Personality Psychology (PSY 420)
Winter, 2018
Prof. Lakey

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm, AuSable Hall 2302

Office: 2315 Au Sable Hall
Office hours: 11:00 – 11:50am (MWF) and by appointment
Email: lakeyb@gvsu.edu (recommended)
Phone: 331-2868 (not recommended)

Required reading:

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1987). Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52,* 81-90.

Borkenau, P., Riemann, R., Angleitner, A., & Spinath, F. M. (2001). Genetic and environmental influences on observed personality: Evidence from the German Observational Study of Adult Twins. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80,* 655-668.

Mikulincer, M. (1995). Attachment style and the mental representation of the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69,* 1203-1215.

Course overview:

Lecture will provide a broad overview of empirical research in personality. In the old days, personality courses focus on grand personality theories (*e.g*., Freud, Sullivan) that attempt to explain everything. Although such theories are important historically, modern personality psychology is a strongly empirically oriented field. Decades ago, the field abandoned attempts to formulate or test grand theories of personality that are intended to explain most aspects of human behavior. Instead, the field focuses on documenting facts about personality. Theory is then built up from empirical facts. In this regard, personality psychology is now much more similar to experimental psychology than to Freud's personality theory. Theory is still important, but now personality psychologists develop limited theories, designed to explain specific empirically observed phenomena. This course will review this modern tradition of research in personality.

Journal article readings will follow the organization of lecture. Reading journal articles is designed to give the student a better sense of the nature of research in personality psychology.

Blackboard: The syllabus, lecture notes, study guides and grades will be available on blackboard. Lecture notes will be posted before lectures are given.

Course goals: *To provide opportunities for detailed, introductory study of…*

1. …the scientific approach to personality.
2. …key scientific findings in personality.
3. …and how quantitative analysis advances our understanding of personality.

Grading:

Exams: There will be three, multiple choice exams, consisting of approximately 40 questions each. About 90% of the questions will be from lecture and about 10% from the journal articles. Exams are not cumulative.

Quizzes: There will be 20 quizzes occurring on a semi-random basis, at the end of selected class sections, on that day's lecture. Quiz days are randomly selected with the restrictions that 1) at least one quiz occurs every week, 2) no more than two quizzes occur in a given week, 3) quizzes do not occur on exam days or on exam review days. Students' two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. Scores on quizzes will be averaged and students' averaged quiz scores will be worth an amount equal to an exam. There will be no make-up quizzes. Instead, the two dropped quizzes are intended to cover illness, emergencies, and trips. The exception is the quiz on the online personality test. This quiz will be given on the Friday of the first week of class.

Curving Exams and Quizzes: Final corrected scores for each exam and averaged quiz scores will be computed by 1) correcting scores for measurement error (i.e., error corrected scores) and then 2) dividing each student's error-corrected score by the highest error-corrected score obtained in the class. This procedure corrects for exam difficulty and measurement error. By using this method, even if the highest score were half of the questions answered correctly, it would be possible for the entire class to get As. For example, a student might obtain an error-corrected score of 23 out of 50 questions (.46). However, if the highest error-corrected score in the class were 25, the student's final corrected score, as entered in the grade book, would be .92 (23/25).

Your letter grade in the class will be based on your final corrected score, which will be the average of your three exam scores, and your final quiz score. Each of these will count 25% toward your final grade in the class. The final proportion scores will be converted to letter grades according to the following schedule:

.90 – 1.00	A
.80 – .89	B
.70 - .79	C
.60 - .69	D
.59 and below	F

The upper two points within the range of a letter grade are assigned "+" and the lower two points within the range of a letter grade are assigned "-". For example, an .88 would be assigned a B+ and a .81 would be assigned a B-.

Make-up exams: Make-up exams will be given under the following circumstances: official university activities (e.g., participating in sporting events), illnesses, and major life events (e.g., romantic breakup). You must email the professor before the exam to be confident that you will be permitted to sit for a make-up exam.

Exam Dates:

Exam 1: Monday, February 12.
Exam 2: Friday, March 23.
Exam 3 (Final): Tuesday, April 24, 2:00 pm - 3:50 pm

Lecture Topics and Approximate Schedule

Week	***Lecture Topic***
Week 1	Overview of the course. Personality and the nature of hypothetical constructs. ***Complete the online Personality Inventory:*** http://www.personal.psu.edu/~j5j/IPIP/
Week 2	*Basic facts about personality:* How are personality characteristics organized in nature? What are the basic building blocks of personality? If you know that a person has characteristic X, can you predict that they will also have characteristic Y?
Week 3	*Basic facts about personality:* Organization of personality traits continued.
Week 4	*Basic facts:* Using the five factor model to explain personality disorders.
Week 5	*Basic facts:* To what extent does personality reflect objective reality? What else could it reflect?
Week 6	*Basic facts:* To what extent are people consistent across situations? If a person acts in a certain way in one situation, how likely is it that he/she will act the same way in another situation?
Week 7	*Basic facts:* To what extent is personality reflected in each person's unique pattern of responding to different situations? (i.e., PxS interactions).
Week 8	*Research Approaches:* PxS interactions when important personal relationships are the situations.
Week 9	*Biological and environmental mechanisms*: To what extent is personality inherited? To what extent is personality determined by environmental factors?
Week 10	*Biological and environmental mechanisms:* To what extent do genetic influences on personality depend on the environment? To what extent do environmental influences on personality depend on genetic

	predisposition?
Week 11	*Cognitive Theory:* How are personality characteristics translated into specific thoughts, emotions and actions?
Week 12	*Cognitive Mechanisms:* Attentional and memory biases in depression and anxiety
Week 14	*Cognitive Mechanisms:* Are there thoughts about the self that occur outside of awareness (i.e., the unconscious)?
Week 13	*Applying what we have learned to a new topic:* Adult romantic attachment.
Week 15	Adult romantic attachment.

Readings covered by each exam:
Exam 1: McCrae & Costa (1987).
Exam 2: Borkenau et al., (2001).
Exam 3 (Final): Strauman, (1989); Mikulincer, (1995).