

# Introduction to Personality

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**Psychology W2610**

**Fall 2010**

**Time: MW 10:35 – 11:50am**

**Room: 614 Schermerhorn**

**Professor:** Walter Mischel

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 9:30-10:30am Schermerhorn Rm 401A or by appointment through e-mail with “Intro to Personality” in subject line

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** TBD

**E-mail:**

**Office Hours:**

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** TBD

**E-mail:**

**Office Hours:**

## I. PURPOSE AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

### A. INSTRUCTOR'S GOALS AND ROLE

In this course, I want to provide a critical analysis of the most significant, enduring and controversial issues in the areas of personality and clinical psychology. Topics include: the meaning of normality, abnormality, and deviance; the units for conceptualizing persons; alternative models of human nature; the nature and role of dispositions; the structure of consistency in personality; the development and maintenance of personality problems; defense and the coping process; self-regulatory processes, willpower, the biological and evolutionary bases of individual differences; continuity and change in development; the nature of the self; clinical inference and evidence; prediction of behavior; the nature of the unconscious and self-knowledge; the rationale underlying alternative treatment strategies; the assessment and therapeutic modification of selected personality problems; the relations between personality psychology as a science and clinical psychology as a profession.

My scholarly efforts to deal with the basic problems addressed in the course are presented succinctly, as well as I can in written form, in my text **Introduction to Personality (Eighth Edition)** and in my monograph **Personality and Assessment**. The latter is the original statement of what I see as the burning issues, problems and challenges in the field of personality and clinical psychology. It was written for colleagues (loved by some, hated by others) and hopefully conveys a sense of the basic issues as I view them, supported by the essential fabric of evidence.

An up-to-date, less intense (simpler) and more balanced overview is offered in my text, **Introduction to Personality: Eighth Edition (2008)**. In it I try to address the student more directly, and present the material in a way that hopefully allows you to master it in a relatively pain-free, effective fashion. (If it doesn't do that for you, please let me know so I can try differently in the next edition).

When reading my two books, please keep in mind that I wrote them so I see them as part of my input to you the student. They are intended as "part of the lectures," and are an integral component of what I want you to see in psychology. I will assume that you are reading them and that you do not expect me to rehash them for you. Instead, class time will be devoted to articulating the basic issues addressed in the course.

Throughout the course my concern will be to convey why these issues are important, not just to professional psychologists and "society" but to you. I want to try to capture what these issues imply about the nature and structure of personality, interpersonal relationships, and the potential for self-directed change. This goal will require close attention to the theoretical questions (often very thorny), research findings (often very tricky), and clinical (case) studies (often very exciting but also confusing). And here your involvement becomes essential.

## **B. STUDENT'S ROLE**

Active and effective teaching depends in part on active learning and participation by the student. To maximize your possible gains from the course, it is essential to do the readings **fast**, continuously ahead of the lectures. Failure to keep up with the readings costs you the right to a stimulating course: don't expect a good course from me if you don't keep your part. Cramming reserved for the exams assures an unsatisfactory class experience. It guarantees intellectually boring (or merely showy) lectures, demoralizes me and you both, prohibits your active participation, and ultimately raises questions about why you are paying tuition at Columbia. In contrast, if you can listen and ask questions informed by the readings, class can become a sometimes creative experience and at least should extinguish neither of us on the educational process.

## **II. READINGS**

### **A. REQUIRED**

Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Ayduk, O. (2008). *Introduction to Personality*. (Eighth Edition). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (available at Columbia University Bookstore)

Mischel, W. (1968). *Personality and Assessment*. New York: Wiley. (Republished in 1996 by Erlbaum) (available at Columbia University Bookstore and on reserve in the library – Note: Psychology Reserves are temporarily housed in the Geology Library in 601 Schermerhorn.)

Mischel, W., & Shoda, Y. (1995). A cognitive-affective system theory of personality: Reconceptualizing situations, dispositions, dynamics, and invariance in personality structure. *Psychological Review*, 102(2), 246-268. (available through Courseworks)

### **B. RECOMMENDED**

Cervone, D. & Shoda, Y. (1999). *The Coherence of Personality*. New York: Guilford.

Freud, S. (1963). *The Sexual Enlightenment of Children*. New York: Crowell-Collier. (on reserve in the library– Note: Psychology Reserves are temporarily housed in the Geology Library in 601 Schermerhorn.)

Mischel, W. (2004). Toward an integrative science of the person (Prefatory Chapter). *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 1-22.

Mischel, W., & Morf, C. (2003). The self as a psycho-social dynamic processing system: A meta-perspective on a century of the self in psychology. In M. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (pp. 15-43). New York: Guilford.

Mischel, W. & Shoda, Y. (1998). Reconciling processing dynamics and personality dispositions. *Annual Rev. Psychol.*, 49, 229-258. (available through Courseworks)

Kelly, G.A. (1963). *A Theory of Personality*. New York: Norton.

### C. HANDOUTS

Various supplements with case materials or special readings will be distributed in class or added to Courseworks at selected points.

### III. QUIZZES & EXAMINATIONS

To provide a common core of background essential for the lectures, you are expected to rapidly master the basic theoretical approaches to personality and their applications. A quiz including the content of the trait, biological, and psychodynamic-motivational approaches to personality will be given in class on October 14th. A second quiz will be given in class on November 18th including both the behavioral and phenomenological-humanistic approaches. The final exam, scheduled during the Final Exam Week, will also be primarily objective and will cover all the readings, lectures, and case materials cumulatively for the entire course.

### IV. GRADE

First Quiz	25%
Second Quiz	25%
Final Exam	50%

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### V. APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

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<u>WEEKS</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
<b>1</b> (Sept 8)	<b>Introduction &amp; The Trait-Dispositional Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chap. 1, 2, 3, & self-assessment. <b>Personality and Assessment</b> Chapters 1 - 4
<b>2</b> (Sept 13, 15)	<b>The Trait-Dispositional Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chap. 1, 2, 3, & self-assessment. <b>Personality and Assessment</b> Chapters 1 - 4

<b>3</b> (Sept 20, 22)	<b>The Trait-Dispositional Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality0</b> Chapter 4 & summary eval.
<b>4</b> (Sept 27, 29)	<b>The Biological Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 5
<b>5</b> (Oct 4)	<b>The Biological Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 6 & summary eval.
<b>5 - 6</b> (Oct 6, 11)	<b>The Psychodynamic-Motivational Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> Chapters 7, 8 <b>Personality and Assessment</b> Chapter 5  <b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>Sexual Enlightenment of Children</b> entire book
<hr/> <b>FIRST QUIZ: Wednesday, October 13 (in class)</b> <hr/>		
<b>7</b> (Oct 18, 20)	<b>The Psychodynamic-Motivational Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> 8, 9, & summary eval. <b>Personality and Assessment</b> Chapter 5  <b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>Sexual Enlightenment of Children</b> entire book
<b>8</b> (Oct 25, 27)	<b>The Behavioral-Conditioning Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 10
<hr/> <b>Monday, November 1 – Academic Holiday</b> <hr/>		

9 (Nov 3)	<b>The Behavioral-Conditioning Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 11 & summary eval.
10 (Nov 8, 10)	<b>The Phenomenological-Humanistic Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 12
		<b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>A Theory of Personality (Kelly)</b> entire book
11 (Nov 15)	<b>The Phenomenological-Humanistic Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 13 & summary eval.
		<b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>A Theory of Personality (Kelly)</b> entire book
<hr/> <b>SECOND QUIZ (Non-cumulative): Wednesday, November 17 (in class)</b> <hr/>		
12 (Nov 22, 24)	<b>The Social Cognitive Level</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 14 <b>Mischel &amp; Shoda (1995) article</b>
		<b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>Mischel &amp; Morf</b> <b>Cervone &amp; Shoda</b> Chapter 1
13 (Nov 29)	<b>The Social Cognitive Level</b> Chapter 15 & summary eval.	<b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapter 14 <b>Mischel &amp; Shoda (1995) article</b>
		<b><u>Recommended:</u></b> <b>Mischel &amp; Morf</b> <b>Cervone &amp; Shoda</b> Chapter 1

<b>13</b> (Dec 1)	<b>Integrated View of Levels</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapters 16, 17, 18 & summary eval.
<b>14</b> (Dec 6, 8)	<b>Integrated View of Levels</b>	<b><u>Required:</u></b> <b>Introduction to Personality</b> Chapters 16, 17, 18 & summary eval.
<b>15</b> (Dec 13)	<b>Review Session</b>	

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**FINAL EXAM: TBD**

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