

PSYC 120-1: Psychology of Personal Adjustment
Fall 2024
M/W/F 1:20-2:25pm; 10/15/25-12/5/25
Wentz Science Center, Room 254

Instructor: Nicole Rivera, Ed.D. (she/her/hers)
Phone Number: Office (630) 637-5921; Cell (630) 306-4932
Email Address: nrrivera@noctrl.edu (note two r's in my ID)
Office: Wentz Science Center, 128
Office Hours: MW 10:00am-12:00pm; T 9:00-10:00am; by appointment

Course Description:

A survey of various theories of personality and development and their practical implications for effective coping with everyday life.

How do theories of psychology help us understand our own behaviors? Are there techniques and strategies that we can use to support or change our behaviors? In this course, we will explore how the science of psychology can support personal growth and adjustment. We will examine contemporary psychological research and explore personal applications of the concepts.

Course Objectives

The goals of this class will be to:

1. Explore theories of psychology that relate to personal behaviors.
2. Examine examples of psychological research that are represented in popular press texts.
3. Apply theories of psychology to support your own behaviors.

Course Texts

Required:

You will select a memoir of your choosing for the first four weeks of the course.

There will be selected common readings available on Canvas for the second four weeks of the class.

Class Policies

Inclusivity:

The NCC Department of Psychology and Neuroscience embraces the idea that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. I am firmly committed to making this classroom an inclusive learning community that supports diverse thoughts, perspectives, experiences, and identities. I encourage people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities to share your rich array of perspectives and experiences; and work to honor and respect all of your classmates. If you have a name or set of pronouns that differ from what appears on the NCC records, please let me know. Let us all work together to create a safe and equitable classroom and campus community. If you do not feel that the environment is inclusive at any time, please either contact me or report the incident via the college's bias incident reporting form:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NorthCentralCollege&layout_id=5

Please review the College policies posted on Canvas. If you have any questions about policies and/or resources available to you, please let me know.

Participation:

You are expected to be ready to engage in class discussions. Much of this course involves personal application of the psychological theories that we will explore. We will engage in classroom exercises and discussions to expand on concepts. There will be space for confidential exploration of these concepts through assignments and you always retain the right to choose how much you want to disclose. I will work to maintain an environment that fosters conversation and respect for different perspectives.

Late Assignments:

Assignments are late if they are not turned by the posted due date/time. Late assignments will be penalized 10% and will not be accepted more than one week after the due date unless we have made other arrangements. I encourage you to communicate with me regarding late assignments.

Canvas:

There is a Canvas page for this class. I will use Canvas to post class materials and assignments. You are encouraged to monitor the Canvas page throughout the course and let me know if you have any questions.

Technology:

Because of the nature of this class, I am asking that you do not use technology during our class. Please use a notebook to take notes or make other records of our experiences together. Reducing technology will allow us to maintain focus and engagement. If you have accommodations that require the use of technology, please let me know.

Assignments

Weekly Reflections (8 x 10 points): Each week, you will complete a short reflective assignment. You will be given a prompt and time to respond to the prompt in writing during the last class of the week. If you prefer to submit your response on Canvas, it will be due by Friday at 11:59pm. You will receive full credit for your response if it is submitted on time and it addresses the prompt in 2-3 paragraphs.

Memoir Review (40 points): You will provide a 2–3-page review of the memoir that you read. You should provide 1) 1.5-2 pages of summary of the memoir; 2) at least one paragraph in which you use at least one psychological concept to provide some interpretation of the memoir, and 3) one paragraph to reflect on what you learned by reading this text.

Personal Narratives (2 @ 20 points): In the second four weeks of the class, you will develop two short personal narrative pieces. Each narrative piece should be 2-pages in length, double spaced. The narrative should provide a summary and use at least one psychological concept to interpret the experience. You have three options to select from:

- **Object:** Locate a personal object that is important to you. Write about what that object is, why it is important, and what it means to you.
- **People:** Interview someone in your life. Develop at least five questions to ask them. After you have the conversation, prepare a 2-page summary of the conversation and what that relationship means to you.
- **Place:** Tell a story about a place on or off campus that is meaningful to you. Describe the place and reflect on why it is important to you.

Final Session (20 points): For the final session, you will work with a group to develop a visual or creative presentation that summarizes concepts and experiences from this course. Each group will have 3-4 minutes to present their work. We will form groups during the last week of the semester and you will have time in class to plan your presentation.

Participation and Attendance (20 points): You are expected to attend each class and participate in class discussions/activities. If you need to miss class because of a college event or illness, please email me. Missing class without communication will be considered an unexcused absence. You can have one unexcused absence because life happens. After that, your grade will be reduced by 3 points per missed class.

Grading:

Assignment	Points Possible
Weekly reflections (8 x 10 points)	80
Memoir Review	40
Personal Narratives (2 x 20 points)	40
Final Session	20
Participation and Attendance	20
Total	200

Grade	Points
A = 93 – 100%	186-200
A- = 90 – 92.9%	180-185
B+ = 87 – 89.9%	174-179
B = 83 – 86.9%	166-173
B- = 80 – 82.9%	160-165
C+ = 77 – 79.9%	154-159
C = 73 – 76.9%	146-153
C- = 70 – 72.9%	140-145
D = 60 – 69.9%	120-139
F = < 60%	<119

Grades will be posted on Canvas throughout the term. If you have questions about a posted grade, please contact me. Final grades are determined based on the points earned in the course and will not be rounded.