

# General Psychology

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Spring, 2006

MWF 11:00

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**Instructor:** Bret Roark, Ph.D.

**Office:** Owens 301

**Office hours:** MWF 3:30-5:00, R 2:00-4:00

**Office phone:** 878-2214

**Course Description:**

An overview of the field of psychology with emphasis on the personal and social relevance of theories, principles and research findings. Included are the biological foundations of behavior, sensation and perception, learning and cognition, motivation and emotion, psychological development, personality and its assessment, the social basis of behavior, psychopathology and the therapeutic modification of behavior, and ecological psychology.

**Course Objectives:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the different areas of psychology and encourage the application of that knowledge to daily life. Students will come to understand psychology as a science and will develop scientific thinking skills that promote objective evaluate of information. Students will develop a better understanding of their behavior and the behavior of others, including developmental changes, memory, abnormal behavior, social behavior and more.

**Course Textbooks:**

Weiten, W. (2004) Psychology: Themes and Variations (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

**Course Format:**

The course will be taught using lecture, discussion and demonstration format. While much of the course will involve lectures, you will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading material, ask and answer questions over the reading topic, and participate in demonstrations.

**Absence Policy:**

Following University policy, if you miss more than 25% of the scheduled classes, you will receive a failing grade for this course. Absences on the days of exams will result in a grade of zero being given for that exam unless the absence was due to extremely unusual circumstances. Only under such circumstances may you take a make-up exam. The make-up exam will be given during the time scheduled for the final exam for this class. This means that if you miss an exam, you will have 2 exams to take during the final exam time for this class--the final exam (exam 5) and your make-up exam.

**Course Requirements:**

A. Examinations 80%: There will be five exams, each consisting of multiple-choice questions. Individual exam grades will be based on the number of points correct divided by the number of points possible. Students' overall exam grade will be based on the total number of points correct (all exams combined) divided by the total number of points possible (all exams combined).

B. Class Participation 10%: During many class periods some form of participation grade will be taken. Participation grades will consist of, but not be limited to, quizzes over the reading assignment, quizzes over the lecture material, class activities, group work, take-home assignments, and/or attendance. The final participation grade will be based on the number of participation points earned divided by the total number of participation points possible. If a student is not present for the entire class period or if a student's behavior is not conducive to class participation then the participation points earned for that day may be eliminated for that student. Class participation points that are missed due to absences cannot be made up under any circumstance.

C. Personal Application Activities 10%: All students are required to complete at least three Personal Application Activities (a fourth one may be done for extra credit). The specific requirements for these activities are given on a separate page in this syllabus. Due dates for the activities are listed in the course schedule below. Note that there are five due dates, but only three activities are required. This means that students are allowed to select which three (or four) due dates to follow. The purpose of the Personal Application Activities is to encourage students to process the chapter material at a more meaningful level and to promote the application of psychology to students' daily lives.

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

90%-100% = **A**      80%-89% = **B**      70%-79% = **C**      60%-69% = **D**      0%-59% = **F**

**COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)**

<b>January</b>	<b>09 Unit 2 Exam (3, 4, 5)</b>	17 Chapter 15
30 Chapter 1	09 Chapter 6	19 Chapter 15
<b>February</b>	<b>13 Spring Break</b>	21 Chapter 15 (PAA Due)
01 Chapter 1	<b>15 Spring Break</b>	<b>24 Unit 4 Exam (12, 14, 15)</b>
03 Chapter 2	<b>17 Spring Break</b>	26 Chapter 11
06 Chapter 2	20 Chapter 6	<b>28 Chapter 11</b>
08 Chapter 7	22 Chapter 6	<b>May</b>
10 Chapter 7	24 Chapter 8	01 Chapter 10
13 Chapter 7 (*PAA Due)	27 Chapter 8	03 Chapter 10
<b>15 Unit 1 Exam (1, 2, 7)</b>	29 Chapter 9	05 Chapter 10
17 Chapter 3	31 Chapter 9 (PAA Due)	08 Chapter 16
20 Chapter 3	<b>April</b>	10 Chapter 16
22 Chapter 3	<b>03 Unit 3 Exam (6, 8, 9)</b>	12 Chapter 16 (PAA Due)
24 Chapter 4	05 Chapter 12	
27 Chapter 4	07 Chapter 12	<b>PSY 122 B</b>
<b>March</b>	10 Chapter 14	<b>Unit 5 Exam (10, 11, 16)</b>
01 Chapter 4	12 Chapter 14	<b>May 15 1:00 - 3:00</b>
03 Chapter 5	14 Chapter 14	
06 Chapter 5 (PAA Due)		

\*Personal Application Activity

## Personal Application Activities

1. These assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and include a header that has your name, the due date of the assignment, the chapter number, and the Personal Application title.
2. **Three** personal application assignments are required.
3. The three required assignments must come from **different** units (A unit is composed of the chapters covered for an exam. For example, you can look at the course schedule and see that unit one is composed of chapters 1, 2, and 7).
4. The assignments must be turned in on the due date listed in the syllabus for that unit. Late assignments will be penalized. If the assignment is more than one week late it will not be accepted.
5. If you want to earn extra credit, one additional personal application assignment can be completed (for a total of four assignments turned in). **ONLY** one extra credit assignment will be accepted.
6. The extra credit assignment can be from any unit of material, even from a unit for which you already did an assignment. For example, if you turned in the personal application activity for chapter one, you could turn in an assignment for extra credit for chapter two. However, you cannot do a second activity from the same chapter.
7. The extra credit assignment must be turned in no later than December 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Chapter 1: Improving Academic Performance

For this Personal Application Activity, you will need to create a realistic study schedule following the example in Figure 1.12. In doing so, describe in a paragraph your permanent study location and planned reward. Furthermore, take the time management assessment in Figure 1.13. Write a paragraph about your score and how you can improve it (if it is low) or where your skills came from (if it is high). Finally, of the three remaining sections in the reading (“Improving your reading”, “Getting more out of lectures”, and “Improving test scores”) select one that you think will benefit you the most and write a paragraph on how it will affect you. In this final paragraph, be sure to include information you learned from Chapter 7 on Memory. In all, you will turn in three paragraphs and your study schedule.

### Chapter 2: Finding and Reading Journal Articles

For this Personal Application Activity, you will need to select a topic of interest to you in the field of psychology. Have your topic approved by the instructor. Then, using the OBU library resource page ( <http://www.okbu.edu/library/databases.htm> ), search the PsychInfo and PsychArticles databases and generate a bibliography of articles related to your topic. Select the five articles that are the most relevant to your topic and print that list of results. Turn in that list with this assignment. Then, select one of the articles (you should be able to find at least one full-text online article) and write a summary of the Introduction, Methods, and Discussion sections of the article. Each section summary should be about one paragraph long. Attach a copy of the full text article to your written assignment.

### Chapter 4: Appreciating Art and Illusion

For this Personal Application Activity, find an art book in the library, or find famous works of art online. Make a color copy (the copy center can make color copies), or print a color version of three paintings. For each painting, write a paragraph that describes the perceptual elements that are used in the art and discussed in the text. Furthermore, elaborate in your paragraphs how the artwork reflects reality and the impact, if any, it has on you.

### **Chapter 5: Addressing Practical Questions about Sleep**

For this Personal Application Activity you will need to describe the habits of the typical college student that you believe would interfere with the quality of his/her sleep. Then imagine that this person had come to you for advice about how to get better sleep. Describe the recommendations you would make for improving the sleep quality for this person.

### **Chapter 6: Achieving Self-Control Through Behavior Modification**

For this Personal Application Activity, you will design a program of personal behavior modification. You will need to turn in a page that identifies your target behavior, your reinforcer, the contingencies you set up, and any other critical elements of your behavior modification program. You will also need to include a graph of your baseline measurement of the target behavior. This measurement may occur over minutes, hours, or days depending upon what the target behavior is. Although you will not be required to carry out your behavior modification program to get full credit on the activity, feel free to complete the program and report your results if you like.

### **Chapter 10: Exploring the Ingredients of Happiness**

For this Personal Application Activity, your assignment is to write an essay, based on the reading, about your own personal state of happiness. In this essay, rate your general level of happiness, and discuss the daily or permanent factors that increase or decrease your happiness. Finally, using the four conclusions about subjective well being, make a plan for increasing your general level of happiness. The plan should specifically relate the four conclusions to the previously mentioned factors you described that make you unhappy.

### **Chapter 12: Understanding Personality Assessment**

For this Personal Application Activity, you will need to find and take a free personality test online. In your essay, first describe the test and discuss how accurate or inaccurate the results were. You do not need to include your results with the assignment, nor even discuss them in detail. Instead, simply characterize the general accuracy of them. Then, compare the test you took to the tests discussed in the Personal Application section. How does your test compare, in scope, content and purpose to the ones discussed in the text. Finally, in terms of other topics discussed throughout the chapter (e.g., reliability and validity), discuss the overall quality of the test you took.

### **Chapter 13: Improving Coping and Stress Management**

For this Personal Application Activity you will need to create a plan for dealing with stress in your life, based on the material provided in the textbook. Your goal is to make this a realistic plan, one you believe you could carry out. You do not have to put your plan into practice, but instead describe what you would do to deal with stress and explain how you would get yourself to carry out the plan.

### **Chapter 15: Looking for a Therapist**

For this Personal Application Activity, you will need to research the various therapeutic opportunities at OBU and in the Shawnee community. Assume that a friend of yours has asked you “Where can I get some counseling for a personal problem that is affecting my life?” Write a description of the counseling opportunities you find, including information about the therapists (the type of counseling they do, their training, etc.). Then, write a final paragraph that describes the characteristics (therapeutic approach, training) that you would like to see in a therapist if *you* were seeking therapy.

## **FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED: WHY GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY IS A TOUGH COURSE**

Adapted from: Patrick A. Cabe  
Department of Psychology and Counseling  
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Because the course is "introductory," some students imagine that Gen Psych ought to be a relatively easy course. Yet many students are shocked to discover that it is one of the most difficult courses they take, especially early in their college careers. There are several reasons why this happens, and listing some of them for you to think about--and maybe do something about--may save you some hassle, disappointment, and grief.

The first reason Gen Psych is a tough course is that we will cover a very broad range of topics through the semester, from concepts and ideas that are very biological to others that are very "social," from topics that may sound like common sense to others that are challenging technical areas. Each of those topical areas will have its own vocabulary and concepts to learn, enough so that some observers claim that Gen Psych requires that a student learn more new terms than he or she would in a semester-long course in a foreign language!

A second big reason that Gen Psych turns out to be extremely demanding for many students is that they have little or no existing knowledge to attach this new content to. Researchers who study memory and the acquisition of knowledge tell us that the more you know about a topic, the easier it is to learn even more. Knowledge grows by becoming woven into the body of your existing knowledge. If you don't know much at the beginning it is surely more difficult to make such connections. Take heart, though, if you work at it you can often find aspects of your own "real life" experience and previous study that do in fact "hook" into the material you will study in Gen Psych. And as time goes by, you should be able to find connections from new material you encounter to material you studied earlier in the term.

Third, some students have to adjust (or learn for the first time!) the study habits needed to match the demands of college work. Some may never have had to work very hard at their studies in the past, and now discover that their study habits just don't work in college. Good questioning skills, good listening skills, good note-taking skills, good reading skills, good thinking skills, and--most importantly--good time management skills simply have to be there if you are going to succeed in college. Confronted with the complexity of the material in a course like Gen Psych, a student may really struggle if he or she has not developed those skills. If your academic skills are not good (or as good as you would like them to be), see your advisor for help and talk to your instructors about how you might improve them. Most importantly, learning the material in Gen Psych can't be done overnight, so establishing a routine of daily study will be a key to success in this course, as well as others.

Fourth, many students just find ways to mess up the simple stuff: They don't come to class, they don't read the textbook, they don't do the assignments or only do part of the assignment or don't follow the instructions for the assignment or they turn them in late (or any combination). So they throw away opportunities to earn what often is cheap credit toward their course grade. And of course they are also less well prepared for the tests. Come to class, read the book, do the assignments (the whole thing, on time, following all the directions--and, yes, it does matter).

Gen Psych will always be a hard course because the material is complex and broad, but it may be even more difficult for you because you may lack background and experience to tie all this new material to, and because your academic skills may be less-than-perfect. The material itself won't get any easier, but you yourself can improve in these other areas--IF you have the attitude that you CAN do it, and IF you put in the effort TO do it.

## Course Legalities

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A. Disabilities: Oklahoma Baptist University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests and submit documentation to the Director of Student Services, Canaan Crane, at (405) 878-2416. The Student Services office is located in the Geiger Center, Room 101.

B. Absences: Following University policy, if you miss more than 25% of the scheduled classes, you will receive a failing grade for this course.

C. Make-up Exams: If extremely unusual circumstances exist and a student has a legitimate reason for missing an exam, he or she may take a make-up exam. The make-up exam will be taken during the scheduled final exam period for this class. This means that if you miss an exam, you will have 2 exams to take during the final exam time for this class--the final exam (exam 5) and your make-up exam. If you know ahead of time that you must miss an exam, please talk with me to see if arrangements can be made for you to take the exam early.

D. Late Assignments: Assignments may always be turned early. Late work will be penalized.

E. Grade Posting: Exam grades, for those students providing written permission, will be posted on the bulletin board outside my office. Students may, at any time in the semester, request a printed grade report which reflects their grade for each assignment and exam.

F. Academic Dishonesty:

The following section regarding academic dishonesty is copied from the Green Book (Student Handbook), and is available online at <http://www.okbu.edu/greenbook/section02.htm#dishonesty>

The University maintains a strict policy concerning academic dishonesty, which includes cheating, plagiarism, giving assistance on an examination or paper when expressly forbidden by the instructor, and any other practices which demonstrate a lack of academic integrity. Cheating occurs any time a student uses deception in order to avoid fulfilling the specific requirements of an assignment or course and/or in order to receive a higher grade than he/she might otherwise receive. Plagiarism occurs when a student appropriates passages or ideas from someone else's writing into his/her own without providing proper documentation and/or without using quotation marks to indicate when he/she is directly quoting from a source. It is the responsibility of the student to know and to adhere to principles of academic honesty.

For additional details regarding the possible penalties for academic honesty and for information about the academic grievance procedure, please consult the above referenced web site.

**Please read the entire contents of this page and sign below if you want your grades posted.**

I give Dr. Roark and Oklahoma Baptist University permission to publicly post my grades, by ID, for any assignments and/or exams given in PSY 122 General Psychology. This permission applies to the final grade in this course as well. I understand that these grades will be posted in the hallway of Owens Hall, outside room 301 and may remain posted indefinitely. I give this consent with the understanding that I will be identified only by my OBU identification number (or another number that I designate).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#:\* \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* If you do not want your grades posted by you OBU ID number, you can give a different number and I will use that number to post your grades.

Alternate ID#: \_\_\_\_\_