

SYLLABUS

General Psychology 1-2, FPF, UC Berkeley, 2017

Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00-3:00 PM, Room 100, 2515 Hillegass,

Bruce Mangan PhD

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INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: to be announced.

Texts: *Course Reader*, including material from various editions of
Grey's & Grey and Bjorklund's *Psychology*
Man's Search For Meaning, Victor Frankl

Videos: *Memento*, Christopher Nolan

Prisoners of Silence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzCGux7qD1c>

Reader available on or after 21 August at Krishna Copy, 2595 Telegraph Ave.

General Psychology covers a very wide range of topics, and at first students can find them unrelated or confusing. One aim of this course is to emphasize the overarching ideas that, in the end, will tie this diverse information together. One of these ideas is *evolutionary adaptation*, and the selections in the reader from Grey's psychology do an excellent job of showing how adaptation helps us understand many kinds of biological phenomena directly related to psychology (e.g., genetics, epigenetics, neural and brain structure, types of learning, habituation). We will also consider unifying ideas that are prominent in the study of cognition. These include *representations and their transformation, concept formation, Gestalt coherence, multiple-causation, the relation of conscious to non-conscious processing, and how organisms handle novel information*. Each of these "core ideas" will be introduced first with a (hopefully) vivid example in one area of study, but they will crop up again and again, often in combination, in other areas as the course progresses. For these unifying factors are jointly present in many complex psychological states, and they will help us examine some of the most salient experiences in human life (e.g., being in love; the exhilarations underlying athletics and art; having, or knowing someone with, a mental disorder). The core ideas will also help us understand how humans respond during the most extreme conditions: e.g., life in a Nazi concentration camp as reported by Frankl.

We will also consider how various strands of contemporary psychology resonate with "traditional" approaches to psychology. The chief example will be Plato's *Phaedrus*. Time permitting, we will briefly consider similar views of personality in the classic cultures of East Asia, South Asia, and the Islamic world.

NOTE: For many students it takes time to fully understand the core ideas and their application. But by the final most students will have mastered them and will be able to apply them to a wide range of cases. In at least one extra credit rich essay question on the final you can, if you wish, describe a significant experience from your own life, and then analyze it using relevant core ideas.

READINGS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THAT WEEK'S CLASS

Week 1: August 24th

Course goals and structure

Reader: pp. 1-5

Week 2: August 29th & August 31st

History and Scope of Psychology

Reader: pp. 6-30

Man's Search for Meaning, Part 1

Science and the Biological foundations of psychology

Reader: pp. 31-62

Week 3: September 5th & 7th

Science and the Biological foundations of psychology, continued

Reader: pp. 63-84

Learning

Reader: pp. 85-139

Week 4: September 12th & 14th

Learning, continued

The Nervous System

Reader: pp. 140-186

Week 5: September 19th & 21st

The Nervous System continued

Sensory processes: Overview

Reader: 187-195

Week 6: September 26th & 28th

Vision

Reader: 196-207

Week 7: October 3th & 6th

1st Midterm October 3th

Consciousness, Perception & Memory

Reader pp. 208-254

Week 8: October 10th & 12th

Consciousness, Perception, Memory continued

Memento

Reader: pp. 255-268;

Week 9: October 17th & 19th

Personality

Reader: (read in order) pp. 269-288; 262-268; 289-327

Week 10: October 24th & 26th

Mental Disorders

Reader: pp. 328-372

Week 11: October 31st, November 2nd

Treatment

Reader: pp. 373-409

Week 12: November 7th & 9th

Classical and cross-cultural views of Psychology

Reader: review pp. 323-325

Reader: pp. 410-438

Week 13: November 14th & 16th

Classical and cross-cultural views of Psychology continued

Social influences on behavior

Reader: pp. 441-460

Video: Prisoner's of Silence: **see by Nov. 16th**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzCGux7qD1c>

Week 14: November 21st

2nd Midterm

Week 15: November 28th & 30th

The Wholeness High: Aesthetics, athletics and "Peak" experiences

Reader: pp. 439-441

Week 16: December 5th & 7th

RRR week: Review, especially conscious & non-conscious cognition

TESTS & GRADING: The course grade is based on two midterms, 100 points each, and a 200 point final. The final grade will be calculated via a "modified curve." A modified curve treats the highest number of points actually earned by a student as if this were 100% of the total number of points possible in the course. For example, if the highest score in the class is 380, then all students scoring from 342 to 380 (90% to 100%) will fall into the A range; all students scoring from 304 to 341 will fall into the B range, and so on. There is, then, no arbitrary limit on how many students can receive a given final grade. In theory everyone could get an A.

All tests in this course have the same format: (a) multiple choice, (b) fill-ins, (c) short answers, and (d) an essay question. The proportion of points for each category will shift from test to test: (c) & (d) will account for increasingly more points on the second midterm and the final; you will always have the option of choosing from at least two possible questions for (c) and for (d).

Multiple-choice questions are based primarily on the text, and range from very easy to difficult; **the few difficult questions are to reward students who carefully read all the assignments.** Fill-in questions focus on terminology and important names. Short answer questions can be handled with a relatively few well thought out sentences. Essay questions will test your mastery of the more complex aspects of course material and your ability to integrate them. Short-answer and essay questions will always drawn from material discussed in lecture and/or section.