

# **Personality Psychology (Psychology 305A), Section 902**

## **Winter 2025/2026, Term 2 (Winter)**

### **Acknowledgement**

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

### **Class Times**

Tuesdays 5:00-7:30 pm

Location: HENN 200

Credits: 3

Pre-requisites: Either (a) PSYC 100 or (b) two of PSYC 101, PSYC 102, PSYC 205, PSYC 207, PSYC 208, PSYC 216, PSYC 217

Co-requisites: None

### **Office Hours and Contact Information**

Instructor: Professor Tracy ([jltracy@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:jltracy@psych.ubc.ca))

Phone: 604-822-2718

Room CIRS 4352

Rather than hold an office hour that may work for only some of you, I try to meet with students at times that work for both of us – so please email me for an appointment. OR – I will always make myself available to chat after class, so stick around and feel free to come talk then.

### **About Me:**

I am a professor in the UBC Psychology Department, and have been here since 2006. I am a social-personality psychologist, and my research focuses primarily on emotions and self-processes; my area of greatest expertise is in the self-conscious emotions of pride and shame. For more information on my research and lab, see <https://drjesstracy.com/ubc-emotion-lab/>. I have taught Personality Psychology at UBC regularly since 2006.

### **Teaching Assistants**

**Karina Miller** ([millerkj@student.ubc.ca](mailto:millerkj@student.ubc.ca))

Room Location: Kenny 3605

Office Hour: Thursdays, 1-2 pm, or email for an appointment.

**Yingchi Guo** ([Yingchi.Guo@ubc.ca](mailto:Yingchi.Guo@ubc.ca))

Room Location: Kenny 4208

Office Hour: Tuesdays 2-3 pm, or email for an appointment

### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the study of personality. Personality refers to consistencies in people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior over time and across situations. Topics will include

methods of personality research and an overview of the primary theoretical perspectives and major research findings in the field. The course will consist of one class per week, which will include lectures, full-length films and film segments, exams, and class discussions in which student participation is encouraged.

Please note that this course will cover material that some people might find uncomfortable, difficult, offensive, or possibly triggering. It's impossible to avoid these topics while covering personality psychology, which involves understanding how past events, including traumatic ones, shape current behavior. Given that everyone differs in what they find troubling, I won't be alerting the class to the potentially troubling nature of any particular topics before I cover them; please just be aware that, at certain times in the course, you might find yourself reading or hearing about matters that may make you uncomfortable.

### **Required Reading**

Buss, D. M., Ensley, C. E., Larsen, R. J., & King, D. B. (2017). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (Second Canadian Edition). New York: McGraw Hill. [NOTE: earlier and U.S. editions are fine too.] The book is expensive so feel free to search online for less expensive editions or used copies. We will also make a couple copies of the book available at the UBC Library for a 2-hour loan.

The syllabus specifies the textbook chapters that are relevant to each lecture. The material in these chapters will be covered in exams, but only those sections that are also discussed or at least mentioned in lectures. You can decide **when** to read these chapters; if you choose to read them before the class that they are relevant to, you are likely to have an easier time following the lecture.

### **Films**

We will be viewing one 2-hour film during the term, as well as shorter video clips. These films are part of the course content; we will discuss them in class, and material covered in the film and class discussions will be included in exams. If you miss a film, it is your responsibility to learn about its major themes. Please note that certain films may be difficult to find.

### **Videos to Watch on Your Own**

For several classes, I recommend videos that you can access online for free and watch whenever you like. These videos are intended to help you understand the material covered in the lectures and textbook.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

**Exams:** This course will have 3 exams—2 midterms and 1 final. Each exam will cover the section of the course that immediately preceded it; in other words, the final exam will focus largely on the final third section of the course, and will be only a bit longer than the other 2 exams (each midterm will be approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes long; the final exam will be approximately 2 hours long). However, each exam will also be somewhat cumulative in that it will call for knowledge acquired across the course thus far (that's just how psychology, and all sciences, works; you need to have knowledge of certain topics in order to write or learn

thoughtfully about other topics). Exam questions (multiple choice and short essay) will be based on material from the lectures, readings, and in-class films, with greatest emphasis on the lectures.

**THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS, EXCEPT IN CASES THAT MEET UBC GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC CONCESSION.** For course policies regarding in-term academic concessions, please refer to the relevant UBC calendar entry:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>. If you have a documentable medical or other emergency, the TAs will coordinate with you to arrange for a make-up exam. If you know now that you will need to miss an exam for a non-emergency reason, you should try to get into a different section of this course or sign up next year instead.

**Grading:** The two midterm exams will each be worth 30% of your total grade, and the final exam will be worth 40% of your total grade (adding up to 100% total).

You also may receive up to **3 extra credit points** (for a total of 103%) for participating in the Department of Psychology's subject pool. You will receive 1 extra credit point for every hour you participate in an experiment. To receive credit for experiment participation, you will need to sign up and receive credit through the Dept. subject pool website: <https://hsp.psych.ubc.ca>. See below for more information on research participation through the Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool.

Please note that final grades (and only final grades) may be scaled, according to department policy.

**Online Resources:** Slides from each lecture (and this syllabus) will be posted online after each class; you should download these files and use them as study guides (they will be on the course website on Canvas).

It is important to note that the slides posted online will not cover everything that is covered in class. If you miss class, you should download the slides **and** ask a classmate for additional notes. Please note that I will NOT respond to emails asking about the contents of lectures that were missed. If you email to find out what you missed in class, you will receive a reply along the lines of: "see lecture notes". If you don't know anyone in the class to get notes from, now is a good time to meet someone!

**Email Policy:** I'm happy to try to answer your questions over email, but I will not be responding to email requests about material that was missed due to an absence. If you miss a class, please be sure to download the slides. For all email responses, please permit more than 24 hours before expecting a response (e.g., you are unlikely to receive a response the night before an exam). Emails will generally not be answered over the weekend.

### **In-class Laptop Policy**

Unless necessary, laptop computers are not allowed in class. There is good evidence to suggest that laptops create a less ideal environment for the entire class (see [here](#)) and even for the learning of each student who uses one (i.e., you'll learn and remember material better if you take notes by hand; see [here](#)).

If you have concerns with this policy, feel free to come talk to me about it. If there are reasons to make exceptions, I'm happy to do that, but please discuss this with me. E-tablets are fine if used appropriately.

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week 1**

Tues., January 6<sup>th</sup>      Review of syllabus  
Overview of Personality  
Begin Research Methods  
Reading: Larsen & Buss, Chapter 1  
Watch: [Brian Little: Who are you really? The Personality Puzzle](#)

### **Week 2**

Tues., Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>      Research Methods in Personality  
Freud & The Psychoanalytic Approach to Personality  
Reading: Larsen & Buss, Chapters 2, & 9

### **Week 3**

Tues., Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>      Contemporary Psychoanalytic Approach  
Motives and Personality  
Phenomenological/ Humanistic Approach  
Reading: Larsen & Buss, Chapters 10 & 11

### **Week 4**

Tues., Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>      Self & Self-Esteem  
Review for Exam  
Reading: Larsen & Buss, Chapters 14 & 3

### **Week 5**

Tues., February 3<sup>rd</sup>      **5:00-6:30 MIDTERM EXAM 1**

### **Week 6**

Tues., Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>      Overview of Traits and Trait taxonomies  
Theoretical Issues in Trait Research  
Trait Taxonomies and Personality Change and Stability - Guest lecture from Karina Miller (TA and PhD student in personality and social psychology)  
Reading: Larsen & Buss, Chapters 4 & 5  
Watch: [Dan Gibert: The psychology of your future self](#)

### **Week 7**

Tues., Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>      **NO CLASS – WINTER BREAK / READING WEEK!**

<b>Week 8</b>	Tues., Feb. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Genetic Approach to Personality Physiological Approach to Personality <u>Reading:</u> Larsen & Buss, Chapters 6 & 7
<b>Week 9</b>	Tues., March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Evolutionary Approach to Personality Learning and Behaviorism <u>Reading:</u> Larsen & Buss, Chapters 8 & 12
<b>Week 10</b>	Tues., March 10 <sup>th</sup>	Modern Cognitive Approach Begin Emotions & Personality Review for Exam <u>Reading:</u> Larsen & Buss, Chapter 13
<b>Week 11</b>	Tues., March 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM 2</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	Tues., March 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FILM: <i>Shattered Glass</i></b> <u>Reading for AFTER THE FILM (or else you'll get spoilers!):</u> Hanna Rosin, "Hello, My Name is Stephen Glass, and I'm Sorry", <i>New Republic</i> , Nov. 10, 2014 [will be available for download on course website on Canvas]
<b>Week 13</b>	Tues., March 31 <sup>st</sup>	Discuss film Wrap up Emotions Relationships and Social Interactions Sex, Gender, & Personality <u>Reading:</u> Larsen & Buss, Chapters 15 & 16
<b>Week 14</b>	Tues., April 7 <sup>th</sup>	Culture and Personality Course overview & Review <u>Reading:</u> Larsen & Buss, Chapters 17 & 20 <u>Watch:</u> <a href="#">Shige Oishi: Personality and Culture</a>

### **Getting Extra Credit via the Human Subject Pool (HSP)**

As part of this course, you are invited to earn **3% extra credit**.

Most students will choose to earn these credits by spending **three hours participating in psychology studies (worth 1% point for each hour)** through the Department of Psychology's Human Subject Pool

(HSP) system. You can locate, create an account, and sign up for studies by going to <https://hsp.psych.ubc.ca>. **Please register in the system by the end of the first month of classes to have the opportunity to earn your first ½ hour credit with a brief online survey that will increase your eligibility for more studies.**

Once registered in the system, you will be able to browse through and select which studies you wish to participate in, sign up for an available timeslot, and confirm your accumulated credits afterward. **At the end of the last day of class for the term, the subject pool is closed.** At that point, you will no longer be able to receive credits. I strongly urge you to participate in and confirm your credits long *before* the last week of class since **many studies will not offer timeslots near the end of the term and you may be locked out before allocating your credits to your desired course.** Further instruction on how to use the HSP online system can be found at <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/> in the document entitled “Subject Pool Information for Participants.”

#### Alternative assignment:

#### **The Library Option**

As an alternative to participation in psychology subject pool experiments, you may complete a library-writing project. Such projects consist of reading and summarizing 1) the research question, 2) the methods and 3) the results (in written form) of a research article from the peer reviewed journal *Psychological Science*. You will receive one (1) research participation credit for each article summary that meets the following requirements.

#### Requirements:

- The article must have been published in the journal titled “*Psychological Science*”
- The article must have a publication date from the year 2000 to present (i.e. papers from 2001 are acceptable; those from 1999 or earlier are not)
- The article must be a research article; it cannot be a review article, a news item, a notice, or a letter to the editor, for example
- The summary should be approximately 500 words in length
- You must include your name, student number, course, section, instructor and email address on each summary
- You must log on to the Human Subject Pool (HSP) system (<http://hsp.psych.ubc.ca/>) and create an account before submitting your article summaries. Your credit is assigned using the online system.

For each course, you may obtain the same number of extra credits via the library option as specified in the course syllabus (i.e. the same number of credits available for students who participate in research).

Summaries must be submitted **no later than 10 days before the end of classes.**

You are to submit your article and your summary to turnitin.com. If you don't have a turnitin account already (from a previous course), you will need to create a user account in Turnitin. **For the library assignment the class ID is 51268460, class name is "HSP 2025 Winter 2", and password is "Research"**. See [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), and click on the “Training” link at the top of the page for detailed instructions on how to submit papers to Turnitin. Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will, at a minimum, not be granted credit, and their course instructor will be notified. Further action may be taken at a departmental or university level.

#### **HSP Online Study Credit Limit:**

We will no longer have an online credit limit. Instead, students are free to receive their HSP bonus credits from any combination of “in-lab” and “online” studies. However, “in-lab” studies will offer a bonus 0.5 credits on top of the standard 0.5 credits per 30 minutes of participation (e.g., a 1 hour “in-lab” study will award 1.5 credits, while an equivalent “online” study will award 1 credit).

### **A Note on the Psychology Department Grading Policy:**

In Psychology at UBC-V, we employ department-wide grading standards to promote equitable alignment, supporting students and course instructors as they learn and teach across many diverse courses and sections. For each Course Section, instructors should aim for a grade average in the following Target Ranges (before any bonus HSP points are added, but including any mandatory HSP points): B- (68-71%) in Introductory 100-level and 200-level courses; B (72-75%) in Intermediate 300-level courses; B+ (76-79%) for Advanced 400-level courses and Selective-Entry lower-level courses (e.g., PSYC 277, 278, 312, 370, 371, 349, 359, 365). Ranges are intended to provide some flexibility to instructors and account for differences that can occur between classes. Ranges increase across year levels to account for improvements in student learning, and students’ ability to self-select into more specialized courses.

During the course, instructors may choose to adjust grades and/or difficulty of the assessments, to align with the Target Range. At the end of the course, if the average falls outside the Target Range (either direction), instructors will typically be expected to use a linear transformation to adjust final grades (i.e., add or subtract the same number of points to all students’ marks, while ensuring no student fails the course due to this transformation). If a course mean falls in within one +/- letter grade band above the Target Range (e.g., in the B+ range for Intermediate courses), and the instructor believes these grades to be justified, the instructor may submit a justification request using the departmental approval final grades submission form, and the grades may stand. This Upper Range is intended to inspire further excellence in learning and teaching, and allow for the possibility that some classes select for higher performing students. Courses with means exceeding the Upper Range will be expected to provide justification as well as use a linear transformation to fall within the Upper Range.

Grades are not official until they appear on students' academic record. Students will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course. At UBC, they convert according to the key below:

A+	90-100%	B+	76-79%	C+	64-67%	D	50-54%
A	85-89%	B	72-75%	C	60-63%	F	0-49%
A-	80-84%	B-	68-71%	C-	55-59%		

### **And finally, a University Policy:**

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise, and so there are additional resources to access, including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for

students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).