Fall (2005) Syllabus

Foundations of Psychology

The Foundations of Psychology is designed to introduce the psychology major to the many areas that make up the study of Psychology. As this is only a one semester course, certain areas of psychology have been selected as representative of the major theoretical and conceptual viewpoints in Psychology. As you proceed as a Psychology major, you will take entire courses that deal with the information that occurs in only one chapter in this course. While the content of each chapter changes there are conceptual links that occur usually based on methods of study used or on physiological correlates of behavior. Thus, you will be developing your vocabulary (lexicon) as a psychologist. Some of these areas are going to more or less interesting to you as we go along (although, I will attempt to make everything interesting). If you like the biological sciences, you will be interested in the chapters dealing with the brain, motivation and stress. If your interests lie more on animal behavior, the chapters on motivation and conditioning will be more to your liking. If you are interested in personality differences, normal and abnormal behavior, then the chapters dealing with these topics will be to your liking. The chapters on perception and memory focus on normal cognitive abilities of humans while the chapter on psychopathology focus on abnormal behavior including perception and cognition. States of consciousness, both natural and induced, are interesting to those who want to know more about sleep, dreams, meditation, and drug effects and use. Health psychology is a burgeoning area of research with all of the interest in stress and how it affects behavior. In Psychology, there are areas of interest for everyone who is interested in how and why we behave as we do.

Dr. Angela Bartoli
Franklin Science Center 123
Office Phone: 477-1107
Home Phone: 245-2513

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:50-11:30; 2-3; Wednesday 3:30-4:30; Thursday 10:50-11:30;2-3 and by appointment

My philosophy of teaching is that students need to learn to learn. This may sound strange, after all haven’t we been in school a really long time? Don’t we already know how to learn? The answer to this question is yes, we do know how to learn in some ways but college should require greater depth and breadth of thinking than that required in high school. So, you will learn how to study for knowledge rather than memorization and learn to think and write in an integrative and critical manner. To this end, I try to attach learning to your knowledge base through examples and through your discovery. Your discovery comes about through reading, listening, communication and collaboration with other students, and studying relationships among phenomena. We will do tests and demonstrations (experiments), watch videos, solve problems and have discussions throughout the course. I would like you to see the common threads running throughout
psychology and psychological theories. A learner who is active not only will learn more but will remember more and will be able to use the information learned.

This course will be conducted using a problem based learning (PBL) approach. The PBL approach allows for student collaboration in an active learning environment. PBL requires students to activate prior knowledge and elaborate on that knowledge in small group discussions. This knowledge and knowledge gained through focused reading is then integrated around relevant problems and information. Students will be assigned to a group which will be their group for the entire semester. In this group, students will be given problems to solve. A certain portion of our classes will be designated to the PBL groups. Sometimes the groups will follow the problem set up as an experiment in class.

**Problem Based Learning Instructions**

Problem based learning (PBL) is an instructional method whereby students collaborate with each other in activating prior knowledge, constructing new knowledge, and in developing a plan for further study.

When a problem is distributed, discussion groups will work on the problem in class (steps 1-5) and outside of class (6-7) using the "7 JUMP" approach as follows:

1. Clarify unknown terms and concepts in the problem description.

2. Define the problem; that is: List the phenomena to be explained.

3. Analyze the problem; "brainstorm"; try to produce as many different explanations for the phenomena as you can think of. Use prior knowledge and common sense.

4. Criticize the explanations proposed and try to produce a coherent description of the processes that, according to what you think, underlie the phenomena.


6. Fill the gaps in your knowledge through self-study

7. Share your finding with your group and try to integrate the knowledge acquired into a report (at least 5 pages).

While specific problems are presented, the student groups are to first go from the specific to create a more general, more encompassing problem statement. In this way, you are expected to look broadly for information (concepts, theories, and research) that applies to the question and its answer.

The report will be typed and will contain references (done in APA style).

Problem discussion groups will be determined randomly and will consist of approximately 5 members. For each problem, a group "leader" will be appointed by the group. The leader will make sure that everyone has a chance to talk and keeps the group 'on task'. A "scribe" will also be designated by the group. The scribe's job is to write down everything that everyone in the group says. Every group member will play both of these roles many times throughout the semester. My job as "tutor" will be to clarify issues and to keep the groups on task. If lecture is
needed to clarify some theories or concepts, it will be given.

The written report is a group project. The well-conducted group will work on the research outside of class and will meet to write the report a couple of days prior to its being due. This allows the group time to edit the paper and to see me for feedback, if necessary. This is an opportunity to have greater control over your learning and the evaluation of that learning! Groups will work outside of class on Blackboard on their group page. Through this I can monitor and respond to group work as it progresses. This method also affords me the opportunity to view the relative contributions of each group member.

Group members will evaluate the relative contributions of each group member to each project. These evaluations will be anonymous and will require a grade and an explanation of the grade. Thus, you will grade yourself and each other member of the group for each problem. (For example, if the group earns a 90 on the paper and member A earns all A’s from her group peers, she will receive a 90. However, if member B receives Ds from his group peers, he will receive a D for the paper).

PBL provides you with the opportunity to learn from other students, to take responsibility for your own learning, to read and learn with purpose in mind, and to contribute to the course content through your research. While at first confused by what seems to be a lack of structure, students who actually collaborate with each other and do the work, report that PBL is more fun than traditional "lecture" courses and they also report that they remember and read more information.

Objectives and outcomes:

1. To understand and apply psychological concepts
   a. learning concepts and theories
   b. applying concepts and theories to explain behavior

2. To analyze theories and concepts
   a. to recognize how certain concepts and theories recur and thread throughout the course content
   b. to determine which theory or theories best explain a behavior and why

3. To predict expected behaviors on the basis of theories or concepts
   a. to combine and integrate information in order to draw examples and inferences

4. To think and write effectively on psychological topics
   a. to write in APA style
   b. to write using the information from the book, the notes, and outside sources to explain and analyze psychological phenomena

5. To gain an understanding of different cultural perspectives and interpretations of behavior
   a. taking another cultural or ethnic perspective to explain a behavior (e.g. African-American, Asian, etc.)

NOTES

Class notes may be accessed on-line at www.ship.edu/~ambart/. Students must bring these notes to class. Do not go to one of the computer centers on campus and attempt to print all of the outlines at once – the computer people will yell at you and at me – so
please, just print a couple at a time. Also, I tend to change the notes as the semester proceeds, so getting too far ahead may not be useful.

**ATTENDANCE OBLIGATION**

Due to the PBL structure of the class, students are encouraged to attend all classes. **Two absences will be allowed**. Any absence after two will result in a 5 point grade reduction on a test.

**ASSESSMENT:**

**Quizzes:**

Once a week or so, the class will be followed up with a **short multiple choice quiz** on the topic being covered. The purposes of this quiz are:

1. to acquaint the student with the type of question asked on the regular exam,
2. to provide you with information concerning your understanding of the material,
3. and to train you to think in a more integrative fashion.

The points earned on these quizzes will be added to your test raw scores.

**Tests:**

**3 tests** will be administered throughout the semester. Each test will cover the material studied since the last test. Tests will be primarily multiple choice with an additional short answer essay question (a question requiring thought and application of the concepts studied). Students are required to be in attendance for all tests unless the professor grants permission to miss. Makeup exams for missed tests will be all essay questions. **If a test is missed without the professor's permission, the student will receive a zero for that test.** Tests will be announced at least one-week prior to the day of administration. I do not put test dates on the syllabus as I cannot predict how much time we will spend on some topics.

Test scores will be standardized through the T-score method where

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<tr>
<th>T score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>55-</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>45-</td>
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<td>35-</td>
<td>D</td>
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The T-score is a curved score. The tests tend to be difficult as I am trying to teach you to think in a particular way. What the curve does is to ease the difficulty. When I return your test, I will have the percentage (raw score) and the T score, you will see the advantage of using a curved score.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**
Take the **Discovery Program** at the Career Development Center in the CUB

**Psychology Orientation Workshops for Freshmen.** (details and dates for these workshops will be forthcoming)

**Experiment Credits** - All students are required to participate in experiments occurring in the psychology department. Each student must accumulate (5) five experiment credits. Students will receive notification of experiments as they occur throughout the semester. The wise student does not wait until the end of the semester to meet this requirement.

**HELP SESSIONS**

Prior to each test, help sessions will be held. The purpose behind these sessions is to allow the student the opportunity to ask questions and to ask for further clarification of the information that is to be covered on the test. It also affords that professor and the students the opportunity to get better acquainted. Attendance is voluntary but recommended. Of course, students may also see the professor during designated office hours or by appointment. Please do not wait until you are in trouble to see me.

**TEXTS**

Sdorow, Lester and Rickabaugh, Cheryl (2002) *PSYCHOLOGY*, 5th edition and

Mastering APA Style *(DO NOT SELL THIS BOOK IF YOU INTEND ON BEING A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR)*

**Course Sequence:**

- **Chapter 1** - The Nature of Psychology
- **Chapter 2** - Psychology as a Science, pp. 30-52
- **Chapter 3** - Behavioral Neuroscience
- **Chapter 6** - Consciousness
- **Chapter 7 and 8** - Learning and Memory
- **Chapter 11 and 12** - Motivation and Emotion
- **Chapter 16** - Psychology and Health
Chapter 13 - Personality

Chapter 14 and 15 - Psychological Disorders and Therapy

Chapter 5 - Sensation and Perception

Learning Disabilities: It is the student's responsibility to indicate to me any disability that may need accommodation. I will be more than happy to comply. As for untimed tests, I usually allow students to take as much time as needed for the tests.

Academic honesty: Read the “Swataney“ for a thorough review of this policy. Plagiarized work will not be accepted and will receive a zero.