

Personality Psychology
(PSY 420)
Winter, 2022
Prof. Lakey

Office: 2315 Au Sable Hall

Office hours: 12:00 – 12:50 (MWF) and by appointment

Email: lakeyb@gvsu.edu

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.

Heeren, A., Mogoşe, C., Philippot, P., & McNally, R. J. (2015). Attention bias modification for social anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review, 40*, 76-90.

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 like 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: All course material will be posted on Blackboard.

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.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe theories of personality and concepts.
2. Demonstrate ability to analyze and think critically about theories and research relating to personality.
3. Explain the scientific method as it applies to personality phenomena.
4. Apply theories of personality and concepts to experiences in everyday life.

Grading:

Exams: There will be three, multiple choice exams, consisting of approximately 40 - 50 questions each. All questions will be from lecture. Exams are not cumulative.

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.

On-line quizzes on lecture: There will be multiple-choice quizzes on each lecture. Quiz questions are in the same style as exam questions but are not identical. Typically, quizzes will be posted on the day that the lecture is finished. The first lecture will focus on the syllabus and there will be a separate quiz on that. Quizzes are open note. Late quizzes will receive a 10% penalty. You will have a week to finish each quiz.

On-line quizzes on the readings. After we have finished the relevant material in lecture, an on-line quiz will be posted on the relevant required reading, as listed earlier in this document. You will have a week to complete the quiz. Late quizzes will receive a 10% penalty. Quizzes are open book.

In-class quizzes on lecture: At the end of class, on a semi-random basis, there will be a two question, multiple-choice quiz on that day's lecture. The constraints are 1. There will be at least one quiz per week but 2. There will be no more than two quizzes per week. There will be 20 such quizzes. There will be no make-up quizzes. Instead, the two quiz drops that everyone gets 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.

Don't cheat. Your grade in this course should be based on your own work. You are not permitted to discuss with another student the exam or quiz questions, until both of you have completed the quiz or exam. Quiz and exam questions are the property of the Brian Lakey and so it is a violation of copyright law to copy or photograph them without my consent.

Grading: Your letter grade in the class will be based on your final course score, which will be the weighted average of your exam scores, on-line readings quiz scores, on-line lecture quiz scores, and in-class quiz scores. Exams will count for 33% of your final course score, on-line lecture quizzes and in-class lecture quizzes each will count for 26% and on-line readings quizzes will count for 15%. Each of these four types of assignments will be curved by summing your total number of questions answered correctly and dividing the sum by the highest score achieved in the course. For example, if you answered 40 questions out of 50 correctly, and the highest score in the class was 45, your curved score would be .888 (40/45), not .80 (40/50).

Your final course score 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-.

Exam Dates:

Exam 1: Friday, February 11

Exam 2: Wednesday, March 23

Exam 3: Monday, April 25, 12:00 pm - 1:50 pm

Lecture Topics and Approximate Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Lecture Topic</i>
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	<i>Basic facts about personality:</i> 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	<i>Basic facts about personality:</i> Organization of personality traits continued.
Week 4	<i>Basic facts:</i> Using the five-factor model to explain important life outcomes.
Week 5	<i>Basic facts:</i> To what extent does personality reflect objective reality? What else could it reflect?
Week 6	<i>Basic facts:</i> 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	<i>Basic facts:</i> To what extent is personality reflected in each person's unique pattern of responding to different situations? (i.e., PxS interactions).
Week 8	<i>Research Approaches:</i> PxS interactions when important personal relationships are the situations.
Week 9	<i>Biological and environmental mechanisms:</i> To what extent is personality inherited? To what extent is personality determined by environmental factors?
Week 10	<i>Biological and environmental mechanisms:</i> 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	<i>Cognitive Theory:</i> How are personality characteristics translated into specific thoughts, emotions and actions?
Week 12	<i>Cognitive Mechanisms:</i> Attentional and memory biases in neuroticism
Week 14	<i>Cognitive Mechanisms:</i> Attentional and memory biases in neuroticism
Week 13	<i>Applying what we have learned to a new topic:</i> Adult romantic attachment.
Week 15	Adult romantic attachment.

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at
<http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>