**PSY 121 - *Introductory Psychology (honors)***

# P. Niels Christensen, Ph.D.

# Floyd Basement Radford University

## MWF 10-10:50 Spring 2012

**Contact**

In-person: Russell 405 and Peery 163 (T/Th 11am – 12noon)

Phone: (540) 831-6643 (Russell) or (540) 831-6145 (Peery)

Email: [pchristen@radford.edu](mailto:pchristen@radford.edu)

Web: <http://pchristen.asp.radford.edu/>

### **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.

Required Text: Hock, R. R. (2009). *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology,* 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

#### 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 content areas in psychology (e.g., neuroscience, social, developmental, clinical).

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, both orally and in writing.

**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 at the beginning of Thursday 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 university 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)**

Communication: One paper and one presentation are required. Detailed instructions regarding these assignments 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 assignments x 40 = 80)**

Class Participation: Contribution to class discussion can yield up to 20 points. Class participation will be assessed by my subjective impression of your contribution. It is expected that students should contribute an insightful question, answer, or comment *at least* once per week.

**(Total possible points: 20)**

Extra Credit: You will be given the opportunity to participate in up to 2 hours of research studies. 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

Date Lecture Topic Major Assignments\*

##### January

18 – 20 Introduction / Science of Psychology

23 – 27 Science of Psychology / Mind Is Matter: The Cellular Basis of the Brain

February

1/30 – 3 Mind Is Matter: The Cellular Basis of the Brain

6 – 10 Location, Location, Location: Localization of Function

13 – 17 Perception and Reality: Consciousness

20 – 24 Whatcha Want: Motivation

March

2/27 – 2 Always Something There to Remind Me: Memory **Midterm Exam (W. 2/29)**

5 – 9 Spring Break

12 – 16 Always Something There to Remind Me: Memory

19 –23 Who Are You? Learned and Inherited Individual Differences **Paper Due (W. 3/21)**

26 – 30 Who Are You? Learned and Inherited Individual Differences

April

2 – 6 Trouble in paradise: Psychology of Mental Health

9 – 13 Trouble in paradise: Psychology of Mental Health

16 – 20 Step by Step: Psychological Development

23 – 27 Running with the Pack: Social Psychology

Thursday, May 3rd 10:15am-12:15pm **Final Exam**

\*Quizzes are every Friday except 1/20 and 3/4. Student presentations will be scheduled on dates beginning Monday 3/12.