

Psychology 420:
Contemporary and Historical Issues in Psychology
Fall, 2009

Section A: Monday & Wednesday, 1:00 – 2:20 Maxey 302

Section B: Monday & Wednesday, 2:30–3:50 Maxey 302

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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 attempt to answer that question by tracing psychology's colorful history, which will also 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. You may even change some previously unquestioned ideas.

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:

Wertheimer, M. (2004). *A brief history of psychology* (4th ed.). Thomson-Wadsworth.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962/1994). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional readings are available electronically on CLEO.

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

Wed, Sep. 2: Introductions, course overview and mechanics

Mon, Sept. 7: 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. 9: 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. 14: 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. 16: Philosophy and the origins of psychology

- Wertheimer (2004). Chapters 2 and 4

*****Friday, Sept. 18: Paper #1 due in Division Office by 4pm*****

Mon, Sept. 21: 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. 23: Physiology and the origins of psychology

- Wertheimer, M. (2004). Chapter 3
- Goodwyn, C.J. (2005). *A History of Modern Psychology*, 2nd Edition. Chapter 3, pp.55-82.

Mon, Sept. 28: Kuhn 2: Process of Science: Anomalies and crises

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

Wed, Sept. 30: Structuralism and the first Psychology Lab

- Wertheimer, M. (2004). Chapters 5-7, and Ch. 10 pp.103-106

Mon, Oct. 5: Kuhn 3: Scientific Progress

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

Wed, Oct. 7: American Psychology and Functionalism

- Wertheimer, M. (2004). Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 pp.106-112

Mon, Oct. 12 No Class, mid-semester break Have a wonderful time!

Wed, Oct. 14 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.

Mon, Oct. 19: 20th Century Schools: Behaviorism, Psychoanalysis and Gestalt

- Wertheimer, M. (2004). Chapters 11-13

Wed, Oct. 21: 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.

Mon, Oct. 26 Post-Schools Era

- Wertheimer, M. (2004). Chapters 14 and 15

Wed, Oct. 28: Debate Planning (MC at conference)

- Come to class having read all of the material for your debate.
- Use the class time to work through argument worksheet from debate handbook

*****Friday, Oct. 30: Paper #2 due in Division Office by 4pm*****

Mon, Nov. 2 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. 4 Debate #2: Psychologists prescribing 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.
- 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.

Mon, Nov. 9 Debate #3: Are adolescents 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.

Wed, Nov. 7 Debate #11: The legacy of Abu Ghraib: Person v. situation

- *Zimbardo, P.G. (2004). A situationist perspective on the psychology of evil: Understanding how good people are transformed into perpetrators. In Miller, A.G. (Ed). *The social psychology of good and evil*. (pp. 21-50). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.
- *Shoda, Y. & LeeTiernan, S. (2002). What remains invariant?: Finding order within a person's thoughts, feelings and behaviors across situations. In Cervone D. & Mischel, W. (Eds). *Advances in Personality Science*. (pp. 241-270). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kunzendorf, R.G., Acevedo, J., Barrasso, D., Leger, S., Lima, D., Lynn, C., & Williams, S. (2005). The fine line between fantasizing torture and countenancing Abu Ghraib. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 24(4), 301-314.
- Carnahan, T. & McFarland, S. (2007). Revisiting the Stanford prison experiment: Could participant self-selection have led to the cruelty? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(5), 603-614.

- Haslam, S.A. & Reicher, S. (2007). Beyond the banality of evil: Three dynamics of an interactionist social psychology of tyranny. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(5), 615-622.
- <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/getArticle.cfm?id=2171>
- <http://www.lucifereffect.com/apsrejoinder.htm>

Mon, Nov. 16 Debate #5 Psychologists and Social Policy – How should psychologists be involved in social policy decisions such as poverty, marriage rights, etc?

- *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.

Wed, Nov. 18 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.

*****Friday, Nov. 20: Paper #3 due in Division Office by 4pm*****

Thanksgiving Break: Have a wonderful week!

Mon, Nov 30: Is there a place for Spiritualism 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.
- Arden, J.B. (1998). *Science, Theology and Consciousness*. Praeger: Westport. Chapter 1.

Wed, Dec. 2: 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.

Mon Dec. 7: Preparing your final portfolio

Wed Dec. 9: Present Finals, Course Evaluation

- *you must be in class on this last day

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 which 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:

- a) All requests for extensions must be made at least 24 hours before the paper is due.
- b) You must *not* tell me why you want an extension.
- c) You must specify the new due date and time.
- d) 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.

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.

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 9) 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.