

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY 105

PDE Specification: On Line

This is a three-credit course and requires the equivalent of 42 hours of classroom learning. A traditional course is equivalent to three class hours per week. Attendance online should be the approximately the equivalent of the traditional course time, 3 hours per week. Work on readings, chapter assignments and other individual assignments therefore require approximately 6 hours per week for the typical student.

ON LINE COURSE

This is an online course only. Please note this course is conducted through the Web Study interface. I do not use Campus Cruiser. Log in to Web Study at <http://widener.webstudy.com/>

UNIVERSITY PREREQUISITES

none

MY PREREQUISITES – PLEASE READ!

1. This is an online course, as such you should have regular and reliable access to a computer and the internet in order to be able to complete assignments.
2. This course uses Webstudy as the interface for teaching and grading. You should have a basic knowledge of how to navigate in this interface. Widener does offer an online orientation for this.
3. This course requires written work on a weekly basis. You should know the basics of research based writing including proper use of citations and references. You should know the difference between opinion, faith and research based writing. This will also be reviewed as part of this course during the first week.
4. You should check Webstudy email on a regular basis for assignments and updates. You should also know how to use the email interface to communicate with the professor as needed.

INSTRUCTOR

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CONTACTING ME

I am best reached by email as I travel between Philadelphia, New York and Toronto on a regular basis. I check in to Web Study daily and most usually in the morning and late evening. While I prefer to keep correspondence in the Web Study interface, if the matter is more pressing, send email to sweisz@gmail.com for a quicker response. If you call me you will most likely get voicemail (listing many organizations), just leave a message! I will return calls in 24-48 hours or

less. If leaving a message, YOU MUST state that you are in my introduction to psychology class, leave your full name, phone number and best time to reach you in order to get a call back.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A general introduction to scientific psychology, including bio-logical psychology, development, learning, memory, psychological disorders, and social psychology.

REQUIRED TEXT

While I realize the cost of texts can be expensive, the book listed below is very necessary in order to complete this course.

Myers, David G., "Exploring Psychology", Ninth Edition, 2011 Worth Publishers, NY
ISBN-13: 978-1-4641-1172-3 ISBN-10:1-4641-1172-3

***PLEASE NOTE: only 9th edition is acceptable!

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL READING ON LINE

This will be provided by web links to articles and videos found each week in the Forums section of Web Study.

INCOMPLETES

Incompletes for this course will NOT be accepted except for medical reasons with a note from a physician. All work for the semester must be completed in a timely manner and before the end date for the course as noted in the timeline and syllabus.

COURSE GOALS

1. Recognize areas of psychological investigation that have implications for everyday life and society.
2. Understand the scientific method as it applies to psychology.
3. Recognize that psychological phenomena are investigated from many levels of investigation, ranging from biological through social ("micro" through "macro") levels.
4. Identify some of the biological mechanisms that influence human psychological processes.
5. Be able to discuss psychological development throughout life, from before birth through old age.
6. Recognize the impact of experience on psychological phenomena, based on learning principles.
7. Recognize the role of cognition and memory in human functioning.
8. Recognize some of the important individual differences that influence human functioning.
9. Discuss psychological health and psychological problems, based on scientific evidence.
10. Recognize ways that society influences human functioning.

COURSE EVALUATION

1. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstance!** All written work must have proper citations, either APA or MLA format, as well as a list of references. All written work is submitted to an independent service to check for plagiarism before I read or review it. Anyone caught plagiarizing will receive an immediate F for the course. Not sure about your work? Ask before submitting. I am more than happy to assist or review a draft. Also, you may consult the Widener Writing Center for additional assistance. A complete plagiarism statement will be emailed to each student individually by me at the start of the course.

2. **Assignments must be completed in a timely manner!** While distance/on line learning gives you the luxury of working at your own pace and your own timing/schedule, assignments are expected to be completed in a timely manner as outlined in this syllabus as well as the course timeline tab in Web Study. Failure to do so or to make special arrangements with me in advance will result in a failing grade or grade reduction for that assignment.

a. **Quizzes, Exams & Papers** – All of these have a stated completion date in the syllabus and course time line. Makeups for quizzes or exams will only be allowed for medical excuses with valid physician note. Any quiz, exam or paper turned in after due date will result in a failing grade for that assignment.

b. **Forum Discussions** - These have a stated completion date in the syllabus and course time line. Each forum corresponds with reading during an assigned week. This is the equivalent of class discussion. While you are given a full week to make your posts, doing so in the last hour of the last day due, defeats the purpose of having a meaningful dialogue with myself or classmates. If the only posts you make are on the last day of the assignment, this will result in an automatic grade reduction. **Your initial post to the required forum topics should be made by Wednesday each week for full credit. Comments and additional contributions may then be made through the end of the week for additional credit.**

3. **Attendance.** This is an online class, but you are still required to check in on a regular basis in the Web Study interface. Attendance online should be the approximately the equivalent of the traditional course time, 3 hours per week. Work on readings, chapter assignments and other individual assignments therefore require approximately 6 hours per week for the typical student. On line attendance (3 hours per week) is monitored through Web Study. Failure to meet attendance requirements can result in automatic grade reductions. Please refer to the PDE requirements for this course stated at the beginning of this syllabus.

GRADING SCALE FOR INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

A	94
A-	90
B+	87
B	84
B-	80
C+	77
C	74
C-	70
D+	67
D	64
D-	60
F	59

READINGS.

This distance-learning course will consist of readings from the primary text, Myers, David G., "Exploring Psychology". Additional reading assignments will be from hyper-linked articles in the forums tab. In order to be able to actively participate in this class, all reading assignments are mandatory and should be completed on time.

WEEKLY CHAPTER QUIZES [Timeline Tab]

There will be a total of 15 weekly quizzes consisting of multiple choice and/or short answer questions. Each quiz covers the chapter required during each week of the course. This will count for 30% of your final grade. Quizzes are usually in multiple choice formats but may also contain short answer questions as well. Questions presented are grouped in three categories: factual, applied and conceptual. Factual questions are straight from the text and measure your knowledge of basic terminology. Applied questions, require you to know the material in the text and be able to apply it to real world examples. Conceptual questions require a deeper understanding of the material and evoke critical thinking on the material presented in the chapter.

Each quiz may be taken twice. Questions are randomly selected from a pool of questions and are unique for each student and each time the quiz is taken. **Only your higher grade will be applied if you opt to take the quiz more than once.**

MULTIMEDIA.

A variety of online videos, podcasts and power points have been included in this course both on the Time Line in Web Study as well as through posts made by me to specific forums. These are specifically marked as being either OPTIONAL or REQUIRED. Those items marked required are calculated in to the final course grade. Optional assignments are there to help you better understand the material and are strongly recommended but not calculated in to your final course grade.

DISCUSSIONS. [Forum Tab]

Class discussion about readings and weekly topics is by way of the "Forums" section of web study. It is critical that you participate in this process. These are where you can post and ask questions about reading materials as well as critically respond to your classmate's ideas. You are expected to:

1. Reply or respond to any required topic posts that I have made in a given forum. The number of topic posts I make may vary depending on the material being covered at that given time. Points will be deducted for not contributing in the key topics that I post.
2. You are also expected to respond to at least two other classmates' posts. All posts and responses should be a well-formed assertion or responses that are research based. It should not simply be comments like 'I agree:', etc.
3. Participation in discussions will count for 30% of your final grade.
4. **GRADING CRITERIA FOR FORUMS.** All forum posts are read and reviewed by me. They are graded based on a rubric as follows:
 - a. Posts clearly utilize materials covered in text or outside sources, incorporating current social psychology theory with real world examples. Citations are provided.
 - b. Substantial original ideas enhancing the course.
 - c. Arguments or statements made show critical thinking, analysis or evaluation of the course material presented.
 - d. Links to valid additional resources (articles, videos and podcasts) are provided that enhance the current course material. See course material as to what constitutes a valid source on the internet.
 - e. Posts measure 100+ approximate words. I am not a stickler for spelling and grammar in forums but posts should be written with some degree of clarity.

MIDTERM.

The mid-term exam is worth 20% of your grade. Midterm exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each. Covered are Chapters 1 through 7 only. The mid-term exam will be conducted on line. This exam will cover only material from the assigned readings to date.

FINAL.

The final exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each. It will cover all of the material from the semester. This will constitute 20% of your course grade.

COURSE TIME LINE

For each week in the course timeline, there are two sections – Assignments and Optional Study Materials. Assignments are required work for successful completion of this course and are evaluated accordingly. Optional Study Materials consist of Power Point Slides reviewing the chapter as well as other study materials that may be of help. The Optional Study Materials are not required nor reviewed.

IMPORTANT

Please be sure to follow the Course Time Line in the Web Study online interface as it will be the most up to date version for this course. **This course will run from August 31, 2015 – January 15, 2016.**

August 31 – September 6**#1 on Timeline****Thinking Critically with Psychology Science**

Psychology traces its roots back to Greek philosophers' reflections on human nature. Psychologists' initial focus on mental life was replaced in the 1920s by the study of observable behavior. As the science of behavior and mental processes, psychology has its origins in many disciplines and countries.

Psychology's most enduring issue concerns the relative contributions of biology and experience. Today, psychologists recognize that nurture works on what nature endows. The biopsychosocial approach incorporates biological, psychological, and social-cultural levels of analysis. Although different perspectives on human nature have their own purposes and questions, they are complementary and together provide a fuller understanding of mind and behavior.

Some psychologists conduct basic or applied research; others provide professional services, including assessing and treating troubled people. With its perspectives ranging from the biological to the social, and settings from the clinic to the laboratory, psychology has become a meeting place for many disciplines.

The scientific attitude reflects an eagerness to skeptically scrutinize competing ideas with an open-minded humility before nature. This attitude, coupled with scientific principles for sifting reality from illusion, prepares us to think critically. Three reliable phenomena—hindsight bias, judgmental overconfidence, and the tendency to perceive order in random events—illustrate the limits of everyday intuition and our need for scientific inquiry and critical thinking.

Psychologists construct theories that organize observations and imply testable hypotheses. In their research, they use case studies, naturalistic observation, and surveys to describe behavior; correlation to assess the relationship between variables; and experimentation to uncover cause-effect relationships.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 1 of the Text

Post in Forum 00 and 01

Take Chapter Quiz 1

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

September 8 – September 13**#2 on timeline****The Biology of Behavior**

Our nervous system plays a vital role in how we think, feel, and act. Neurons, the basic building blocks of the body's circuitry, receive signals through their branching dendrites and cell bodies and transmit electrical impulses down their axons. Chemical messengers called neurotransmitters traverse the tiny synaptic gap between neurons and pass on excitatory or inhibitory messages.

The central nervous system consists of the brain and spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system consists of the somatic nervous system, which directs voluntary movements and reflexes, and the autonomic nervous system, which controls the glands and muscles of our internal organs.

Hormones released by endocrine glands affect other tissues, including the brain. The most influential endocrine gland, the pituitary gland, releases hormones that influence growth, and its secretions also influence the release of hormones by other glands. The nervous system directs endocrine secretions, which then affect the nervous system.

The brain's increasing complexity arises from new brain systems built on top of old. Within the brainstem are the oldest regions, the medulla and the reticular formation. The thalamus sits atop the brainstem and the cerebellum extends from the rear. The limbic system includes the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the hypothalamus. The cerebral cortex, representing the highest level of brain development, is responsible for our most complex functions.

Each hemisphere of the cerebral cortex has four geographical areas: the frontal, parietal, occipital, and temporal lobes. Although small, well-defined regions within these lobes control muscle movement and

receive information from the body senses, most of the cortex—its association areas—are free to process other information. Experiments on split-brain patients suggest that, for most people, the left hemisphere is the more verbal and the right hemisphere excels in visual perception. Studies of people with intact brains indicate that each hemisphere makes unique contributions to the integrated functions of the brain.

How do our heredity and our experiences organize and "wire" the brain? Genes provide the blueprints that design both our universal human attributes and our individual traits. Behavior geneticists explore individual differences. By using twin and adoption studies, they assess the heritability of various traits and disorders. Their research indicates that both nature and nurture influence our life courses. We are products of interactions between our genetic predispositions and our surrounding environments.

Evolutionary psychologists focus on what makes us alike as humans. They study how natural selection favored behavioral tendencies that contributed to the survival and spread of our genes.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 2 of the text

Post in Forum 2
Take Chapter Quiz 2

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

September 14 – September 20

#3 on timeline

Consciousness and the Two-Track Mind

Consciousness is our awareness of ourselves and our environment. Cognitive neuroscientists study the links between brain activity and mental processes. Research indicates that we have a two-track mind. Conscious information processing enables us to exercise control and to communicate our mental states to others. Beneath the surface, unconscious processing occurs simultaneously on many parallel tracks. Our awareness focuses on a limited aspect of all that we experience.

Our daily schedule of waking and sleeping is governed by a biological clock known as circadian rhythm. Our sleep also follows a repeating cycle. Awakenings during REM sleep yields predictable "dreamlike" reports that are mostly of ordinary events. Freud's view that dreams can be traced back to erotic wishes is giving way to newer theories, for example, that dreams help us process information and fix it in memory or that dreams erupt from neural activity.

Studies of hypnosis indicate that, although hypnotic procedures may facilitate recall, the hypnotist's beliefs frequently work their way into subjects' recollections. Hypnosis can be at least temporarily therapeutic and has the potential of bringing significant pain relief. Hypnosis may be an extension both of normal principles of social influence and of everyday splits in consciousness.

Psychoactive drugs also alter consciousness. Depressants act by depressing neural functioning. Although their effects are pleasurable, they impair memory and self-awareness and may have other physical consequences. Stimulants act at the synapses by influencing the brain's neurotransmitters. Hallucinogens can distort judgment of time and can alter sensations and perceptions. A number of those who survive a brush with death later recall visionary experiences. Drug effects depend on dosage and the user's personality and expectations.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 3 of the text
Post in Forum 3
Take Chapter Quiz 3

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

September 21 – September 27

#4 on timeline

Developing Through the Life Span

Developmental psychologists study the life cycle, from conception to death, examining how we develop physically, cognitively, and socially. Three issues pervade this study: (1) the relative impact of genes and experience on behavior, (2) whether development is best described as gradual and continuous or as a sequence of predetermined stages, and (3) whether the individual's personality remains stable or changes over the life span.

The life cycle begins when one sperm unites with a mature egg to form a zygote. Attached to the uterine wall, the developing embryo begins to form body organs and by 9 weeks, the fetus becomes recognizably human. With the aid of new methods of studying babies, researchers have discovered that newborns are surprisingly competent. Infants develop skills of sitting, standing, and walking in a predictable sequence; their actual timing is a function of individual maturation rate.

Jean Piaget theorized that the mind develops by forming schemas that help us assimilate our experiences and that must occasionally be altered to accommodate new information. In this way, children progress from the simplicity of the sensorimotor stage through the increasingly complex preoperational and concrete operational stages to abstract formal operational thought. Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of the social environment in the child's development.

Infants become attached to their parents largely because they are comfortable, familiar, and responsive. Denied such care, children may become withdrawn, anxious, and eventually abusive. Children who develop a positive self-image tend to have been reared by parents who are authoritative but at the same time allow their children a sense of control over their own lives.

Adolescence typically begins at puberty with the onset of rapid growth and sexual maturity. Jean Piaget theorized that adolescents develop the capacity to reason abstractly. Following Piaget's lead, Lawrence Kohlberg contended that moral thinking likewise proceeds through stages, from a morality of self-interest to a morality of universal ethical principles. Jonathan Haidt, on the other hand, believes that much of our morality is rooted in moral intuitions. Erik Erikson theorized that a chief task of adolescence is to form one's identity. This struggle may continue into the adult years as new relationships emerge and new roles are assumed. The time from 18 to the mid-twenties is an increasingly not-yet-settled phase of life called emerging adulthood.

Researchers who emphasize experience and learning tend to see development as a slow continuous process. Those who emphasize biological maturation tend to see development as a series of genetically predisposed stages. Although the stage theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson have been modified in the light of later research, each theory usefully alerts us to differences among people of different ages and helps us to keep the life-span perspective in view.

The barely perceptible physical declines of early adulthood begin to accelerate during middle adulthood. For women, a significant change is menopause. After 65, declining perceptual acuity, strength, and stamina are evident, but short-term ailments are fewer.

Research suggests that people are not as predictable as some stage theorists have argued. Life events and even chance occurrences influence adult life in unanticipated ways. Two basic aspects of our lives—

love and work—dominate adulthood. Most people retain a sense of well-being throughout life.

The normal range of reactions to a loved one's death, or to our own impending death, is wider than most suppose. Those who face death with a sense of integrity, according to Erikson, feel that their lives have been meaningful and worthwhile.

Researchers who have followed lives through time have found evidence for both stability and change.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 4 of the Text

Post in Forum 4

Take Chapter Quiz 4

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

September 28 – October 4

#5 on timeline

Gender & Sexuality

Although in most ways men and women are alike, they also differ. For example, men behave more aggressively and are perceived as more dominant, forceful, and independent. Women are more concerned with making social connections. Differing sex chromosomes and differing concentrations of sex hormones lead to significant physiological differences. Yet, gender differences vary widely depending on culture. Cultural variations in gender roles demonstrate our capacity for learning and adapting. Both social and cultural factors contribute to gender identity and gender typing.

In nonhuman animals, hormones help stimulate sexuality activity. In humans they influence sexual behavior more loosely. The human sexual response cycle normally follows a pattern of excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution. People who suffer sexual dysfunctions or paraphilias are unable to complete a normal response cycle. Problems arising from unprotected sex—sexually transmitted infections and unwanted teen pregnancies—can radically alter people's lives. Exposure to sexually explicit material can have adverse effects. However, fantasizing about sex does not indicate a sexual problem or dissatisfaction. One's sexual orientation seems neither willfully cho-sen nor willfully changed; new research links sexual orientation to biological factors.

Evolutionary psychologists study how natural selection favors behavioral tendencies that contribute to the survival and spread of our genes. They use natural selection to help us understand gender similarities and differences and important aspects of our sexuality. Throughout the world, males are more likely than females to initiate sexual activity. In addition, men have a more recreational approach to sex while women have a more relational approach. In explaining gender differences in sexual behavior, evolutionary psychologists argue that women most often send their genes into the future by pairing wisely, men by pairing widely. Critics maintain that evolutionary psychologists make too many hindsight explanations and underestimate the role of culture. Evolutionary psychologists highlight the explanatory power of their theoretical principles, especially those that offer testable predictions.

We are products of both nature and nurture, of genes and environment. For example, genes and

hormones may predispose certain gender differences but gender roles also shape us. Still, we are not rigidly determined. We are architects of our future and the stream of causation runs through our present choices.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 5 of the Text

Post in Forum 5

Take Chapter Quiz 5

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

October 5 – October 11

#6 on timeline

Sensation & Perception

Sensation is the process by which we detect stimulus energy from our environment and transmit it to our brain. Perception is the process of organizing and interpreting sensory information, enabling us to recognize meaningful objects and events. Clear evidence that perception is influenced by our experience comes from the many demonstrations of perceptual set and context effects.

The task of each sense is to receive stimulus energy, transform it into neural signals, and send those neural messages to the brain. In vision, light waves are converted into neural impulses by the retina; after being coded, these impulses travel up the optic nerve to the brain's cortex, where they are interpreted.

In organizing sensory data into whole perceptions, our first task is to discriminate figure from ground. We then organize the figure into meaningful form by following certain rules for grouping stimuli. We

transform two-dimensional retinal images into three-dimensional perceptions by using binocular cues, such as retinal disparity, and monocular cues, such as the relative sizes of objects. The perceptual consistencies enable us to perceive objects as enduring in color, shape, and size regardless of viewing angle, distance, and illumination. The consistencies explain several well-known illusions.

Both nature and nurture shape our perceptions. For example, when cataracts are removed from adults who have been blind from birth, these persons can distinguish figure and ground and can perceive color but are unable to distinguish shapes and forms. At the same time, human vision is remarkably adaptable. Given glasses that turn the world upside down, people manage to adapt and move about with ease.

In hearing, sound waves are transmitted to the fluid-filled cochlea, where they are converted to neural messages and sent to the brain. We locate sounds by differences in the timing and loudness of the sounds received by each ear.

Our other senses include touch, taste, smell, and body position and movement. The sense of touch is actually four senses—pressure, warmth, cold, and pain—that combine to produce other sensations such

as "hot." Taste, a chemical sense, is a composite of sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami sensations. Smell, also a chemical sense, does not have basic sensations as there are for touch and taste. Our effective functioning also requires a kinesthetic sense and a vestibular sense, which together enable us to detect body position and movement.

Our senses are not totally separate information channels. In interpreting the world, our brain blends their input. Thus, for example, the smell of food may influence its taste.

Although parapsychologists have tried to document ESP, most research psychologists remain skeptical, particularly because the results of experiments have not been reproducible.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 6 of the Text

Post in Forum 6

Take Chapter Quiz 6

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

October 13 – October 18

#7 on timeline

Learning

Learning helps us adapt to our environment. Pavlov explored classical conditioning, in which we learn to anticipate events, such as being fed or experiencing pain. In his famous studies, Pavlov presented a neutral stimulus just before an unconditioned stimulus, which normally triggered an unconditioned response. After several repetitions, the neutral stimulus alone began triggering a conditioned response resembling the unconditioned response.

While in classical conditioning we learn to associate two stimuli, in operant conditioning we learn to associate a response and its consequence. Skinner showed that rats and pigeons could be shaped through reinforcement to display successively closer approximations of a desired behavior. Researchers have also studied the effects of positive and negative reinforcers, primary and conditioned reinforcers, and immediate and delayed reinforcers. Although Skinner's emphasis on external control also stimulated much debate regarding human freedom and the ethics of managing people, his operant principles are being applied in schools, sports, the workplace, and homes.

The behaviorists' optimism that learning principles would generalize from one response to another and from one species to another has been tempered. We now know that conditioning principles are biologically and cognitively constrained. Critics point to research on latent learning to support their claim that Skinner underestimated the importance of cognitive constraints.

Another type of learning that is important among higher animals is what Albert Bandura calls observational learning. Children tend to imitate what a model does and says, whether the behavior is prosocial or antisocial. Research suggests that violence on television leads to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 7 of the Text

Post in Forum 7

Take Chapter Quiz 7

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

MIDTERM EXAM

October 19 – October 25

#8 on timeline

Midterm exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each.

Covered are Chapters 1 through 7 only.

You have up to 4 hours to complete this open book exam.

Once you open the interface and begin the exam, you must work to completion. Do not open and close the exam before you have completed and submitted it.

ALL EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:58pm on October 25, 2015.

NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!

October 26 – November 1

#9 on timeline

Memory

Memory is the persistence of learning over time. Evidence that learning persists includes three forms: recall, recognition, and relearning. Atkinson and Shiffrin have proposed an information-processing model that involves three stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval. More recent research has modified this model to incorporate the concept of working memory.

Although some types of information are encoded automatically, other types, including information involving meaning, imagery, and organization, require effort. Mnemonic devices that use imagery and that organize information into chunks aid memory. Organizing into hierarchies also helps.

Information first enters the memory through the senses. We register visual images via iconic memory and sound via echoic memory.

Although our memory for information just presented is limited to about seven items, our capacity for storing information permanently is essentially unlimited. The search for the physical basis of memory has focused on the synapses and their neurotransmitters and on brain circuits. The frontal lobes and hippocampus process explicit (declarative) memories, the cerebellum and basal ganglia process implicit (nondeclarative) memories, and the amygdala plays a role in emotion-related memory formation.

To be remembered, information that is "in there" must be retrieved with the aid of associations that serve as primers. Returning to the original context sometimes aids retrieval. While in a good or bad mood we often retrieve memories congruent with that mood. Forgetting sometimes reflects encoding failure. Without effortful processing, much of what we sense we never notice or process. Memories may

also fade after storage—often rapidly at first and then leveling off. Retrieval failures may be caused by proactive or retroactive interference or even by motivated forgetting.

Memories are not stored as exact copies. Rather, they are constructed, using both stored and new information. Thus, when eyewitnesses are subtly exposed to misinformation after an event, they often believe they saw the misleading details as part of the event. Memory researchers are especially suspicious of long-repressed memories of sexual abuse that are "recovered" with the aid of a therapist or suggestive book.

Among strategies for improving memory are studying repeatedly, making material personally relevant, activating retrieval cues, using mnemonic devices, minimizing interference, getting adequate sleep, and self-testing.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 8 of the Text

Post in Forum 8

Take Chapter Quiz 8

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

November 2 – November 8

#10 on timeline

Thinking, Language & Intelligence

Concepts, the building blocks of thinking, simplify the world by organizing it into a hierarchy of categories. Concepts are often formed around prototypes, or the best examples of a category. When faced with a novel situation for which no well-learned response will do, we may use problem-solving strategies such as trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight. Obstacles to successful problem solving include the confirmation bias, fixation, and a form of fixation called mental set. Heuristics provide efficient, but occasionally misleading, guides for making quick decisions. Overconfidence, belief perseverance, and framing further reveal our capacity for error. Still, human cognition is remarkably efficient and adaptive. For example, creative thinkers exhibit divergent thinking. And, with experience, our intuition becomes more efficient and adaptive, and we grow adept at making quick, shrewd judgments. Research has shown that other species share many cognitive abilities with humans.

Language facilitates and expresses our thoughts. Spoken language is built from phonemes, morphemes, words, and the semantics and syntax that make up grammar. The ease with which children master language suggests that they are biologically prepared to learn words and use grammar. Language processing illustrates how the mind's subsystems are localized in particular brain regions, yet the brain acts as a unified whole.

Thinking and language are difficult to separate. Although the linguistic determinism hypothesis states that language determines thought, we know that thinking can occur without language, and so we might better say that thinking affects our language, which then affects our thoughts.

Another debate concerns whether language is uniquely human; it has been fueled by studies of animals,

particularly chimpanzees, who have developed considerable vocabularies and who can string words together to express meaning. Skeptics point out important differences between apes' and humans' abilities in the verbal or signed expression of complex grammar.

Today, intelligence is generally considered to be the ability to learn from experience, solve problems, and adapt to new situations. Psychologists debate whether intelligence is one general ability or several specific abilities. Some theorists have expanded the definition of intelligence to include social intelligence, especially emotional intelligence.

Barely a century ago, psychologists began designing tests to assess people's abilities. Some measured aptitude; others assessed achievement. In France Alfred Binet developed questions that helped predict children's future progress in the Paris school system. Lewis Terman of Stanford University used Binet's ideas to develop the Stanford-Binet intelligence test. German psychologist William Stern derived the formula for the famous intelligence quotient, or IQ.

Modern tests are widely accepted only if they are standardized, reliable, and valid. Aptitude tests tend to be highly reliable, but they are weak predictors of success in life. One way to test the validity of a test is to compare people who score at the two extremes of the normal curve: the challenged and the gifted. Studies of twins, family members, and adopted children point to significant genetic determinants of intelligence test scores. These and other studies also indicate that environment significantly influences intelligence test scores. Psychologists debate evolutionary and cultural explanations of gender differences in aptitudes and abilities. Environmental differences are perhaps entirely responsible for racial gaps in intelligence.

Aptitude tests, which predict performance in a given situation, are necessarily "biased" in the sense that they are sensitive to performance differences caused by cultural experiences. However, the major tests are not biased in that they predict as accurately for one group as for another. Stereotype threat can adversely affect performance and sometimes appears in intelligence testing among African-Americans and women.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 9 of the Text
Post in Forum 9
Take Chapter Quiz 9

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

November 9 – November 15

#11 on timeline

Motivation & Emotion

Motivation is a need or desire that energizes and directs behavior. Under the influence of Darwin's evolutionary theory, the popular view was that instincts control behavior. Drive-reduction theory maintains that physiological needs create psychological drives that seek to restore internal stability, or homeostasis. In addition, some motivated behaviors increase arousal, and we are pulled by external incentives. According to Maslow, some motives are more compelling than others.

Hunger seems to originate from changes in glucose and insulin levels that are monitored by areas deep within the hypothalamus, as well as changes in the levels of appetite hormones such as ghrelin. To control weight, the body also adjusts its basal metabolic rate. Body chemistry and environmental factors together influence our taste preferences. In studying obesity, psychologists have found that a number of physiological factors make it difficult to lose weight permanently. Those who wish to diet should set realistic goals, minimize exposure to food cues, exercise, and make a lifelong change in eating patterns.

The need to belong is a major influence in motivating human behavior. Social bonds boosted our ancestors' survival rates. We experience our need to belong when feeling the gloom of loneliness or joy of love, and when seeking social acceptance. People who excel are often self-disciplined individuals with strong achievement motivation.

Emotions are psychological responses that involve an interplay among (1) physiological arousal, (2) expressive behavior, and (3) conscious experience. James and Lange argued that we feel emotion after we notice our bodily responses. Cannon and Bard contended that we feel emotion when our body responds. Schachter and Singer's two-factor theory states that to experience emotion, we must be aroused and cognitively label the emotion.

Some emotional responses are immediate, as sensory input bypasses the cortex, triggering a rapid reaction outside our conscious awareness. Others, especially responses to complex emotions, require interpretation.

Carroll Izard has identified 10 basic emotions, most of which are present in infancy. Other emotions are variations of these 10. Although the physical arousal that occurs with the different emotions is for the most part indistinguishable, researchers have discovered subtle differences in brain circuits, finger temperatures, and hormones. In using physiological indicators to detect lies, the polygraph does better than chance but not nearly well enough to justify its widespread use.

We decipher people's emotions by "reading" their bodies, voices, and faces. Women are superior to men in emotional sensitivity and responsiveness. Although some gestures are culturally determined, facial expressions, such as those of happiness and fear, are universal. Facial expressions not only communicate emotion but also amplify the felt emotion.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 10 of the Text
Post in Forum 10
Take Chapter Quiz 10

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

November 16 – November 22

#12 on timeline

Stress, Health & Human Flourishing

Stress is the process by which we appraise and respond to challenging or threatening events, or stressors. Stressors may be catastrophes, significant life changes (positive or negative), and daily hassles. Walter Cannon viewed our response to stress as a fight-or-flight system. Hans Selye saw it as a three-stage general adaptation syndrome. Another subfield, psychoneuroimmunology, focuses on mind-body interactions.

Exposure to prolonged stress can increase our susceptibility to serious illness. Health psychology provides psychology's contribution to behavioral medicine. Modern research assesses the health consequences of various life experiences. Stress may affect the progression of several serious illnesses, including AIDS and cancer. Coronary heart disease has been linked with the anger-prone Type A personality.

Several factors affect our ability to cope with stress, including our feelings of personal control, our basic outlook on life, and our supportive connections. Stress management programs include training in aerobic exercise, biofeedback, meditation, and relaxation. Although biofeedback can sometimes help people control tension headaches, simple relaxation exercises offer some of the same benefits. Researchers seek to identify "intervening variables" that may link spirituality and health.

Positive psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing. Happy people live healthier and more energized and satisfied lives. Happiness boosts people's perceptions of the world and their willingness to help others. However, even significant good events seldom increase happiness for long, a fact explained by the adaptation-level and relative deprivation principles.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 11 of the Text

Post in Forum 11

Take Chapter Quiz 11

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

***** THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY *****

November 30 – December 6

#13 on timeline

Personality

Personality is one's characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting. Psychodynamic theories focus on the unconscious and early childhood experiences. Sigmund Freud, in his psychoanalytic perspective, proposed that childhood sexuality and unconscious motives influenced personality. For Freud, conflict between pleasure-seeking biological impulses and social restraints centered on three interacting

systems: id, ego, and superego. Freud believed that children develop through psychosexual stages and that people's later problems are rooted in how they resolve conflicts associated with these stages.

The neo-Freudians agreed with Freud's basic ideas but placed more emphasis on the conscious mind and on social influences. Today, psychodynamic theorists agree with many of Freud's views but not his idea that sex is the basis of personality. Contemporary research confirms that, more than most of us realize, our lives are guided by unconscious information processing.

The humanistic perspective emphasized the growth potential of healthy people. Abraham Maslow believed that if basic human needs are met, people will strive to actualize their highest potential. Carl Rogers suggested that being genuine, accepting, and empathic helps others to develop a positive self-concept.

The trait perspective attempts to describe the predispositions that underlie our actions. Through factor analysis, researchers have isolated five distinct dimensions of personality. People's specific behaviors vary across situations as their inner dispositions interact with particular environments. However, their average behavior across many situations is predictable. The social-cognitive perspective emphasizes how internal personal factors combine with the environment to influence behavior. More than other perspectives, it builds from psychological research on learning and cognition and reminds us of the power of the social situation. Researchers assess how people's behaviors and beliefs both affect and are affected by their situations.

Currently, the self is one of Western psychology's more vigorously researched topics. Studies confirm the benefits of positive self-esteem but also point to the possible hazards of unrealistically high self-esteem. Compared with defensive self-esteem, secure self-esteem depends less on external evaluations and enables us to lose ourselves in relationships and purposes larger than self.

Individualist and collectivist cultures have different effects on personal identity. Yet, despite our many cultural differences, we humans are more alike than different.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 12 of the Text

Post in Forum 12

Take Chapter Quiz 12

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

December 7 – December 13

#14 on timeline

Social Psychology

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another. In thinking about others' behavior and its possible causes, we tend to underestimate the influence of the situation, thus committing the fundamental attribution error. Attitudes affect behavior when external influences are minimal, especially when the attitude is stable, specific to the behavior, and easily

recalled. Our actions can also modify our attitudes, especially when we feel responsible for those actions. Research on social influence indicates that behavior is contagious, beginning with the norms of our culture. When we are unsure about our judgments, we are likely to adjust them toward the group standard. Sometimes, social influences are even strong enough to make people conform to falsehoods or capitulate to cruelty.

The presence of others can arouse individuals, boosting their performance on easy tasks but hindering it on difficult ones. When people pool their efforts toward a group goal, individuals may free-ride on others' efforts. Sometimes, group experiences arouse people and make them anonymous, and thus less self-aware and self-restrained. Within groups, discussions can enhance members' prevailing attitudes and produce groupthink. A minority committed to a position can, however, influence a majority. Prejudice can be both overt and subtle. As overt prejudice wanes, subtle prejudice lingers. Social barriers and biases are often unconscious. Prejudice arises from social inequalities, social divisions, and emotional scapegoating. Prejudice also has cognitive roots.

Aggression is a product of nature and nurture. In addition to genetic, neural, and biochemical influences, aversive events heighten people's hostilities. Aggressive behavior is also learned through rewards and by observing role models and media violence.

Geographical proximity, physical attractiveness, and similarity of attitudes and interests influence our liking for one another. Passionate love is an aroused state we cognitively label as love. Companionate love often emerges as a relationship matures and is enhanced by equity and self-disclosure. Altruism is the unselfish regard for the welfare of others. The presence of others at an emergency can inhibit helping. The bystander effect is most apparent in situations where the presence of others inhibits one's noticing an event, interpreting it as an emergency, or assuming responsibility for offering help. Many factors influence our willingness to help someone in distress, including cost-benefit analysis and social norms or expectations. Conflicts are fueled by social traps and by enemies forming mirror-image perceptions of one another. Enemies become friends when they work toward superordinate goals, communicate clearly, and reciprocate conciliatory gestures.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 13 of the Text

Post in Forum 13

Take Chapter Quiz 13

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

December 14 – December 20

Psychological Disorders

#15 on timeline

Mental health workers label behavior as psychologically disordered when there is a significant dysfunction in a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) provides an authoritative classification scheme. Whether we use a medical model or a biopsychosocial approach affects our understanding of psychological disorders.

Although diagnostic labels may facilitate communication and research, they can also bias our perception of people's past and present behavior and unfairly stigmatize these individuals.

Those who suffer from an anxiety disorder may for no reason feel uncontrollably tense (generalized anxiety disorder), may experience sudden episodes of intense dread (panic disorder), may have a persistent irrational fear (phobia), or may be troubled by repetitive thoughts and actions (obsessive-compulsive disorder). Symptoms may also follow the experience of some traumatic event (post-traumatic stress disorder).

Mood disorders include major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. Current research on depression is exploring (1) genetic and biochemical influences and (2) cyclic self-defeating beliefs, learned helplessness, negative attributions, and aversive experiences.

The symptoms of schizophrenia include disorganized thinking, disturbed perceptions, and inappropriate emotions. Researchers have linked certain forms of schizophrenia to brain abnormalities. Studies also point to a genetic predisposition that may work in conjunction with environmental factors.

In dissociative disorders, conscious awareness becomes separated from previous memories, thoughts, and feelings. Those afflicted with a dissociative disorder may even have two or more distinct personalities. Psychological influences on eating behavior are evident in those who are motivated to be abnormally thin. Personality disorders are characterized by inflexible and enduring behavior patterns that impair social functioning. The most common is the remorseless and fearless antisocial personality.

The U.S. National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 26 percent of adult Americans suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. National population surveys indicate that the rates of disorder vary across the world. Most who suffer from a disorder show the first symptoms by early adulthood. Poverty is clearly a predictor of mental illness.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 14 of the Text

Post in Forum 14

Take Chapter Quiz 14

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

***** WINTER BREAK *****

January 4 – January 10

Therapy

#16 on timeline

Mental health therapies include psychological therapies and biomedical therapies. Therapists using an eclectic approach draw from a variety of techniques. In fact, half of all psychotherapists describe themselves as taking an eclectic approach.

Psychoanalysts use free association and the interpretation of dreams, resistances, and transference to help their patients gain insight into the unconscious origins of their disorders and to work through the

accompanying feelings. Psychodynamic therapists focus more on trying to help people understand their current symptoms. They emphasize themes across important relationships.

Humanistic therapy focuses on clients' conscious feelings and on their taking responsibility for their own growth. Client-centered therapists use active listening to express genuineness, acceptance, and empathy. Behavior therapists emphasize the direct modification of problem behaviors. They use exposure therapies, such as systematic desensitization, and aversive conditioning, and they may also apply operant conditioning principles with techniques such as token economies. Cognitive therapies aim to change self-defeating thinking by training people to view them-selves in new, more positive ways. Cognitive-behavioral therapists aim to change the way people act as well as alter the way they think.

Except for traditional psychoanalysis, these various types of therapies may also occur in therapist-led small groups. One special type of group therapy, family therapy, assumes that no person is an island.

Research on the effectiveness of therapy indicates that people who receive therapy are more likely to improve than the untreated. No one therapy is generally more effective, but some are better than others for treating certain problems.

Administration of antipsychotic, antianxiety, and antidepressant drugs and mood-stabilizing medications constitutes the most widely used biomedical therapy. Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), although controversial, continues to be an effective treatment for many severely depressed people who do not respond to drug therapy. Gentler alternatives to ECT are now being used. Psychosurgery is rarely used to alleviate specific problems largely because the effects are irreversible and potentially drastic.

The biopsychosocial approach acknowledges that effective treatment of psychological disorders must consider biological, psychological, and social-cultural factors. Therapeutic lifestyle change recognizes these factors in a training program that treats depression through aerobic exercise, adequate sleep, social connections, positive thinking, and nutritional supplements. Preventive mental health experts aim to change oppressive, esteem-destroying environments into more benevolent, nurturing environments that foster individual growth and self-confidence.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read Chapter 15 of the Text
Post in Forum 15
Take Chapter Quiz 15

OPTIONAL STUDY MATERIALS

Power Point Slides

FINAL EXAMS

Monday, January 11 – Friday, January 15

The exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions covering the entire semester. You will have up to 4 hours to complete the exam. ONCE YOU START THE EXAM, YOU MUST WORK TO COMPLETION. YOU MAY NOT OPEN AND CLOSE THE EXAM INTERFACE! This will constitute 25% of your course grade.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: All exams must be completed by FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2016 before 5:00PM!
No Exceptions!**