

Introduction to psychology

PSY 105
ID: 18771

Spring 2010
Instructor: Elena Kosterina, MA
Office: Main Building of AUCA, 209
Office phone: 663309 (*239)
Email: elena.kosterina@gmail.com
Course language: English
Classes: Tue 9.25; Th 9.25.
Consultations: by appointment
Prerequisites: no
Number of credits: 3
Course status: elective

Course description: This course provides broad overview of major topics in contemporary psychological science, gives perspective of history of psychology as a science, helps students to explore major findings and concepts in psychology using different approaches, and gives students opportunity to practice and implement the knowledge they get through the course by providing them with interactive resources and practice materials.

The goal of the course is, after providing a wide range of fields and dimensions of contemporary research in psychology, to encourage students to explore the topics and concepts of their interest individually.

After successful completion of the course, **students are supposed to:**

- Understand and discuss major approaches in psychology
- Differentiate and implement different research methods in psychology
- Know major figures and history of most prominent findings in psychology
- Know major dimensions of contemporary research and primary fields of interest in psychology
- Be able to implement obtained knowledge in personal exploration and research
- Be able to discuss critically the materials of the course and any further research materials in psychology

Course materials:

Course textbook: John Santrock (2000). Psychology. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 6th edition.

Some **discussion materials** will be based on the issues from *Taking Sides. Clashing Views on Controversial Psychological Issues* by Brent Slife.

Course lectures, student presentations and additional reading materials can be found on Resources. Additional reading materials can be distributed through the course and marked as either required or recommended ones.

During the course, **additional interactive teaching materials** will be used to help students to get a broad picture of the topics studied. The information from this materials will be used in discussions and exams.

Course requirements:

Attendance – 5%. Students are expected to attend all the classes. Missing of more than 3 classes will affect not only your attendance, but also your participation grade, because the grade for the course is heavily based on class participation.

Participation – 10%. Students are expected to take part in all discussions and be active in facilitating those. It is essential that student be ready with assigned reading before each class the reading is assigned to be ready to discuss the material. One reading will be assigned for a week and students are expected to read it before the lecture session.

Presentation and discussion facilitating – 15%. Students will have to make one presentation during the course and facilitate class discussion on the basis of their presentation material. To be ready with facilitation, students will have to prepare at least critical questions for fellow students, or plan debates on the topic of their presentation. The goal of facilitation is to demonstrate that the material they presented was understood and perceived by students and to demonstrate own knowledge of material through facilitation. Presentation topics can be found in the class schedule.

Exams – 40% (20% each). During the course there will be two exams that will cover half of course material each. The outline of topics that will be covered in the exams can be found in lectures. Exams will contain multiple and essay questions.

Group research – 15%. Students will be offered to prepare a group project in the form of psychological research in a small group. The students will be expected to:

- find a **topic** they would like to study
- read the chapter and **additional materials** to get enough starting knowledge about the topic
- formulate the **hypothesis** they would like to test, or a research question
- choose the particular **research design** they are going to use
- gather the **data** for their research
- make conclusions on the basis of summarized **results**
- report the results in the form of a **written report**. *The format of the report:* not more than 2 pages 1,5 space, Times New Roman. The report should include introduction to the topic, short literature review, the description of the method used (participants, materials, procedure), results and discussion. It is encouraged that students hand in the drafts of the written report two weeks before the submission. The written report is submitted after the oral presentation.
- report the results in the form of **oral group presentation**. The research presentations will take place during the last week of the classes. The presentation has to be not longer than 10 minutes. Is not required that each group participant present the same amount of information. The project will be graded according to the presentations and will be the same for each group participant.

Course paper – 15%. During the course the students are expected to write one essay paper on a controversial issue in psychology. The student choice has to be based on the scope of topics covered through the course. The paper has to be maximum 3 pages 1,5 space. Through the paper, student should compare opposite views on some topic in psychology and formulate hypothesis and own opinion on the topic on the basis of material studied. Exemplary essay topics will be provided in the beginning of the course.

Home assignments (bonus) - during the course, there will be several home assignments offered to students, which will be graded with bonus points. Completion of the assignments is recommended because often the discussions will be partly based on them.

Grading scale:

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|----|-----------------------------------|
| A | 96 – 100% |
| A- | 91 – 95% |
| B+ | 86 - 90% |
| B | 81 – 85% |
| B- | 76 – 80% |
| C+ | 71 – 75% |
| C | 66 – 70% |
| C- | 61 – 65% |
| D+ | 56 – 60% |
| D | 51 – 55% |
| D- | 46 – 50% |
| F | 45 and less % of the final grade. |

Sample essay topics:

1. Are there gender differences in intelligence?
2. Do evolutionary and genetic factors determine our sexual behavior?
3. Does religious commitment improve mental health?

Class schedule:

| Week | Topic | Readings | Presentation |
|-------------|--|-----------------|---|
| Week 1 | Introduction to the course requirements | | |
| | What Is Psychology? | Chapter 1 | |
| Week 2 | Psychology's Scientific Methods and Ethics in Research. MOVIE: MILGRAM EXPERIMENT, ISSUE 2 DISCUSSION. <i>ISSUE 3 DISCUSSION?</i> | Chapter 2 | Psychometric instruments (lecture). |
| Week 3 | Biological Foundations and Neuroscience. <i>ISSUE 4</i> DISCUSSION. MOVIE | Chapter 3 | Behavioral genetics (seminar). |
| Week 4 | Sensation and Perception. MOVIE | Chapter 4 | Synaesthesia (seminar). |
| Week 5 | States of Consciousness. MOVIE | Chapter 5 | Hypnosis. The theories and history of the practice. Interpretation of dreams. |
| Week 6 | Learning <i>ISSUE 6 DISCUSSION. MOVIE</i> | Chapter 6 | Social learning. |
| Week 7 | Memory. MOVIE | Chapter 7 | Forgetting and memory loss. |
| Week 8 | Midterm exam | | |
| Week 9 | Thinking and Language. MOVIE | Chapter 8 | Animal communication . |
| Week 10 | Intelligence <i>ISSUE 8 DISCUSSION.</i> | Chapter 9 | Intelligence tests. Giftedness. Definition and examples of giftedness. Approaches to teaching gifted children. |
| Week 11 | Human Development. MOVIE | Chapter 10 | Early and middle adulthood. Late adulthood and aging. |

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| Week 12 | Motivation and Emotion. MOVIE | Chapter 11 | Nonverbal communication of emotions. |
| Week 13 | Personality. MOVIE | Chapter 12 | Love and sexuality in the hierarchy of needs. Love theories. Personality disorders. |
| Week 14 | Abnormal Psychology. Therapies. | Chapter 13 | Schizophrenia. Dissociative disorders. Art therapy and dance therapy. |
| Week 15 | Social Psychology. MOVIE: Stanford prison experiment. | Chapter 16 | Stereotypes and prejudices. Discussion on Stanford Prison. |
| Week 16 | Project presentations | | |
| Week 17 | Final exam | | |