

PSYCHOLOGY 2010: Psychology as a Human Science
Spring, 2019
9:30 – 10:45 MW
Technology Learning Center (TLC) 1301

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Course Description

from the Catalog: *This gateway course is intended to introduce beginning psychology majors to the major philosophical and methodological alternatives to psychology (as) a natural science. This exploration will include: third and fourth force psychologies, integrative psychology, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, eco-psychology, qualitative research methodologies, narrative psychology, critical psychology, literature, mythology. This course will serve as preparation for more advanced study in the UWG major.*

This is pretty close, really, to what I have in mind for the class. I hope that we have a nice time of it together, in getting better acquainted with what psychology is, and how to take it up not only as a major, but as a discipline and a vocation and maybe even a way of being. I have set forth some specific objectives below.

Course Readings

I have taught this class ten or so times, by now, and still have yet to find a good text or set of texts. There are several that we could use, but it is easy to become overwhelmed and relate to texts as burdens rather than gifts. And it seemed to me that we could accomplish what we needed to with internet and CourseDen resources, and especially with readings from my free, on-line textbook. Take a look at it here, please? (<https://sites.google.com/westga.edu/intropsych>) I'll post readings and activities on CourseDen. Read the readings, complete the activities, and we'll be fine. The readings are occasionally difficult and dense (that happens, with psychology), but will be quite worthwhile for both the conceptually rigorous and the experientially prizing among you (and to those few of you in both; you know who you are).

For those of you interested, some of the texts I was thinking of are:

Stephen F. Davis and R. Eric Landrum: *The Psychology Major: Career Options and Strategies for Success*, 5th ed. ISBN: 978-0-205-82965-1
Roger R. Hock: *Forty Studies That Changed Psychology*, 7th. Ed. ISBN: 0205918395
Donald Polkinghorne: *Methodology for the Human Sciences Systems of Inquiry (SUNY Series in Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology)* ISBN: 0873956648
Keith E. Stanovich: *How to Think Straight About Psychology*, 10th ed. ISBN: 978-0-205-91412-8

So know that these books are on my list of “pretty good books in psychology, that beginning majors should be familiar with,” and feel free/responsible to give them a look for your own reasons, okay?

Course Objectives

What I would like for us to accomplish together includes (but is not of course limited to),

1. Wider sense of **vocation** in general, and vocation in psychology in particular;
2. Increased familiarity with the **profession of psychology**, and with psychology **training and practice** at various levels;
3. Acquaintance with and appreciation for **critical thinking** as it relates to training and practice in psychology;
4. Deeper sense of **research** as a fundamentally human activity, and acquiring a smart and compassionate hard-won perspective on research as a precarious and worthy and aspirational enterprise;
5. Survey knowledge of various **approaches to research**, along with the fundamental philosophical commitments associated with each, and involvement with research in psychology exemplifying various approaches;
6. More specific and deeper acquaintance with **research methods that may be termed “human,”** and a beginning earnest involvement with this sort of research.

Of course this is all too much, and of course there will be other things that we will discover along the way that will distract us meaningfully away from the map to the territory. I will try to facilitate the course as a collaborative seminar, with some lecture and organization and orchestration on my part, but always within the context of shared responsibility and participation. I hope to create and maintain an atmosphere that is as once rigorous (in socializing us to “psychology talk” interactions) and kind (in prizing and honoring various ways of being in relationship to psychology).

I'll post a reading/assignment list for each class meeting on CourseDen in coming days...

Course Requirements and grading

1. Preparation, attendance, and participation. We only have 30 or so opportunities for you to get your money's worth. We have work to do. This is one of those classes that for most of us will be shining a new light on something we already own and know, but in a somewhat limited way. So, there is no alternative to preparation for a new conversation, and to participation in a way that locates the material, and the processes around it, in our personal experience, but from an informed perspective. Each of us is expected to read thoroughly the material for each day, and come prepared to contribute meaningfully and well to class interactions. For each class meeting, please come prepared with a question from the readings and the CourseDen responses to them, and/or to our class gatherings, written on a 3X5 card. Write the kind of question that you could not have written without reading the material. We'll talk about this in class.

For our first class meeting (Jan 7th), write a card completing thoughtfully the rest of this sentence: “What I am most curious about, regarding psychology as a human science, is _____.” Spend some time thinking about this, okay? It will make our first gathering worthwhile.

We'll keep track of your cards along the way, and give you some participation credit at the end. More importantly, you'll have the opportunity to get some of your questions answered along the way. We cannot accept tardy response cards, or make-up cards for missed classes (you are hereby authorized to miss as many classes as I do, and I have missed precisely one class, since 1983). If you are not here I will

assume that you are somewhere else, and we'll miss you. **Don't send me e-mails or excuses, please**, except as noted on exam days. Through participation and attendance you may earn up to **50** points.

2. Exams: We will have three examinations (two during regular class meetings [see schedule] and a final exam during our regularly scheduled exam time, Wednesday, May 1, 8:00) each worth 100 points and each based on the (a) readings, (b) class notes, and (c) CourseDen discussions. I'll use a variety of question formats (multiple choice, short-answer, true-false, matching)...measuring student learning is all about human science, after all! Bring that smallish red Scantron (Form 882-E), a #2 pencil, and mostly a clear head and a good and open heart, okay? IF you cannot be in class on exam day **FOR AN EXTREME AND JUSTIFIABLE PERSONAL OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY**, you will need to (a) notify me IN ADVANCE of class, and (b) bring documentation of the circumstances, and (c) arrange to take a make-up exam before the next class meeting (when I return the exams)... a huge hassle. Come to class... take the exam.

You can get a feel for what my exams are like by checking out the "sample exam" on CourseDen. JUST like class (why would I want to measure something other than class, or measure in a way that is different from how we gather, for class?)

3. Perspective Papers. There will be two, each worth 50 points.
- A. "Psychology as my major, career, or vocation" (a five-page paper, due posted to the dropbox on our CourseDen page, **due**), in which you (in about a page each):
- Set forth your understandings of our readings and discussions on these topics (What have you learned new?)
 - Trace your journey toward a major in psychology (How did you get here? What does being a psychology major mean to you, anyway?)
 - Sketch an outline of your objectives for training (What are some classes you plan on taking here? Are you wanting to approach the degree as a specialist, or a generalist? What do you hope to accomplish?), and
 - How do you see your career future ("What are you going to do with your psychology degree?"), and
 - How do you see your vocation ("Who are you going to be, because you were here?" "How will you LIVE differently, in being called otherwise to be human?")
- B. "My curiosity in psychology," another five-page paper in which you:
- Identify an area of human or non-human animal experience that is (for now) interesting to you
 - Review (in a couple of pages) some existing research perspectives on that experience, including their focus, method, and implications (we'll do lots of this in class, so you'll have numerous examples to work from)
 - Sketch a tentative way and plan that you might approach this interest, in terms of maybe an independent study, a faculty-supervised research project, or preparation for work in graduate school. Conclude with a summary of your topic, a methodological approach or two, and an outline of what you would hope to find in the course of your curiosity. This isn't a formal "research proposal" but rather a bookmark for you, along with the first paper, of where your thinking and passion are these days.

This paper is due by **class time, 4-29**, and we will discuss your papers in our last meeting on that date.

Both of these papers will be part of your portfolio for graduation here, and will be works you'll want to keep and refer to throughout your training time.

4. Response Papers

There will be two or three times during the course when we'll decide you want more time or effort to dwell deeply in something in class, to do some more research and maybe write a bit. I'll always announce these in advance, and you'll post them either to the Discussion tab or to Assignments (we'll decide, together). 50 points in total.

So you see you may earn up to 500 points, including 50 for merely showing up (that's something, after all). I'll assign grades the usual way:

A 90% and above	(450 - 500 points)
B 80-89%	(400 - 449 points)
C 70-79%	(350 - 399 points)

Other Information

Please feel free to contact me for any reason you feel is important, in that I want to be as accessible a companion to you as possible. CourseDen dialogue is wonderful, e-mail is always good, and I have voice-mail that I check frequently as well. I would welcome particularly the chance to consult with any of you needing accommodation for special circumstances such as a recognized disability, or having difficulty with course material or requirements. I support and honor various gifts and challenges people bring to academic work. Any student with a recognized disability requiring accommodations of any sort should feel free to contact me and we will discuss your circumstances. Please see also the material in this link, considered part of the syllabus for our course:

<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

Psychology as a Human Science, Spring, 2019
TENTATIVE Topical Schedule

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
1-7, 1-9	*Introduction to our work: Seeing, Observing, Witnessing, Stepping in, Picking Up, and Taking in
1-14, 1-16	* Job, Employment, Career, Vocation, Major
1-21	No class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday <i>“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”</i>
1-23	* The Profession of Psychology
1-28, 1-30	* Training in Psychology and “getting your money’s worth” “Vocational Perspectives” Paper due 2-1, 5:00 PM
2-4, 2-6	* Science and Theory and Theory-Building Exam 1 (2-136 class time)
2-11 2-13	* Critical Thinking and Psychology
2-18, 2-20	* Research and Scholarship: An Introduction * Positivism and Quantification: “If it counts, it can be counted”
2-25, 2-27	* Qualitative Approaches and “counting to One”
3-4, 3-6	* Psychoanalysis as Research
3-11, 3-13	* Existential and Phenomenological Approaches Exam 2 (3-13, class time)
3-18, 3-20	Spring Break
4-1, 4-3	* Humanistic Approaches
4-8, 4-10	* Narrative and literary approaches (“It’s the STORY!”)
4-15, 4-17	* Postmodern and constructivist approaches
4-22 4-24	* Action Research (“It’s about doing, not just knowing”)
4-29	Stuff we didn’t get a chance to get to My Curiosity in Psychology paper due, paper presentations
5-1	Third test