

# Psychology 493 (Section 004): Advanced Personality Psychology

Spring, 2024

## Course Information:

**Time:** Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30-9:50AM

**Location:** 119 Psychology Bldg.

**Final (optional):** April 23rd, 7:45-8:45AM

## Course Personnel:

**Instructor:** Dr. Richard Lucas

**Email:** [lucasri@msu.edu](mailto:lucasri@msu.edu)

**Office:** 249A Psychology

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1-3

## Course Objectives:

- To learn about the major theories and findings from the field of personality psychology.
- To learn about the research methods that psychologists use.
- To learn to think critically about conclusions made by psychologists and other social scientists.
- To apply ideas from psychology to your own life experiences.

## Course Readings and Materials:

**Required Text:** *Great Myths of Personality*, Donnellan & Lucas

This is a relatively inexpensive text that presents issues about personality psychology in relation to a series of “myths” that non-scientists (or even scientists) may believe. I will organize the course around these myths. While presenting these myths, the book also provides basic information about the methods and theories that personality psychologists rely on to answer questions related to these myths. The book is available in the bookstores and in electronic formats. **Much of the material on the exams will come from the book, so please do keep up with these readings!**

Because the textbook chapters are very short, we will also regularly read articles from scientific journals. These will also be relatively brief, and I will provide guidance on how to read scientific articles. This will include general advice throughout the semester along with specific questions about each reading. You should do these readings before each class and come prepared to discuss the questions that I provide. **Material from these readings (especially topics that are highlighted in the questions that I provide for your guidance) will show up on the exams.**

I wanted to acknowledge that I am an author on the required text, which can present somewhat of a conflict of interest, as I do get royalties from this. I can assure you that I am not getting rich by assigning you this text; I only receive about \$1 per book sold. To avoid any concerns about this, however, I will donate an amount equal to the full cost of the book (currently \$23) for every student in the class at the end of the semester. I will provide some options for charities and the class will vote on which to support.

## Course Policies and Assignments

**Attendance and Participation:** You get points for coming to class and participating. Specifically, each class, you can get two points for attendance and two additional points for participating (starting on the second day of class). You can receive a combined total of **60 points from attendance and participation.**

Not counting exam days and the first day of class, there will be 23 class sessions, which means that the maximum amount of points you can get from attendance and participation is lower than  $23 \times 4$  (which would equal 92 points). This means that you have some flexibility in how you get these points. If you come to class every day, you only need to participate in 7 of those classes. If, on the other hand, you come to class and participate in each of the first 15 classes, you will have more leeway to miss classes later in the semester without penalty. You are adults, and you can choose how to maximize these points. This also means that you do not need to provide excuses to me if you miss a class (other than an exam); you have enough flexibility that you can make up these points in other class sessions (though see the caveat below about in-class assignments).

**Note that although you have flexibility, you are strongly encouraged to come to class and to participate every day, as you will get the most out of the class if you do so!**

**Course Notes:** Please take detailed notes on the lecture material—you will be tested on it. Research shows that providing students with copies of the overhead notes does not help them learn or remember the material any better. For that reason, I do not provide copies of my overhead notes. Developing note-taking skills is an important part of your education, and you should practice it in this class. If I ever go too quickly, please do not hesitate to ask that I repeat something or slow down.

**Brief Assignments:** Throughout this course, there will be **12 brief assignments worth 5 points each**. These will take one of two forms. The first will be a “pop-quiz” writing assignment based on the reading for that class. However, you will always know what questions might be asked. Specifically, I will take one of the questions that I provided as guidance for your readings and ask you to respond to that question in a paragraph or two. These will be graded on a 1 – 5 scale, with 5 being reserved for answers that are complete and well-written. You will have the final 20 minutes of class to complete these pop quizzes.

The second type of brief assignment will be one-page reaction papers to an issue that we discussed in class. You can complete these at home and turn them in through D2L. These will not be high-pressure assignments, they will instead be opportunities for you to apply concepts from class to your own life or to get your opinions on the issues we discuss. They will also be graded on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being reserved for answers that are complete and well-written. You will generally have one week from the date of the assignment to complete these.

Note that only **the best 8 out of 12** brief assignments will count towards your final grade. That means that you can miss some without penalty (again, no excuse needed), or you can make up for poor performance on one assignment with a better score on another. Just make sure you are keeping track of which assignments you have missed so you do not miss more than four.

**Exams:** There will be **two in-class exams, each worth 100 points**. The exams will not be cumulative, though some topics do show up in both the first and second half of the class. These exams will be a mix of multiple choice and essay questions, and the material will come from course readings and in-class lectures. The questions that I provide to guide your reading will be very useful in preparing for these exams. If you can answer all of these questions thoroughly, you should do well on the exams.

There will be an optional final exam that you can take to replace one of the two exam scores. This will be administered during the final exam period. This exam will likely be more focused on essays than multiple choice. This final exam is completely optional; if you are happy with your grade after completing the other course material, you do not need to show up for the exam. Taking the final exam can never hurt your grade; if you do poorly, the score from the first two exams will stand.

**Makeup Exams:** If you cannot take the exam because you are sick or for any other reason, **you must contact me before the start of the exam**. If you do not (for instance, if you sleep through an exam), you will need to take the final exam to make up for the missed exam. If you cannot take the exam because of a university-scheduled event (e.g., a commitment for a sports team), a religious holiday, or some other acceptable event that you could have foreseen, you must notify me **at least one week before the exam**. I will use a different exam for makeup exams, and these will be mostly essay-based.

**Research Paper:** There will be one major research paper assignment in this class, which will be broken down into smaller assignments. Each part of the assignment will build on the prior one, and there will be a component to the assignment that requires you to discuss the evolution of the project with each new step in the process. The end result will be a 10-page, APA-formatted paper on a topic related to personality psychology (I will provide more details in class).

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1/30	150-word description of your paper topic
2/15	5 1-paragraph summaries of research articles related to your topic
3/7	1-page outline of your paper
4/4	Final Paper Due

More details about each step of this process will be provided in class.

Consistent with MSU’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, I may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources for any assignment that is completed at home. The tool compares each student’s work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a ‘similarity score’. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student’s work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit papers without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin. Student submissions will be retained only in the MSU repository hosted by Turnitin.

**Use of Generative AI (E.g., Chat-GPT).** This is a writing course, and there is no question that generative AI has changed the way that people write. Content creators (e.g., artists and writers) are already being replaced by generative AI, and the tools clearly have some value. At the same time, an important goal of this course is to help you think clearly about the issues we discuss, and developing your ideas through the process of writing will help you achieve this goal.

The use of generative AI is not prohibited in this class, but the ways that you use it must be disclosed. For instance, as one assignment, you will be asked to generate a topic for a paper that you will eventually write. You can use generative AI to help come up with ideas, but you must disclose this if you do. Moreover, generative AI can come up with some really bad ideas or ideas that sound good but that don't meet the requirements of the assignment. So if you do use generative AI, you will be responsible for evaluating what it provides you and adapting it for this class.

Similarly, many parts of the writing assignments will require you to discuss specific issues that generative AI may struggle with. So, for instance, if you use a generative AI tool to help you understand and summarize an article (which again, you must disclose), then you may miss specific issues that are relevant to the assignment (i.e., how the article relates to issues discussed in class).

Finally, the main writing assignment in this class requires some continuity from start to finish. The idea you propose should lead to the articles you summarize, which should inform your outline, which should be the basis for your paper. It may be difficult for generative AI tools to link these pieces together, which you will be asked to do. So although disclosed use of generative AI is allowed, you are responsible for making sure that the resulting work makes sense and is responsive to the requirements of the assignments.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or **two weeks prior to the accommodation date** (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be able to be honored.

If you require testing accommodations (additional time, less disruptive room, etc.) you must contact me and present your VISA **at least one week before the exam date** to schedule an alternative exam. Note that you will need to do this for each exam, even if after giving me your VISA form. Typically, I will schedule for you to take the exam during a special exam session offered by the Psychology Department. If you are unable to make the times offered, or that option does not meet your VISA accommodations, you may be able to schedule to take your exam at the RCPD office. In either case, the exam must be scheduled well in advance, so you need to adhere to the two-week prior notification requirement.

**Questions:** If you have questions about any of the material in the textbook or lectures, please attend my office hours. Please feel free to interrupt me with any questions or comments about the material being discussed (even if it is simply to request that I slow down or repeat something).

**Grade Breakdown.** Your grade will be calculated in the following way. There are 400 total points available in this class.

<u>To get this grade:</u>	<u>You need this percentage:</u>	<u>Which is this many points:</u>
4.0	90%	360
3.5	85%	340
3.0	80%	320
2.5	75%	300
2.0	70%	280
1.5	60%	240
1.0	50%	200
0.0	<50%	<200

**Your total points (i.e., the actual points you get from exams, assignments, participation, etc.) will be rounded to the nearest whole number. There will be no adjustments because your score is close to the cutoff.**

## Academic Integrity

The only way that you will benefit from this or any other course is to do the required work. In most cases, this means doing the work on your own. There are only two times when you will be allowed to work with other students on assignments: (1) During the in-class activities and (2) During the emergency extra credit sessions after the exams. All other work (including the homework and the exams) should be done entirely your own. If you engage in any form of cheating, you will receive a 0.0 for this course. This includes using someone else's iClicker for in class activities when those people are not in class.

Statement on Academic Integrity from the MSU Office of the Ombudsman: There is a statement from the MSU ombudsman posted on the course website. This provides a definition of what cheating and academic dishonesty is. You should read this statement, as it provides clear guidance on what counts as cheating in this and other courses at the university. Not knowing that your behavior is cheating is not an excuse if the behavior is covered in this document.

One Last Thing — Class Disruptions and Expectations for the Classroom Environment: When class begins, please put away newspapers and other reading materials. Please turn off ringers on cell phones, and please do not talk to other students. Talking is distracting for those around you and for me (even if you are sitting in the back of a large classroom). These guidelines apply during lectures, films, and discussions. University policy prohibits any behavior that disrupts a class. If I have to ask you to stop any of these behaviors more than once during a semester, you will lose all extra credit and in-class activity points.

## Limits to confidentiality

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the [MSU Police Department](#)) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [MSU Counseling Center](#).

## Topics and Reading List

**Note that all readings will come from the text (indicated with chapter numbers) or will be posted on D2L. This reading list may change slightly as the course progresses.**

January 9: Introduction  
Textbook: Introduction

January 11: Person-Situation Debate  
Read: Chapter 1

Blog post on how to read a journal article: <https://blog.efpsa.org/2013/02/28/how-to-read-and-get-the-most-out-of-a-journal-article/>

January 16: Outcomes of Personality  
Read: Chapter 2

January 18: Genes, Part I  
Read: Chapter 3  
Turkheimer, 2000

January 23: Genes, Part II  
Read: Harden Article in New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/24/opinion/dna-nature-genetics-education.html>  
Johnson et al., 2009

January 25: Types and Traits  
Read: Chapter 5

January 30: Measurement, Part I  
Read: Chapter 6  
Vazire & Carlson, 2011

February 1: Measurement in Important Contexts  
Read: Chapter 7  
Listen: <http://rationallyspeakingpodcast.org/197-why-people-think-some-things-cant-be-quantified-and-why-theyre-wrong-doug-hubbard/>

February 6: Measurement, Myers-Briggs  
Read: Chapter 8

February 8: No class; use time to develop summaries

February 13: No MSU classes

February 15: Measurement: Types of Assessment  
Read: Chapter 9  
Chapter 10

February 20: Measurement: Personality Quizzes  
Read: Chapter 11

February 22: Exam #1

February 27: Spring Break

February 29: Spring Break

March 5: Personality Development, Part I  
Read: Chapter 12

March 7: Personality Development, Part II

Read: Chapter 13

Wagner et al., 2020

March 12: Traumatic Growth

Read: Chapter 14

March 14: Birth Order

Read: Chapter 16

Rohrer et al., 2015

March 19: Parenting

Read: Chapter 17

March 21: Happiness, Part I

Read: Chapter 18

Chapter 19

March 26: Happiness, Part II

Read: Chapter 20

Dunn et al., 2014

March 28: Relationships

Read: Chapter 22

Chapter 23

April 2: Self-esteem and Narcissism

Read: Chapter 24

Paulhus, 2014

April 4: Culture and Regional Differences

Read: Chapter 25

Chapter 26

April 9: Gender Differences

Read: Chapter 27

April 11: Personality Disorders

Read: Chapter 28

April 16: What Else Is There To Personality

Read: McAdams & Pals, 2006

McAdams & McLean, 2013

April 18: Exam #2

April 23: Final Exam