

General Psychology and Introduction to the Profession (in English)

PSY 125

ID 2900

Dr. Elena Molchanova, MD

Office:	AUCA; Psychology Department
Pre-requisites:	none
Meeting times:	Mon. 9.25; Tue 9.25
Credit hours:	6 credit
E-mail:	molchanova_e@mail.auca.kg
Required textbook:	Santrock J. (2000). <i>Psychology</i> . McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 6 th addition.
Additional sources:	Carlson N. R. (1990). <i>Psychology: the Science of Behavior</i> . 3 rd addition.

You will find all necessary materials via on-line (www.e-course.auca.kg)

Key word: INTRO (in capital letters)

Course Description

This introductory course will help you to understand what it means to be a psychologist. There are different motivations of choosing our profession and sometimes our expectations are different from the reality. You will acquire basic knowledge about mental processes and behavior and will also learn necessary principles of psychological research design and psychological experiments. You will be exposed to a variety of topics starting from main psychological paradigms. And, of course, this course will provide a background for more advanced courses of Psychology Department.

Course Objectives

1. Provide some basic knowledge that will help you better understand yourself and other people.
2. Provide practical skills in application of psychological knowledge to real life situations.
3. Develop your critical skills in terms of understanding strengths and limitations of psychological science. You will also increase your skepticism about the psychology relevant information presented in mass media.

Grading Policy

There will be a precise algorithm of how the grade will be calculated (look at course evaluation criteria). Taking into account that many of us are susceptible to Above Average Effect (overly positive view of the self), many people in the class may feel that they deserve a higher grade because you are so “close” to it. Do not ask me to change the grade. I am not going to do that. I will give everybody the grade in accordance with the grading system. I do not want to make any decisions based on my personal attitude to you.

If you feel that the evaluation of your work was not fair or you noticed some scoring mistakes in your grade, you should bring these issues to my attention immediately. If your demands are reasonable, I will remedy my mistakes. After all, social psychological research demonstrates that all people are susceptible to mistakes and biases. I promise, there will be a no-risk situation for you - I will not penalize anyone who takes the time to highlight instances where you or someone else was treated unfairly.

Missed classed and Make-up Exams

There will be only few satisfactory reasons for missing exams. You may miss exams when you are sick (you should present a reference letter from a doctor), you are presenting a paper at the conference, and you have major family problems. *All make-up exams will be more difficult than the original exam and will be arranged at the end of the semester.*

Cheating policy

If I notice that you have submitted someone else's work and presented it as your own, copied your answers from other exam papers or plagiarized from a published article, I will assign you an F in the course regardless of your performance in other portions of the course. I will hate to do that, but there will not be any exceptions to this rule.

Cell Phones

It is always disturbing when cell phones and beepers go off during the class. You are supposed to turn them off before every class. If I hear any noise from the cell phone or the beeper during the class, you will be asked to leave the class without permission to come back. You can take your belongings only after the class. If you are waiting an emergency call, you should warn me before the class.

Course evaluation criteria:

Presentations - 10 %

Quizzes (four quizzes per semester) – 40%

Final exam – 25%

Final project – 25%

Grading system

A	95-100%	C	74-77 %
A-	90-94 %	C-	70-73 %
B+	88-89 %	D+	68 - 69 %
B	84-87 %	D	64 - 67 %
B-	80-83 %	D-	60 - 63 %
C+	78-79 %	F	0-59 %

1. Attendance

Even attendance is not included into evaluation criteria, it is mandatory. I do not like when students go back and forth during the class. It distracts my attention. Please, do not do that. Try to solve all your problems before the class. I am not going to regard a person as being present in class if she/he left the classroom for more than 15 minutes. You should read one or two chapters from the assigned book every week in accordance with the class schedule. I also might distribute some additional material before the class. We will have intensive on-line discussions, forums, chats. During these sessions, you will have to raise questions outlining the moments that were not very clear in the lecture or a chapter. You are also welcome to share with your thoughts and critical comments about the relevant material.

2. Exams and quizzes

There will be one major final exam during the semester, but a lot of “usual” multiple choice quizzes. Both quizzes and exam will include the material covered in the textbook, distributed handouts, and lectures. They will be primarily multiple-choice and mini-essay. The final exam is cumulative.

3. Presentations

Every student will have to prepare two presentations in class. You have to choose the topic of your presentations from the class schedule. Your final exam will cover all the topics of students' presentations, so, please be attentive while listening to your colleagues.

Class Schedule

(Also available in: www.e-course.auca.kg)

week	Topic
1	Organizational issues. What is Psychology? Psychology as a science, brief introduction to the history of psychology. The notion of psychological paradigm. Motivation of choosing Psychology as a field of study.
2	Classification of the main mental functions. Alexander Luria and his theory of functional blocks in a human brain. Definitions of mental functions in general psychology.
3	Sensation and perception.
4	Consciousness. Altered states of consciousness. Sleep and dreams; hypnosis and drugs.
5	Emotions; definition and theories of emotions. Emotional expression. Anxiety, depression, aggression and alexithymia.
6	Communication. Verbal and non-verbal communication
7	Motivation, theories of motivation. Abraham Maslow and his theory. Motivations and emotions
8	Memory. Memory structures and memory processes. Types of memory. Remembering and forgetting. Eyewitness memory

9	The notion of Ego-defenses. Classification of Ego defenses. Examples of Ego-defense functioning.
10	Intelligence: definitions, multiple intelligence theory, problems with measuring, answering nature & nurture question.
11	Learning. Classical and operant conditioning.
12	Research method in psychology. Definition of Psychological experiment, creating the experimental design, dependent and independent variables.
13	Biological basis of psychological functions: experiments on split-brain.
14	Notion of mental disorders
15	Final exam week.