

PSY 200

Introduction to Psychology

General Description

Overview

Welcome aboard! You have purchased a ticket for a journey through the wondrous land of psychology. Throughout your adventure, you will encounter different psychological theories and perspectives. In combination, these theories and perspectives will present a rather complex picture of human and animal behavior. However, because this is an introductory course in psychology, we will stress only the most important themes. Consequently, you will gain a global understanding of human and animal behavior but without an in-depth analysis into any specific area. We encourage you to take more specialized courses in psychology if you wish a more thorough coverage of any area. This course will prepare you well for these advanced courses. Before delving into the various subfields of psychology and what each one teaches us about human and animal behavior, we will outline the procedures and structure of the course.

Course Structure

Because this is a correspondence course, there are no formal lectures or class meetings to attend—generally, assignments and any other exchanges with the instructor will be conducted by mail. Learning the material will be your responsibility. You will need to devise a schedule that accommodates your time and study habits. Having the freedom to choose when to study can be both a blessing and a curse. Try to arrange your schedule so that you cover a chapter a week. It is very easy to lose momentum if you do not keep up with this suggested guideline.

Course Structure

The following is a cursory overview of the course. In this course you will cover sixteen textbook chapters, each corresponding to a different area of psychology. These areas can be grouped into seven unifying themes:

1. **history and methods**—history of psychology, perspectives and research methods in psychology, and the use of statistics in psychology
2. **psychophysiology and consciousness**—the nervous system, sensory systems, perceptual processes, and states of consciousness
3. **cognitive psychology**—memory, thinking (problem-solving), and intelligence
4. **learning, motives, and emotions**—what motivates humans, ways of learning, and human emotions
5. **human growth**—human development and language acquisition
6. **personality and abnormal behavior**—measuring personality, personality theories, abnormal behavior and treatments
7. **social behavior**—understanding how people and society influence our behaviors.

Course Requirements

Each lesson in this course manual will cover one textbook chapter and will have objectives and assignments. Lessons 6 and 12 count as course exams, and there will be one final exam. Course exams and the final exam specify which chapters will be covered. The exams are not cumulative.

Required Text

Weiten, W., *Psychology: Themes and Variations*, 8th edition, (2010), Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. You can purchase your text from Friday Center Books & Gifts at the Friday Center in person, by using the book order form at the end of this General Description, or online at <https://s4.its.unc.edu/HigherGrounds>.

Recommended Study Strategies

Contrary to popular belief, psychology is not an easy topic. In order to do well in this course, you will need to take time to read, study, and review the material carefully—and there is a lot of material. In so doing, the following suggestions may prove helpful. (Read also pages 28–33 in the textbook for helpful hints.)

- Never try to read an entire chapter at once. Most of the chapters are long, and you can easily lose track of the important information. If possible, try to divide the chapter readings in half.
- Review the objectives and clearly understand what they are asking. It is a good idea to mark specific portions of the textbook or course manual that pertain to a specific objective. Once you have found the answer to an objective, **write it down** for future reference and review.
- Try to spend fifteen minutes a day going over the material you reviewed or read earlier. Repetition is an important method of retaining information. Moreover, make the answers to the objectives meaningful. That is, don't just memorize them; learn them by restating them in your own words and by thinking of examples.
- Make sure that you read and study each section of the chapters, including the “Personal Application” and “Critical Thinking Application” sections that are at the end of each chapter.
- Quiz yourself for understanding. Ask yourself questions and see whether you answer them correctly. Each chapter has a practice test that you should use.
- Some chapters and lessons are longer than others. Skim ahead and try to plan the amount of time you will need for each lesson—an average of nine hours per lesson.
- Try to arrange your final exam as soon as you reach the point in the course when that is possible.

Studying the Lessons

In this course manual, each lesson begins with a reading assignment followed by a discussion section that will present information not covered in the chapter or clarify confusing material. A second section titled Learning Objectives focuses your attention on the most important material in the lesson. You should be able to achieve all of the objectives, some of which may come from new material presented in the discussion section. Doing well in this course is strongly linked to knowing your objectives thoroughly.

Preparing and Submitting Written Assignments

The final section of the lesson is the “Written Assignment.” Once you have mastered the learning objectives, you are ready to proceed with the written assignment and to submit your answers for a grade. You may use the textbook or any other material to answer the questions in these assignments. However, **answer each question in your own words**. Each definition should include an example or elaboration of the concept or theory. Essays should be detailed and comprehensive, including examples and elaborations as needed. Please make sure that you answer each part of every question. Be sure that you reread all of your responses, that you have answered each question completely, and that you have expressed your ideas clearly. Remember that you will not have the opportunity to verbally explain to me what you meant! Once you have completed the assignment to your satisfaction, mail your work to Self-paced Courses for grading (be sure to attach each assignment the matching submission cover sheet located at the end of each lesson). In a couple of weeks or so, your graded assignment will be returned with any comments I may have. Please review these carefully and do not hesitate to contact me if you have concerns or questions.

Course Exams and Final Exam

As mentioned previously, there are two course exams and one final exam. The purpose of these exams is to assess how well you mastered the learning objectives. Many of the exam questions will be aimed at discovering how well you apply the knowledge you gained through mastering the objectives.

The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, short essay questions, and a section on defining terms. The exams

are not cumulative; each exam will cover new, not old, material. The two regular course exams are in this manual (Lessons 6 and 12). They are **closed-book** exams that you will complete under conditions that simulate an actual exam; you cannot use your textbook or course notes, and there will be a two-hour time limit. Try to plan your exams for a time and place that is free of distractions. By signing the Honor Pledge, you indicate that you are abiding by the University Honor Code.

The final exam will cover material from Lessons 13–18. This exam must be supervised in accordance with Self-paced Courses policy. The exam application form is located in the back of this manual. *You must pass the final exam in order to pass the course.*

Grading

The grade you earn in this course will be based on the total number of points you have accumulated through graded assignments, course exams, and the final exam. The breakdown of the point system is as follows:

General Point Breakdown

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Graded assignments	30 points each	480 points
Course exams	100 points each	200 points
Final exam	120 points	120 points

Grades by Point Breakdown

<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
732–800	A
716–731	A–
700–715	B+
652–699	B
636–651	B–
620–635	C+
572–619	C
556–571	C–
540–555	D+
476–539	D
Below 476	F

General Description

The point structure allows you to set your own grade objectives. For example, should you want to earn a B in this course, the total number of points you will need is between 652 and 699. Moreover, this point system indicates your current status in the course at any time.

A Final Word

Psychology is a fascinating and complex field. If you take this course seriously, you will learn a lot about yourself and human behavior. Enjoy the course, and good luck!