? How were psychoanalytical theories developed further and who contributed to this?

After an introduction to the history of Psychoanalysis and important concepts of psychosocial development, we will discuss clinical and social implication of psychoanalytic theory. Finally, we will hear about the work of the so-called "Neo-Freudians", like C. G. Jung, Alfred Adler and Karen Horney before we discuss psychoanalytic approaches to concepts like aggression, anxiety, and attachment.

5) Behaviorism - Cognitivism (October, 10)

Why would we talk about Pavlov's dogs in a personality class? Who is "Little Albert" and what do we learn from his story? What can we learn about Kelly's personal construct theory and what clinical applications derive from that?

Together we will consolidate knowledge about classical learning theories and ask about their perspectives on personality. We will have a look at cognitive personality theories and discuss strengths and criticisms of the cognitive approach. Finally, we will have a look at the fields of application, in particular Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

6) Personality Assessment (October, 17)

How good are we at judging ourselves on personality scales? Is there agreement between our own and our friends' ratings concerning personality? How is personality data considered to be useful in areas of applied psychology?

We will try out different personality measures ourselves and discuss the underlying concepts. Also, we will be moving forward with our friendliness scale, especially in terms of discussing implications deriving from (classical) test theory.

7) MIDTERM EXAM (October 24)

8) Humanistic Approaches (November, 7)

"Why am I here?" "What should I be doing?" What answers would existential philosophy provide regarding these questions? What perspectives does Positive Psychology offer? What critical potential is there in humanistic approaches?

We will hear about different theoretical strands known under the umbrella-term "humanistic approaches", including existentialism, phenomenology, the works of Rogers and Maslow.

9) Well-being and personality (November, 14)

What do researchers mean by the "well-being paradox"? How is well-being associated with personality? What individual differences in health and wellbeing can be found?

A short overview is given concerning current perspectives on well-being and concepts of health psychology (subjective health, life satisfaction, resilience) and their relation to personality research. We will discuss aspects of mental and physical health and research concerning diagnostics and the support of individuals with personality disorders.

10) The measurement of intelligence (November, 21)

A widely distributed quote says: "Intelligence is as what IQ tests measure." Is that true? We all have an idea about what an "IQ" is and that you better score high on an IQ test. But how can we capture the concept of intelligence and why do psychologists collect data using the intelligence concept?

We will try out different instruments to measure intelligence and discuss the underlying concepts of different approaches. We will discuss how intelligence or cognitive skills develop over the life span and finally deal with questions from critical dementia studies.

11) Intelligence, emotional intelligence and creativity (November, 28)

What role do gender stereotypes play when we think about emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills? How is creativity associated/correlated with personality aspects, for example the Big Five? How come people consider Yoda to be wise? Is wisdom a personality related construct, a trait, or situation-related? How do people become wise?

We will discuss how/if emotion regulation, empathy, interpersonal skills are perceived as "emotional intelligence". We will also discuss different approaches at wisdom research and how wisdom can be measured. Eventually, we will develop our own wisdom questionnaire.

12) Social attitudes and culture (December, 12)

What is culture? How does psychology define and measure right-wing attitudes? How do psychologists study personality and culture? Can a person be a member of two (or more) cultures at once? Is it possible to be a member of one culture only?

In this meeting we will discuss issues at the intersection of personality, developmental, and social psychology. We will also discuss self and identity in relation to concepts like "collectivism" and "individualism" and throw a light on questions of universality of values.

13) Personality and individual differences from a life span perspective (December, 12)

How do interpersonal relationships change/show stability over the life span? How would we describe ourselves as a friend of someone? What role do gender stereotypes play in research and what intersectional aspects have to be addressed (gender, age, class, ethnicity) when critically discuss "individual differences"?

We will discuss questions of stability and change, on a more applied level. We will focus different aspects of self and identity within a biographical perspective and finally discuss how the researchers' own biographies and development shapes the way they think about their research, illustrated by the work of J. and E. Erikson.

14) FINAL EXAM (December, 19)

NOTE: This is a tentative course schedule, it is subject to modifications.

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence, 4th ed.	Maltby / Day / Macaskill	Pearson	9781292090511	Yes

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Absence will only be excused in case of an emergency. In such a case, please let us know as soon as possible. Unexcused absences will result in a low or failing participation grade. Excessive absences, will lead to the grade "F" for the course.

INPUTS are provided by the professors to help students gain an overview concerning developments in the fields and the most prominent and/or controversial theories in personality research. Special topics or perspectives within personality research introduced to help foster discussions and critical reflections on theory, methods, and ethics. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and be on time.

ASSIGNMENTS are given to help students gain practical experience and improve skills by applying research methods, i.e. conducting mini interviews, putting oneself in the role of "research subjects" by filling out questionnaires, collecting questionnaire data on small convenience samples, constructing test items, critically reflecting on aspects of personality theories and empirical research in this field. Assignments are mandatory and deadlines are non-negotiable. Written assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard. Neither printed copies nor

emailed versions will be accepted.

GROUP TASKS are assigned in class to help reflecting personal experiences and how they are related to personality theories and psychological concepts. Students are expected to actively participate in all classroom activities and discussions.

READINGS: In order to increase knowledge in specific areas of personality and individual differences students are provided with articles on special topics. Texts must be read ahead of class. Students will give a short presentation based on the reading. Additionally students will prepare questions or statements to start discussions, reflections or debates on the topic.

Grading Policy

Percentage weigh on final grade:

Attendance and participation: 20%

Assignments: 20%

Exams: 30% (each)

EXAMS: Students are obligated to take the midterm exam as well as the final exam. Attendance at all exams is mandatory. At each exam students will be asked to choose two out of three questions to answer in an essayistic style.

GRADING SCHEME

<u>Total</u> <u>percent</u>	<u>Grade</u>
94-100	A
90-94	A-
87-90	B+
84-87	B
80-84	B-
77-80	C+
74-77	C
70-74	C-

67-70	D+
64-67	D
60-64	D-
<60	F

Other

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students are expected to act according to the principles of Academic Integrity. This includes a commitment to fairness, respect, honesty and appreciation of others' contributions. (For further information on academic integrity visit: [<https://www.aup.edu/academics/academic-and-career-resources/academic-resource-center/academic-integrity>])

PLAGIARISM "is the presentation of someone else's work as one's own. This includes the use of any ideas, words or data, in written, oral or electronic form, without properly attributing their source(s). It also includes the submission of purchased papers or papers borrowed from or written by other students or authors. The American University of Paris deplores cheating, lying, fraud, theft and other behaviors that show disrespect for the rights of others and diminish the value of your degree. All academic work submitted at AUP must be the product of the student's own reflection, study and research." ([<https://www.aup.edu/academics/academic-and-career-resources/academic-resource-center/academic-integrity>])

SUPERVISION: Students are invited to come to the office hours with questions and problems regarding the course. As teachers it is our concern and obligation to provide supervision and we are always happy to help. Experiencing problems and difficulties, i.e. with assignments is nothing to be worried about, we certainly will find ways to work through.