

# Introduction to Psychology PSYCH 1001 (400:001) Syllabus

## MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Mrs. Heather C. Peterson, M.A. Forensic Psychology, Licensed Addiction Counselor**



As a sophomore social work major at the University of Northern Iowa, I knew I wanted a career working with and helping people in some capacity. I had a particular interest in juvenile delinquency and other facets of the criminal justice system, so when I learned of a course titled Psychology and Law I was very excited to enroll. Throughout the duration of that course I was continually fascinated with the countless connections that are made between the legal system and numerous psychological principles. I was particularly interested in the formation of false memories of child abuse, the insanity defense and criminal responsibility, psychopathology, the effects of imprisonment, and criminal profiling; just to name a few.

After becoming so enthralled, I chose to double major in Psychology and Criminology, and at the same time I also joined Dr. Kim MacLin's Psychology and Law Research Lab. As a research assistant I had the opportunity to conduct research on racial bias in line-up and photospread construction, the effects of defendant demeanor on assumptions of guilt or innocence, and the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. I was also able to conduct my own research study on criminal stereotypes, which allowed me to investigate the presumptions people have regarding particular crimes, based on physical appearance and the labels they might use to describe that type of criminal. For example, is a child molester a creepy old man with thick glasses and greasy hair lurking around a school yard in a van?

Due to my continued interest in the many connections between psychology and law, I decided a graduate degree in forensic psychology would suit me best. As I prepared for my advanced degree I served as a teaching assistant for both Research Methods and Introduction to Psychology. I also secured internships with the Black Hawk County Attorney's Office and worked at a shelter that served female victims of domestic violence.

During graduate school I also completed two internships; one with Urban Peak-Denver, working with homeless and runaway youth between 14 and 24 years of age, providing shelter services, education, job counseling, and case management, while encouraging them to permanently exit the streets. The other was with the Denver Juvenile Probation Department, where I conducted drug and alcohol assessments for substance abusing youth, while also holding them accountable to the community and justice system. In addition to those professional experiences, I also volunteered with a restorative justice initiative sponsored by the Colorado Department of Corrections Sex Offender Treatment and Monitoring Program, providing social and psychological support to sex offenders reintegrating from prison back into the community.

In June of 2007, I graduated from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology, with my Master's Degree in forensic psychology. It was at this point when I was fortunate enough to be invited back to the University of Northern Iowa to serve as an adjunct instructor teaching Psychology and Law; the very course that inspired me to specialize in the field.

In addition to Psychology and Law, I have also taught courses in Drugs and Individual Behavior, Introduction to Psychology, and a graduate level course in Psychology, Law, and Philanthropy, via the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). Over time, I transitioned these courses to an online capacity and have since moved back to the beautiful mountain town of Crested Butte, Colorado. Isn't Distance Education great?!

While teaching online, I have also been working as a Substance Abuse Counselor, providing voluntary and court mandated substance abuse assessments, education, and individual and group therapy for those involved in the Gunnison County Adolescent Drug Court program, Gunnison County Jail system, DUI offenders, and Western State Colorado University students. I have also

pursued additional trainings, proper supervision, and passed the national exam to become a Licensed Addiction Counselor. As such, I opened my own private practice, Teocalli Treatment Options, LLC, and obtained a designation as a State of Colorado Licensed Treatment Agency, where I provide mandated DUI Education and Therapy, as well as general behavioral health treatment.

Please be mindful that although an online course provides a great deal of flexibility with regard to one's "class time", it is of paramount importance to maintain a regular schedule of logging in (daily if possible) and designating time for study and coursework on a regular basis. I am always willing to discuss my academic and professional work experiences, so please feel free to ask any questions you may have! If you have any questions about the materials, need further clarification on a topic, or would simply like to discuss a concept or assignment, please feel free to contact me.

#### **Contact Me**

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course, Introduction to Psychology, satisfies the Individual and Institutional Perspectives requirement of the Social Science Category in the Liberal Arts Core at the University of Northern Iowa. It is designed to provide an introduction to the study of behavior with emphasis in the areas of learning, cognition, motivation, personality, behavioral disorder, therapy, and social influence. An understanding of the impact of both theoretical perspectives and experimental evidence on the formulation of the science of human behavior is also stressed. Psychological theories and principles are utilized to explain and predict behavior.

Psychology is the scientific study of mind, brain, and behavior. Some of what you will learn may seem like "common sense," or at the very least familiar to you because you will be learning about topics that you can relate to. However, one of the most important things you will learn is that some of what we believe to be "common sense" is not true at all, and that even "common sense" principles should be evaluated scientifically. You will learn about psychology from several different viewpoints: psychology as an academic science, psychology in life (yours included!), and psychology in the broader world. All course assignments and materials are designed to bring psychology to you from these different areas.

You may be entering this course thinking it will be "easy," interesting, and maybe fun. Well you're right about the last two but not the first! An introductory psychology course necessarily covers a great deal of material, and contrary to all of your notions about what psychology is, much of it is challenging. Each of your chapters is actually its own specialty area in psychology and psychologists and researchers will spend their whole working lives on one area. So there is a lot of material to cover and you will get a "taste" of each major area in psychology. Personal values, memories, and reflections are an important part of learning about psychology, however, you will learn that understanding the material cannot just be done from a personal perspective. Rather, you must also learn about the material from a scientific point of view. You will have to develop and/or hone your study skills in order to do well in this course.

#### **Required Textbook:**

Myers, D. (2008). *Exploring Psychology 7th Edition*. Worth Publishers.

\* Additional readings may be required. It will be the student's responsibility to obtain these materials as assigned.

#### **Suggested Resources:**

<http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/exploring7e/default.asp> This site provides students with access to free online resources including study guides, practice quizzes, simulations and demonstrations, as well as additional web links.

<http://www.learner.org/resources/series138.html> This site provides 26 half-hour "Discovering Psychology" video programs designed to provide an overview of all topics while featuring demonstrations, classic experiments and simulations, current research, documentary footage, and computer animation. These videos may be used as both a preview and review to each specialty topic in psychology.

<http://www.apastyle.org> This site provide instruction on writing, citing, and referencing work in APA style.

<http://0-www.library.uni.edu.unistar.uni.edu/>

<http://scholar.google.com/> These sites are both resources which will assist you in locating peer reviewed academic/scholarly research articles.

### **Course Objectives:**

This course will prepare students to accomplish the following:

- Field of Psychology
  - Define psychology.
  - Describe the move from philosophy to scientific reasoning in the study of psychology.
  - Identify the different perspectives from which psychologists examine behavior and mental processes.
- Scientific Methods in Psychology
  - Describe the scientific method and the scientific attitude that facilitate the development of psychological theories.
  - Identify the methods psychologists use to describe, predict, and explain behavior systematically.
  - Identify the elements of experimentation.
  - Describe why correlations enable predictions but not explanation.
- Biological Psychology
  - Describe the nature-nurture issue in terms of genetic and environmental variables.
  - Identify the structure and types of neurons and explain how neural impulses are generated.
  - Identify the major divisions of the nervous system.
- Altered States
  - Describe the cyclical nature and possible functions of sleep and dreaming.
  - Discuss hypnosis and the behavior of hypnotized people.
  - Describe the physiological and psychological effects of specific drugs and discuss the factors that contribute to their use.
- Sensation and Perception
  - Describe the visual process, including the stimulus input, the structure of the eye, and the transformation of light energy into neural activity.
  - Describe the senses of taste, hearing, smell and touch and the basis for pain.
  - Differentiate Gestalt psychology's contribution to our understanding of perception from other explanations of perception.
- Development
  - Identify the methods of studying development over the life cycle.
  - Discuss Piaget's view of how the mind develops and discuss his stage theory of cognitive development.
  - Identify the course of language acquisition.
  - Identify the current views regarding continuity and discontinuity in terms of social and emotional development.
- Learning
  - Describe the process of classical conditioning.
  - Describe the process of operant conditioning.
  - Describe the process of social learning.
- Memory
  - Describe memory in terms of information processing and distinguish between short-term working memory and long-term memory.
  - Describe the importance of meaning, imagery, and organization in the encoding process, encoding or retrieval failure, and the constructive nature of memory.
- Cognition
  - Describe the nature of concepts and the role of prototypes in concept formation.
  - Discuss how we use trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight to solve problems.
  - Discuss how overrepresentative and availability heuristics influence our judgments and the effects that overconfidence, framing, and belief perseverance can have on judgment and decisions.

- Intelligence and its measurement
  - Describe the nature of intelligence.
  - Discuss the controversial issues in the study of intelligence.
- Motivation
  - Define motivation and discuss the role of biological needs and external incentives in motivated behavior.
  - Explain the basis of hunger in terms of both internal physiology and external incentives.
  - Describe the research on human sexuality.
  - Describe the nature and sources of achievement motivation.
- Emotions, Health Psychology, and Stress
  - Describe the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal.
  - Discuss health consequences of prolonged stress and significant life changes.
  - Identify strategies for coping with stress.
- Personality
  - Identify major theories of personality.
  - Identify the individual differences in personality.
  - Describe measures of personality assessment.
- Abnormal Behavior
  - Identify the criteria for judging if behavior is psychologically disordered.
  - Discuss the symptoms of anxiety disorders.
  - Discuss the symptoms of substance-use disorders.
  - Discuss the symptoms of mood disorders.
  - Discuss the symptoms of schizophrenia and autism.
- Therapy
  - Identify methods and theoretical approaches to psychotherapy.
  - Describe the uses of medical therapies in the treatment of psychological disorders.
  - Discuss the social and legal issues in the treatment of psychological disorders.
- Social Psychology
  - Discuss social perception and cognition.
  - Describe attitude formation and means of changing established attitudes.
  - Describe interpersonal attraction and influence.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course will be delivered over the World Wide Web, utilizing web pages, and a learning management system (eLearning). The course is divided into 15 assignments, a research requirement, a final research project, and four proctored exams. All assignments will be submitted via **eLearning**.

### Assignments:

For each chapter there is a 40 point written assignment. For each assignment you are required to respond to **two** of the four essay questions provided. All answers are to be typed and double-spaced (APA style), and students should limit each answer to two to five pages. Each response is worth 20 points. An excellent response will be clear and concise while demonstrating a detailed understanding of the concepts as well as your critical thinking skills.

Type assignments using a word processing program and save as a file. If you are using a word processing program other than Microsoft Word, then please save the file as Rich Text Format.

Submit your assignment by clicking on the **Assignment Submission** link in the **Course Content** menu on the left and uploading your assignment. **Need help?** See the [eLearning Tutorials](#) for instructions on how to submit an assignment.

**Extra Credit:** After each written assignment you will find an extra credit opportunity. This may involve watching a film, reading a book, or completing a task and writing a short report (2-5 double-spaced pages, APA style) on your experience. Each extra credit opportunity is worth up to 10 points, and is to be submitted along with the written assignment. In addition to these written extra credit opportunities, there will also be a few extra credit questions on each exam.

## Research Requirement:

Experiment participation is a departmental requirement designed to expose students to the research process in psychology, as well as provide a critical service to psychologists conducting research at the university—psychologists need human subjects to do their research. Therefore, every introductory psychology student at UNI is required to participate in 4 credits (1 credit=1 hour) of experiments. This credit is graded complete or incomplete and carries no point value. (Students receive an “incomplete” in the course until the requirement is fulfilled).

Due to the online nature of this Guided Independent Study course, reading research reports has been chosen as an alternate assignment and is required in lieu of actual experiment participation. See the Research Requirement document for further instructions.

## Final Research Project:

In addition to the credit/no credit aspect of the experiment participation alternative, a 100 point final research project is also assigned to augment that requirement. This assignment may be submitted at anytime throughout the duration of the course. You **are** allowed to use the article from your Final Research Project to fulfill one of the four required credits for this research/experiment requirement.

## Exams:

Each exam will consist of approximately 20 multiple choice questions (worth one point each) per chapter covered. There will be four proctored exams. Examination request forms are included at the appropriate places in the **Course Content**.

The breakdown of exams is as follows:

Exam 1: Chapters 1-3 = 60 points

Exam 2: Chapters 4-7 = 80 points

Exam 3: Chapters 8-11 = 80 points

Exam 4: Chapters 12-15 = 80 points

## GRADING

**Course Requirements:** UNI Guided Independent Study requires that you submit all assignments and complete all exams to receive a grade in the course.

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 15 Written Assignments | 600pts         |
| 4 Exams                | 300pts         |
| Final Research Project | 100pts         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>1000pts</b> |

## Grading Scale:

|            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| A = 93-100 | C = 73-76        |
| A- = 90-92 | C- = 70-72       |
| B+ = 87-89 | D+ = 67-69       |
| B = 83-86  | D = 63-66        |
| B- = 80-82 | D- = 60-62       |
| C+ = 77-79 | F = less than 60 |

## Cheating & Plagiarism:

Cheating is any sort of activity that results in you turning in work (written assignments, reports, extra credit) where you are not the SOLE contributor and developer of the ideas. You are bound to the University's ethics policies and the consequences of cheating/plagiarizing are not worth it. Do your **own** work!

**If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class:** UNI is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. It is the responsibility of students to contact the Office of Disability Services (213 Student Services Center-- 319-273-2676) to arrange for documentation and accommodation.

**If you are near the UNI campus, I encourage you to utilize the Academic Learning Center's free assistance with writing, math, reading, and learning strategies:**

- The Writing Center offers one-on-one writing assistance open to all UNI undergraduate and graduate students. Writing Assistants offer strategies for getting started, citing and documenting, and editing your work. Visit the Online Writing Guide at [www.uni.edu/unialc/writingcenter.html](http://www.uni.edu/unialc/writingcenter.html) and schedule an appointment at 008 ITTC or 319-273-2361.
- The Math Center offers individual and small-group tutorials especially helpful for students in Liberal Arts Core math courses. No appointment is necessary, but contact the Math Center at 008 ITTC or 319-273-2361 to make certain a tutor will be available at a time convenient for you.
- The Reading and Learning Center provides an Ask-a-Tutor program, consultations with the reading specialist, and free, four-week, non-credit courses in Speed Reading, Effective Study Strategies, PPST-Reading and -Math, and GRE-Quantitative and Verbal. Visit <http://www.uni.edu/unialc/> and 008 ITTC or call 319-273-2361.