

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Introduction to Psychology
Instructor: Joseph R. Merz, Ph.D.
Office: Butcher Athletic Center - Room 226. Office Phone 876-5296
Office Hours: T,TH 3:30-5:30 & W 11:30-12:30 & 4:15-5:15
Home Phone: (304) 876-3622 (Between 9:00 a.m. & 9:00 p.m.)

NO EXCEPTIONS!

“The Mass of Men Lead Lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation... A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.”

Henry David Thoreau

General Course Description

This course will provide you with a broad, general introduction to psychology – its basic subject matter, its approaches to gathering and evaluating evidence about the causes of behavior, and the means by which psychological knowledge is (or can be) applied to improve the quality of individual and communal life.

Passing this course is a prerequisite to more advanced courses in psychology, which in general develop in greater breadth and depth, topics covered in this basic class. My overall objective is for you to be excited about the field of psychology. I realize that this will be the only psychology class that some of you will ever take, and what I want to leave you with, after finishing this class, is a feeling that psychology is a most fascinating area of study.

Textbook

The text for the class is Psychology In Action, written by Karen Huffman, Eighth Edition. Please note: It is imperative that you bring your textbook to each class meeting.

Class Structure

The class periods will consist of lectures, discussions, films and demonstrations of psychological phenomena. Class discussion will be encouraged.

Objectives

1. Knowledge of psychology. This goal is evaluated directly by examination. It includes: (a) awareness of major psychological approaches to the study of the behavior of organisms; (b) knowledge of its origins and major contributor; (c) knowledge of research findings, concepts, and basic terminology; understanding of its methodology and its limitations.
2. Development of scientific values and skills. Some of these are testable; others will evolve slowly, perhaps not completely during the semester. Included here are: (a) stimulation of intellectual curiosity about human and animal behavior; (b) appreciation of the scientific method; (c) recognition of the operation of individual bias in experimentation, observation, and reporting of what has been observed or measured; (d) a critical attitude towards all generalizations, and an ability to evaluate them on the basis of the evidence upon which they claim to be based.
3. Personal development. You will be the best judge of whether this goal has been attained; however, the evidence might not manifest itself for a long time. Ideally, contact with psychological knowledge should: (a) increase your understanding and tolerance of the behavior of other people, especially a greater acceptance of what is labeled “deviant”, “abnormal”, “pathological”, “crazy”, or “different”; (b) a better understanding of the forces acting upon you to limit or prevent your freedom of choice and action – those in your past (guilt, traumatic memories, obligations, bad contracts, unrewarded experiences, punishments, low self-esteem, shyness, and others), those in the present (social pressures to conform, comply, obey, perform, to do what others reward you for, and others); (c) stimulation of your curiosity to explain why people (and you) behave as they do; (d) development of intelligent skepticism about accepting unwarranted “truths,” e.g. psychology in everyday life, those in the mass media, as well as those by credentialed authorities.

Attendance

Attending class on a regular basis is very important. For each class missed beyond the equivalent of one week of class, two points will be deducted from your final semester grade. REMEMBER: ATTENDANCE REPRESENTS COMMITMENT!

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Arriving late for class twice over the course of the semester will be considered the maximum allowed. For every late arrival to class beyond this limit, you will be marked ABSENT for the class period.

Classroom Etiquette

Please do not hold conversations with classmates whenever the professor or another student is speaking. Also refrain from writing and passing notes or participating in other distracting behavior. Your undivided attention in class is a must. An atmosphere of mutual respect is in order. The professor reserves the right to request that you leave if you engage in any form of disrespectful conduct.

Grading System

1. There will be four (4) exams given in the course. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. If you miss an exam, you must take an all essay question make-up exam. The instructor reserves the right to schedule make-up tests during the week of final examinations.
2. A number of short, announced quizzes will be given throughout the semester. The purpose of the quizzes will be to allow you to check your progress. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.
3. Letter grades will be determined by the following schedule, which is an absolute scale:

A	–	90-100
B	–	80-89
C	–	70-79
D	–	60-69
F	–	0-59
4. Your final grade will be based on the following:

(a)	Results of the four exams	80%
(b)	Results of the quizzes	5%
(c)	In class participation	5%
(d)	Research Participation	<u>10%</u>
		100%
5. All students taking PSYC 203 Introduction to Psychology must complete a research participation requirement. This requirement may be completed in one of two ways. The first way is to participate in 2 units of research conducted by faculty, independent study students under the supervision of faculty, or students in the PSYC 485 Senior Thesis class. Psychology relies on empirical methods to test and refine its theories and exposure to the research process is considered an important learning experience for students. We understand, though, that some individuals may object to participation in research studies. The second way to

fulfill the requirement is to read two articles and to write a two-page paper about each one. The articles must be chosen from the approved list which is posted on the Department Web site (<http://shepherd.edu/psychweb>) and on the Participant Pool bulletin board outside White Hall room 333. Participation will count for 10% of your final grade in this class and, whichever option you choose to complete, you must complete it by last day of classes. Signup sheets and complete participation policies and procedures may be found on the Participant Pool Bulletin Board.

6. PLEASE NOTE:

The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Fall 2008

Tentative Schedule – Introduction to Psychology

Date	Topic	Assignment
Aug 18	Orientation	
Aug 25	Perspectives	Chapter 1 (pp 1-18)
Sept 3	Research Foundations	Chapter 1 (pp 19-44)
Sept 8	Abnormal Psychology	Chapter 14
Sept 15	EXAMINATION # 1	
Sept 22	Psychotherapy	Chapter 15
Sept 29	Life-Span Development 1	Chapter 9
Oct 6	The Biology of Behavior	Chapter 2
Oct 13	EXAMINATION # 2	
Oct 20	Conditioning and Learning	Chapter 6
Oct 27	Personality	Chapter 13
Nov 3	Personality	Chapter 13
Nov 10	EXAMINATION # 3	
Nov 17	Health Psychology	Chapter 3
Nov 23-30	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec 1	Health Psychology	Chapter 3
Dec 8	EXAMINATION # 4	