

**SENIOR SEMINAR
PSYCHOLOGY 485
FALL SEMESTER 1998**

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Person
Office hours: MW 10:15 - 11:15
or by appointment

Phone: 843- 3988
Office: 129 Clough

Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to have you demonstrate the critical thinking skills indicative of a senior level psychology major. You will demonstrate critical thinking skills in weekly essays, class discussions, an oral presentation, and one term paper. It is my wish, along with the rest of the psychology faculty that you will think critically about the questions that are currently being asked in our field. At this stage in your education, you should be able to pose a narrowly focused, thought-provoking question about a psychological issue/topic, synthesize the information that you gather from research journals and books in a logical and meaningful way, and differentiate sound empirical evidence from the not-so-sound.

Course Requirements and Grade Evaluation

Class participation, preparation, and attendance (10%). The success of our class meetings depends on each student doing her/his reading assignments and showing up ready to contribute to the class discussions. Your final grade will suffer a 2% deduction for each class that you miss.

Weekly essays (25%, 5%each). The assigned reading each week will consist of a target article and a number of response articles from various issues of *Psychological Inquiry*. Each student will read the target article and one or two response articles. You will then write a short essay (2-3 pages) that: (1) summarizes the target article, and (2) summarizes the responses of the other researcher(s) (that are assigned to you) to the target article. These essays are due on my door on Monday at 12:00 p.m.

Written paper. (40%). In selecting the topic for your paper, you may choose one of the following two options: (1) You may choose to research an area of psychology that you have previously worked on with a Rhodes faculty member. That is, you may revise, rework, and update a project or paper that you completed in a directed inquiry or a part of 410 course. The version for this course should address the current questions and theoretical issues concerning your topic as well as include a critical evaluation of the empirical research available in current research journals. If this is the option that you choose, you should understand that the level of thinking and scholarship that you demonstrate in this course should reflect that of a senior level psychology major. You will need to provide me a copy of the original paper (preferably with the course instructor's feedback) as soon as possible. (2) You may choose to study a psychological topic/phenomena from the *Psychological Inquiry* readings. Regardless of the option you choose, your paper should be theoretically grounded and include a critical evaluation of the pertinent scientific evidence. Each paper is to be under 3500 words and must be written and referenced in APA style. This word limit does not include the title page, abstract, or reference section. All paper topics must be approved by the instructor.

Oral Presentations (25%). You will be required to give one 40 minute oral research presentation. The topic of the presentation will be the same as the topic for the written paper. The presentations are formal in nature and similar to those that occur at professional meetings and conferences. You will be expected to entertain questions either during or at the end of your presentation. The psychology faculty are invited to all student presentations.

Additional Requirements and Policies

1. Written work. All written assignments are to be typed. Your paper must be submitted in APA format. Papers not submitted in APA style will not be graded; they will be returned to you and a letter

grade will be deducted from your paper for each day that it is late. You will be penalized for excessive grammatical, spelling, and formatting mistakes.

2. Individual student meetings. On the days that we do not meet as a class, I will meet individually with students to discuss topics and ideas regarding the presentations and papers. There will be a sign-up sheet on my office door for senior seminar students only.
3. Honor code. All students are required to read the Honor Code. The constitution of the Honor Code is provided in the Student Handbook. Failing to properly reference published work is a violation of the Honor Code.
4. Check e-mail daily. You'll need to check your e-mail daily so you don't miss any course updates or schedule changes.
5. Pledges. Two pledges must be signed for each paper:
 - This paper reflects my own ideas and my current understanding of this issue.
 - This essay falls within the word/page limit.
6. Late work. **I do not accept late work.**