

Psychology 420
Contemporary and Historical Issues in Psychology
Fall 2014
Section B: Monday & Wednesday, 2:30 – 3:50 Maxey 302

Instructor: Melissa Clearfield

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Office hours: Monday 11-12, Thursday 2:30-4 or by appointment

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Course Goals and Overview

The overarching goal of this course is to foster your thinking about what the discipline of psychology really is. Now that you have spent 3 years taking classes in this department, it's time for you to step back and reflect on where the field has come and where it is going. We'll begin by thinking about the underlying belief system(s) of psychology, and then we'll question the implications for conducting psychology as a science. We'll trace psychology's colorful history, which will allow us to extract some key issues that transcend historical context. Following the history portion, we'll turn our attention to the present, and the host of thorny ethical issues and heated debates that lie at the heart of our field. This course is organized to help you consider psychology's past as you formulate your opinions on contemporary questions. In taking and defending our own personal opinions, we will uncover some of the assumptions we all make (consciously or not) about psychology and its purpose. The critical requirement is to continue to question and challenge your own opinions about psychological issues. Hopefully, you'll find deeper meaning in your own working assumptions about behavior. Another important goal of this course is to encourage you to find and develop your own voice as a psychologist (or at least an informed person who participates in psychology with a well developed knowledge base). This growth includes formulating and identifying your own opinions, thoughtfully handling intelligent counterarguments to them, and articulately expressing your views to others, in both written and oral modes.

Course Texts:

Benjamin, L.T. (2007). *A brief history of modern psychology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962/2012). *The structure of scientific revolutions, 4th edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional readings are available electronically on our course CLEO site.

Course Policies:

Academic dishonesty

All of the work that you submit in this course must be entirely your own. You may seek help in a variety of ways as you prepare your papers, including: consulting additional readings, searching for material on the internet, discussing your ideas with other students, exchanging notes with other students, or reading and discussing drafts of each other's papers. If you do use someone else's words or ideas in your written work, you *must* give proper acknowledgment.

Plagiarism will *not* be tolerated in any form. You have signed a statement indicating that you understand and will abide by the College policy on plagiarism. **Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment**, and will be reported to the Dean of Students, thus potentially facing more severe penalties from the College. (For more details, see the Student Handbook.)

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodation in this course, please meet with Juli Dunn, Director of Academic Resources (dunnjl@whitman.edu) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. We will work together to come up with an appropriate plan. All information about disabilities is private; if I receive notification from ARC that you are eligible for accommodation, I will provide accommodation as discreetly as possible.

Schedule of Topics and Readings: All readings should be completed before each class.

Wed, Sep. 3: Introductions, course overview and mechanics

Mon, Sept. 8: What is this field, Psychology?

- Benjamin, L.T. (2001). American Psychology's struggles with its curriculum. *American Psychologist*, 56(9), 735-742.
- Comments on Benjamin by Chao, LeShan, Griggs et al., Critelli & Keith, and response by Benjamin, *American Psychologist*, 57(6-7), 451-455.

Wed, Sept.10: What is psychology's epistemology?

- Gergen, K.J. (2001). Psychological science in a postmodern context. *American Psychologist*, 56(10), 803-813.
- Comments on Gergen by Haig, Teo & Febraro, Hoffman and Friedman, *American Psychologist*, 57(6-7), 457-462.

Mon, Sept. 15: Argument in Psychology

- Boring, E.G. (1929). The psychology of controversy (1928 APA Presidential Address). *The Psychological Review*, 36(2), 97-121.
- Lamott, A. (1995). Shitty first drafts; Perfectionism. In *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*, (pp. 21-32). New York: Anchor.

Wed, Sept. 17: Philosophy and the origins of psychology

- Benjamin (2007). Chapter 1.
- Goodwyn. C.J. (2005). *A History of Modern Psychology*, 2nd Edition. Ch. 2.

*****Friday, Sept. 19: Paper #1 due by 12pm*****

Mon, Sept. 22: Kuhn, Part 1: Process of Science: Normal Science

- Kuhn, T.S. (1967). *The structure of scientific revolutions*, chapters 1-4. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wed, Sept. 24: Physiology and the origins of psychology

- Benjamin (2007). Chapter 2

Mon, Sept. 29: Kuhn 2: Process of Science: Anomalies and crises

- Kuhn, T.S. (1967). *The structure of scientific revolutions*, chapters 5-8.

Wed, Oct. 1: Structuralism and the first Psychology Lab

- Benjamin (2007). Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 pp. 74-84

Mon, Oct. 6: Kuhn 3: Scientific Progress

- Kuhn, T.S. (1967). *The structure of scientific revolutions*, chapters 9-13.

Wed, Oct. 8: American Psychology and Functionalism

- Benjamin (2007). Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 pp. 84-92.

Mon, Oct. 13 No Class, mid-semester break

Wed, Oct. 15 Responses to Kuhn: Is Psychology a Science?

- Meynell, H. (1975). Science, the truth, and Thomas Kuhn. *Mind*, 84, 79-93. Available on-line at www.jstor.org
- Driver-Linn, E. (2003). Where is psychology going? Structural fault lines revealed by psychologists' use of Kuhn. *American Psychologist*, 58(4), 269-278.

5pm: Grad School Q&A with pizza (recommended for those considering graduate school in psychology), location TBA

Mon, Oct. 20: 20th Century Schools: Applied Psychology and Psychoanalysis

- Benjamin (2007). Chapters 6 and 7

Wed, Oct. 22: 20th Century Schools: Behaviorism and Cognitive Psychology

- Benjamin (2007). Chapters 8 and 11

5pm: Fechner Day, 3rd floor hall, attendance required unless you have an official excused absence

Mon, Oct. 27 Debate Planning (MC gone)

- Read all debate articles and use class time to work through argument worksheet from debate handbook

Wed, Oct. 29: Gender and Race in the history of Psychology

- Goodwyn, C.J. (2005). A History of Modern Psychology, 2nd Edition. pp. 167-172; 436-442.
- Kite, M.E., Russo, N.F., Brehm, S.S., Fouad, N.A., Hall, C.C.I., Hyde, J.S. & Keita, G.P. (2001). Women psychologists in academe: Mixed progress, unwarranted complacency. *American Psychologist*, 56(12), 1080-1098.

Friday, Oct. 31: Paper #2 due at 12pm

Mon, Nov. 3 Debate #1: How should Psychology handle controversial research?

- *Lilienfeld, S.O. (2002). When world collide: Social science, politics, and the Rind et al. (1998) Child Sexual Abuse Meta-Analysis. *American Psychologist* 57(3), 176-188.
- *Baird, B.N. (2002). Politics, operant conditioning, Galileo, and the American Psychological Association's response to Rind et al. (1998). *American Psychologist* 57(3), 189-194.
- McCarty, R. (2002). Science, politics, and peer review: An editor's dilemma. *American Psychologist* 57(3), 198-201.
- Newcombe, N.(2002). Five commandments for APA. *American Psychologist*, 57(3), 202-205.
- Delay, T. (2000). Fighting for children. *American Psychologist*, 55(9), 1054-1055.
- Fowler, R. (1999). An open letter to the Hon. Rep. DeLay (R-Tx). Available at <http://www.apa.org/releases/delay.html>.
- Sternberg, R.J. (2002). Everything you need to know to understand the current controversies you learned from psychological research. *American Psychologist*, 57(3), 193-197.

Wed, Nov. 5 Debate #2: How should psychologists be involved in social policy decisions?

- *Kakkad, D. (2005). A new ethical praxis: Psychologists' emerging responsibilities in issues of social justice. *Ethics and Behavior*, 15(4), 293-308.
- *Kitzinger, C., & Wilkinson, S. (2004). Social advocacy for equal marriage: The politics of "rights" and the psychology of "mental health". *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 4(1), 173-194.
- Frost, D. M., & Ouellette, S. C. (2004). Meaningful voices: How psychologists, speaking as psychologists, can inform social policy: Comment. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 4(1), 219-226. [comment on Kitzinger & Wilkinson]
- Borshuk, C., & Cherry, F. (2004). Keep the tool-box open for social justice: Comment on Kitzinger and Wilkinson. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 4(1), 195-202. [comment on Kitzinger & Wilkinson]
- Clark, C.R. (1993). Social Responsibility Ethics: Doing Right, Doing Good, Doing Well. *Ethics and Behavior*, vol. 3, no. 3-4, pp. 303-327.

Mon, Nov. 10 Debate #3: How can we make our science more reliable and reputable?

- *Nosek, B.A., Spies, J.R. & Motyl, M. (2012). Scientific Utopia: II. Restructuring Incentives and Practices to Promote Truth Over Publishability. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 615-631
- *Stroebe, W., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2012). Scientific Misconduct and the Myth of Self-Correction in Science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 670-688
- John, L. K., Loewenstein, G., & Prelec, D. (2012). Measuring the prevalence of questionable research practices with incentives for truth telling. *Psychological Science*, 23 (5), 524-532.
- Fiedler, K., Kutzner, F., & Krueger, J.I. (2012). The Long Way From α -Error Control to Validity Proper: Problems With a Short-

Sighted False-Positive Debate. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 661-669,

- Ferguson, C.J. & Heene, M. (2012). A Vast Graveyard of Undead Theories: Publication Bias and Psychological Science's Aversion to the Null. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 555-561
- Maner, J.K. (2014). Let's Put Our Money Where Our Mouth Is: If Authors Are to Change Their Ways, Reviewers (and Editors) Must Change With Them. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9, 343-351.

Wed, Nov. 12 Debate #4: Should adolescents be held responsible for their crimes?

- *Steinberg, L. & Scott, E.S. (2003). Less guilty by reason of adolescence: Developmental immaturity, diminished responsibility, and the juvenile death penalty. *American Psychologist*, 58(12), 1009-1018.
- *Micucci, L. (1998). Responsibility and the young person. *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*, 11, 277ff. Read only from 296 (or p.17 from print-out) to the end.
- Beckman, M. (2004). Crime, culpability and the adolescent brain. *Science*, 305, 596-599.
- Interdivisional Committee on Adolescent Abortion. (1987). Adolescent abortion: Psychological and legal issues. *American Psychologist*, 42(1), 73-78.
- Morse, S.J. (1997). Immaturity and responsibility. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 88(1), 15-67. Read only section 3, pp.48-61.

11am: Careers in Psychology with Gayle Townsend, Maxey 207 (optional)

Mon, Nov. 17 Debate #5: Should psychologists prescribe psychotropic medication?

- *Hayes, S.C. & Heiby, E. (1996). Psychology's drug problem. *American Psychologist*, 51(3), 198-206.
- *DeLeon, P.H. & Wiggins, J.G. (1996). Prescription privileges for psychologists. *American Psychologist*, 51(3), 225-229.
- *McGrath, R.E., Wiggins, J.G., Sammons, M.T., Levant, R.F., Brown, A. & Stock, W. (2004). Professional issues in pharmacotherapy for psychologists. *Professional Psychology: Research and practice*, 35(2), 158-163.
- Fox, R.E., DeLeon, P.H., Newman, R., Sammons, M.T., Dunivin, D.L. & Baker, D.C. (2009). Prescriptive authority and psychology: A status report. *American Psychologist*, 64, 257-268.
- Mantell, E.O., Ortiz, S.O., & Planthara, P.M. (2004). What price prescribing? A commentary on the effect of prescription authority on psychological practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and practice*, 35(2), 164-169.
- Wiggins, J.G. & Wedding, D. (2004). Prescribing, professional identity and costs. *Professional Psychology: Research and practice*, 35(2), 148-150.
- APA Association (2011). Practice Guidelines regarding psychologists' involvement in pharmacological issues. *American Psychologist*, 66, 835-849.

Wed, Nov. 19 Debate #6: Can/Should psychology be unified?

- *Sternberg, R.I. & Grigorenko, E.L. (2001). Unified psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(12), 1069-1079.
- Kendler et al. (2002). Comments. *American Psychologist*, (56)12, 2002, 1125-1130.
- Bower, G.H.(1993).The fragmentation of psychology. *American Psychologist*, 48(8), 905-907.
- Koch, S. (1993). "Psychology" or "The Psychological Studies"? *American Psychologist*, 48(8), 902-904.

11am: MFT prep, general guidelines, Maxey 207 (optional)

*****Friday, Nov. 21: Paper #3 due by 12pm*****

Thanksgiving Break

Mon, Dec. 1: Spiritualism and ESP in modern Psychology?

- Coon, D.J. (1992). Testing the limits of sense and science: American experimental psychologists combat spiritualism, 1880-1920. *American Psychologist*, 47(2), 143-151.
- Bem, D. (2011). Feeling the future: Experimental evidence for anomalous retroactive influences on cognition and affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(3), pp. 407-425.

Wed, Dec. 3: The Future of Psychology: Science-Practitioner Divide

- Rice, C.E. (1997). The Scientist-Practitioner Split and the future of psychology. *American Psychologist*, 52 (11), 1173-1181.

11am: MFT prep, quiz game, Maxey 207 (optional)

Mon Dec. 8: Preparing your final portfolio

Wed Dec. 10: Present Finals, Course Evaluation

- *You must be in class on this last day

5pm: Holiday party and sing-a-long, location TBA

Course Activities and Assignments

1. Course reading

This course uses tough reading and lots of it. I know you can handle the material, but be prepared to invest some extra time and effort. Like most articles written for professionals, the material is quite rich and will likely take extra time and multiple readings to fully digest. Therefore I recommend reading the material well (several days) in advance. Take some notes and then spend some time *genuinely* thinking about and digesting the contents. Some of the pieces may require a second reading — be sure to leave time for this.

Readings should be completed on the date listed. For the debates, if you are not leading that debate, read only the papers marked by the *. If you are leading the debate or writing a paper on it, read all of the articles (and you may need to do additional research too).

2. Class participation (20%)

If there is a single element that is critical to the success of this class, it is active class participation. It is crucial that you attend class and arrive prepared to intelligently discuss the day's topic and readings. In this course, your classmates will also be depending on you to create an interesting, interactive environment (and you will be depending on them for the same). If you have been inclined to sit back and let others do the talking, you'll need to break out of your pattern and contribute your energy and ideas to get the most out of Psych 420.

Your grade will depend in large part on both the regularity and the helpfulness of your comments. Please note that quality is much more important than quantity! Expectations and grading policy for participation are at the back of this packet.

3. 3 Position papers (45% total)

Developing and defending your own views, and communicating them effectively and diplomatically are critical components of the class. Most classes ask you to comprehend, digest and report on others' arguments (i.e. experts, academicians, writers). In this class, I want you to develop your OWN opinions. To do so effectively, you need to use other psychologists' views to support, contextualize and buttress your arguments.

There are no "correct" answers to these questions, but there are positions that are more effectively argued than others. Grades on papers are not based on how closely your opinions fit mine, but on the criteria specified on the feedback sheets. Our opinions on all paper topics are mixed—I wouldn't set them up as issues if I didn't think there were excellent arguments on both sides. I am most impressed by papers that effectively handle counter-arguments, no matter what your position.

More details on the assignments (including rewriting), expectations and grading policy are in the Course Writing Manual.

Extension policy for papers: Anyone can get an extension with the following stipulations:

- All requests for extensions must be made at least 24 hours before the paper is due.
- You do *not* need to tell me why you want an extension.
- You must specify the new due date and time (subject to my approval).
- You may only receive 1 extension per paper (i.e. no extensions of extensions).

Late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments must be handed by the specified time (4pm without an extension). If you do not turn in your paper by the due date (original or extended), you will fail the paper (and hence the class).

**** Exceptions to these policies will be made only if you have had a real catastrophe.** (I hope not!) In that case, you should first talk to the Dean of Students.

Writing Assistant: Our class is lucky enough to have Kristi Von Handorf as a Writing Assistant. Kristi was an exceptional psychology major who excelled in this course last year before graduating with honors. She is here to help you by reading drafts and discussing ideas for papers and rewrites. She will hold office hours in the weeks before papers are due (days and times TBD). If you would like

feedback on a draft, you must e-mail her the draft at least 24 hours in advance. If you would like to discuss ideas or an outline, you can drop in to her office hours or e-mail her to schedule an appointment (kristi.vonhandorf@gmail.com).

4. Debates (15%)

The meat of the “contemporary” aspect of the course will be guided, appropriately enough, by the promising young psychologists of tomorrow (that’s you). Aside from strengthening your planning, discussion and presentation skills, our class debates will provide an experiential way for you to articulate your thinking. In teams of 3 or 4 people, you will present one of the major contemporary questions that psychologists are discussing. You’ll need to meet with your debate team several times, both in and out of class, to plan a valuable and effective presentation. I encourage you to use creative ways to get your points across (skits, jokes, demonstrations, videos, etc), but be sure to plan your session so that each of you has at least 10 minutes of talking time, and that you present substantive ideas or arguments backed up by course reading. Also be sure to leave a chunk of time for general discussion of the questions and ideas raised.

These presentations should be carefully rehearsed and researched, but also conducted with a minimum of notes. You should speak your ideas, rather than read them. Rebuttals should be focused on answering actual points made by the other team. Use your creativity and humor in your presentations, but make sure you also make serious points that you find intelligent, even if you don't personally support them. More details will be provided in the Debate Handbook.

5. Take-home final (20%)

The take-home final is designed to help you synthesize some of the most important ideas that *you* took from the course. Note that the word “you” is the operative one; each person will probably come away with a different set of striking or influential ideas and questions. This final will involve creating a course portfolio. To complete it successfully, save all worksheets, handouts, notes and papers throughout the course. Make sure you are in class on the last day (December 7) to present your final and do the course evaluation.

There will be *absolutely* no extensions on the final paper. Exceptions must go through the Dean of Students Office.

Class Participation: Standards & Expectations

An **OUTSTANDING** (A-level) participant typically:

- Displays genuine enthusiasm and engagement with the readings.
- Advances the conversation to new levels.
- Contributes complex insights into the texts and issues.
- Draws connections among different texts and issues.
- Takes intellectual risks.
- Enhances the participation of others by questioning, actively listening, and sharing time.

A **GOOD** (B-level) participant typically:

- Shows genuine effort.
- Actively listens and volunteers.
- Asks good questions about the texts and issues.
- Stays on-topic and furthers the conversation.
- Makes significant observations, comments, or other points.
- Engages other students, not just the professors.

An **ADEQUATE** (C-level) participant typically:

- Listens but does not volunteer.
- Shows acquaintance with the texts and signs of preparation if called on.
- Offers opinions on the texts, but without support.

UNACCEPTABLE (failing) behavior includes:

- Frequent absence.
- Signs of total disengagement at our meetings: sleeping, writing letters, reading, etc.
- No evidence of preparation.
- “Toxic” or hostile behavior that undermines our collective learning.