

Psychology 215: Personality Psychology

Fall Semester 2024, TTH 11:30am-12:55pm, Sharpless 430

A personal note from your professor: *Welcome to Personality Psychology! I am excited to spend a semester with you learning about this fascinating field. Here is a little bit about me: I completed my Ph.D. in Personality Psychology at UC Berkeley in 2000, and I have been teaching at Haverford since 2006. I live in Havertown, PA with my husband and 16-year old son. I have taught Psych 215 almost every single Fall semester since 2006! I love teaching this course and it is my mission to help you develop an appreciation for the scientific study of human personality and its many applications to our lives. It is also my mission to get to know each of you as well as possible so that I can help you grow as a student and explore how personality psychology may enrich your developing interests. I am committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students in my classroom. As a starting point, I will be sending out a Google Form in the first week of class so that you can share what you would like me to know about you!*

Professor's Info

- Jennifer Lilgendahl (she/her) (you can call me Professor Lilgendahl, Professor, or Jen ☺)
- Office: Sharpless 422
- Student office hours (time to meet with me and ask questions): TBA in second week of class (and by appt.) – timeslots will be accessible for electronic sign up ahead of time.
- Email: jlilgend@haverford.edu

Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to examine the fundamental issues and questions addressed by the field of personality psychology, including: What is personality, and how do we best characterize personality differences? What are the psychological processes and mechanisms that explain personality? How does personality develop and change over time? How does personality shape the course of a person's life? What constitutes a "healthy" personality? This course will explore these questions by considering evidence from several major theoretical approaches to personality (e.g., trait, social-cognitive, motivational, developmental, narrative) and important topics in personality psychology (relationships, culture, mental and physical health etc.), and it will encourage students to develop a critical and dynamic understanding of human personality that is situated within its biological, social, and cultural contexts. We will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- To develop a working command of the different *theoretical frameworks* used to address personality and the nature of the empirical support available for each
- To become acquainted with the different *methodological procedures* used to study personality, along with their strengths and weaknesses
- To *think critically* about studies of personality, both in terms of the methods used and in terms of the generalizability of the findings to diverse groups
- To *apply* personality psychology to your understanding of *real-world situations, experiences, and events*; in other words, to think like a personality psychologist!
- To *develop your scientific research, writing, and oral presentation skills* within the context of the field of personality psychology.

Required Readings

- The assigned readings for this class involve a textbook (info below) and articles from the scientific literature and the popular press. All supplemental articles are (or will be) posted on Moodle for you

to access for free. You are expected to have completed the readings assigned for each day prior to class and to be prepared to actively summarize, evaluate, apply, discuss, etc. their contents in class. The assigned readings will be central to each class.

- Textbook: McAdams, D. P., & Dunlop, W. L. (2022). *The Person: A New Introduction to Personality Psychology, 6th edition*. Wiley.
 - This book is required for this course. There are several different ways to access the book, listed below and available through the college's bookstore website.
 - New print copy for purchase: \$103.48
 - Print copy for rent: \$62.40
 - E-book for purchase: \$85.44
 - E-book for rental: \$36 (150 days)

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following course requirements and my overall impression of your effort and participation in the course. First, a grade will be determined mathematically based on the weighting provided below. Second, I will evaluate this initial grade in the context of my impression of your participation, including in class participation and attitude, effort put forth, and whether or not your performance displays a pattern of improvement. Depending on my assessment of these factors, I may adjust your grade one step upward, especially if your grade is right on the border between two grade levels. Grades will be determined using the following scale (calculated from your total out of 210): 94-100% = 4.0; 90-93% = 3.7; 87-89% = 3.3; 83-86% = 3.0; 80-82% = 2.7; 77-79% = 2.3; 73-76% = 2.0; 70-72% = 1.7; 67-69% = 1.3; 63-66% = 1.0; 60-62% = .7; 59% or below is a failing grade. Clear grading rubrics for each assignment will be provided in class.

- Exam 1 = 40 pts
- Exam 2 = 60 pts
- Group Presentation = 30 pts
- Final Paper = 40 pts
- Thought Papers = 20 pts (2 x 10 pts each)
- Attendance = 20 pts

Exams

There will be two take-home exams in this course. The exams will be delivered and turned in electronically, via Moodle. Dates are included in the course schedule below. You will have 2 hours to complete each of the two exams (self-timed), and will involve a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Further details regarding content, format, grading, and policies for exams will be provided in class.

Thought Papers

Over the course of the semester there will complete a total of two thought papers, one before the first exam and one between the first and second exam. These are “low stakes” assignments that are designed to engage students with the material in a way that encourages creative and critical thinking. There are two dates before the first exam and you need to choose one of those (9/15 or 9/29), and then there are two dates before the second exam and you need to do one of those (11/3 or 11/17). Select the dates that work best for you. Your task is to write about course material (any aspect you chose) in a way that extends the analysis beyond what you learned in class, in one of three ways – Hypothesize, Apply, Critique (described below). Your two thought papers need to take two forms (i.e., so you will do two types of the three options). These thought papers will be graded out of 10 points, with 9 reflecting a good effort (clear, thoughtful, fully developed), 10 reflecting a great effort (like a 9 but with an extra level of insight, creativity, etc.), and an 8 reflecting completion that is lacking in some way (very short, unclear, inaccurate use of concepts, etc.).

- **Hypothesize:** In this type of thought paper, you present a novel hypothesis about personality that draws from what you learned in class, describe your reasoning behind the hypothesis, and very briefly describe a generally way you could test it.
- **Apply:** In this type of thought paper, you apply concepts from the course material to analyze a real-world situation, whether it is something in your own life, a way that a concept could be used in a specific setting (schools, hospitals, etc.), or to understand a societal or cultural phenomenon or problem.
- **Critique:** In this type of thought paper, you make a critique of something covered in class (concept, theory, method, etc.), with a rationale of your critical perspective using an example and a brief statement of how the concept could be improved.

Group Presentation

In the second half of the semester, students will be assigned to groups of four based on date preferences (earlier vs. later) and requests for working with friends in class (I will assign groups to presentation dates). Groups will work together to select a topic of mutual interest. Each student will find an article relevant to the topic, and the group will work together to create a presentation that incorporates findings from all four articles. The learning goals of the group presentation are to develop presentation skills, explore and synthesize the primary literature, and enrich your classmates' exposure to interesting topics in personality psychology. We will use a full class period for groups to start working together on identifying a topic area and searching for articles. Further details regarding this assignment and grading will be provided in class.

Final Paper

The final assignment for this course will be an 5-7 page paper due Friday, 12/20 at noon (end of semester). Details about this paper assignment will be provided in class – there will be three different options for the final paper, including a case study analysis, a traditional literature review style paper, or an application of personality psychology to a real-world topic. As per college policy, there will be no extensions to the deadline of this paper unless arranged through your Dean ahead of time.

Course Policies and Expectations

- **Attendance:** In-person attendance is required for this course. For the first few class meetings, I will take roll in order to work on learning students' names. After that, I will pass around a sign-in sheet for each class in order to have a record of attendance. You may miss one class without any consequence at all; after that, missing class will have a negative impact on your grade (1 point lost for each unexcused absence) unless you notify me ahead of time via email with a legitimate reason to miss class. Legitimate reasons to miss class are feeling sick, being deemed a close contact with someone who has Covid, some types of sanctioned school activities that directly conflict with class (e.g., athletic contests, going to a conference, etc.), and family emergencies. You are responsible for staying on top of announcements made in class even if you are not present. If you must miss several classes due to isolating after testing positive for Covid (or any other illness), we will work together to make sure you are able to stay current with the course.
- **Conduct and tech use in class:** In-class activities will involve a combination of lecture and discussion and will focus heavily on the assigned readings for the day. My expectation is that you will come to class having completed the readings (and any other preparations I've asked of you) and ready to participate and be fully engaged during class time. While I do not ban laptops in my classroom, I assume and expect that you will use your laptops appropriately (i.e., for taking notes, looking at the readings) and not for emailing, doing social media, shopping, etc. If that is how you would like to spend your time, please do not come to class!
- **Deadlines/late work/extensions:** I make decisions about extensions on a case-by-case basis. My position as a professor is that deadlines are serious and important and every attempt should be

made to meet them. However, flexibility and understanding is also very important in some situations, and I am more than willing to be flexible when you make a pro-active effort to communicate with me about your situation. In this spirit, I encourage you to always communicate with me if you anticipate difficulties with getting your work to me on time. It is always better to communicate earlier rather than later if you are struggling in any way. Timely communication gives me the best opportunity to support you in completing your work and being as successful as possible in this class. At the same time, I encourage you to do your best to meet deadlines whenever possible. It is an important life skill, and will benefit you to be able to check things off your list in a timely fashion. My policies regarding the grading of late work are as follows:

» Homework assignments: The point of the homeworks is that you do them when scheduled, as they are meant to fuel discussion during the class immediately after they are due. They are also meant to be “low stakes” and not take a lot of time. As described above, you get full credit for completion. For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to mark these four dates in your calendars and make every effort to get them done on time. However, if you have a major unavoidable conflict, or if you are so sick you cannot complete it on time, please email me and we will make an alternative arrangement. Late homework assignments without an email explanation will not be given credit.

» Exams: The take-home exams each have a fairly large window for completion (4-5 days). Within those windows, you can decide when to sit and take your 1.5 hour exam. For this reason, I expect that you will get your exam in by the deadline. Exceptions will only be made in serious circumstances and with timely communication.

» Final Paper: Because the final paper is due at the very end of the semester, you will receive a zero on the paper if it is late unless prior arrangements have been made involving your Dean, which is consistent with college policy.

- Email correspondence: I will always do my best to respond to emails as quickly as possible. However, my days and evenings are sometimes extremely busy, so my guarantee is within 24 hours. If something is urgent, you may note that on the subject line!
- Permissions: All of the materials made available to you in this course, including the syllabus, all handouts, the exams, and the PowerPoint slides, are my intellectual property as the professor of this course and should not be shared with anyone outside the course or posted anywhere without my permission. Also, lectures should not be recorded without my permission. If you have reason to do so, please ask! Also, at least at the beginning of the semester, I will be recording my lectures and providing the link after class for one week.
- Use of AI programs: The use of ANY AI programs (e.g., ChatGPT, etc.) for the purpose of completing ANY assigned work for this course is expressly prohibited. I consider it a serious violation of the Honor Code to use AI as a tool for what should be your own, independent work in this course. This strict policy applies to all assignments – homeworks, exams, group presentation, and final paper. I am especially concerned about this issue with take-home exams (which will include writing open-ended answers to short answer and essay questions), and if I suspect the use of AI I will confront you about it.

Accommodations for Disabilities

I am committed to partnering with you on your academic and intellectual journey. I also recognize that your ability to thrive academically can be impacted by your personal well-being and that stressors may impact you over the course of the semester. If the stressors are academic, I welcome the opportunity to discuss and address those stressors with you in order to find solutions together. If you are experiencing challenges or questions related to emotional health, finances, physical health, relationships, learning strategies or differences, or other potential stressors, I hope you will consider reaching out to the many resources available on campus. These resources include CAPS (free and unlimited counseling is available), the Office of Academic Resources, Health Services, Professional Health Advocate,

Religious and Spiritual Life, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the GRASE Center, and the Dean's Office. Additional information can be found at <https://www.haverford.edu/deans-office-student-life/offices-resources>.

Additionally, Haverford College is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body and providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment – please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at hc-ads@haverford.edu. The Director will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations. It is never too late to request accommodations – our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing. Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and want to use their accommodations in this course should share their accommodation letter and make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss how their accommodations will be implemented in this course. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice in order to successfully implement. If, at any point in the semester, a disability or personal circumstances affect your learning in this course or if there are ways in which the overall structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be adapted to facilitate full participation, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

It is a state law in Pennsylvania that individuals must be given advance notice that they may be recorded. Therefore, any student who has a disability-related need to audio record this class must first be approved for this accommodation from the Director of Access and Disability Services and then must speak to me. Other class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

Title IX College Statement

Haverford College is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive living and learning environment where all can feel secure and free from harassment. All forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence are violations of Haverford's policies, whether they occur on or off campus. Haverford faculty are committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College community as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, know that help and support are available. Staff members are trained to support students in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more.

The College strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of sexual misconduct. Please be aware that all Haverford employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors, clergy, and healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the Bi-College Title IX

Coordinator: <https://www.haverford.edu/users/ktaylor4>

Information about the College's Sexual Misconduct policy, reporting options, and a list of campus and local resources can be found on the College's website: <https://www.haverford.edu/sexual-misconduct>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings and Activities
1	9/3	Course overview	
1	9/5	The Science of Personality: Conceptual Framework and Methodological Approaches	•Ch. 1
		Level 1: Social Actor -- Traits	
2	9/10	Introduction to Traits: History, Definitions, and Measurement	•Ch. 4 •Essay by Serena Williams, 8/9/22 issue of <i>Vogue</i> magazine (used for in-class activity and discussion)
2	9/12	Establishing The Validity of Self-Reported Traits	•Conard (2006). <i>Aptitude is Not Enough: How Personality and Behavior Predict Academic Performance</i> •Canli (2002). <i>Amygdala Response to Happy Faces as a Function of Extraversion.</i> **Thought Paper #1 first opportunity, due Sun, 9/15 by 11:59 pm – Moodle upload
3	9/17	Extraversion, Neuroticism and the Neurological Basis of Traits	•Ch. 5 •Dobbs (2007). <i>The Gregarious Brain</i> (NY Times)
3	9/19	Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness	•Ch. 6 (pp. 170-190) •Ch. 7
4	9/24	The Roles of Genes and Environments in Trait Development	•Ch. 3 (pp. 66-85) •Ganiban et al (2021). <i>Gene X Environment Interactions in the Development of Preschool Effortful Control</i>
4	9/26	Stability and Change in Traits Over Time	•Ch. 8 •Zimmerman & Neyer (2013). <i>Do We Become a Different Person When Hitting the Road?</i> **Thought Paper #1 second opportunity, due Sun, 9/29 by 11:59 pm – Moodle upload
5	10/1	Culture and Traits – Multiple Perspectives	•Chapter 3 (pp. 86-98) •Haas et al (2022). <i>Person-Culture Personality Fit</i>
5	10/3	No class: Take-Home Exam #1	**Exam #1 posted on Wednesday, 10/2 and due via Moodle by Sunday, 10/6 at 11:59 pm**
		Level 2: Motivated Agent – Social Cognition, Motivation, and Development	
6	10/8	Social Context / Introduction to the Social-Cognitive Approach	• Ch. 11 (pp. 318-324) • Quan et al (2019). <i>The relationship between hostile attribution bias and aggression.</i>
6	10/10	Social-Cognitive Approach to Self /Fixed vs. Growth Mindsets	•Ch. 11 (pp. 324-341) •Vestad & Bru (2023). <i>Teacher's support for growth mindset and its link with students' growth mindset, academic engagement, and achievements in lower secondary school.</i>
		Fall Break	
7	10/22	Motivation I: Defense Mechanisms and Repressive Coping	•Newman &McKinney (2002). <i>Repressive Coping and Threat-Avoidance: An Idiographic Stroop Study</i>
7	10/24	Motivation II: Social Motives and the Picture Story Exercise	•Ch. 9 (pp. 252-267)
8	10/29	Motivation II: Self-determination Theory	•Ch. 9 (pp. 268-286) •Koole et al (2018). <i>Becoming Who You Are: An Integrative Review of Self-Determination Theory and Personality Systems Interactions Theory</i>
8	10/31	Early Bonding and Personality: Attachment styles	• Ch. 2 (pp. TBA) **Thought Paper #2 first opportunity, due Sun, 11/3 by 11:59 pm – Moodle upload
9	11/5	Personality in Emerging Adulthood: Identity Development	•Ch. 11 (pp. 341-347) •Pelco et al (2018). <i>Identity Status, Service Learning, and Future Plans</i>

9	11/7	Personality Development in Midlife: Generativity and Ego Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ch. 11 (pp. TBA) •Lilgendahl et al (2013). <i>Does Ego Development Increase During Midlife? The Effects of Openness and Accommodative Processing of Difficult Events</i>
		Level 3: Narrative Identity	
10	11/12	Group Presentations – overview and group work	•Whole class period dedicated to group presentations – overview and group work
10	11/14	Narrative Identity I: Theory Methods, and Basic Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ch. 12 **<i>Thought Paper #2 second opportunity, due Sun, 11/17 by 11:59 pm – Moodle upload</i>
11	11/19	Narrative Identity II: Developmental and Cultural Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ch. 13 •Reese et al (2017). <i>Tell the Tale and Living Well: Adolescent Narrative Identity, Personality Traits, and Well-Being Across Cultures</i>
11	11/21	Integrative Case Study Discussion – Apply Conceptual Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Case Study of Ben from <i>Adolescent Portraits</i>, Parts 1 and 2 •Group #1 presentation
12	11/26	No class: Take-Home Exam #2	** <i>Exam #2 posted on Friday, 11/22 and due via Moodle by Tuesday, 11/26 at 11:59pm</i> **
12	11/28	Thanksgiving – no class	
		Focus on Mental Health and Personality / Group Presentations	
13	12/3	Mental Health #1: Personality Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ch. 15 •Group #2 presentation
13	12/5	Mental Health #2: Stress and Coping	•Group #3 presentation
14	12/10	Group Presentations	•Groups #4, 5, and 6 presentations
14	12/12	Group presentations	•Groups #7, 8, and 9 presentations
			** <i>Final paper due at noon on Friday, 12/20</i> **