

Big Issues in Psychology ----- Spring 2013, M/W 3-4:15, HHH 224

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D2L Course Login Site: <http://www.uwec.edu/d2l/>

April's information

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Office hours: T/Th 8-8:50am, Friday 2-2:50pm, and by appointment.

Readings: The readings for this course are available on D2L. Some are lengthy. Some are not.

Course plan and objectives: In this course we will read and discuss primary literature – old and new – that revolves around enduring issues in psychology and psychological science. We will:

- (1) describe and discuss musings on the meaning of science literacy, on the utility of the scientific filter, and on the quality of psychological science;
- (2) develop a knowledge of influential (both recent and classic) findings in psychology, such as in the domains of social influence, cognitive biases, memory, learning, genetics, personal relationships, and therapy and therapeutic outcomes.
- (3) apply knowledge of the discipline to discuss current issues relevant to the public interest, such as sex differences, educational initiatives, violence and crime, the effects of childhood sexual abuse, religious belief, and money and happiness.

Students requiring special accommodations: If you are a student with a disability or issue that will require some form of accommodation, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Old Library 2136 (836-4542), for requisite documentation. I will be happy to make accommodations for you as necessary. Please tell me immediately if there is some issue of which I should be aware.

Academic dishonesty

Sample violations include: (a) using student homework, papers, or ideas from previous semesters, unless approved by me; (b) asking for or giving information about the content of my quizzes (e.g., studying from an unauthorized file); (c) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism). If you are concerned that an activity you or someone else is considering might fall into the dishonest category, ask me about it. I consider academic misconduct in this course as a serious offense, and I will pursue the strongest possible academic penalties for such behavior. The disciplinary procedures and penalties for academic misconduct are described in the UW-Eau Claire Student Services and Standards Handbook (<http://www.uwec.edu/sdd/publications.htm> <<http://www.uwec.edu/sdd/publications.htm>>) in Chapter UWS 14—Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures.

Learning goals

UWEC has five interdisciplinary learning goals. This course endeavors to promote them. Students should...

1. communicate effectively
2. demonstrate knowledge of human culture and the natural world
3. engage in creative and critical thinking
4. demonstrate individual and social responsibility
5. respect diversity

The Psychology Department has adopted the APA Goals of the Undergraduate Psychology Major. Below, I have listed the goals in their briefest form. Our course materials connect to each goal in at least one way and often several ways. For each goal, I have listed one or more outcomes of that goal that I think are relevant to our reading material, discussions, and final assignments.

Goal 1: Knowledge Base of Psychology

- Characterize the nature of psychology as a scientific discipline;
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology;

Goal 2: Research Methods in Psychology

- Distinguish the nature of designs that permit causal inferences from those that do not;
- Evaluate the validity of conclusions presented in research reports;

Goal 3: Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

- Use scientific principles and evidence to resolve conflicting claims;
- Identify and evaluate the source, context, and credibility of behavioral claims;
- Recognize and defend against common fallacies in thinking;
- Evaluate the quality of information, including differentiating empirical evidence from speculation and the probable from the improbable;
- Use reasoning to recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals;

Goal 4: Application of Psychology

- Describe how applying psychological principles can facilitate appropriate change in institutions and in society;
- Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life;
- Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems, such as psychology-based interventions in clinical, counseling, educational, industrial/organizational, community, and other settings and their empirical evaluation;

Goal 5: Values in Psychology

- Tolerate ambiguity and realize that psychological explanations are often complex and tentative;
- Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for psychological claims;
- Demonstrate reasonable skepticism and intellectual curiosity by asking questions about causes of behavior;

Goal 6: Information and Technological Literacy

- Read and accurately summarize the general scientific literature of psychology;

Goal 7: Communication Skills

- Interpret quantitative visual aids accurately, including showing vigilance about misuse or misrepresentation of quantitative information;
- Listen accurately and actively;
- Attend to nonverbal behavior and evaluate its meaning in the communications context;
- Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats;

Goal 8: Sociocultural and International Awareness

- Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others and vice versa;
- Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that might exist in themselves and in others;

Goal 9: Personal Development

- Purposefully evaluate the quality of their thinking (metacognition);
- Display high standards of personal integrity with others;

Goal 10: Career Planning and Development

- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of lifelong learning and personal flexibility to sustain personal and professional development as the nature of work evolves.

Course requirements:

Attendance is required, for the following reasons.

- Each class day, there will be a quiz on the reading assigned for that day. These quizzes will each be worth about 10-20 points. Sometimes these will be formal quizzes; sometimes they will be more informal writing activities. They will always require you to have read your material for the day. At the end of the session, I will drop your lowest quiz score. This means you can miss class **ONE** time, without penalty, whatever the reason might be. If you miss class for a university-sanctioned event, then I am obligated to help you make up that work (it doesn't count as your miss).
- A portion of our class time will be spent in interactive discussion. Therefore, you will send to me, over email, one discussion question from the reading, **by 12:00 noon the day of class**. We will use your discussion questions in class, so I need time to compile and organize them. You need to send a discussion question for every class time for which there are assigned readings. The discussion questions will be worth 3 points each. I will not include late questions in our list of questions for class. We frequently do not get through all the discussion questions, but writing a discussion question seems to help clarify ideas for people.
- For the discussion itself, I will assign you a score of 0, 1, or 2 points each class time to track your participation. 0 = not in class; 1 = in class physically but apparently not mentally; 2 = attentive and/or avid participant. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest participation score. This means you can miss class **ONE** time, without penalty, whatever the reason might be. If you miss class for a university-sanctioned event, then I am obligated to help you make up that work (it doesn't count as your miss).

In the end, each class day will be worth anywhere between 15-25 points. If you do the reading according to schedule, force yourself to take notes on the reading, and come to class awake and excited about learning, there should be no problem. You should plan for at least two hours to get through each set of assigned readings. I expect you to be a good citizen. This includes participating actively in class discussion but not dominating it, doing your fair share in small-group interactions, and having a positive attitude toward the course. This is a senior course and you are expected to take charge of your own learning.

At the end of the semester, one part of your final assignment will be a summary of the key points from each day of readings (a comprehensive review). The other part of your final assignment will be a written reflection, which you will read aloud to your classmates during the final exam session. The assignment is designed to enable you to relay your understanding of psychology as a scientific discipline and the challenges we face in growing science in psychology.

Senior Exit Survey:

- Not graded, but required by *everyone* of senior status before *anyone* receives a grade in the class. I will forward information from the department chair when it is sent to me toward the end of the semester.
- Deadline: Last day of class.

Psychology Portfolio:

- Not graded, but required by *all psychology majors* before *anyone* receives a grade in the class. I will forward information from the department chair when it is sent to me toward the end of the semester.
- Deadline: Last day of class.

Psyc 401: Big Issues in Psychology
Spring 2013 Semester Schedule of Readings

Week 1

January 23: *Introduction to the course and introductions to each other. Assign first readings.*

Week 2

January 28: *Disciplines of Intellect, and the Case for Scientific Intellect*

- Snow, C. P. (1959, May 7). *The two cultures*. Rede Lecture to the Senate, Cambridge, England.
- Miller, J. (1989, January 17). *Scientific literacy*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, San Francisco, CA.

January 30: *Clever Science Experiments Can Have Lasting Impact*

- Meier, P. (1972). The biggest public health experiment ever: The 1954 field trial of the Salk Poliomyelitis Vaccine. In, *Statistics: A guide to the unknown* (pp. 2-13). San Francisco: Holden Day.
- Haney, C., Banks, C., & Zimbardo, P. (1973). Interpersonal dynamics in a simulated prison. *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 1, 69-97.

Week 3

Feb. 4: *Good Science Requires Clear Displays of Clear Thinking*

- Tufte, E. R. (1997). *Visual explanations: Images and quantities, evidence and narrative* (Ch. 2: Visual and statistical thinking: Displays of evidence for making decisions). Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.

Feb. 6: *The Scientific Filter is not Perfect*

- Wikipedia pdf on *publication bias*.
- Young, N. S., Ioannidis, J. P. A., & Al-Ubaydli, O. (2008). Why current publication practices may distort science. *PLoS Medicine*, 5, 1418-1422.
- Simmons, J. P., Nelson, L. D., & Simonsohn, U. (2011). False-positive psychology: Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant. *Psychological Science*, 22, 1359-1366. doi:10.1177/0956797611417632

Week 4

Feb. 11: *The Scientific Filter is not Perfect: A Case in Point*

- Tatum, J. (2000). Clinical intuition and energy field resistance. In E. D. Leskowitz (Ed.), *Transpersonal hypnosis: Gateway to body, mind, and spirit*. Boca Raton, FL, USA: CRC Press.
- Rosa, L., Rosa, E., Sarner, L., & Barrett, S. (1998). A close look at therapeutic touch. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 279, 1005-1010.
- O'Mathuna, D. P. (2000). Evidence-based practice and reviews of therapeutic touch. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 32, 279-285.

Feb. 13: *Thinking Scientifically about the Natural World is not Humans' Natural Way of Thinking*

- Hood, B. M. (2009). The science of superstition: How the developing brain creates supernatural beliefs (Ch. 1 and 2). New York, NY, USA: Harper Collins.
- Shermer, M. (2002). How thinking goes wrong: Twenty-five fallacies that lead us to believe weird things. (Ch. 3 in *Why people believe weird things: Pseudoscience, superstition, and other confusions of our time*). 2nd edition. New York, NY, USA: Henry Holt and Company.
- Recommended but not required:
Dawkins, R. (2011). The magic of reality: How we know what's really true (Ch. 11 and 12). New York, NY, USA: Free Press.

Week 5

Feb. 18: *Cognitive Biases that can Interfere with Scientific Thinking: Insensitivity to Sample Bias*

- Hamill, R., Wilson, T. D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1980). Insensitivity to sample bias: Generalizing from atypical cases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 578-589.

Feb. 20: *Cognitive Biases that can Interfere with Scientific Thinking: Selective Attention and Exposure*

- Brock, T. C., & Balloun, J. L. (1967). Behavioral receptivity to dissonant information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6, 413-428.
- Edwards, K., & Smith, E. E. (1996). A disconfirmation bias in the evaluation of arguments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 5-24.

Week 6

Feb. 25: *Cognitive Biases that can Interfere with Scientific Thinking: Hindsight Bias*

- Fischhoff, B. (1975). Hindsight is not equal to foresight: The effect of outcome knowledge on judgment under uncertainty. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 1, 288-299.
- Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977): Telling more than we can know: Verbal reports on mental processes. *Psychological Review*, 84, 231-259.

Feb. 27: *Awareness of Our Mental Processes: Mate Choice as Exemplar.*

- Todd, P. M., Penke, L., Fasolo, B., & Lenton, A. P. (2007). Different cognitive processes underlie human mate choices and mate preferences. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA*, 104, 15011-15016.
- Finkel, E. J., & Eastwick, P. W. (2009). Arbitrary social norms influence sex differences in romantic selectivity. *Psychological Science*, 20, 1290-1295.

Week 7

March 4: **No readings. Interim review and reflection.**

March 6: *Memory and False Memory*

- Mazzoni, G. A. L., Loftus, E. F., & Kirsch, I. (2001). Changing beliefs about implausible autobiographical events: A little plausibility goes a long way. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 7, 51-59.
- Bruck, M., Ceci, S. J., & Hembrooke, H. (1998). Reliability and credibility of young children's reports: From research to policy and practice. *American Psychologist*, 53, 136-151.

- Poole, D. A., Bruck, M., & Pipe, M. (2011). Forensic interviewing aids: Do props help children answer questions about touching? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 11-15.

Week 8

March 11: *Memory Repression and Recovery*

- Scoboria, A., Mazzoni, G., Kirsch, I., & Milling, L. S. (2002). Immediate and persisting effects of misleading questions and hypnosis on memory reports. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 8, 26–32.
- Loftus, E. F., Garry, M., & Hayne, H. (2008). Repressed and recovered memory. In E. Borgida and S. T. Fiske (Eds.), *Beyond common sense: Psychological science in the courtroom* (pp. 177-194). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

March 13: *Is Psychotherapy Effective?*

- Smith, M. L., & Glass, G. V. (1977). Meta-analysis of psychotherapy outcome studies. *American Psychologist*, 32, 752-760.
- Chambless, D. L., & Ollendick, T. H. (2001). Empirically supported psychological interventions: Controversies and evidence. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 685-716.

Week 9

March 25: *Factors Tied to (or not Tied to) Therapeutic Outcomes*

- Strupp, H. H., & Hadley, S. W. (1979). Specific versus nonspecific factors in psychotherapy. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 36, 1125-1136.
- Leon, S. C., Martinoich, Z., Lutz, W., & Lyons, J. S. (2005). The effect of therapist experience on psychotherapy outcomes. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 12, 417-426.

March 27: *The Power of Expectancies*

- Snyder, M., Tanke, E. D., & Berscheid, E. (1977). Social perception and interpersonal behavior: On the self-fulfilling nature of social stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 656-666.
- Feldman, R. S., & Prohaska, T. (1979). The student as pygmalion: Effect of student expectation on the teacher. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71, 485-493.

Week 10

April 1: *Placebo Effects*

- Shiv, B., Carmon, Z., & Ariely, D. (2005). Placebo effects on marketing actions: Consumers may get what they pay for. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XLII, 383-393.
- McClung, M., & Collins, D. (2007). "Because I know it will!" Placebo effects of an ergogenic aid on athletic performance. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 29, 382-394.

April 3: *Learning and Memory*

- Szpunar, K. K., McDermott, K. B., & Roediger, H. L. (2008). Testing during study insulates against the buildup of proactive interference. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 34, 1392-1399.
- Marsh, E. J., Agarwal, P. K., & Roediger, H. L. (2009). Memorial consequences of answering SAT II questions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 15, 1-11.

Week 11

April 8: *Fads in Education*

- Karpicke, J. D., & Blunte, J. R. (2011). Retrieval practice produces more learning than elaborative studying with concept mapping. *Science, 331*, 772-775.
- Alfieri, L., Brooks, P. J., Aldrick, N. J., & Tenenbaum, H. R. (2011). Does discovery-based instruction enhance learning? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 103*, 1-18.

April 10: *Genetics and Individual Differences*

- Bouchard, T. J., Lykken, D. T., McGue, M., Segal, N. L., & Tellegen, A. (1990). Sources of human psychological differences: The Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart. *Science, 250*, 223-228.
- Rowe, D. C. (1994). Limited rearing effects on intelligence (IQ). In *The limits of family influence* (Ch. 4). New York, NY, USA: Guilford Press.

Week 12

April 15: *Personality and Personality Disorder*

- Lykken, D. T. (2006). Psychopathic personality: The scope of the problem. In C. J. Patrick (Ed.), *Handbook of psychopathy*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jaffee, S. R., Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., & Taylor, A. (2003). Life with (or without) father: The benefits of living with two biological parents depend on the father's antisocial behavior. *Child Development, 74*, 109-126.

April 17: *Intervening on Violence*

- Rice, M. E. (1997). Violent offender research and implications for the criminal justice system. *American Psychologist, 52*, 414-423.
- McCord, J. (2003). Cures that harm: Unanticipated outcomes of crime prevention programs. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 587*, 16-30.

Week 13

April 22: *Intergroup Bias*

- Dunham, Y., Baron, A. S., & Carey, S. (2011). Consequences of "minimal" group affiliations in children. *Child Development, 82*, 793-811.
- Mahajan, N., & Wynn, K. (2012). Origins of "us" versus "them": Prelinguistic infants prefer similar others. *Cognition, 124*, 227-233.

April 24: *Women and Men; Work and Wages*

- Mason, M. A. (2009). *Better educating our new breadwinners*. From *The Shriver Report 2009: A study by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress*. Available at: <http://www.shriverreport.com/awn/education.php>
- Browne, K. R. (2006). Evolved sex differences and occupational segregation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27*, 143-162.

Week 14

April 29: *Child Sexual Abuse*

- Rind, B., Tromovitch, P., & Bauserman, R. (1998). A meta-analytic examination of assumed properties of child sexual abuse using college samples. *Psychological Bulletin*, *124*, 22-53.
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2002). When worlds collide: Social science, politics, and the Rind et al. (1998) child sexual abuse meta-analysis. *American Psychologist*, *57*, 176-188.

May 1: *Religion and Behavior*

- Bloom, P. (2012). Religion, morality, evolution. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *63*, 179-199.
- Bushman, B. J., Ridge, R. D., Das, E., Key, C. W., & Busath, G. L. (2007). When God sanctions killing: Effect of scriptural violence on aggression. *Psychological Science*, *18*, 204-207.
- Shariff, A., & Norenzayan, A. (2007). God is watching you: Priming God concepts increases prosocial behavior in an anonymous economic game. *Psychological Science*, *18*, 803-809. (This paper is discussed in Bloom's review.)

NOTE: May 1 and 2 are the days for UWEC's Celebration of Excellence in Research and Creative Activity (formerly student research day). We will vote as a class on whether we want to attend CERCA in lieu of class (and complete an assignment pertaining to it), or if we want to hold class as scheduled on May 1.

Week 15

May 6: *Money and Happiness*

- Kahneman, D., Krueger, A. B., Schkade, D., Schwartz, N., & Stone, A. A. (2006). Would you be happier if you were richer? A focusing illusion. *Science*, *312*, 1908-1910.
- Vohs, K. D., Mead, N. L., & Goode, M. R. (2008). Merely activating the concept of money changes personal and interpersonal behavior. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *17*, 208-212.
- Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Spending money on others promotes happiness. *Science*, *319*, 1687-1688.

May 8: *Where Are We Headed in Higher Education?*

- Cronon, W. (1998). Only connect...Goals of a liberal education. *The American Scholar*, *67*.
- Murray, C. (2008). *Real education* (Ch. 3: Too many people are going to college.). New York, NY: Crown.

Final exam slot: Final assignment due; share final reflections.