

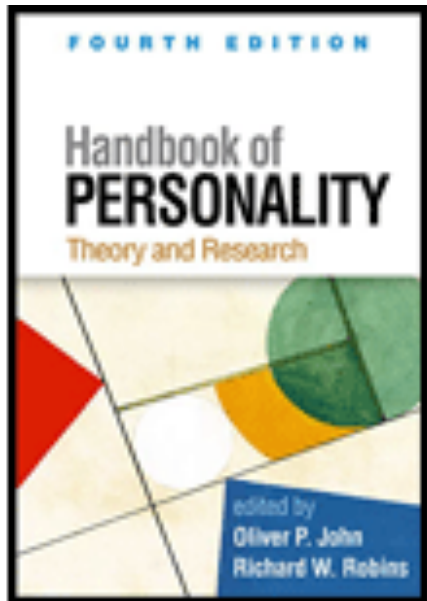
Psychology 200: Personality Seminar

Greg Feist: 924-5617
Office Hours: T Th 11:30-12:30pm
Class time: T Th 3-4:15pm
Classroom: DMH 308

Fall 2026

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Required Reading:



John, O.P., & Robins, R. (2021). *Handbook of Personality Theory and Research* (4th ed.) Guilford Press.
ISBN 978-1-4625-4495-0

[Amazon](#): eTextbook rental; \$60; Paper, \$78-114
[GumLiz](#) (used): \$20.

Seminar Philosophy

The primary purpose of a seminar is to teach three related skills:

- a) critical reading
- b) critical writing
- c) critical discussion

By "critical" I of course mean the ability to point out strengths and weaknesses in argument, theory, and method and not to just accept what is written as "true"; to learn to not believe everything you think and how to challenge your and other people's assumption and develop evidence-based arguments.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1 – know and understand the history and historical themes in personality psychology.

CLO2 – integrate, distinguish, and synthesize major theoretical perspectives in personality psychology (evolutionary, biological-genetic, trait, development/life-span, health, and psychopathology)

CLO3 – understand the experimental and research methods that are used to study personality and behavioral genetics, trait structure, development of personality, creativity, health, and mental health.

CLO4 – critically evaluate research studies.

CLO5 – critically discuss research findings and theoretical ideas with colleagues.

CLO6 – synthesize several research studies and draw conclusions, in written format.

CLO7 – understand the applications of personality psychology to fields of genetics, development, creativity, health, and mental health.

MA Experimental Goals and Program Learning Outcomes

GOAL 1. ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE

PLO 1.1: Students completing the MA in Psychology program will understand the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology, i.e., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological.

Psyc 200 contributes to this PLO through high-level reading assignments across all major theoretical perspectives in current personality psychology

GOAL 2. RESEARCH METHODS & SCHOLARSHIP

Students completing the MA in Psychology program are required to complete a thesis. The thesis will demonstrate

PLO 2.1: creative problem solving in the design, implementation of empirical research.

PLO 2.2: demonstrate project management skills in the implementation of empirical research.

PLO 2.3: demonstrate advanced competency in the statistical analysis and interpretation of empirical research findings.

PLO 2.4: be able to communicate (oral and written) their research findings at a professional level

Psyc 200 contributes to this PLO by developing skills involved in analyzing, synthesizing, and critically evaluation large amounts of scholarly information

GOAL 3. CAREER ENHANCEMENT

PLO 3.1 Students completing the MA in Psychology program will achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master's in psychology in the public or private sector.

Psyc 200 contributes to this PLO by developing the critical thinking, oral, and written skills expected of graduate students in PhD programs or in research professions.

Weekly Readings/Bibliography (in Canvas, Readings)

Any supplemental readings are PDFs of articles and posted in *Canvas > Files > Readings*

Assignments and Grading

Class Oral Presentations:

Starting the second week of the semester you can choose to lead seminar and to be responsible for a weekly presentation. *You pick one reading from a week's readings.* Your presentation is a combination lecture and discussion. There are 14 different readings and 14 students, so that works perfectly for 1 week/presentation per student. Turn in your Week Preferences (rank 4 top choices) after the first class (via email).

Tuesdays will be devoted to student presentation and Thursdays will be devoted to critical seminar discussion of the week's reading, with your written critiques/questions being the foundation of the discussion. If we need a little more time Thursday for the Tuesday student presentation, we can do that.

Weekly Chapter Critiques/Questions:

For each assigned chapter (except when you present), you are responsible for turning in a critique/questions. The purpose of the critique is to encourage you to critically evaluate the article, and to promote thoughtful discussion of the article in class. Each critique should have two sections:

Strengths and Weaknesses. These can concern theory, writing, methods, analyses, conclusions or implications. Each critique should also contain 2 questions and/or discussion points about the article. (The critique/question will probably be around 3/4th to 1 page in length. You do not need to summarize the article.) When writing your critique, see the "topics to be discussed" above for some things to think about. I will grade this on quality, but if you put in the effort, you will get 5/5. If you turn in superficial critique/question that doesn't reflect a careful reading, you will earn less than 5 points.

Turn these critiques/questions on Canvas/Discussion the night before the class (Monday nights, 11:59pm). Late Critiques/Questions will NOT be accepted, and therefore a missing one earns 0 points. You are allowed 1 miss and still can earn full credit.

There are 14 non-presenting weeks, but you only have to turn in questions for 13 weeks, for a total of 65 points. **For the week you present, you do not have to turn in questions. If you turn in a 14th critique/question, that will count as extra-credit (5pts).**

Proposal Outline and Final Paper

At the end of the semester a paper is to be turned in. The paper will be on the topic of your choice (as long as it relates to personality psychology). It can be a review of the literature in a particular area, it can be a discussion of one or more particular debates and disagreements (such as is the situation or personality disposition more critical in explaining our behavior, or are genetic or environmental influences more important in shaping our personalities), or it can be your own particular theory on some dimension of personality. The paper is to be no more than 8 pages (it can be as little as 6.5 pages; excluding title page and references), with at least 15 citations in APA style. You will turn in an outline of what your paper is to be on Nov 19. Turn in Final paper before midnight on Dec 11 (Fri), via Canvas.

Participation:

Graduate seminars require active participation, which means showing up online, being on time, asking questions, and being an active discussant. **Attendance per se cannot be the basis for your grade, but if you miss more than 1 or 2 classes, your participation grade will suffer. Graduate school requires in person discussion of ideas and the reading and you can only participate if you are there** to discuss the material. Some people talk more than others (that's personality!), so participation will be more quality than quantity of input.

Grading:

Your final course grade will be based on five factors:

--your paper proposal	10 points (4%)
--your final paper	100 points (40%)
--your oral presentation	50 points (20%)
--your weekly critiques/questions (13 x 5)	65 points (26%)
--participation in class	25 points (10%)

TOTAL 250 points (100%)

There will be pluses and minuses to the grades (i.e. A-'s will be given). But as is the case with graduate seminars, the lowest grade is usually a B-.

Grade	Percentage	Points	Grade	Percentage	Points
A+	95 and above	237 and above	B	83-86	207-216
A	92	230-236	B-	80-82	200-206
A-	90-91	225-229	C+	77-79	192-199
B+	87-89	217-224			

Classes will comprise lectures, in-class activities, and discussions. Attendance is required and is critical for success in this course. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the information covered. It is vital that you complete all scheduled readings and assignments before each class. Do not talk, read, text message, or eat during class. **Please arrive to class on time.**

Classroom & Course Protocol

The expectation is that you will attend class regularly. Because this is a small graduate seminar, I would request the standard professional: come prepared to class, be polite and respectful to everyone, do not do off-topic activities during class, and speak up and ask questions when you are confused, or need help.

In a small seminar it is important that you attend regularly and especially when there is a peer presentation. Just as you would like support from your fellow students, they will appreciate your by attending and engaging in discussion.

Respectful disagreement and debate are encouraged. However, unprofessional, disrespectful, or disruptive behavior is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Student%20Conduct%20Code%202013.pdf>. Such behavior may result in being asked to leave the class and/or referrals to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

I expect you to come to class prepared. “Prepared” means you have completed the readings and any assignment before class starts.

Check the course Canvas site regularly.

I will make important course announcements, post grades, etc. on the Canvas site. If I become ill, I will inform you as soon as I can via email and Canvas. You should check the site before each class.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, academic renewal, etc. Refer to the current semester’s catalog policies section for any add/drop deadlines, policies, and procedures section and specific registration information. Please be aware of the Late drop policy is available. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material, Amends F06-2

“Common courtesy and professional behavior dictates that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. This permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”

“Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Therefore, neither recording of class lectures or discussions nor distribution of course materials are allowed. Failure to follow this policy will result in immediate expulsion from the class, a grade of F in the

course, and reporting the student to the University and proper authorities for further sanctions/punishment.

Professional Communication

As a University student, you are encouraged to engage in professional communication with faculty, staff, and your fellow students. This is especially important in electronic mail notes that you might send. When sending email, I would encourage you to create an email account that includes your name. If you do not create such an email, be certain to include your name in the correspondence.

Academic Integrity

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S072.Pdf Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own and this INCLUDES AI or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. At SJSU plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

1. The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substances of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work;
Do not make up data; collect data as if they were your thesis data (i.e., follow all IRB rules of protocol).
2. And, representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, painting, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one's own.

The following URL will take you to the SJSU library's plagiarism tutorial. **You are required to complete this tutorial before submitting any written assignments:**
<http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/tutorial/plagiarism/index.htm>.

For this class, **all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified.** If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_199703.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Reading Schedule

Week	Date	Title	Ch, Authors (all in <i>Handbook</i>)
1	Aug 20	Course Overview and Introduction	
2	Aug 25-27	History of Big Five Taxonomy	Ch 2, John
3	Sep 1-3	Evolution of Human Personality	Ch 1, Lewis & Buss
4	Sep 8-10	Personality in Animals	Ch 7, Weiss
5	Sep 15-17	Neurobiology of Personality	Ch 8, DeYoung et al
6	Sep 22-24	Behavioral Genetics & Personality	Ch 9, Krueger & Johnson
7	Sep 29-Oct 1	Motivation, Personality & Development	Ch 3, Dweck
8	Oct 6-8	Personality Development	Ch 11, Roberts & Nickel
9	Oct 13-15	Personality & Parenting	Ch 16, Atherton & Schofield
10	Oct 20-22	Person-Situation Interaction	Ch 31, Furr & Funder
11	Oct 27-29	Cognitive-Affective System of Personality	Ch 19, Ayduk & Mendoza-Denton
12	Nov 3-5	Emotion & Personality	Ch 21, Keltner & Shiota
13	Nov 10-12	Culture & Personality	Ch 32, Oishi et al.
14	Nov 17-19	Creativity & Genius Paper Proposal Due, Nov 19	Ch 20, Simonton
15	Nov 24	Personality and Health (no class Thurs, Thanksgiving)	Ch 37, Friedman & Hampson
16	Dec 1-3	Personality Disorders	Ch 36, Widiger & Oltmanns
	Frid Dec 11	Paper due: Dec 11, 11:59pm (Canvas)	