Course Outline for Psychology 1AA3

(2006 - 2007)

What You Need

The only required text for this course is this book. There is one additional suggested text, and that is Henry Gleitman's *Psychology*, published by W.W. Norton. Although no test questions will be drawn from this text, it provides an excellent alternative presentation of much of the material covered in the lectures. It also contains much additional information that you may find quite interesting. If you are considering going on in a psychology program, we highly recommend that you get this text.

How You Will Be Evaluated

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your performance on two group assignments, a midterm test and a final examination.

The Group Assignments

These two assignments, which will be completed with a small group of students in your class, are designed to introduce you to process of self-directed exploration and investigation that is an important part of what psychologists - and indeed, all scientists and scholars - do. The first group assignment will be worth 10% of your final grade in the course, and the second group assignment will be worth 15% of your final grade in the course.

Early in the course, the class will be divided into groups of 4-6 students, and each group will complete the assignments together. Group assignment will be assessed by the tutor and by other students in the class and assigned a single grade which will be given to each of the members of the group. Thus if a group’s assignment receives a grade of 85%, each member of that group will be assigned a mark of 85% for that assignment.

The purpose of each assignment is to analyze, explore, and better understand a situation, phenomenon, or problem. Each group in the class will receive a different written description of the problem, and will spend several weeks exploring it and finding out as much as they can about it.
Exploring the problem will involve deciding on the questions that need to be answered in order for the problem to be better understood, locating the information needed to answer those questions, synthesizing that information into a coherent answer to the question, and presenting that answer to others in written and/or web-based form.

Some time will be provided for group members to collaborate on the project inside class. Most groups will wish to collaborate outside class as well, either meeting in person or collaborating via email.

The final product of the assignment will be a final project report that summarizes for others what the group learned in exploring the problem. The final project report will either be a printed document submitted to the tutor, or it will be a web-based document that can be viewed and reviewed by others in the class. In either case, each group should be prepared to present the results of their research to the class once the project has been completed.

While a required class presentation is only a possibility the for the first group assignment (depending on how much time is available), class presentation will be an integral part of the second group project.

Laptop computers will be available for those groups who want to use them for their presentation. Your tutor will have more information about that.

The Midterm Test

Twenty-five percent of your final mark in this course is based on the midterm test, which takes place approximately halfway through the course. The midterm consists of 40 multiple-choice questions, which you will have 50 minutes to complete. There is no penalty for guessing (a wrong answer is the same as a question left blank), so you should answer all questions, guessing whenever you are not sure.

The midterm will be written during the last scheduled class meeting of the test week - either Thursday or Friday, depending on your course section (Wednesday, for the MW evening section). The midterm test will cover the courses material on Development, and on Personality and Psychopathology.

For 2006-2007, the 1AA3 midterm will be held on Thursday, February 15th or Friday, February 16th. That information will also be posted on the IntroPsych web site. The midterm
will be written in your regular 1AA3 classroom. If there is any change to this location, it will be announced by your tutor and posted in the locations mentioned above. **It is your responsibility to determine the date, time, and location of the midterm for your section.**

Test results will be posted on the IntroPsych web site approximately one week after the test has been written. Copies of the midterm test, together with the accepted answers, will be available on Reserve in **Mills Library** shortly after the test results are posted.

**The Final Examination**

The remaining 50% of your mark in Psych 1AA3 will be based on a final examination, covering the work of the entire course, which will take place during the April examination period. The final examination will consist of 80 multiple-choice questions, which you will have two hours to complete. The date, time, and place of the final examination will be announced by the Registrar’s Office about the middle of the term, and posted in a number of areas around the campus and on the IntroPsych website.

**The Research Participation Option**

If you choose, you may reduce the value of the final exam by participating as a subject in **two hours** of approved research in the Psychology Department. The two hours of research participation will be counted as 5% of your total mark in the course, and will reduce the value of the final exam from 50% to 45%.

Note that this is not the same as adding 5% to your mark in the course. Instead, it is the equivalent of earning a mark of 100 on 5% of the final exam. For example, for a student with a grade of 60% on the final exam, the research participation option effectively raises the mark on the final exam to 64%, thus increasing the final course mark by 2%.

Note that you must complete **two hours** to change the value of the final exam from 50% to 45%. Completing only one hour of participation will gain you an interesting experience and the gratitude of the experimenter, but it will not be counted in the calculation of your Psych 1AA3 final grade. This is an important point, since near the end of the course, many students will be competing for the research spots necessary to complete their two hours. I strongly advise that if
you wish to use the research participation option, you complete your two hours as early in the course as possible.

**What You Need to Know About Research Participation**

The research conducted in the Psychology Department by faculty members and their students tries to answer questions about perception, thinking, learning, and remembering. If you want to participate in the department’s research, either for credit in Psych 1AA3 or just for personal interest, you can sign up on the web at [http://experimetrix.com/mac](http://experimetrix.com/mac).

In order to use the *Experimetrix* on-line sign-up, you will need to register with the *Experimetrix* system. To register for the system, you will need to provide your Name, McMaster Student ID, and your McMaster (MUGSI) email address. You will receive an Experimetrix login and password at your Mac email address.

This is the only time you have to use your McMaster email address for *Experimetrix* (you can use another email address for further communication), but the Mac email address is important at the start to help keep the system secure.

Through the *Experimetrix* system you can sign up for experiments, check the details of experiments you have previously signed up for, or cancel them. You can also check your participation credits.

The number of studies being run varies from week to week and month to month, so you should check *Experimetrix* frequently if you are interested in participating. Successful completion of the research participation option is given a mark of 100%. You may successfully complete the research option in two ways:

1. **You may complete two hours of participation as a subject, providing data in one or more approved experiments.** Note that you may withdraw as a data-generating subject at any time during an experiment and can choose to continue as an observer (as described below) without any loss of course credit.

2. **If you do not wish to serve as a subject, you may participate as an observer.** In this case, the experimenter will take you through all the experiences that an actual subject would have, but you will not actually provide any data in the experiment. If you wish to choose this option for any experiment, you should contact the Subject Pool Coordinator, Ann Hollingshead.
(room 105) to make the necessary arrangements. The Subject Pool Coordinator is not a member of the Psych 1AA3 course staff, and is completely unconnected with any course evaluation.

Note that **In order to participate as an observer, you must meet the same selection criteria as regular subjects.** For example, in an experiment requiring female subjects, only females could participate as observers. The time required for observational participation will be approximately the same as that for a regular subject.

After you complete a research participation, the experimenter will give you a debriefing sheet which includes as complete a description of the experiment as is possible. Sometimes certain details of the experiment must be kept confidential until all subjects have participated in order to prevent information from one subject affecting the performance of later subjects in the study. In such cases, the experimenter will tell you how you can get more complete information about the experiment after all subjects have participated.

You will also be given a receipt acknowledging your participation in the experiment. **KEEP THIS RECEIPT IN A SAFE PLACE.** The experimenter will report your participation to the Intro Psych Office (room 107), where we will transfer that information to our computer database. If there should be any questions regarding your participation in the study, it will be very useful to have your receipts.

Be sure to show up at the proper time and place for each experiment you have signed up for. If you find that you can no longer participate in a particular experiment, be sure to cancel your appointment through *Experimetrix*.

**IF YOU FAIL TO SHOW UP FOR TWO EXPERIMENTS, YOU LOSE ANY PREVIOUS EXPERIMENTAL CREDITS, AND YOU WILL BE BANNED FROM FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH OPTION.**

If you have any questions about research participation, or any concerns about the way a particular experiment was run, please feel free to bring them to the attention of Ann Hollingshead, who manages the research participation option. You can reach Ann by phone at extension 23xxx, or by email at hollings@mcmaster.ca.
(Ann is also the Psychology Department’s Undergraduate Advisor, so you might also want to chat with her about programs in Psychology. Or check out her web page at http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/Psychology/abboard/advbb.htm).

Course Outline

Listed below are the topics to be covered in this course, the approximate dates on which they will be presented, and the required readings (if any) for each section.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Developmental Psychology  (Weeks of Jan. 1, 8, and 15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Basics and Beyond, section on Developmental Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>This section of the course will discuss the ways in which abilities and characteristics develop and change from birth through early adolescence. We will discuss two areas of development: Language acquisition and intellectual development.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Personality &amp; Psychopathology  (Weeks of Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Basics and Beyond, section on Personality &amp; Psychopathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>In the first part of this section we will describe how the concept of personality has been approached, and consider several specific theories of personality, including those of Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers. In the second part, we will consider the definition, causes, symptoms and treatments of several important mental disorders.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Thursday, February 15th and Friday, February 16th</th>
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<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Midterm Recess - Week of February 19th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td><strong>Social Psychology</strong> (Weeks of Feb. 12, 26, and Mar. 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Basics and Beyond, section on Social Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Social psychology studies how others affect our behaviors and thoughts. We will look at several topics in this field including our perception of others, their affects on our behavior, and attitude development and change.</td>
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<th>Topic:</th>
<th><strong>Animal Behavior/Sociobiology</strong> (Weeks of Mar. 12, 19, 26)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Basics and Beyond, section on Animal Behavior/Sociobiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>In the first part of this section we look at the study of the naturally occurring behavior of non-human animals. In the second part, we look at how sociobiology or evolutionary psychology applies concepts derived from the study of adapted, innate behavior to shed new light on human social behaviors - particular those involved in reproduction.</td>
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