

Rhodes College  
Psychology 150  
Dr. Marsha Walton

Fall, 2005  
Foundational Issues in Psychology  
121 Clough

**Office hours:** Mondays 10:00 - 12:00 drop-in (no appointments)  
Wednesdays & Fridays by appointment

## I. Course Objectives

Psychology 150 is a course designed for students who wish to prepare for further study in the field of psychology or in related fields. It is a prerequisite for most advanced courses in the department of psychology. There are two interrelated course objectives for Psychology 150.

A. Students will become familiar with methods of investigation in psychology and will exercise critical thinking skills in evaluating psychological research. This will entail:

1. familiarity with the ethical and scientific principles that guide psychological research.
2. the ability to identify independent and dependent variables, and to understand issues of reliability and validity.
3. the ability to formulate empirical questions and operational definitions of psychological variables.

B. Students will become familiar with the foundational issues in the field of psychology and with the five major approaches to the study of these issues: biological, learning theory, cognitive, socio-cultural, and psychodynamic. Familiarity with foundational knowledge will entail:

1. the ability to recognize and discuss recurring themes and underlying principles that emerge in various areas of the discipline.
2. an understanding of the underlying assumptions and principles that guide the five major schools of thought in psychology, and an ability to compare and to evaluate thinking from these different perspectives.

## II. Course Requirements

### A. Reading Assignments

The following two textbooks are required, and should be read by class time on the day they are listed in the schedule that follows. The first text describes the five major approaches to the field of psychology and presents major themes. The second discusses critical methodological issues and prepares the student to read and evaluate psychological studies.

Tavris, C. & Wade, C. (2001). *Psychology in perspective, 3rd Edition*. Prentice Hall. (TW)

Hock, R. R. (2005). *Forty studies that changed psychology: Explorations into the history of psychological research., 5th Edition*. Prentice Hall. (H)

All of the Tavris & Wade text, and 13 chapters from the Hock text will be assigned during the term. Optional readings in the Hock text are listed in parentheses at points in the schedule when they will be relevant to the readings. Students who do these optional readings and turn in a short report, will receive two bonus points that will be added to the relevant exam. The reports should include the following information:

1. Authors and title of the article in APA style (just copy from the Hock text).
2. Describe the research question(s) addressed in this study.
3. Identify the independent and dependent variables.
4. Describe how the independent variable(s) were manipulated.
5. Describe how the dependent variables were operationalized.

Bonus reports must be turned in at the beginning of the class in which they are listed on the schedule and will not be credited if they are late. They must be typed in accordance with font and style guidelines described in Footnote 1.<sup>1</sup>

### **B. Criterion Assignments**

There will be several short assignments in psych 150 that focus on your ability to ask clear empirical and theoretical questions and to operationalize variables. These assignments will not be graded, but students will be required to re-do them until they meet the minimum standard. (Most students succeed on the first or second attempt.) Students who do not complete the criterion assignments will not pass the course.

### **C. Examinations**

Opening Quizzes. The first five minutes of most classes will be used for quick quizzes on material from that day's reading assignment or from the previous class lecture. Points earned on these quizzes will be added as bonus points to the next in-class exam. Students not present for these (no matter what the reason) will not be given any make-up. (They're BONUS points!)

In-class exams. Five objective, multiple choice and short-answer tests will be given during the term. These will cover material from assigned readings, from class lectures and discussions. Each of these tests will count 10% of the final course grade.

Final Examination. A comprehensive final examination will cover all course work. The exam will be similar in format to the in-class examination. It will count 20% of the final course grade.

The final exam will be divided into sections corresponding to the five units in the course. For students whose performance on the final exam is better than their grade on the corresponding in-class exam, I will overwrite the earlier grade. Because I allow this 'second chance' with no penalties, I do not generally give make-up exams during the term except for college-sponsored trips where it is possible for the student to take the exam early. If a student is ill or for some other reason is unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, he or she will count that part of the final exam as the grade for that section of the course.

Students whose average is above 93 on the first five exams will have the option of taking an oral final rather than the written exam.

### **D. Experiment Participation.**

Students are encouraged to participate in ongoing research in the department by volunteering for three hours to be subjects in experiments conducted by students in advanced psychology classes. All studies will have been approved by an Institutional Review Board that considers the ethical implication of all research with human participants. Participants will be given an opportunity to learn about the findings of the research at the end of the project. We believe that participation as a subject is an excellent way to gain first-hand knowledge and deeper understanding about how psychological research is conducted. Students who participate in an experiment will write a short report describing (1) what they did and how they felt during the experiment and (2) what the research question and the researcher's hypotheses were. These reports are due by the last class day at 4:30.

An alternative to the experiment participation requirement is offered to those students who do not wish to be a research participant or are unable to schedule an experiment. This will involve a comparable amount of writing about research that the student will read.

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<sup>1</sup> ALL out-of-class work turned in for this course must be typed, double-spaced, in a print size no smaller than this footnote. Work that does not meet these specifications will be returned unread and will suffer the late penalty or will not be credited.

Students who do not complete either the research participation or its alternative will not pass psych 150.

### **E. Student Investigations**

Students will complete two Student Investigation assignments and will turn in a report of their work on the dates listed in the schedule. The two projects will count 30% of the final course grade. Student Investigations assignments involve collecting data on one's own behavior and sharing with classmates. They are to be done in accordance with the *Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Subjects*, published by the American Psychological Association and summarized in your Hock book of readings. A copy is kept on reserve in the Atkinson Reading Room (Clough 111a). All projects must be typed (double-spaced, font size as large as footnote 2) and prepared in the format described below. Projects turned in later than 4:30 p.m. of the day they are due will suffer a full letter grade penalty and will not be graded until the end of the term. Those not prepared according to these specifications will be returned and must be redone; they will suffer the late penalty. Students who turn the first student investigations in on time may re-do these assignments if they wish to improve their performance. All re-writes will suffer the one-grade late penalty. Re-writes will be considered only if they are turned in along with the original graded paper. No late work or re-writes will be accepted after 4:30 p.m. on the last class day.

Students are strongly encouraged to collaborate in pairs or triplets on the Student Investigation projects. Collaboration on these projects allows students to work with more data than each has collected alone. When collaborating, each student should collect data, as specified in the assignment, and then the authors should combine the data and write a single report. Each author must sign the pledges as described in the section below on the use of the honor code.

Use the following headings to organize your Student Investigation Reports.

#### I. Description and Explanation of Research Question.

Describe your research question, and the purpose of the project. Report previous research or background theory that is relevant to the study.

#### II. Description of Method.

- a. Participants: Detail the number and relevant characteristics of your research participants (e.g., age, education, etc.).
- b. Procedure: Carefully and clearly describe your research procedure.

#### III. Results.

Give a clear and orderly description of your results. Present numerical data in tables and/or graphs as well as in paragraphs. Always attach all raw data to the end of the report. Each author's raw data should be identified and pledged (see below).

#### IV. Discussion.

Explain your research results in light of what was expected, based on previous research and theory. If your results do not support your expectations or corroborate previous research, discuss why you think this happened. You may be able to come up with reasons why your data lead to different conclusions than you initially expected.

Consider the flaws and/or limitations in the procedure you used. How might you change this study to address some of the criticisms you make?

### **III. Use of the Honor Code in Psychology 150**

As in all courses at Rhodes, students are expected to act honorably in pursuit of our mutual educational objectives. Unlike some other courses, however, collaborative work is encouraged in all out-of-class assignments. Therefore students are free to study together, to share notes, to discuss all assignments with one another or with others outside the class, to proofread and edit one another's work, and to give

each other as much helpful feedback as possible. For this reason, work done for this course will be pledged differently than work in many other courses in the college.

All in-class examinations should be pledged with the standard college honor code: *I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this exam.* The pledge should be written on the back of the last page of the exam. No copies of 150 exams or exam items from any section of the course from this term or from any previous term should be available for students to see. If you should become aware that any such copies exist, you are required to report this to the instructor. It is an honor code violation to fail to report the availability of exams.

For all written, out-of-class work turned in for this course, students should sign the following pledge: *The ideas in this report reflect my understanding of and my current thinking about this material.*

Each author of a collaborative report must sign the following additional pledge: *I pledge that I have contributed my fair share to this collaboration.*

For student investigations, which involve collecting data, each student will attach a copy of the data to the report along with the following signed pledge: *I pledge that I collected these data myself and that this is an accurate and un-tampered-with copy of my results.*

#### IV. Schedule of Assignment and Reading Due Dates

Day	Date	Reading	Topic	Assignment Due
1th	8.25		Introductions/First Questions	
2t	8.30	TW1	Epistemology	Ten Questions
3th	9.1	TW2	Four Ws (Who, What, Where, When), and Four Cs (Casual Correlations and Causal Connections)	
4t	9.6	H6c, Hpreface	Bias and Noise Validity and Reliability	Theory Questions/ Empirical Questions
5th	9.8	Exam 1	Exam 1 - Buckman 216 (9:30 - 10:15) Exam Post-mortem - Clough 123 (10:15 - 10:45)	
6t	9.13	TW7 (H5b)	Baby Thought/ Mind of a Child	Operational Definitions
7th	9.15	H4a, H4c	Mind of a College Student	
8t	9.20	TW8	User's Guide to Human Memory Memory and Intelligence	Imaginary Answers
9th	9.22	Essay 3, H4d	Creating the Past	Study SI data
10 t	9.27		Exam 2 (Buckman 216) Cognitive Psychology Reprise (Clough 123)	
11 th	9.29	TW3 (H4b)	Heritability and Epigenesis of Behavior	
12 t	10.4	H1c, H6b (H5a)	Infant Temperament and the Epigenetic Landscape	
13 th	10.6	TW4 (H1b)	The Psychology of Seeing (Guest Lecture: Dr. R. Strandburg)	Study SI paper
14 t	10.11	Essay 1, H1a, (H2b, H2c)	Foundations of Form and Function: Architecture of the Sensory Systems	
15 th	10.13		Exam 3 (Buckman 216) Midterm Check-ups (Clough 123)	
			Midterm Recess	

16 th	10.20	TW5 (H3b)	Radical Behaviorism Environmental Engineering	
17 t	10.25	H3c, H9b (H3a)	Principles of Operant Conditioning Punishment	
18 th	10.27	TW6 (H5c,H3d)	Moderate Behaviorism Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	
19 t	11.1	Essay 2, H7a, (H5d)	Blaming Others/Blaming Yourself Freedom and Responsibility	
20 th	11.3		Exam 4 (Buckman 216) Freedom and Responsibility: Reprise	
21 t	11.8	TW9 (H10a)	Social Construction of Gender Classroom Talk	
22 th	11.10	H6d, H10c (H10b, H7d)	Social Construction of Self	
23 t	11.15	TW10 (H4b)	Intimacy and Power Gender Roles and Relationship	
24 th	11.17	Essay 4, H7b	Comparing Perspectives on Gender	Classroom Language SI Data
25 t	11.22		Exam 5 (Buckman 216) Five Perspectives on Gratitude	
			Thanksgiving Recess	
26 t	11.29	TW11 Essay 5 (H2d,H8b, H9c,H9d)	Unconscious Motivation First Love and the Powerful Mother	Classroom Language SI paper
27 th	12.1	TW12 (H7c,H8a, H8c, H8d, H9a)	Five Perspectives on Human Misery	
28 t	12.6	Essay 6, H6a	Critical Issues and Themes Finding Uses for What You've Learned	All experiment participation reports. All SI re-writes.
	12.9		Reading Day	
	12.14	8:30 a.m.	Final Examination	