

PSY 121 - *Introductory Psychology (honors)*

Radford University

Fall 2008

Instructor: P. Niels Christensen, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: 2:00 – 3:00 Monday/Wednesday and by appointment
Class Time/Location: 1:00 – 1:50 Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Peery Basement
Required Texts: Hock, R. R. (2009). *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Course Description

This honors-level course will provide an introduction to the many areas that comprise the field of psychology. Some of the topics to be discussed include biology, thought processes (cognition), social interaction, development, and psychopathology. Information will be presented with an emphasis on the *empirical* evidence that scientists have generated to understand human behavior. In addition to learning basic content information about psychology, students will learn how psychologists ask questions, evaluate evidence, and communicate with each other. To be successful in this course, students must synthesize information presented in both the lecture and the text. After taking this class, intended psychology majors should be able to target areas of study that they would like to pursue and non-psychology majors should have a greater insight into the science of understanding human behavior.

Learning Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: To understand and explain human thought, emotion, and behavior with a basis in the prominent theoretical perspectives and empirical research of psychology.

Objective 1.1: Demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical areas in psychology (e.g., biological, social, developmental, psychodynamic).

Objective 1.2: Apply psychological theories to a variety of “real world” examples.

Objective 1.3: Identify the utility and shortcomings of different psychological theories, results, and methods.

Goal 2: To develop skills for effective scientific thinking.

Objective 2.1: Formulate testable questions about psychological phenomena.

Objective 2.2: Identify relevant psychological theories to support one’s explanations for human thought, emotion, and behavior.

Goal 3: To communicate in ways analogous to psychological scientists

Objective 3.1: Use the structure of a scientific psychology manuscript

Objective 3.2: Use proper spelling, grammar, and sentence structure to support one’s position.

Objective 3.3: Express knowledge of psychology clearly, concisely, and adequately to support one’s position.

Grades

EXAMS: There will be one in-class midterm and one comprehensive final. The midterm and the final will consist of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions. All exam dates are listed in the syllabus.

(Total possible points: 2 exams x 100 = 200)

QUIZZES: Twelve in-class quizzes will be given during Friday classes throughout the semester. Each 5-question quiz is worth 10 points and will include both multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. Quizzes cover all material covered since the previous quiz. *Quizzes may not be taken early or late.* The lowest two quizzes (or missed quizzes) for each student will be dropped. An additional two quizzes will be removed from your grade if the student provides advance notice of a legitimate conflict and supporting documentation. The

quizzes will start at the beginning of class – do not be late or you will miss the quiz.

(Total possible points: 10 quizzes x 10 = 100)

WRITING: Two brief papers (~5 pages in length, double-spaced, and typewritten) are required. Detailed instructions regarding this assignment will be distributed later in the course. Be sure to turn in your paper on the due date – 5 points will be lost for each day late starting after the class in which it is due.

(Total possible points: 2 papers x 40 = 80)

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Contribution to class discussion can yield up to 25 points. Class participation will be determined by submitting questions and answers in class. No late submissions are possible.

(Total possible points: 20)

EXTRA CREDIT: You will be given the opportunity to participate in up to 2 hours of research experiments.

Details regarding how, where, and when to sign up for these experiments will be provided in class. You will receive 5 points for each ½ hour of participation (rounded to the higher hour). If you do not wish to participate in research experiments you may write up to 2 1-page abstracts that summarize research from an APA journal article (please see me for complete instructions). All extra credit must be submitted before finals week!

(Total possible extra points: 4 half-hours x 5 = 20)

A total of **400 points are available** (plus extra credit) and your semester grade will be assigned as follows:

A > 89.5% B > 79.5% C > 69.5% D > 59.5% F < 59.5%

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Major Assignments*</u>
<u>September</u>		
1 – 6	Introduction / Science of Psychology	
8 – 12	Mind is matter: The cellular basis of the brain	
15 – 19	Mind is matter: The cellular basis of the brain	
22 – 26	Perception versus reality: Drugs, dreams, and dissociative experiences	
<u>October</u>		
9/29 – 3	Perception versus reality: Drugs, dreams, and...	Paper #1 Due (Mon. 9/29)
6 – 10	Always something there to remind me: Memory	
13 – 17	Always something there to remind me: Memory	Midterm Exam (Fri. 10/17)
20 – 24	Who are you? Learned and inherited individual differences	
27 – 31	Who are you? Learned and inherited individual differences	
<u>November</u>		
3 – 7	Who are you? Learned and inherited individual differences	
10 – 14	Trouble in paradise: Psychopathology and treatment	
17 - 21	Trouble in paradise: Psychopathology and treatment	
24 – 28	Thanksgiving Break	
<u>December</u>		
1 – 5	You can't always get what you want: Motivation, control, and stress	
8 – 12	Running with the pack: The influence of others on our psychology	Paper #2 Due (Mon. 12/8)
<u>Tuesday, December 16th</u> 8:00am-10:00am		Final Exam

*Quizzes are every Friday except 9/6, 10/17, and 10/24. In lieu of the quiz on 10/24, there will be a quiz on Monday 10/27.