Introduction to General Psychology
Psychology 1101
University of West Georgia

Instructor:
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Office Hours: Tues & Thurs - 11-12:00 or by special arrangements made through email (Feel free to email me if you ever need to speak in person for any reason)

Course Description:
This course is meant to serve as a broad introduction to the field of psychology. The general theme discussed throughout this course will be that psychology has traditionally struggled to maintain a unified perspective, and as such has developed in several different directions in order to fulfill distinct purposes. Rather than focusing on the memorization of random psychological facts, or merely on terms coined by only the most prominent psychologists, we will focus on the cultural-historical problems that people who have called themselves psychologists have traditionally attempted to resolve. In looking at the historical reasons why various psychologists chose to pursue their research with the methods and approaches that they did, it will hopefully become clear why psychology has proliferated in the multitude of ways that it has. By the end of the course it should become evident how the development of each perspective in psychology represents the indefinitely wide range of factors that must be considered in order to achieve even the slightest understanding of what it means to be a human being.

Course objectives:
As an "introduction" to psychology, the primary aim of this course is to construct a broadly understandable context for the field as whole. By and large, psychology has traditionally centered itself around the study of those factors -- such as emotion, intelligence, interpersonal relationships, etc. -- that we often consider essential to what it means to be an individual person. To be sure, if there is any factor that truly grants psychology its own validity apart from other disciplines in the social and natural sciences, it is its focus on the intrinsic uniqueness and potential continuity of each individual life. Throughout this course, you will come to see how the discipline of psychology is in a very real sense the study of you. In so far as we are all human persons, we have all to some extent come up against the theoretical and practical issues that psychologists encounter in their work every day. As such, one of the aims of this course is to critically present both advantages and challenges that can result from looking at the world from a psychological perspective.

When all is said and done, I hope to expose you to ways of thinking about yourself and others that are both new and exciting. If you are a person open to personal growth, the study of psychology has the potential to teach you new ways to interact with the world around you. All of the expectations for the class assignments will be relatively straightforward, and I will prepare you for the exams and projects as well as I possibly can. I do hope that you take the opportunity to find in this class something that you might take with you for the rest of your life.
**Course Readings**


*Extra Credit/Optional Readings*

Frankl, V. E. (1975). *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Pocket Book. *(Can be found on Amazon and/or GoogleBooks -- any edition will be fine)*


**Course Assignments:**

*Projects and Test*

There will be three separate bulk grades, the sum of which will comprise 75% of your overall course grade. One of these grades will be derived from a traditionally structured test. Half of this test will be comprised of multiple choice questions to be answered in class. The other half will be made up of short, take-home essay questions, expected to be turned the day of the test. The second bulk grade of the course will be determined by either a quiz or a 3-5 pg written report (book review), in which you will relate the book *Kafka on the Shore* to the material covered during the course throughout the semester thus far. The third and final bulk grade will be based on a project that will be completed within groups determined by yourselves. For this project, your group will complete a social experiment outside of class and organization a presentation of the findings to present together at the end of the year.

A detailed overview of the material that will be covered on the test will be made available in the form of a corresponding study guide. During the class period prior to the test day, we will review a the study guide together. The study guide will be posted on the D2L section of the school's website the week before the test will be handed out. Attending class on review day will greatly increase your odds of doing well on the test. If the test is missed, or any project isn’t completed on time, there will be no opportunity to compensate for the missed grade barring special permission—please email me about this in advance. Only in cases with special circumstances will tests or projects that are not completed be allowed to be taken or turned in after the assigned date. However, in such cases no points will be deducted.

For the group projects, the grade will be determined partly by a grading rubric and partly by the reflections written by your group members. I will ask each person to write a reflection of their experience working with their group, and base half of the grade for the final project on the content of these reflections. The other half of the grade will be derived from the presentation itself. A more detailed grading rubric will be posted on course den early in the semester. At least 25% of the grade for this assignment will be based on your attendance on the date reserved for working on the final presentation. See the course schedule below.

*Classroom Participation*

Consistent attendance to class is encouraged, but not mandatory (except during the final two weeks of the semester). There will be no official record kept to monitor precisely which days you attend. However, there will be unannounced in-class assignments that will comprise the
participation portion (25%) of your overall grade. Barring special permission from me, you will
not have the opportunity to make up these assignments if they are missed. Also, the information
you will find on the tests will come primarily from what will be discussed in class. Missing too
much class will thus put you at an extreme disadvantage come test time. Consistently showing up
late to class (five minutes or more) could also affect your participation points–see below.

Extra Credit
Extra credit opportunities will be made available from the beginning of the course in the form of
a 5 page book report or group meetings with graduate students. More details will be made
available later in the course.

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>100pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Report/Quiz</td>
<td>100pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>100pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100pts</td>
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<td>400pts overall course pts + up to 50 extra credit pts possible</td>
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General Class Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
A good portion of your overall grade will be determined by academic writing assignments. Academic
integrity regarding these assignments is absolutely necessary. This means that the content of the
assignment must be your own original work, with all aspects drawn from outside sources referenced to
the best of your ability. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment, and
will be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for possible probation or
suspension from the University. A detailed account of the schools policy on academic integrity can be
found in the honor code in the student handbook.

MISSING CLASS
As noted above, class attendance and showing up on time are both important elements to your doing well
in this course. However, as there will be no official record of absences, there is no need to inform me
should you be forced to miss a class or come late, unless it happens to be a test day. In all instances other
than test days, it is your responsibility to get the notes you miss from a fellow peer. Showing up late
consistently or in ways that become a distraction to others could be grounds for the loss of participation
points. I will issue one verbal warning to you before deducting any points; however, after that I reserve
the right to deduct 5 points from your overall participation in each instance. At that point, the
responsibility to get to class in a timely manner and exhibit respect towards your peers will be entirely on
you.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES
Accommodations and modifications will be made for those with specific learning disabilities (university
documentation required) regarding any and all activities and assignments.

PREJUDICE/DISCRIMINATION
I would like us all to strive to promote an atmosphere in class that feels safe for exchanging ideas and
asking questions. Any discrimination of any sort (directly or indirectly), towards anyone in class or a
particular group of people, will not be tolerated. Open discussion will be an essential part of this class, so
I hope we can all remain inquisitive while conducting ourselves in a respectful way.
Additional General Information

Students, please carefully review the following information at this link: [http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf). It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

If you miss your final exam, and prior arrangements have not been made, you may receive a grade of F on that exam or paper and this may affect your final grade in the class. If you miss your exam due to an emergency, please contact the Psychology office at (678) 839-6510 or go to Melson Room 123 as soon as possible to complete the application: “Missed Final Exam: Verification of Emergency”. This form will need to be approved by the chair for an incomplete grade which may allow you the time to make up your exam or complete your final assignments. This application will require documentation and authorization from you to verify your emergency.

Course Schedule (Readings in Parenthesis)

Please keep in mind that this schedule is tentative and, like the rest of the syllabus,
-August-
Week 1 - Philosophical Roots
  Monday 25- Introduction of the course/Go over syllabus (Intro in book)
  Wednesday 27 - Philosophical Roots of Medical/Biological Perspectives
    (Galen, Descartes, Galton, Charcot, Kraepelin)

-September-
Week 2 - Phil cont’d
  Monday 1 - No Class
  Wednesday 3 - Philosophical Roots of Cultural Perspectives (Kierkegaard, Herbart)

Week 3 - Beginnings of Modern Psychology
  Monday 8 - Introspective Experimentalism (Wundt, James, Ebbinghaus)
  Wednesday 10 - Beginnings of Developmental Theory (Hall, Binet, Janet)

Week 4 – Behaviorism
  Monday 15 – Behavioral Experimentalism (Pavlov, Thorndike, Watson)
  Wednesday 17 - Behaviorism takes over psychology in the U.S. (Skinner, Wolpe)

Week 5 – Gestalt-Cognitive Psychology
  Monday 22 - Historical Roots of Cog Psych (Kohler, Zeigarnik, Hebb, Bruner, Festinger)
  Wednesday 24 - Brain Structure, Physiology and Psychology

Week 6 – Brain Science, Genetics and Developmental Psychology
  Monday 29 – Brain Development, DNA, and Psychology

-October-
  Wednesday 1 – Child and Adolescent Development (Piaget, Vygotski, Kohlberg, Bettelheim, Erikson)

Week 7 – Cognition, Memory, and Individual Differences
  Monday 6 – Information Processing Models (Miller, Tulving, Chomsky)
Wednesday 8 – Personality Theories

**Week 8 - TEST WEEK**

- Monday 13 - Review day
- Wednesday 15 - **TEST DAY**

Week 9 - Psychotherapy

- Monday 20 - Attachment Theory (Bowlby, Harlow, Ainsworth, Bandura)
- Monday 22 - Existential-Phenomenological Psychology

Week 10 – Positive Psychology and CBT

- Monday 27 – Psychoanalysis
- Wednesday 29 – Positive psychology and Self Help (Csikszentmihalyi, Seligman, Loftus, Schacter, Kabat-Zinn)

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**-November-**

Week 11 - Social Psychology

- Monday 3 - Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Mental Health
- Wednesday 5 - Anti-Psychiatry

Week 12 - Developmental Theory cont’d

- Monday 10 – Social Justice Psychology and Participatory Action
- Wednesday 12 - Social Psychology (Lewin, Goffman, Glasser)

**Week 13 -**

- Monday 17 – Social Experiments and Ethics (Asch, Milgram, Zimbardo, Spence)

- Wednesday 19 – **Quiz**

Week 14 - Happy Thanksgiving! (Work on written report)

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**-December-**

Week 15 - TBD

- Monday 1 -TBD
- Wednesday 3 –TBD
Week 16 - Finals Week

Written report and all extra credit assignments are due in class on the final exam date. Nothing will be accepted after this date! More details will follow.