

**Columbia University**  
**PSYC 4630 GU: Advanced Seminar in Personality Theory and Research**  
**Spring 2024**

**Time: Mondays, 10:10 am-12:00 pm**  
**Room 405**

**Instructor: Svetlana Komissarouk**

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Office hours: online by appointment

**Prerequisites**

Open to psychology graduate students and advanced undergraduate psychology majors with the instructor's permission.

**Course Description**

This seminar invites you to engage in critical and creative thinking by pursuing classic and modern views on personality. We will read the classic papers of the most prominent personality theoreticians and analyze the basic and enduring issues in personality theory and assessment: how people are different from one another, how people think (consciously and unconsciously), what people want (consciously and unconsciously) and what and why people do. Discussions and readings will cover diverse theoretical principles and methodological approaches to personality. Students will write a literature review based on the theories presented during the seminar.

**Course Rationale and Overview**

This seminar invites you to engage in critical and creative thinking by pursuing both classic and modern views on personality. During the course, we will review the main theories in the Psychology of Personality and develop new ideas for research in this rapidly growing field. In addition to providing a solid knowledge base and relevant scientific research literacy, you will cultivate your oral (e.g., leading discussions) and written (e.g., writing a paper) communication skills in this course.

The first half of the term class sessions will center on discussions of assigned readings. We will allow each student to lead the class as the discussant. There is no substitute for reading original work in a field to appreciate its content and style. As much as I tried to represent essential areas of personality in the reading list, no topic was truly covered in depth. I hope that students who become seriously interested will engage in further reading. Detailed recommendations about reading scientific articles are posted on Courseworks. You will be quizzed about the main article at the beginning of each class period. ***Missed quizzes cannot be made up.***

The second part of the term will be dedicated to creating an individual project - *a literature review of contemporary research findings through the lens of classic theories* - through communication both in class and during personal meetings with me. The final product of this

process will be a written paper that connects theoretical constructs from personality literature into a comprehensive research review. The paper should be no more than 5-7 pages long, and detailed requirements will be discussed in class and posted on Courseworks.

To plan and develop this project, you will meet with me individually at least twice throughout the term (more as deemed necessary). As part of the assignment, you will complete a PowerPoint presentation of your analyses of the chosen contemporary research findings through the lens of classical theories during the class meeting. This will allow us to brainstorm together and provide you with constructive group feedback. The final paper will be due on the **29<sup>th</sup> of April 2024**.

### **Course Goals**

By the end of this course, you will have:

- Learned fundamental principles and theories in personality; identity, describe and apply the major theories, including Traits, Psychoanalytic, Neo psychoanalytic, Evolution, Lifespan, Humanistic, Cognitive, and Social Learning approaches.
- Improved your creative thinking by synthesizing and applying psychological material, including classic theories and current research findings, to your new ideas.
- Cultivated your personal presentation style as a discussion leader by developing your skills to raise interesting questions to engage the audience.
- Learned to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and arguments about personality.
- Cultivated your writing of scientific papers by writing a paper that clearly communicates theories, hypotheses, and research findings.

### **PSYC GU4630 will fulfill the following degree requirements:**

- For the Psychology major or concentration in the College and in G.S. and for the Psychology Postbac certificate, it will meet the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement.
- For Psychology Postbac certificate students, and for Psychology majors who enter Columbia in Fall 2013 or later, it will fulfill the seminar requirement.
- For G.S. students it will meet one term of the social science requirement, provided that students obtain the necessary permissions and have taken the prerequisite psychology courses. Majors will have priority over students who are taking the course for social science credit.

### **Course Grading and Requirements**

<b>20%</b>		Class participation
<b>15%</b>		Quizzes

15%	Leading discussion
50%	Individual project (10% presentation, 40% final paper)
5%	Bonus for the productive brainstorming during the second part of the term.

### *Class Participation*

This is an upper-level, discussion-based seminar. Therefore, your active participation in these discussions will contribute 20% to your final grade- to ensure that everyone is accountable for thoroughly engaging with the material during class discussions.

Generally speaking, adequate class preparation and participation could include:

- Asking insightful or clarifying questions.
- Connecting the reading to other reading you've done in this or other courses, drawing parallels and/or contrasts among findings.
- Actively listening to fellow classmates and responding to their ideas.
- Offering thoughtful critiques of the research methodology and providing suggestions for improving it.
- Bringing in outside sources—potentially from the news media, your own experience, or other sources—that shed light on these research questions

As attendance and participation are essential not just to your own experience but to that of the rest of the class, inadequate preparation and/or unexcused absences (see Course Policies) will lead to losing Class participation points in the Course Grading - one point for each unexcused absence. As the primary focus of each class meeting is discussion, I encourage you to come to me with any concerns beforehand.

While assigned discussion leaders are expected to lead the class, they are certainly not the only ones responsible for a productive class session. Effective participation involves helping your peers by giving required materials a thorough and thoughtful read while preparing to engage in various discussion points.

### *Weekly Quizzes*

Each quiz will comprise several multiple-choice and/or short-answer questions and will occur on the day on which the article is assigned to be discussed in class. At the end of the semester, I will allow you to drop your lowest quiz score. ***Missed quizzes cannot be made up.***

### *Leading Discussions*

You are responsible for leading the class discussion once during the course. Your role as discussion leader is to initiate and sustain a healthy class discussion on this material. We will talk more about what that means in class, and I will help lead the first discussion to help you get the idea. Leaders must also meet with me at least two days before their class to go over a discussion map. Additionally, the leader will present and discuss with the class the supplementary papers assigned to the discussion.

Many of you will find using PowerPoint to aid your discussion particularly helpful in this

regard but note that I will *not* be grading your PowerPoint or other presentation tools. Instead, I will be grading the quality of the discussion your presentation inspires and your ability to raise interesting questions to engage the audience in it.

### *The individual project (review paper)*

The review paper should be **no more than 5-7 pages**, double-spaced, not including references. Each student will determine the paper's topic and discuss it with me at the individual meetings during the first part of the course, **no later than 03.27.24.**

*The literature review* requires analyzing contemporary research in light of two (or more) classical psychology theories of your choice. You would introduce a recent research article (published in 2018-2024) and explain how the ideas in this article relate to these two (or more) classical theories. To do it, specific concepts, constructs, and principles from these theories must be identified, defined, and critically applied to the research ideas of the article. Reviews earning a strong grade must adhere to APA format, have excellent organization with a clear thesis statement, provide a solid conclusion, and effectively use at least **six** new academic sources to build an effective logical argument.

To help you formulate your idea fully, we will schedule 10-15 minutes of PowerPoint presentations in class during the second part of the term and individual meetings with me. At least one week before the in-class presentation of the personal project, each student will confirm with me and submit to Courseworks one reading relevant to their presentation for the whole class to read ahead of time. E.g., a study that uses a similar method or an article that addresses the same topic but in a different way. Then, two days before the presentation, they will send the one-page project summary to the whole class to read. These steps help ensure that the other students can make helpful and informed suggestions about the personal project. During the second part of the term, I will monitor every student's brainstorming of proposed ideas. I will add up to 5 bonus points to your final grade for constructive suggestions during these sessions.

To write a literature review, you can find many sources online about writing an essay, for example, <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/essay-structure>.

### *Class Attendance*

Excused absences are granted only if proper documentation (i.e., a letter from your doctor or advising dean) is provided. An unexcused absence will lead to losing Class participation points in the Course Grading - one point for each unexcused absence -- and receiving a grade of zero on each missed quiz. Note that you are still responsible for the work that is due for that particular class session.

Mobile phones *are not permitted* during class. Laptops may be used for anything course-related, but please refrain from unrelated activities as they distract you and others.

### *Students with Disabilities*

If you require special classroom accommodations or support services, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS—<http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods>) to make the

necessary arrangements.

### *Academic Integrity*

*"The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity...In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent."*

From the Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity

([www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement](http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement))

Last but not least, cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. Any student found guilty of either will receive a zero for that assignment and be referred to the Dean's Disciplinary Process, described here ([www.college.columbia.edu/academics/disciplinaryprocess](http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/disciplinaryprocess)). For more information on what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, consult the Columbia University Guide to Academic Integrity (<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>). Although an exhaustive review of Columbia's policies and the numerous forms that plagiarism can take is not possible here, keep in mind that the following are unacceptable:

- Submitting essays (or portions of essays) written by others as one's own
- Failing to acknowledge the sources of one's work through proper bibliographic and in-text citations. This can range from direct quotations and paraphrases to expressions and *ideas* reflected in others' work.
- References (and quotation marks where appropriate) are required in all cases, including for website material.
- Intentional to accidental plagiarism—neither is tolerated. It is your responsibility to remain knowledgeable and careful regarding inadvertent plagiarism.
- Collaborating on an assignment without specific permission from the instructor.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your work maintains the expected standards.

Remember that when it comes to academic integrity issues, it is better to err on the side of caution. That said, if you have any questions about how to appropriately cite existing work or build upon someone else's ideas, please feel free to contact me, and I will be happy to help.

## Tentative Reading List

The following is the preliminary reading list, which is subject to revision during the semester.

Class	Date	Discussion topics	Required readings
1	01.22.24	Introduction	Syllabus
2	01.29.24	Research Methods in Personality	1. Lee J. Cronbach & Paul E. Meehl 2. Peter Borkenau et al
3	02.05.24	Traits Approaches	1. Gordon W. Allport 2. Robert R. McCrae & Paul T. Costa Jr.
4	02.12.24	Psychoanalytic Approaches	1. Sigmund Freud, Ana Freud 2. Carl Jung
5	02.26.24	Psychoanalytic and Evolution Approaches to Gender	1. Bendixen, M, Kennair, L, & Buss, D.M 2. Keren Horny
6	03.04.24	Neo-psychoanalytic Approaches	1. Erik Erikson 2. Alfred Adler
7	03.18.24	Humanistic Approaches	1. Abraham H. Maslow 2. Carl R. Rogers
8	03.25.24	Cognitive and Social Learning Approaches	1. Albert Bandura 2. Walter Mischel & Yuichi Shoda
03.27.24 Deadline for the topic of the project			
10	04.01.24	Presentation 1	In the second half of the semester, readings for each class will consist of two or three student proposals and three articles, assigned in advance by that day's presenters following a discussion with me and my confirmation.
11	04.08.24	Presentation 2	
12	04.15.24	Presentation 3	
13	04.22.24	Presentation 4	
14	04.29.24	Summary	
The final submission of the paper is due on the 29th of April, 2024			

### Bibliography of Required & Supplemental Readings

All papers are available on Courseworks. Readings in *italics* are supplemental readings (only for discussion leaders).

#### Class 1. Introduction.

There are no assigned readings for this class. Please go over the syllabus.

#### Class 2. Research Methods in Personality

1. Cronbach, L.J. & Meehl, P. E. (1955). Construct Validity in Psychological Tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 52, 281-302.

- *Vazire, S. & Mehl, M.R. (2008). Knowing Me, Knowing You: The Accuracy and Unique Predictive Validity of Self-Rating and Other-Rating of Daily Behavior, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95, 1202-1216.*

2. Borkenau, P, Riemann, R, Angleitner, A & Spinath, F.M. (2001). Genetic and Environmental Influences on Observed Personality: Evidence from the German Observational Study of Adult Twins. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 655-668.

- Gosling, S.D. (2008). *Personality in Non-human Animals. Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2, 985-1001.
- Bleidorn, W, Hopwood, C.J. & Write, A. (2017). *Using Big Data to Advance Personality Theory. Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 18, 79-82.

### **Class 3. Traits Approaches. Person-Situation Debate.**

1. Allport, G. (1931). What is Trait of Personality? *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 25, 368-372

- Oishi, S. (2004). *Personality in culture: A neo-Allportian view. Journal of Research in Personality*, 38(1), 68-74.
- Mischel, W. (1968). *Consistency and Specificity in Behavior. From Personality and Assessment (New York: Wiley, 13-39.*

2. McCrae, R. R., & Costa Jr, P. T. (2008). A Five-Factor Theory of Personality. *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*, 139-153.

- Roberts, B. W., & Mroczek, D. (2008). *Personality trait change in adulthood. Current directions in psychological science*, 17(1), 31-35.
- Stewart, R. D., Möttus, R., Seeboth, A., Soto, C. J., & Johnson, W. (2022). *The finer details? The predictability of life outcomes from Big Five domains, facets, and nuances. Journal of personality*, 90(2), 167-182.
- Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017). *The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. Journal of personality and social psychology*, 113(1), 117.

### **Class 4. Psychoanalytic Approaches.**

1. Freud, S. (1933/1965). Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychological Personality. From *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, by Sigmund Freud, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited and translated by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1966), 51-71.

1a. Freud, A. (2018). *The ego and the mechanisms of defense*. Routledge. **Chapters 3 and 4 only.**

- Shaver, P. R., & Mikulincer, M. (2005). *Attachment theory and research: Resurrection of the psychodynamic approach to personality*. *Journal of Research in personality*, 39(1), 22-45.
  - Barrett, L. F., Williams, N. L., & Fong, G. T. (2002). *Defensive verbal behavior assessment*. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(6), 776-788.
2. Yung, C. (1971). *Psychological Types*. From *Psychological Types*, translated by R. Hull and H. Baynes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 510-523.
- Öhman, A., & Mineka, S. (2003). *The malicious serpent: Snakes as a prototypical stimulus for an evolved module of fear*. *Current directions in psychological science*, 12(1), 5-9.
  - Goffman, E. (2006). *The presentation of self. Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook*, 129-139.

### **Class 5. Psychoanalytic and Evolution Approaches to Gender.**

1. Bendixen, M, Kennair, L, & Buss, D.M. (2015). *Jealousy: Evidence of Strong Sex Differences Using both Forth Choice and Continuous Measure Paradigms*. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 86, 212-216.
- Eagly, A.H. & Wood, W. (1999). *The Origins of Sex Differences in Human Behavior*. *American Psychologist*, 54(6), 408-423
  - Carpenter, C. J. (2012). *Meta-Analyses of Sex Differences in Responses to Sexual Versus Emotional Infidelity: Men and Women Are More Similar than Different*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 36(1), 25-37.
2. Horney, K. (1967). *The Distrust Between the Sexes*. From *Feminine Psychology* (New York: Norton), 104-116.
- Steinem, G. (1994). *Womb envy, testyria, and breast castration anxiety*. *Revista "MS"*, 4(5).

### **Class 6. Neo-psychoanalytic Approaches.**

1. Erikson, E. (1950). *Eight Stages of Man*. From *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton), 219-234
- James S. Fleming (2018). *Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Stages*. Chapter 9, 1-23. Erikson, E. (2004). *Erikson and Personal Identity: A Biographical Profile*.
  - Schachter, E. P. (2005). *Erikson meets the postmodern: Can classic identity theory rise to the challenge?* *Identity*, 5(2), 137-160.



- Capps, D. (2004). *The decades of life: Relocating Erikson's stages*. *Pastoral Psychology*, 53, 3-32.

2. Adler, A. (1982). The fundamental views of Individual Psychology. *Individual Psychology: Journal of Adlerian Theory, Research & Practice*, 38(1), 3-6. {Online book: Understanding life}.

2a. Adler's legacy about birth order and Personality: Sulloway, F. J. (1999). Birth order. *Encyclopedia of creativity*, 1, 191-195.

- Eckstein, D., Aycock, K. J., Sperber, M. A., McDonald, J., Van Wiesner III, V., Watts, R. E., & Ginsburg, P. (2010). *A Review of 200 Birth-Order Studies: Lifestyle Characteristics*. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 66(4).

### **Class 7. Humanistic Approach.**

1. Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological review*, 50(4), 370.

- Noltemeyer, A., James, A. G., Bush, K., Bergen, D., Barrios, V., & Patton, J. (2020). *The relationship between deficiency needs and growth needs. The continuing investigation of Maslow's theory*. *Child & Youth Services*, 1-19.
- Kenrick, D. T., Griskevicius, V., Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2010). *Renovating the pyramid of needs: Contemporary extensions built upon ancient foundations*. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 5(3), 292-314.

2. Rogers, C. R. (1947). Some observations on the organization of personality. *American Psychologist*, 2(9), 358-368

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). *If we are so rich, why aren't we happy?* *American Psychologist*, 54(10), 82
- Farber, B. A., & Doolin, E. M. (2011). *Positive regard*. *Psychotherapy*, 48(1), 58.

### **Class 8. Cognitive and Social Learning Approaches. Person-Situation Debate.**

1. Bandura, A. (1978). The self-system in reciprocal determinism. *American psychologist*, 33(4), 344.

- Bandura, A. (1999). *Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective*. *Asian journal of social psychology*, 2(1), 21-41.

2. Mischel, W., & Shoda, Y. (1995). A cognitive-affective system theory of personality: reconceptualizing situations, dispositions, dynamics, and invariance in personality structure. *Psychological review*, 102(2), 246.

- Mischel, W. (2004). *Toward an integrative science of the person*. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 1-22

**—Syllabus is subject to revision. Updates will be posted on Courseworks. —**