

EXPLORING HUMAN BEHAVIOR
Course Syllabus
Summer 2009

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I. Introduction

The general aim of this course is to help you to better understand why human beings act as they do. In psychology, this question is addressed through the concept of "motivation." We will examine four types of motivational influence in this course -- the influences of other people, the physical environment, individual personality, and neuro-psychological factors. In each case, we will consider some typical examples of human behavior or human experience and seek to understand their causal roots.

II. Course Goals

The goals of this course are as follows:

- 1) To introduce you to the range of topics found in the discipline of psychology
- 2) To introduce you to the methods which psychologists use to study the subjects of interest to them
- 3) To help you to become more sophisticated consumers of the "popular psychology" found in contemporary news media in our society
- 4) To foster greater self-understanding of how you function psychologically
- 5) To enhance your ability to deal with other people by enabling you to better appreciate the psychological influences upon their behavior
- 6) To provide you with a clearer understanding of the scientific method in general
- 7) To further develop various academic skills -- learning through a text, lectures, and discussions; library search strategies; empirical research practices

III. Course Format

This course will entail a series of reading assignments, lectures, group discussions, films, written reports, and a final examination. The texts for this course will be Psychology: A Connecttext by Terry F. Pettijohn 4th edition (published in 1998 by the Dushkin Publishing Company) and Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Psychological Issues, 15th edited by Brent Slife (published in 2008 by Dushkin). Each weekday, for the next two weeks, you will spend several hours in classroom activity and have reading assignments in the Pettijohn and Slife texts. Our classroom will be LBC 315.

Typically, we will have a lecture/discussion from 8:30 to 9:50 A.M. each day. After a brief break, we will spend from 10:00 to 10:50 A.M. engaged in some other form of learning activity (e.g. films, group research, library instruction, demonstrations). The time from 11:00 to 11:45 A.M. will be devoted to discussion of the course material. During most afternoons, you will be free to read the texts, work on your library project or to do other course work.

For each reading assignment, you will complete a response sheet, including several questions about the information and ideas contained in the reading for that day. Additionally, each of you will undertake two brief written assignments -- in one case examining the psychological literature and in the other case, writing a position paper, using psychological sources to state your position on one of the issues raised in the Slife text. You will also have a final examination, held on the morning of July 3rd.

The grade for this course will be based upon the following items:

Class attendance	10%
Class participation	10%
Daily response sheets	16%
Final examination	34%
Library assignments	15%
Position paper	15%

IV. Class Schedule

- June 22 – LECTURE: "The Psychological Approach to Problems"
READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 1 [pp. 1-26]
EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Demonstration of psychological questions and methods
DISCUSSION: The value of psychology
AFTERNOON: 1:00 p.m. -- Complete personality tests
2:00 p.m. Video: "Interviews with My Lai Veterans" [#975]
- June 23 – LECTURE: "Motives: Causes vs. Reasons"
EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Introduction to Library Project
Library training [Lilly Library Reference Area]
READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 15 [pp. 377-408]
Slife - Issue 3 [pp. 45-61]
DISCUSSION: The ethics of psychological research
AFTERNOON: Work on Library Project in Lilly Library
- June 24 - LECTURE: "Persons in Social Context: The Concept of Mindfulness"
READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 9 [pp. 214-240]
Slife - Issue 14 [pp. 261-278]
EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Video: "Interviews with My Lai Veterans" [#975]
DISCUSSION: Does personality cause anti-social behavior?
AFTERNOON: Work on Library Project in Lilly Library

- June 25 -- LECTURE: "Learning: Behaviorism vs. Cognitive Psychology"
 READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 6 [pp. 129-155]
 Slife - Issue 17 [pp. 348-367]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Video: "Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment" [#2106]
 DISCUSSION: Should media violence be regulated or restricted?
- June 26 -- LECTURE: "Human Development"
 READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 3 [pp. 50-76]
 Slife - Issue 8 [pp. 146-163]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Advice for parents
 DISCUSSION: Is divorce bad for children?
LIBRARY PROJECT DUE AT 4:00 P.M. [Turn it in to LBC 302]
- June 29 -- LECTURE: "The Psychology Personal Traits"
 READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 11 [pp. 270-297]
 Slife - Issue 11 [pp. 207-226]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Assessing personal traits
 DISCUSSION: Are there multiple intelligences? Who decides?
- June 30 -- LECTURE: "Structure/Function of the Nervous System"
 READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 2 [pp. 27-49]
 Slife -- Issue 4 [pp. 64-83]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: FILM: "The Hidden Universe: The Brain" [#1125]
 DISCUSSION: Is human violence natural?
- June 30 -- LECTURE (P.M.): "The Brain and Behavior"
- July 1 -- LECTURE: "The Problem of Mental Disorders"
 READING: Pettijohn - Ch. 13 [pp. 326-352]
 Slife - Issue 16 [pp. 311-345]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Normality/Abnormality
 DISCUSSION: Is it ethical and effective to treat homosexuality?
POSITION PAPER DUE AT 4:00 p.m. [Turn it in to LBC 302]
- July 2 -- LECTURE (A.M.): "Psychology and Human Distinctiveness"
 READING: Slife -- Issue 10 [pp. 184-206]
 EXPERIENTIAL MODULE: Demonstrating our human distinctiveness
 DISCUSSION: Is human behavior determined or do we have free will?
- July 3 -- **FINAL EXAM (9:30 a.m.)**
 DISCUSSION: Reflecting on this course -- where to from here?