

Personality Theory

Last Updated: Mon, 12/29/2025

Course prefix: PSYC

Course number: 2240

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
33444

Instructor First Name: Christopher

Instructor Last Name: Stanzione

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This is a course on the psychology of personality. It covers the major theoretical approaches to the study of human personality and encourages an evaluation of these approaches in the light of relevant empirical research. It is an upper-division course for which a course in introductory psychology is a prerequisite, and a course in psychological statistics is useful but not required. For maximum efficiency, you'll need to do two things 1) BE ACTIVE AND ENGAGED. Some of the information discussed in lectures will be reinforced by the outside readings, but the *majority* will not. You'll need to participate daily to grasp an understanding of this growing field of psychology. 2) ATTEND LECTURE. The material is dense and you will be expected to know it. You will need to develop a command of the topics, not just a general understanding. This course is going to challenge you to think critically; to integrate what you are learning about personality psychology and the rigor of experimental psychology. We will be talking about real human dilemmas.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Evaluate empirical personality research** by identifying research questions, methods, findings, and limitations in peer-reviewed studies.
2. **Analyze personality from multiple theoretical perspectives**, including trait, situational, biological, developmental, and social-cognitive approaches.
3. **Apply personality research to real-world contexts** (e.g., work, health, relationships, culture) while recognizing ethical boundaries and risks of misuse.
4. **Integrate evidence across studies** to form qualified, evidence-based claims about personality, rather than relying on intuition or single studies.

5. **Revise and refine interpretations of personality** as new evidence is introduced, demonstrating intellectual flexibility and scientific reasoning.
6. **Communicate psychological analysis clearly and professionally** in both written (portfolio entries, worksheets) and oral (analytical presentations) formats.
7. **Collaborate effectively in small groups** to discuss, evaluate, and present scientific evidence.

Required course materials:

There is not a required textbook for this course (reference text posted to Canvas), however you are required to read several empirical articles in addition to other assigned readings.

Grading policy:

Grading

| Assessment | How Many? | Points | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Content Quizzes | 5 | 15 pts each | 75 |
| Analytical Presentation | 2 | 15 pts each | 30 |
| Group Article Analysis | 5 | 12 pts each | 60 |
| Character Analysis | 1 | 30 pts | 30 |
| Exams | 3 | 75 pts each | 225 |
| TOTAL | | | 420 |

Course Points Letter Grade

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 420 - 378 | A |
| 377 - 336 | B |
| 335 - 294 | C *needed for P/F |
| 293 - 252 | D |
| < 251 | F |

Attendance policy:

Institute approved absences: This absence is usually for a GT event (conference, sports event, etc). You must submit this form at least 5 days prior to the absence and get me the approval ASAP: <https://registrar.gatech.edu/info/institute-approved-absence-form-for-students>

Personal emergencies: Students may need to miss classes due to personal emergencies such as being hospitalized or being in a car accident. The Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students can assist students with documented emergencies by contacting professors on behalf of the student. For more information, please call the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students or complete this form:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout_id=3

Religious holidays: Please contact the Instructor ASAP to reschedule missed work.

Illness: If you are sick, you are responsible to get class notes from a student in class. Because all group article analyses are done in-person, there is no way for you to makeup this collaboration later. Luckily, one of these activities is dropped from your grade without penalty (i.e. there are a total of 6 group submissions, with only 5 required to calculate your final grade).

Evidence of your requested approval letters from either the Registrar or the Deans Office must be in my inbox on the same day or earlier of the assignment/class due date. Once the approval is granted, missed work must be made up within 5 business days of the date on the approved documentation. Otherwise, there is no late work accepted for any unverified reason.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion