

New Jersey Institute of Technology
Jordan Hu College of Science and Liberal Arts
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor: Jill Hall, MA, LPC

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Class Time: Thursdays, 6-8:50PM

908-906-8091

CKB Room 223

Office Hours - by appointment

Course Description: Introduction to the study of human behavior. Topics include motivation, perception, learning, cognitive development, personality and emotion, individual differences, biological basis of behavior, and psychological research methodology. This course can be used to satisfy either the three-credit 200 GER in History and Humanities, or the three-credit GER in Social Sciences, but not both.

Course materials-

There is no required textbook for this course. The following books are recommended readings:

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*. New York, Harper & Row.

Frankl, V.E. (1992). *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (4th ed.). Boston, Beacon Press.

Ronson, J. (2011). *The psychopath test: a journey through the madness industry*. New York, Riverhead Books.

Duhigg, C. (2013). *The power of habit: Why we do what we do in life and business*. Random House Books.

Hock, R.R. (2009). *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology: Explorations into the History of Psychological Research* (6th Ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Gain familiarity with human behavior's biological, social, cognitive, and environmental origins.
2. Apply the science of psychology to real-world situations.
3. Students will employ critical thinking skills in analyzing psychological research and media.
4. Students will use communication skills, both written and oral, in the expression of ideas and analysis related to the psychology topics covered in class.

5. Demonstrate a respect for cultural and individual differences that are present in the range of topics discussed in class.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the scientific methods used to study behavior and mental processes.
7. Students will learn the process of psychological, cognitive, and emotional development across the lifespan.
8. Compare and contrast the variety of psychological theories on behavior, learning, and psychosocial development.
9. Students will be introduced to the subsets of psychology including but not limited to social psychology, positive psychology, health psychology, addiction psychology and gender psychology.

Class Format and General Policies

This course is a learning community and will take place in person. Topics will be introduced and explored, and completing required readings and assignments is expected. Participation is essential in effective learning, therefore attendance and participation are required and are a crucial component in calculating your grade. Live discussion encourages an exchange of ideas, individual and collective reflection.

Classes will not be streamed on Zoom or Google meet.

Electronics policy

Students are expected to be respectful toward each other and the professor at all times, therefore, texting, answering phone calls, scrolling social media, and other internet browsing during class time is seen as a disruption and will negatively impact your grade. Please understand, *I will not always ask you to put away your electronic devices, but I will notice when you are using them.*

Late work policy

All assignments are due on the date indicated. There will be no make-up dates for unexcused absences from exams, classwork, or other assignments. Due dates are not negotiable.

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity

“Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.”

AI

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to assist with research and brainstorming, but all AI-generated content must be properly cited and the student remains responsible for the accuracy of the information presented.

Accommodations

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early as possible in the semester to discuss the needed accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420. Please be reminded that accommodation documentation needs to be updated every semester, so speak with Student Disability Services regularly.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center (G17 Central King) is available for 45-minute individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors, onsite and online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. To make an appointment, please visit <https://njit.mywconline.com>.

Grading System

Grades are not given, but earned. Students will be graded based on the total number of points available to be earned throughout the semester. For example, if the total available points to be earned is 600 points, and you've earned 500, your percentage will be a 83% earning you a B.

Participation - for each class you attend, you earn 10 points.

Exams (midterm and final) - each worth 100 points.

Guided readings/viewings - when assigned, will be worth 20 points each.

Movie Reviews - each worth 100 points (there will be 3)

Other assignments/classwork or group assignments - values will be posted as given

A = 100-90

B+ = 89-85

B = 84-80

C+ = 79-75

C = 74-70

D+ = 69-65

D = 64-60

F = 59 and below

I will be using Google Classroom as the platform to share assignments and for submissions. In addition, all presentations will be posted on the classroom in order to facilitate student learning outcomes. The code will be provided on the first day of class.

Movie Review assignments

#1 - Good Will Hunting (100 points - due 9/25/25)

#2 - Antwone Fisher or A Beautiful Mind (100 points - due 11/6/25)

Details for these assignments and their due dates will be included in the Google Classroom

Psychology in the Real World assignment (100 points - due 12/5/25)

For this assignment, you will explore how one or more concepts you've learned in the course can be applied to real-world situations. It is an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of key concepts and principles of the course.

You will choose one of the following options -

#1 - Real-Life application

Choose a real-life situation (personal experience, news article, film, TV show, reel on social media and analyze it using 3 psychological concepts from class - for example, classical conditioning, cognitive dissonance, bystander effect, developmental stages, Freud's concepts, etc.)

- Briefly describe the event or situation
- Identify and explain the psychological concepts being shown
- Analyze how these concepts help explain what happened.
- Be prepared to discuss with the class.

#2 - Interview or observe

Interview someone (a parent, professor, coach, neighbor) or observe a setting (workplace, gymnasium, restaurant, mall) and connect what you see behaviorally to psychological concepts.

- Summarize the interview or observation
- Choose 2 psychological principles relevant to their behavior
- Provide analysis with supporting evidence from your course materials

#3 - Personal reflection

Reflect on a personal experience and explore it using psychological ideas.

- Describe the experience.
- Identify at least 2 psychological concepts that relate to the experience.
- Discuss how understanding these concepts gave you new insight into the experience.

Requirements:

- use at least 2 peer reviewed sources or class materials provided.
- Be organized in the structure - be sure there is an introduction, body and conclusion
- Proofread for grammar, spelling and clarity.

- More information will be provided in the scoring rubric.

Course Outline

- 9/4/25 - Course Introduction, review of syllabus
Defining psychology and exploring its history
How does psychology help us learn about ourselves?
- 9/11/25 - Psychology's Scientific method
Types of psychological research
Ethical research
- 9/18/25 - Biological foundations
Structures of the brain and their functions
Brain plasticity and reactions to experiences
- 9/25/25- Learning
Motivation
Classical and operant conditioning
Cognitive factors in learning
Biological, cultural and psychological factors in learning
- 10/2/25 - Wellness day
- 10/9/25 - Thinking, intelligence and language
Genetic, biological and environmental effects on cognition
Does gender influence language and language development?
Theories of multiple intelligences
Do teacher expectations influence students' IQ gains?
- 10/19/25 - Human Development
Nature vs. Nurture
Effects of early experiences/attachment
Development across the lifespan
Moral reasoning
- 10/23/25 - midterm
- 10/30/25 - Theories of personality
Psychodynamic, Humanistic and Trait perspectives

The ego and mechanisms of defense
Individualism and collectivism
Personality assessment

11/6/25 - Gender, sex and sexuality - what does it mean to be sexually healthy?

11/13/25 - Psychological disorders
Defining abnormal behavior
Combatting social stigma

11/20/25 - Health Psychology
Biopsychosocial model
Making positive life changes
Controlling stress
Health and wellness behaviors
Mindfulness

11/25/25 - **What else is out there?
Positive psychology
Social psychology
Psychology of addiction
Feminist psychology

11/27/25 - no class

12/4/25 - Psychological Therapies
Biological therapies - (medications, ECT, surgery)
Psychotherapy and its effectiveness
Psychotherapy outcome studies

12/11/25 - Review for Final exam

12/18/25 - Final

