PSY 100
General Psychology

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Class:  Online – courses.maine.edu

Course Materials:

Textbook - Title:  Psychology - Author:  Schacter, Gilbert, Wegner, & Nock - Edition:  3rd -
Publisher:  Macmillan - ISBN:  1-4641-9451-3

Course Syllabus

Course Overview:

This course is an introduction to the science of psychology – the empirical understanding
of how humans think, feel, and behave.  Over the course of this term, we will adopt several
different modern perspectives on the science, working our way through a basic understanding of
psychological approaches to emotions, group processes, memory, stress and health, among many
others.

Although this course is online and asynchronous, this will not be a solitary endeavor.
You will have the opportunity to interact meaningfully with your classmates and with me through
the blackboard course, and to work with your colleagues to understand our material and to share
that understanding with one another.

Technological Details

This course will be run through Blackboard, Youtube, and Google Hangouts.
Information on how to connect to electronic resources is available on Blackboard.  You will also
be responsible for viewing and listening to online multimedia content.

You are expected to have reliable and stable computer access throughout the course.
Much of the content in the course will require streaming or large downloads; although a
broadband connection is not required for these resources, it is strongly recommended (contact
instructor for suggestions).
It will require basic computer competency to navigate to the course website, watch linked online videos, and follow links to online quizzes. If you have any questions about your ability to access the online content of this course:

Please contact UMaine IT for technical support - http://www.umaine.edu/it/helpcenter/ - Phone: 581-2506; e-mail: help.center@umit.maine.edu

Opportunities in the Course:

Throughout the course there will be several ways we evaluate performance and assess learning. Our course will be divided into two general themes: Mastering Content and Mastering Skills.

- **Grade Breakdown**
  - Navigating the course content
    - Reading Content – 20%
    - Video Content – 20%
  - Study Quizzes – 10%
  - Mastering Skills – 30%
  - Content Final - 10%
  - Skill Final - 10%

  **Navigating the Course Content – 40%** - There will be a series of course pages available to help you navigate the textbook and video content of the course. You will be expected to carefully read the assigned text and watch the assigned videos, and while doing so, construct responses to the provided study questions. Not only will these responses serve as a self-created study guide, but they will also determine a significant portion of your grade. Your responses to the course content questions will determine 40% of your final course grade.

  **Study Quizzes – 10%** – Each unit, Blackboard-based quizzes will be available to test your understanding of the textbook material. You may take these quizzes as many times as you like, and your final submission for these quizzes before the deadline will determine 10% of your final course grade.

  **Mastering Skills - 30%** - In each unit, you will have the opportunity to practice some skills in psychological science and discuss those skill practices with your peers in a discussion forum. Your ability to complete these assignments and engage in these discussions will reflect 30% of your final course grade.

  **Final Assessments - 20%** - In the final unit of the course, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate both your mastery of content (through multiple choice and essay-based exams) as well as your mastery of our skills (in a short-answer exam that asks you to locate research, summarize it, and apply it in brief writing exercises). Your ability to demonstrate your final mastery of both the content and skills of the course will determine 20% of your final course grade.
Final grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Avg</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Avg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>72 – 77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5 – 90</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.5 – 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82 – 87.5</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>62 – 67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5 – 80</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 or less</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that while I reserve the right to modify these cutoffs, I will do so only to lower them; I absolutely will not raise these cutoffs. That is, if you earn 90% you are guaranteed at least an A- in the course.

If the distribution requires adjustment, I will calculate the cutoffs as a percentage of earned grades in the course. I will take the average of the top 10% of the class and 95% of that average will be the cutoff for an A. 85% of that average will be the cutoff for a B. 75% for a C, etc. This method has the effect of correcting for the potential of flawed assessments on my part, while not punishing the students who excel regardless.

Again, this method will only be used if necessary and will only serve to lower cutoffs. The only way to ensure you receive the grade you desire is to attain the final point total listed above for that grade.

Course Policies:

It is important that we understand the policies of the course up-front so that there is no confusion and are limited surprises throughout the course. Please take a moment to carefully consider these policies and refer to them first if you have a question about how to take care of something in the future.

**Missed assignments and exams**

Unlike face-to-face courses that require you to function on a very specific schedule, this course allows you the flexibility to engage with the material and the class when it’s convenient for you. Our assignments are structured the same way. Instead of having a quiz where you must be present in class during a 10 minute window, you’ll have quizzes that are available to you for until a certain deadline, and you may take them as many times as you want. Your skill mastery grades work similarly. You have a window of time in which to engage with your assignments and discussions with your classmates to demonstrate your mastery of skills.

Due to the extremely fast class and restrictions of our online course software, there is no way for me to extend deadlines on assignments. Unless there is a severe Blackboard error that prevents access for more than 24 hours the deadlines set up in the course will not move.

Incompletes are available only in extreme circumstances on an individual basis. Please contact the instructor if you think this applies to your situation.
Student Behavioral Expectations / Conduct Policy:

One of the shortcomings of an all text-based medium is the lack of facial expressions, body gestures, and tone of voice that we all rely on to impart meaning into the words we speak. Emoticons are a poor substitute. Try to remember that others may read your messages with a different tone than in which you wrote them. Also remember that a message may have been intended to have a different tone than the one you have read into it.

Always try to resolve disputes about the appropriateness of a post within the discussion forum. Keep such posts as neutral as possible, ask for clarification on a messages intention and meaning. If you are uncomfortable confronting a fellow student in such a manner, e-mail me directly and me alone. Do not email the fellow student directly, especially without a CC: to me.

I do not tolerate flame wars. I will remove any abusive and inappropriate posts. Such postings will not count toward your progress in the course. Under certain circumstances a more formal inquiry and/or administrative action may be warranted.

If you own a web-cam feel free to record your comments and questions and add them as an attachment to your post in the discussion forum. I will likely do this from time to time.

While engaging in the class, students are expected to maintain classroom decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular completion of material, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the education opportunity. Disrespect to other students, the faculty, or social groups will not be tolerated.

Student Honor Code

This course is built upon a community of mutual respect. The greatest violation of that community is any instance of cheating, plagiarism, or other form of academic dishonesty. I consider violations of this sort to be the cardinal sin of academia, and I take them very seriously. I have absolutely no tolerance for it. Any instance of academic dishonesty in the course may result in the assignment of an “F” and full prosecution allowed by the University.

Two tips to keep you from running afoul of this problem: 1.) If you have any doubt in your mind whether or not your academic behavior is plagiarism then cite the source from which you are drawing. 2.) If your choice is between academic dishonesty or not completing an assignment, you are much better off simply not completing the assignment.

An aside on the Internet: Information about psychology is prevalent on the Internet. Please ensure that the material you turn in comes from empirical and peer-reviewed sources and from your own thoughts. It is exceptionally easy to determine when students have lifted content from websites (including online encyclopedias). Without a citation, these sources constitute academic dishonesty. With citations, these sources constitute shoddy and weak work. So it’s best to avoid them as sources for your work.
Students with Disabilities or Special Needs

If anyone feels that they may require additional assistance in order to meet the goals and requirements of this course please see me privately. The staff of the Disability Support services (East Annex: 581-2319) coordinates accommodations and services for UM courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation and have not contacted them, please do so as soon as possible.

Contacting Me

I am always available to you via e-mail. If you have technology questions, please contact the IT help desk directly, as I can’t help you!

A Note on Studying and Study Guides:

One of the skills you will have the opportunity to practice and develop in this course is studying and condensing material. I am increasingly often asked by students to provide exam study guides. I do not provide such guides, and the only reason I do not provide them is for your benefit.

Research from cognitive psychology demonstrates conclusively that study materials that you generate yourself are significantly better recalled both short-term and long-term than studying material that was prepared by someone else. They call this the Generation Effect. I have seen through the course data described above that students who prepare their own unit exam study guides perform significantly better than students who do not, or who rely upon other students’ notes. So while I won’t provide one, you’ll construct it yourself through completing the course content!

A Personal Note

By now you may have the impression that “learning is a grim and serious business.” It’s not, at least in my class. By setting out these ground rules before the semester starts we can avoid later complications arising from miscommunication.

I think you’ll find that this course can be fun, as well as informative. Psychology is terribly intriguing and the constant discovery in the field is exciting. I hope to share with you the excitement I feel when studying about something so interesting and important. One of the nicest things that can be said about a class or a professor is that “the class is hard, but I learned a lot.” I hope that you can say that about this course at the end of the semester.

If something we cover in class is particularly interesting to you, or you wish to discuss a topic at length, please do feel free to shoot me an e-mail and discuss it!
A note on winter term:

This course is **FAST** - we compress 15 WEEKS of content into 15 DAYS. Think of it this way:

In a typical 100-level course, you should expect to spend 3 hours a week in class, and around 6 hours a week in preparation and out-of-class work. That amounts to about 135 hours of work for a 3-credit course. You’re taking that nice distributed practice and smooshing it into only 3 weeks. That’s about 45 hours a week, or more than a full-time job!

If you’re considering the course while working full time, or taking on other major time commitments, you might find it extremely difficult!

Course Calendar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>Content Mastery</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 1/20</td>
<td>Lesson 1 – Psychology: The Evolution of a Science</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 1/27</td>
<td>Lesson 2 – Methods in Psychology</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 2/3</td>
<td>Lesson 3 – Neuroscience and Behavior</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 2/10</td>
<td>Lesson 4 – Sensation and Perception</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 2/17</td>
<td>Lesson 5 – Consciousness</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 2/24</td>
<td>Lesson 6 – Memory</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 3/3</td>
<td>Lesson 7 – Learning</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 3/24</td>
<td>Lesson 8 – Emotion &amp; Motivation; Stress &amp; Health</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 8 AND Chapter 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 3/31</td>
<td>Lesson 9 – Language, Thought, &amp; Intelligence</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapters 9 AND Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 - 4/7</td>
<td>Lesson 10 – Development</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 - 4/14</td>
<td>Lesson 11 – Personality</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 - 4/21</td>
<td>Lesson 12 – Social</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Lesson Title</td>
<td>Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Lesson 13 – Psychological Disorders</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Lesson 14 – Treatment of Disorders</td>
<td><em>Psychology</em> Chapter 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>Lesson 15 – Synthesis</td>
<td><em>Final Assessments</em></td>
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