HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY
PSYC 4030
Fall, 2014

Instructor Information

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Course Description

The course provides an introduction to the historical and philosophical background of psychology as it emerged as a scientific discipline and professional practice, with emphasis on the contexts in which ideas develop. The intent is to enhance the student’s conceptual understanding of psychology and encourage critical reflection on its development, limits, and possibilities.

Course Objectives

• Be able to articulate the assumptions of several major Western philosophical systems and analyze how these inform competing frameworks of psychological theory and methods.
• Demonstrate awareness that historical situation and implicit philosophical commitments are relevant to all aspects of psychology
• Identify important questions psychology has centered on and the methodological approaches it has adopted to address them.
• Demonstrate understanding of differing conceptions of “psychological data” and sound empirical methods in psychology.
• Examine the influence of particular research studies on the field as a whole.
• Engage in critical reflection on all of the above.

Texts

Required:


*In the syllabus, this text is referenced as “H & H”

*Additional readings will be assigned from a site called “York Classics” (http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/) and the Links to Documents at Other Sites page that can be found on the first page of the York Classics site.

Optional:

Education.


**Format of Class**

This course is usually taught with a regular classroom format, and the design of the online course will parallel that structure as closely as possible for sake of parity. There will be two lectures per week most weeks (e.g., not the week of Labor Day, when there will be one lecture).

**Grading Formula and Description of Assignments**

There will be six quizzes (20-25 questions), a midterm, and a final exam.

Quizzes: 30%
Midterm Exam: 35%
Final Exam: 35%

Optional Project for Extra Credit:

*Quizzes* will cover content from lecture and the primary text (H & H). They will be multiple choice, true-false, or fill in the blank format. Major concepts, researchers/scholars, and research results corresponding to the unit covered will be included. You will have a five day period to access the quiz and 30 minutes to complete it once begun. *There will be no make-up quizzes. If you fail to take the quiz during the available period, you will receive a 0 for that quiz. Your five best quiz scores will be averaged for the quiz portion of your final grade (i.e., your lowest quiz score will be dropped).*

*Exams* will require both accuracy of grasp of course material and critical reflection on it. They will include short answer and longer essay questions. The midterm will include material covered in the Hergenhahn and Henley text, assigned readings from *York Classics*, lecture and discussion. You will submit your responses online and will have a 24 hour period in which you may access the exam. Once you log on, you will have two hours to complete the exam.

***Note that ANY conflicts with the exam time must be discussed with the professor IN ADVANCE of the exam. Any technical problems encountered while taking the exam must be discussed with the D2L helpdesk IMMEDIATELY.***

*Discussion* is strongly encouraged. Please share questions that arise, associations to other class material you have encountered, reflections on “big questions” raised by course material, connections to your own life experience or that of others you know. Discussion will be monitored by the professor but not graded.

*Optional Audio/Visual Project* (Extra credit):

You may complete ONE project for extra credit. Successful completion of the extra credit project is worth UP TO 10 points added to your final numerical grade. That is, if your average grade on quizzes and exams is 78, you could earn up to an additional 10 points, bringing your final grade to 88, or B. You may work with ONE other
student on the project if you wish, but in that case the additional points would be split between you (e.g. each would receive 5 points of a possible 10).

Project: Create a website, video, or PPT presentation with audio voiceover. Feel free to get creative with the project and include whatever material you think appropriate as long as it is 1) legal, 2) you do not plagiarize, and 3) content is appropriate for a classroom. You will post your project on CourseDen for the edification of all.

You have two options:

**Option 1:**

Cover ONE of the chapters (one of the themes/issues/debates) in the Gross text. For your presentation, group is to cover both sides of the debate fairly (i.e. with equal representation) and develop a position that demonstrates synthesis of the competing perspectives. The presentation should not just consist of a reiteration of the material in the book. Rather, use the book to guide you to a clear explication of what is at stake in the debate or issue covered. Also, an important part of the task is to situate the debate historically. That is, give appropriate historical context for the debate, examples of theories or research programs that illustrate one side or the other (or a synthesis), and key figures who held positions on each side of the controversy.

**Option 2:**

Bring to life a person from the history of psychology. You should select a person who is less well known, and emphasize reasons the person is important. You should include information such as:

- Family background and context of upbringing
- Influential ideas “in the air” during the period of formal education (informal influences on thought).
- Mentors and collaborators (formal influences on thought).
- Ideas/research results for which the person is best known.
- Critical responses to the ideas or research forwarded.
- Enduring contributions to psychology.

**Schedule of Reading and Assignments**

*Please Note: Topics and readings are subject to revision.

**All required reading assignments, quizzes, exams and projects are in red.

**August**

**Note:** For online readings not at York Classics see the Links to Documents at Other Sites page from the York Classics site.

25 Introductions and Class Overview

27 Overview of Contemporary Psychology; Understanding Psychology’s History and Why We Study History in Psychology

*Required: H & H, Chapter 1*
September

3 Psychological Themes in Ancient Greek Thought

Required: H & H, Chapter 2

Note: Additional readings are SUPPLEMENTAL and will not be included on quizzes or expected for exams. If you wish to make reference to them on exams, that will be impressive, but it is not expected.

Plato, (ca. 380 BC). *Meno*. (Internet Classics Archive at MIT)
Aristotle, *DeAnima (On the Soul), Book III*
Aristotle, *On Memory and Reminiscence*
(http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Aristotle/De-anima/de-anima3.htm)

8 Psychological Themes in Roman and Medieval Thought

Required: H & H Chapter 3


10 Renaissance Science and Philosophy

Required: H & H Chapter 4


PREFACE
BOOK III. THE SYSTEM OF THE WORLD
RULES OF REASONING IN PHILOSOPHY
PHÆNOMENA, OR APPEARANCES

15 Quiz 1: Available 9/15-9/16

17 Empiricism and Positivism

Required: H & H Chapter 5

Locke, John. (1689). *An essay concerning human understanding*. (Research Institute for the Humanities, Chinese University of Hong Kong.). Book I, Chapter I

Comte, Auguste. (1856). *A general view of positivism* (portion of Chapter 1). (The Value of Knowledge).

22 Rationalism

Required: H & H Chapter 6
Descartes, Discourse on Method, Pts. 1-5
(http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/descarte.htm)

24  Romanticism and Existentialism

Required: H & H Chapter 7

29  Quiz 2: Available 9/29-9/30

October

1  Experimentation, Physiology, and Psychophysics

Required: H & H Chapter 8

Helmholtz, Hermann. (1878). The facts of perception. (The Value of Knowledge).

6  Early Experimental Psychology, Structuralism

Required: H & H Chapter 9


8  The Psychology of Individual Differences/Intelligence Testing

Required: H & H Chapter 10

Cattell, James McKeen. (1890). Mental tests and measurements. Mind, 15, 373-381. (York Classics)

Quiz 3: Available 10/8-10/14

October 13: Review

OCTOBER 15: MIDTERM EXAM

October

20  Functional Psychology

Required: H & H Chapter 11

James, William. (1892). The stream of consciousness. From Psychology (chapter XI).
22 **Behaviorism**

*Required: H & H Chapter 12*


27 **Neobehaviorism**

*Required: H & H Chapter 13*


29 **Quiz 4: Available 10/29-11/2**

November

3 **Gestalt Psychology**

*Required: H & H Chapter 14*


5 **“Mental Illness”/the Medical Model/Clinical Psychology**

*Required: H & H Chapter 15, 16*


November

10 **Third Force Psychology**

*Required: H & H, Chapter 17*


12 Quiz 5: Available 11/12-11/17

17 Psychobiology

Required: H & H, chapter 18

19 Cognitive Psychology/Cognitive Science

Required: H & H, chapter 19

Miller, George A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. Psychological Review, 63, 81-97

24-26 Thanksgiving Break: NO CLASS

December

1 Contemporary Directions

Required: H & H, chapter 20

*Find one article from The American Psychologist written in the past five years.

3 Quiz 6: Available 12/3-12/8

OPTIONAL (EXTRA CREDIT) Project: Post by December 5

FINAL EXAM: Available 12/8-12/11

*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.

**Please review the following information which includes 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. The information can be found at this link: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf.