



## **PS420 THEORIES OF PERSONALITY SPRING SEMESTER, 2006**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Craig Platt  
**OFFICE:** Crestview 311. Phone and voice mail: 4282. E-mail: [plattcw@fpc.edu](mailto:plattcw@fpc.edu)  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:30; Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00-4:00; other times available by appointment.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- 1) Schultz, D.P., and Schultz, S.E. (2005). *Theories of personality* (8th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- 2) Bond, A.H. (2002). *Tales of psychology*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon.
- 3) Biographical or autobiographical book of your choosing for biographical study project.

**PREREQUISITES:** 12 credit hours in psychology

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course examines historical and current psychological theories of personality representing a broad range of perspectives, including psychoanalytic, neopsychoanalytic, humanistic, behavioral, cognitive, and trait theories. The course is intended to help you to:

1. develop an understanding of the major theories of personality, their strengths and weaknesses, and the relationships between them.
2. be aware of the social, historical and biographical factors that have influenced the development of these theories.
3. apply theories as tools for describing and explaining personality functions in individual cases.
4. enhance your abilities to express ideas clearly in written and spoken form, and to think critically about your own and others' ideas.

**GRADING:** Your grade for this course will be determined by your performance on three tests, two short-story papers, a biographical study project, reading responses using WebCT, class participation, and miscellaneous brief assignments. These components will contribute to your grade as follows:

Tests	40% (highest grade, 20%; 2 others, 10% each)
Two short-story papers	20% (10% each)
Biographical study project	25% (preliminary paper 5%; final paper 20%)
WebCT reading responses and participation	10%
Miscellaneous assignments	5%

Please note that there is not a separate category for class participation, but it can influence your course grade. After I have determined your base grade for the WebCT reading response component at the end of the semester, I will add or subtract a maximum of one full letter grade if your class participation has been clearly outstanding or lacking.

**TESTS:** Tests will cover both textbook and classroom material. Format for all tests will include written short answers and longer essays. All three tests will be unit tests covering material from the corresponding unit of the course; only the final exam will be partially cumulative. No make-up tests will be given except in cases of a documented medical excuse.

**IN-CLASS GROUPS:** We will occasionally spend part or all of a class session working on brief assignments in small groups. These group projects will always be completed within one class session, and will not require extra work outside of class. Each group will hand in a written product to me at the end of class to be graded; all members of the group will receive the same grade. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest group project grade and average the rest. This average will count toward the “miscellaneous assignments” portion of the course grade, along with any other brief individual assignments or quizzes that may occur over the course of the semester. I will be dividing the class into groups for these group projects, and will change the groupings each time, so you will not work with the same teammates throughout the semester.

**ATTENDANCE:** The success of this class depends on the regular attendance and participation of everyone involved, so I expect you to make every effort to attend *all* class sessions. I will allow up to four absences (with no distinction between excused and unexcused); each absence beyond the fourth will result in a penalty of one letter grade from the "reading responses and participation" component of your grade. Please note also that in-class group projects will not necessarily be announced in advance, so any absence could cause you to miss a group project. If this does occur, you will not receive credit for that project.

**WebCT READING RESPONSES:** For each assigned reading, you will be expected to post a “reading response” on the WebCT site for this course. This feature of the course is intended to serve several purposes: to facilitate class discussion, to give me a sense prior to class of any aspects of the reading people have questions about, and to encourage active, critical reading. Your assignment for each of these postings is to express a specific, thoughtful comment or question about some aspect of the assigned reading. For chapters from the Schultz text, for instance, you might raise a criticism of some specific idea from a particular theory being discussed, or express and explain your agreement with some point, or ask a thoughtful question that might stimulate discussion in class. When we read fictional short stories from the Bond book, discussion cards should draw a connection between the story and some theoretical idea(s) we have covered previously. Please do *not* use reading responses simply to express your *feelings* about the assigned reading (“I liked it,” or “I didn’t like it,” or “It was boring,” or “It wasn’t as boring as last week’s reading”...), or just to *summarize* what the author said.

Note: Once you have read your chosen book for your biographical study (which is due by the end of February), I will expect you to be making connections between your biographical study

subject/person and the theories we'll be studying. To facilitate that process, every reading response you write about chapters from the Schultz text from that point on should include some commentary on whether and how any idea(s) from that chapter might relate to your subject.

**Reading responses are to be posted by 8:00 A.M. on the day that each reading is due.** There is no absolute minimum or maximum length, but a short paragraph (a few sentences) would be typical. Each response will be graded "check" (as long as you've written a thoughtful response that clearly relates to the reading) or "check-minus." Your base grade for this component of the course will be simply the percentage of potential check marks you have earned at the end of the semester (90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F). This grade may then be adjusted for attendance and participation as stated above.

**SHORT STORY PAPERS:** Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to write two short papers, approximately 3 to 4 pages in length. In each of these papers you are to choose one of the fictional short stories from the Bond book, and analyze the story from the perspective of any one personality theory we have covered in this course. The due dates for these papers are listed in the course outline. For the first of these papers, you will have the option of revising the papers after it is graded and returned; revisions are due one week after the graded paper is returned to you. You will receive a more detailed handout on this assignment early in the semester.

**DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP OPTION:** You will have the option, in place of writing the second of the two short story papers, of leading the class discussion of one of the assigned short stories from the Bond book. This project may be done individually, or in a team of two students. If you choose this option, you will be expected to take charge of the class for approximately 30 to 40 minutes, using whatever methods you choose to facilitate class discussion of your assigned story in relation to theoretical ideas from the course. Please note that this is not simply a presentation; your role is not primarily to tell us *your* interpretation of the story, but to prepare questions and/or other activities that will lead the class through an analysis of the story. The project will be graded in terms of how well you prepare and the effectiveness of your session; if you work with a partner, each team member will receive the same grade.

If you choose this option, **please let me know by Wednesday, February 8th.** Also, please tell me a first and second choice of stories you would like to work with; this will require looking ahead at the stories listed on the syllabus for the remainder of the course.

**BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY PROJECT:** As a major term project, you will be choosing a person to focus on as a "case study" throughout the semester, culminating in a final paper in which you analyze your subject's personality using the theoretical perspectives we will be studying in the course. The person you choose may be any contemporary or historical figure; the only limitation is that you will need to be working with published material about your subject, so he or she will in some sense need to be a public figure. Given the focus of the course on "normal" personality structure and development, the ideal subject would not necessarily be someone whose outstanding characteristic is some form of psychological disorder; on the other hand, several of the theories we will look at in this course do focus largely on the nature and origins of anxiety and maladjustment. The most fundamental criteria as you choose a subject would be that (a) the person should be of genuine interest to you, (b) there should be a *good*,

book-length biography or autobiography available to serve as your primary source, and (c) your subject should be a *complex* person psychologically—i.e., someone about whom there are interesting questions to be addressed. The list of possible subjects (e.g., people in politics, the arts, entertainment, business, science, etc.) is practically endless—but do keep in mind the importance of starting with a book that does an effective job of revealing your subject’s complexities.

Please note the role of this assignment in the overall structure of the course. Rather than working on your biographical research purely as an add-on to class reading assignments over the course of the semester, you will be reading your primary biographical book at the same time as your classmates during a two-week period early in the semester (see Course Outline). This is meant to ensure that you will have your subject’s story in mind *prior* to encountering many of the theoretical perspectives we’ll be studying, which will allow you to reflect on the connections as you encounter ideas from the various theories.

You will be expected to use at least two additional biographical sources (which may be articles rather than books) in your final paper, but the primary source will presumably be the book that you read initially in February. This means that the process of selecting this book is an important one, and should be started immediately. Note also that you will probably need to *purchase* the book—both because you don’t want to limit yourself to what’s available in the library, and because you’ll want to have the book in hand throughout the semester. Online booksellers like amazon.com are great places to search—and to buy, if you have a credit card. It might also be helpful to browse at local bookstores like Borders or Toadstool.

The biographical study project will involve two graded pieces of writing. The first, due Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, will be a *preliminary prospectus*, 2 to 3 pages long, in which you summarize key characteristics of your subject’s personality and pose questions that you will be attempting to address in your theoretical analysis over the course of the semester. Your *final paper*, due Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, will be at least 10 pages in length, and will use multiple theoretical perspectives from this course to analyze your subject’s personality.

You will be given more detail about both assignments in a separate handout.

**LEARNING DISABILITIES:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any student in this class who has a documented learning disability will be provided with reasonable accommodations designed to meet his or her needs. Before any such assistance can occur, it is the responsibility of the student to see that documentation is on file with the Academic Services Office. Please see me as soon as possible to discuss any need for accommodations.

		<b>COURSE OUTLINE</b>		
	WEEK	DATE	Topic	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<b>PSYCHOANALYTIC AND NEOPSYCHOANALYTIC THEORIES</b>	<b>1</b>	Wed., 1/18	Introduction to course	
	<b>2</b>	Mon., 1/23	Perspectives on personality	Read Schultz, Ch. 1; written assignment
		Wed., 1/25	Freud: Psychoanalysis	Read Schultz, Ch. 2
	<b>3</b>	Mon., 1/30	Freud, continued; Stories: Brodkey, "A Young Woman Speaks" and McCann, "My Mother's Clothes"	Read Bond, pp. 109-117; McCann handout
		Wed. 2/1	Jung: Analytical Psychology	Read Schultz, Ch. 3
	<b>4</b>	Mon., 2/6	Myers-Briggs Type Theory	<b>Submit written choice of biographical study subject &amp; book</b>
		Wed., 2/8	<b>TEST #1</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Mon., 2/13	Film, TBA	Read biographical study book
		Wed., 2/15	Film, continued	Read to at least p. 100 of biog. book
	<b>6</b>	Mon., 2/20	<b>NO CLASSES — PRESIDENTS' DAY</b>	<b>NO CLASSES — PRESIDENTS' DAY</b>
		Wed., 2/22	Session with guest lecturer John Daido Roshi Looi— views of the self in individualist and collectivist cultures	Read Markus & Kitayama (handout)
	<b>7</b>	Mon., 2/27	Discuss biographical study subjects	Finish biographical book; <b>Preliminary biog. study paper due</b>
		Wed., 3/1	Horney: Interpersonal Psychoanalysis	Read Schultz, Ch. 5 and handout
	<b>8</b>	Mon., 3/6	Stories: Trevor, "A Complicated Nature" and Oates, "In the Region of Ice"	Read Bond, pp. 75-92; 185-205
		Wed., 3/8	Fromm: Humanistic Psychoanalysis	Read Schultz, Ch. 6

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY	9	Mon., 3/13	Adler: Birth Order	Read Schultz, pp. 134-137; 144-146 <b>Short Story Paper #1 due</b>
		Wed., 3/15	Erikson: Psychosocial Stage Theory; and story: Gill, "Truth and Consequences"	Read Schultz, Ch. 8; Bond, pp. 53-57
	March 20-24 <b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
	10	Mon., 3/27	Genetics and personality	
Wed., 3/29		<b>TEST #2</b>		
HUMANISTIC/PH ENOMENOLOGIC	11	Mon., 4/3	Maslow: Humanistic Psychology	Read Schultz, Ch. 11
		Wed., 4/5	Stories: Adams, "Roses, Rhodendron" and Yates, "The Right Thing"	Read Bond, pp. 58-74; 267-279
	12	Mon., 4/10	Rogers: Person-Centered Theory; and story: Atwood, "Betty"	Read Schultz, Ch. 12; Atwood handout
Wed., 4/12		Cattell: Factor-Analytic Trait Theory	Read Schultz, Ch. 10	
TRAIT THEORIES	13	Mon., 4/17	The NEO/Five-Factor Model	<b>Short Story Paper #2 due</b>
		Wed., 4/19	Bandura: Social-Learning Theory	Read Schultz, Ch. 15
SOCIAL-LEARNING THEORY	14	Mon., 4/24	Rotter: Locus of Control	Read Schultz, pp. 433-446
		Wed., 4/26	Integrating Perspectives	Read Schultz, Ch. 17
	15	Mon., 5/1	Biographical studies	<b>Biographical Study Papers due</b>
		Wed., 5/3	Conclusion	
	EXAM #3 will be given during the scheduled final exam period for this class, which is <b>Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 8:00-10:00 a.m.</b> No exceptions will be made, so please make travel plans accordingly.			

**PS420 THEORIES OF PERSONALITY  
BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY PROJECT  
SPRING SEMESTER, 2006**

As a major term project for this course, you will be choosing a contemporary or historical person to focus on as a “case study” throughout the semester. This project is intended to function as an integral part of the course; rather than working on your biographical research purely on your own as an add-on to class readings and discussion, you will be reading your primary biographical book at the same time as your classmates early in the semester. This is meant to ensure that you will have your subject’s story in mind *prior* to encountering most of the theoretical perspectives we’ll be studying, which will allow you to reflect on connections as you encounter ideas from the various theories. Those reflections should provide useful material for your WebCT reading responses and for class discussion, as well as for your final paper.

**Selecting a Subject and Book:**

The person you choose for this project may be any contemporary or historical figure; the only limitation is that you will need to be working with published material about your subject, so he or she will in some sense need to be a public figure. Given the focus of the course on “normal” personality structure and development, the ideal subject would not necessarily be someone whose outstanding characteristic is some form of psychological disorder; on the other hand, several of the theories we will look at in this course do focus largely on the nature and origins of anxiety and maladjustment. The most fundamental criteria as you choose a subject would be that (a) the person should be of genuine interest to you, (b) there should be a *good*, book-length biography or autobiography available to serve as your primary source, and (c) your subject should be a *complex* person psychologically—i.e., someone about whom there are interesting questions to be addressed. The list of possible subjects (e.g., people in politics, the arts, entertainment, business, science, etc.) is practically endless—but do keep in mind the importance of starting with a book that does an effective job of revealing your subject’s complexities.

You will be expected to use at least two additional biographical sources (which may be articles rather than books) in your final paper, but the primary source will presumably be the book that you read initially in February. This means that the process of selecting this book is an important one, and should be started immediately. Note also that you will probably need to *purchase* the book—both because you don’t want to limit yourself to what’s available in the library, and because you’ll need to have the book in your possession throughout the semester. Online booksellers like amazon.com are great places to search—and to buy, if you have a credit card. It might also be helpful to browse at local bookstores like Borders or Toadstool. It may be helpful to look at *reviews* of any book you’re considering, which can be searched for using the library periodical databases like Academic Search Premier. Also, amazon.com has customer reviews, and sometimes brief published reviews, for most books.

A few considerations to keep in mind as you choose a primary book to use:

- The book may be either a biography written *about* your subject, or an autobiography/memoir written *by* your subject. Be aware that choosing an autobiography

may be a *risky* decision, given people's tendency to present themselves in a positive light. A book written about your subject by someone else may be more forthcoming about the person's problems and challenges. On the other hand, it might be all the more interesting to try to "read between the lines" of an autobiographical book.

- You will need to be sure that the book you choose includes sufficient material about the subject's personal life, rather than focusing entirely on his or her public and professional life. Also, more specifically, since many personality theories emphasize the importance of childhood experiences, you will need a source that deals adequately with your person's early years.
- Beware of books that are written as a purely positive tribute to your subject. You will be much better served by a book that reveals your person's complexities, even if he or she is someone known primarily for great achievements or contributions.

### **Preliminary Paper/Prospectus:**

The preliminary paper, or "prospectus," is due in class on **Monday, February 27th**, and should be **2 to 3 double-spaced (word-processed) pages** long. Your assignment in the prospectus is to summarize what you have learned from your primary book about your subject's personality, and to pose questions about your subject that you will be attempting to address in your theoretical analysis over the course of the semester. The purpose of the prospectus is *not* to apply any theoretical ideas at this point; that work remains to be done throughout the semester and in your final paper. Instead, think of your task as writing the kind of brief *character sketch* that any intelligent reader might write after reading the biography you've just read. For instance, according to this source, what seem to be your subject's most significant personality traits or tendencies? How is this person viewed, by self and others? What strengths does he or she seem to possess, and what weaknesses or challenges? What events or influences seem to have been especially important in this person's life story?

In addition to this summary, your prospectus should also state *questions* about your subject that you will try to address in your theoretical analysis throughout the semester and in your final paper. These should not be simply generic questions that could be asked about anyone (e.g., how did his relationship with his mother influence him?). Instead, try to pose specific questions that are raised by your biographical reading, and that you genuinely would like to develop your own answers to. For instance, if you were using Bill Clinton as your subject, two of your questions might be: "Why was he so committed, at such a young age, to the ambition of wanting to be President?" and "Given his political ambitions, why did he apparently engage repeatedly in sexual behavior that he knew put his career at risk?" Having posed these and other questions, you will then be looking for possible insights in the theories we'll be studying.

### **Reflections in Reading Responses:**

Once you have read your biographical book, I will expect you to be making ongoing connections between your case study subject and the theories we'll be studying. To facilitate that process, every reading response you write about chapters from the Schultz text from that point on should include some commentary on whether and how any idea(s) from that chapter might relate to your



subject. (This is *in addition to* whatever other comments or questions you might want to raise in each posting.)

### **Final Case Study Paper:**

Your final paper, **due Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, should be a minimum of 10 pages in length.** Your assignment in this paper is to analyze your subject's personality in relation to course material, using theoretical ideas both to describe and explain your subject's personality. Your analysis should include discussion of the questions you raised in your prospectus—i.e., how any of the theorists we've studied would answer those questions—but your paper may also explore other issues and observations that you didn't raise as questions in your prospectus.

Your analysis should make use of *at least* four theories from the course. The goal is to use theoretical ideas in ways that genuinely shed light on your subject—helping to make sense out of his or her personality—rather than just applying terminology. You may find that one or two theories seem to offer the most useful insights, in which case it would be perfectly acceptable to emphasize those ideas, but other theories should still be used. One issue to consider is whether you see different theories as offering *contradictory* perspectives on your subject. If so, it would be appropriate to discuss the nature of that contradiction in your paper.

*Additional sources:* You are expected to use at least two other biographical sources about your subject in addition to your primary book. These may be articles rather than additional books.

*Citing sources:* Information from your biographical sources should be cited in your paper using APA format. Theoretical ideas from the Schultz text or from class sessions do *not* need to be cited.