

Spring 2012  
**PSYCH 8400 – PERSONALITY: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**  
Thursdays 5:30 - 7:30 PM, 217 Tolentine Hall; CRN: 32178

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**Dr. John Kurtz**  
320 Tolentine Hall  
519-4217; e-mail: [john.kurtz@villanova.edu](mailto:john.kurtz@villanova.edu)

**Office Hours:**  
Wed. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
Thurs. 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

**TEXTBOOK:**

Larsen, R.J., & Buss, D.M. (2010). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This seminar course is an examination of basic concepts and controversies in modern personality science. The primary objective is to evaluate current theories of human individuality with special attention to the formation of relevant hypotheses and the design of empirical studies to test them. Students will further develop their skills in critically appraising the primary literature, presenting and discussing concepts and issues in class, and writing clearly within the format of an empirical manuscript.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** (3 units; pre-requisite: graduate standing in psychology)

**Examinations.** There will be two non-cumulative exams; the first will be given **March 1** and the second during the final exam period at a date to be announced later. The first exam will be comprised of multiple choice and essay items related to the concepts presented in the first half of the course (six lectures by me). The final exam will consist of multiple choice and essay items related to individual student selected topics.

**Class Discussion.** Each student will select one lecture topic from the readings for the second part of the course and lead the class in a discussion of existing and proposed research. Two students will present to the class during each of the final seven lectures. Topic areas will be assigned on a first-come basis. Specific topic selections should be presented in writing with a list of five representative references by **February 16**. Students are welcome to consult with the instructor in selecting an appropriate topic.

**Research Paper.** Students will explore a specific aspect of their chosen topic further in an APA-style manuscript. The first part of the paper will present a concise (6-7 pages maximum) review of the relevant literature. The second part of the paper will present a proposal for further research (Method and Data Analysis) to test explicit hypotheses of the selected topic. Further details will be presented in a separate document.

**GRADING:**

Midterm (March 1)	20%
Class Discussion	20%
Paper (Due: April 26)	40%
Final	20%

**COURSE CALENDAR:**

1. Jan. 19	Research Issues	Larsen & Buss Ch. 1 Cohen
2. Jan. 26	Measurement and Assessment	Larsen & Buss Ch. 2 Ahadi & Diener
3. Feb. 2	Trait Concepts and Taxonomies	Larsen & Buss Ch. 3, 4 McAdams
4. Feb 9	Personality Development and Change	Larsen & Buss Ch. 5 McCrae et al.
5. Feb 16	Behavior Genetics and Personality	Larsen & Buss Ch. 6
6. Feb 23	Modern Psychodynamic Theories	Larsen & Buss Ch. 10 Westen
<b>Mar. 1</b>	<b><i>Midterm Exam</i></b>	-
7. Mar. 15	Physiological Approaches to Personality Mark Versella, Jason Strickhouser	Larsen & Buss Ch. 7
8. Mar. 22	Evolutionary Theory and Personality Caitlin Dressler, Nadya Soto-Fernandez	Larsen & Buss Ch. 8
9. Mar 29	Motives / Social Interaction Erica Sciulli / Joseph Leman	Larsen & Buss Chs. 11, 15
10. Apr. 12	Cognition / Emotion Elena Cucco / Lindsey Bupp	Larsen & Buss Chs. 12, 13
11. Apr. 19	Sex and Gender / Cross-cultural Heather Lasslett / Takakuni Suzuki	Larsen & Buss Chs. 16, 17
12. Apr. 26	Self Approaches / Coping and Health Chelsea Anglin / Nick Jones	Larsen & Buss Chs. 14, 18
13. May 3	Personality Disorders Zvi Shapiro, Bethany Taylor	Larsen & Buss Ch. 19
May 5-11 (TBA)	<b><i>Final Exam</i></b>	

Psychology 8400 Preliminary Reading List:

**Jan 19 – Research Issues**

Cohen, J. (1994). The Earth is round ( $p < .05$ ). *American Psychologist*, 49, 997-1003.

**Jan 26 – Measurement and Assessment**

Ahadi, S., & Diener, E. (1989). Multiple determinants and effect size. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 398-406.

**Feb 2 – Trait Concepts and Taxonomies**

McAdams, D.P. (1995). What do we know when we know a person? *Journal of Personality*, 63, 365-396.

**Feb 9 – Personality Development and Change**

McCrae, R.R., Costa, P.T., de Lima, M.P., Simoes, A., Ostendorf, F., Angleitner, A., et al. (1999). Age differences in personality across the adult life span: Parallels in five cultures. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 466-477.

**Feb 23 – Modern Psychodynamic Theories**

Westen, D. (1998). The scientific legacy of Sigmund Freud: Toward a psychodynamically informed psychological science. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 333-371.

**Psychology 8400 – Spring 2012**  
**Guidelines for Term Project**

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**Due Date:**

For Presentations given March 15 through April 19:

**April 26**

For Presentations given April 26 and May 3:

**May 7**

**Presentation:**

Two presenters will be allowed 60 minutes each during class meetings occurring between March 15 and May 3. An overview of theories and problems related to your topic will be presented, followed by a proposal for research. This opportunity to present your project to the class will be most helpful to you if you are fully prepared with all of the specific details of your method and plan for analysis. Please leave time for questions and discussion about your proposed study. Presenters are advised to prepare questions to stimulate class discussion. All presenters will assign one empirical research article to the class *one week before* the presentation date. Choose an article that is most related to the study you are proposing. Students are expected to read these articles in addition to the assigned chapters in preparation for class. Content from these articles may appear on the final exam. If you plan to use Powerpoint, please send the file to me by e-mail at least 30 minutes before the start of class.

**Paper:**

Follow APA Style (6<sup>th</sup> edition) *throughout*; points will be deducted for style violations!

1. Title Page
2. (No Abstract necessary)
3. Introduction section:
  - a. 6-7 pages total; do not exceed 7 pages
  - b. Includes literature review with minimum of 5 *\*primary* references
  - c. Explicit statement or list of hypotheses
4. Method section
  - a. Participants
  - b. Measures, instruments, and/or apparatus
  - c. Procedure
5. Data Analysis section
  - a. Statistical tests for hypotheses
  - b. Table(s) or figure(s) depicting hypothesized results

**NOTE:** The most critical part of the paper is a specification of the **hypothesis** (or hypotheses)! All other aspects of the paper revolve around this component. The presentation of the literature review should lead up to the hypotheses, and likewise, the methods and data analysis should provide a clear test of the hypotheses.

\* “Primary” literature typically refers to journal articles, although book chapters are sometimes primary sources if they present data from a study that is not published elsewhere. In any case, do not cite textbooks (including the one for class!) and, please, do not cite internet sources!