

**Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
PSYC 4050 6.0 C: PERSONALITY THEORY AND
BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS**

Thursday 11:30, VH2005

FW 2024-25

Please read this outline very carefully: it contains information about our course and how to make the best of it. Read it again before working on any major assignment. If you have any question, please ask the instructor during class, so that other students would benefit from your question.

Note: This outline contains some redundancies that aim to emphasize important issues.

This course integrates personality theory with behavioural styles and personality disorders. It is focused on case studies that allow us to apply the theories of personality and the knowledge of psychopathology on real people.

The first semester is devoted to core concepts and theories of personality; the second semester is devoted to personality styles and psychopathology and to case studies. During the fall semester, class is mainly guided by the course director. During the winter semester, class is lead by the students themselves who will be presenting two seminar academic projects.

In both semesters active involvement of students in discussion is important. These discussions make the class an academic seminar. For most classes students are required to read chapters from a textbook /course kit and will be tested on the reading material. Please note that in the beginning of the second semester students are responsible to master **three** textbook chapters for each class. This is a heavy lifting, which is better prepared ahead of time (during the fall when reading is lighter and during winter break).

In class quizzes will be written on e-class platform, therefore it is recommended that students have operational suitable equipment (such as a laptop or smart phone) for that purpose.

Experiential learning:

This course emphasizes experiential learning by a case-study research, trough applying theories of personality and psychopathology on real people (with or without any significant psychopathology). The case-study research is based on biographical literature.

Course Director Ehud E. Avitzur, Ph.D., C. Psych

Webpage: www.yorku.ca/eavitzur

Office: NA

Office Hours: By appointment, usually **before** class or remotely.

E-mail: Please note: **Emails are read and answered on Wednesdays AM and Sundays AM only.** Email address: eavitzur@yorku.ca use it only for

urgent and important matters. PLEASE WRITE “**4050 /A**” in the subject line.

E-mail without such a subject line is considered “a spam”.

Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced.

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology)
- HH/PSYC 2021 3.00 (Statistical Methods I) or HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II)
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 2130 3.00 (Personality)
- HH/PSYC 3140 3.00 (Abnormal Psychology)
- Students must be in an Honours program in Psychology and have completed at least 84 credits

Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

Course website: [eClass](#)

All course materials, except textbook and course kit, will be available on the course eClass site. The site will be your central access point for course materials.

Course Description

This course aims at deepening the understanding of major theories of personality and personality development on the one hand and human behaviour and psychopathology on the other hand. The course will focus on the emotional and social aspects of personality and psychopathology.

In the fall, we will concentrate in the theoretical aspects of personality and its development. Later, the first part of the winter semester will be devoted to students' presentations on behavioural disorders. The last part of the winter semester will be devoted to students' *case study project*.

In the process of learning personality theory and behaviour disorders we will deal constantly with the nature/ nurture issue, and we will be tracing the fine boundaries between the normal and the abnormal in the human phenomenon. This learning experience has the potential of promoting a deeper psychological understanding.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in personality theory and behaviour disorders.
2. Critically evaluate, synthesize, and resolve conflicting results in personality theory and behaviour disorders.
3. Articulate trends in personality theory and behaviour disorders.
4. Locate research articles and show critical thinking about research findings in personality theory and behaviour disorders.
5. Express psychological knowledge in written form in more than 1 sub-discipline.
6. Engage in evidence-based dialogue with course director and peers.
7. Demonstrate an ability to work with others.

Required Reading:

Course kit for the first semester: Available at the bookstore.

Reading for the second semester:

Millon, T., Grossman S., Millon, C., Meagher, S. and Ramnath, R. (2004). *Personality disorders in modern life*. NJ: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

(Currently out of print, available as a course kit for students in this course).

Ground rules:

- If you are sick, or if someone in your household is sick- please stay at home, as a public health measure. Please note: when sick, you may write your quiz at home.
- Our classroom has no windows. It is recommended to use a mask in class if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Cellphones, and tablets will be used in class only for educational purpose. Empirical research shows that multi-tasking impairs the quality of performance.
- Be on time.
- In a seminar class, we are a team working together. If you must leave class before it ends, let us know.

Teamwork: Many research projects in psychology are products of joint efforts of colleagues. In this course presentations and papers may be performed individually or as a joint effort of two-three students, depending on the number of students in class. If you are in a team, be aware that the workload should not be divided: All team members will work together and will be equally responsible for all parts of the presentation and paper. Make sure that all team members share similar motivation to invest in the project.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Constructive, meaningful contribution in class	Every class	10%
Quizzes: Fall	Almost every class	15%
Quizzes: Winter		15%
A pitch for the first presentation (on a personality disorder)	Fall classes # 8, 9	3%
A pitch for the second presentation (historical case study)	Winter class # 1,2	3%
First Presentation (on a personality disorder)	Winter: Classes 2-6	12%
Second Presentation (on a case study)	Winter: Classes 7-12	17%
Final Paper	Last day of class	25%
Total		100%

Description of Assignments

Constructive Participation in our seminar class. Students who attend and participate in seminars tend to get more out of courses, learning from the classmates and from direct interactions with the Course Director. Beginning on our second class, students' **meaningful** contributions are monitored and recorded. Meaningful contributions are those that promote, enhance the academic discussion, adding insight, offer integration with knowledge of psychology, interesting and relevant life experiences. Students who cannot attend class, cannot contribute to it. Students are encouraged to stay at home when sick, or when someone in the household is sick.

Quizzes: To encourage students' engagement with required readings, many seminar classes include Quizzes. Typically, quizzes will be short, based on multiple-choice questions. Assuming n quizzes in each semester, only the best n-1 quizzes per semester will be calculated towards the final grade. **No make-up for missed quizzes will be offered for any reason.**

“Pitches”: Tentative Outlines of Presentations: As in most seminar classes, most of the second semester is devoted to students’ presentations. Students are expected to present twice in teams. Ahead of the two presentations, the teams will be very briefly discussing their Presentations’ Tentative Outline. This aims at promoting a timely preparation of the presentations, and make sure that the team is one the right track. Each team will shortly describe its project (5 minutes maximum). The outline of your first presentation will be discussed in classes number 8, 9. The outline for your second presentation will be discussed in the first and second classes after the winter break. Teams pitch will be roughly evaluated as: fail (0); below expectation (1%); meet expectation (2%); above expectation (3%). To meet the expectation on the outline for the first presentation, which is about a personality disorder, students must read and master the corresponding chapter in Millon’s text and have a tentative idea of where to take it further, including a tentative annotated bibliography. To meet the expectation on the outline for the second presentation (on a real person), students should read at least two biographies about the person on focus and be able to discuss in class their reliability and validity, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, students should have a tentative idea about which personality theories *may* be a good fit for this project; and students should be able to suggest a topic for their independent further research (see below, “Second presentation on a case study”).

Presentations: The second semester is devoted to students’ presentations. Students are expected to present twice.

Please consult with the following link to improve your presentation:

<https://eavitzur.info.yorku.ca/class-presentation/>

Feedback on your presentation is often given by classmates and professor immediately after your presentation. Please make sure to write down the feedback. Grades are finalized after all teams have presented.

The first presentation (30 minutes) is focused on a personality style/disorder (antisocial, avoidant, OC, dependent, histrionic, narcissistic, schizoid, schizotypal, paranoid, borderline). This presentation will address a personality theory perspective, developmental factors, and behavioural ramifications of the disorder. Bringing the subject matter to the state of the arts, in term of current empirical research would be advantageous. A rubric is available on eClass.

The case study project includes three parts: “a pitch” (check above: **“Pitches: tentative outline of presentation”**), presentation (check **second presentation on a case study** below), and a final paper (check **Final Paper** below).

Second Presentation on a case study (45 minutes, discussion excluded). The presentation’s structure would be like the structure of an academic paper in psychology (see below “Final Paper”) with one difference: The presenters may leave some issues open for discussion in class, and they may share their questions with the class. Post-presentation class discussion is aimed at targeting these issues and enriching the final paper. The professor will lead the post-presentation discussion. Rubric is available on eClass.

As described earlier, this project aims at integration of personality theory, personality styles and disorders in real life. Since students are not eligible to apply clinical concepts to real people, a compromise is offered: Instead of exploring the life of a “living” person, students may focus on a known person, about whom there is a lot of biographical information. Examples: Joseph Stalin, Sylvia Plath. Of more contemporary interest: Donald Trump. The person on focus does **not** have to demonstrate any psychopathology: Barak Obama, for example, would be a good candidate to be the focus of your study.

It is advisable to choose an interesting, multilayered, complex personality about whom there is enough reliable psychologically relevant information to be the centre of your project. Students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking about biographical data collection issues, such as contradictions among sources, issues of reliability and validity. The students are encouraged to consult with the professor early in the year before making the final decision about the focus of the project. Please note that projects on people with very similar pathologies will not be approved (many students seem to be fascinated by antisocial serial killers. To avoid redundancy, only two teams will be allowed to present serial killers). Please choose a person who is older than 50, so that there is information on a solid portion of their adult life. Please take into account that detailed information about the subject’s childhood is needed to relate to most personality theories that emphasize the impact of childhood’s experiences.

The project will relate to a minimum of two theoretical perspectives learnt in class and at least one issue (theoretical or empirical) independently studied. These will be applied to a person on focus. For example: If you decided to work on the life story of Princess Diana, you may use two of the theories discussed in class (such as Freud’s psychoanalysis and attachment) plus independent research (i.e., bulimia; impact of parental conflict on children; or any other issue that is relevant to Princess D’s life).

Final Paper:

The final paper will be written in accordance with APA guideline/style.

The paper can be written individually or, preferably, as a joint effort of a team/ parts of a team.

Paper format: While the presentation is semi-formal, in terms of language and style, the paper is the formal written assignment in this course. It will include: title; abstract; the core of the paper will be an introduction (1-2 pages), method (of your qualitative research; addressing the reliability and the validity of biographical resources; 1 page), results (the life story of the person, focus only on facts; 4-5 pages), discussion (your understanding of the life story of the person, focus on interpretation and speculation according to your psychological knowledge; 3-4 pages); summary (1/2 page); reference list; appendix. The recommended length of the paper is 10 double spaced pages (not including bibliography). Maximum length is 11 pages (not including bibliography). Appendix at any length is accepted.

If you work on the paper as a team, you must add an appendix to your paper, describing team members’ contributions to the project. Without such a document the group members will not be granted a final grade. Free riding is not an option.

Criteria for paper evaluation: Rubric is available on eClass. Please note: Good academic writing skills are critical to have your ideas delivered and understood. *Only a paper that is well written can be a good paper.* Great ideas cannot be appreciated if not well articulated.

Penalties: referring to a textbook or to an unreliable website. Papers are to be handed in by the due date. Students handing in the paper in a delay will be penalized (3% per day). *Students presenting their work during the last two weeks of classes will be automatically granted with a seven-day extension.* No need to ask for that extension.

Late Work/Missed Quiz

Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (Attending Physician Statement is not required due to the pandemic). Nevertheless, if one wishes, APS can be found at <http://registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attending-physicians-statement.pdf>). Students who wish to request the accommodation from the Course Instructor, may do so. The accommodation will be tailored to the individual case. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. Penalty for not-authorized late submission of work: One letter grade decreases every late day (e.g., A becomes B+).

Class Format and Attendance Policy

As mentioned before, a main feature of a seminar class is academic discussion. Students and professor sit in a space that invites and facilitates such a discussion. Attendance and meaningful contributions are monitored.

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2024-2025](#)

Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment

For any late assignment, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office. At this time, due to COVID-19 an Attending Physician's Statement (APS) is not required, however, a reason for missing an evaluation component in the course must be provided.

[HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for late assignment.

Missed quizzes: there will be many quizzes during the year, and the lowest two are not included in the final grade. When for health reasons you cannot attend class, you may write the quiz at home, through e-calss. *There are no makeup quizzes for any reason.*

For a list of all important dates please refer to [Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates](#)

	Fall (Term F)	Year (Term Y)	Winter (Term W)
Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept 18	Sept 18	Jan 20
Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct 2	Oct 16	Jan 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Nov 8	Feb 7	Mar 14
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	Nov 9 – Dec 3	Feb 8-Apr 4	Mar 15-Apr 4

Add and Drop Deadline Information

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

Electronic Device Policy

As mentioned before, electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops) are permitted during class time for course-related purposes. It is expected that you would

complete tests/exams in a manner that does not require consulting an unauthorised source during an examination.

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as “Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation” (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or “encouraging, enabling or causing others” (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses

and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the 4050A course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

Intellectual Property Rights Statement. Lateness Penalty

Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized, one half letter grade (1 grade point) per day that assignment is late. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter).

Unauthorized late submission of work results in a lower letter grade/day.

Tentative Course Schedule

Fall

#	Topic	Reading for the class	Students' activity
1 Sep. 5	A general introduction to the course. The scientific evolution of ideas. Principle of Over Determination. Q&A and office hour	No reading is assigned to first class	
2 Sep. 12	Temperament: focus on reactivity, adaptability, quality of mood. Q&A and office hour	On Thomas and Chess' model of Temperament: Use your 1010 or 2110's text. This is a light load of reading, so start reading Millon's text! While reading Millon's text, write study notes for yourself.	
3 Sep. 19	Freud's structural theory; Life and death instincts. From Freud to Klein: Evolution of ideas. Klein's main concepts Q&A and office hour	Read two first chapters (pages 1-77) from the course kit	Q1 on Freud
4 Sep. 26	Psychodynamic model: The defences	Master page 79 in your course kit "Early Perspectives". Use other sources to expand your understanding of each defence mechanism. This is a light load of reading, so continue reading Millon's text.	Q2 on defences
5 Oct 3	No Class	Continue reading Millon's text.	
6 Oct. 21	<u>Planning the first presentation: Teaming up; Topics and dates.</u> Erikson Q&A and office hour	Mitchell and Black (1995): On Erikson. Course kit. This is a light load of reading, so continue reading Millon's text	Q3 on Erikson
7 Oct. 28	On Adler Q&A and office hour	Read the chapter on Adler	Q4 on Adler

8 Nov. 4	1. "pitch" your first presentation (first half class) 2. On sex, gender, sexual orientation Q&A and office hour	No new reading is assigned for today's class. Use the time to continue reading Millon's text	Upload your pitch with an annotative bibliography. (two halves class)
9 Nov. 11	1. "pitch" your first presentation (second half class) 2. Self-Psychology 3. Q&A and office hour	On self-psychology from the course kit.	Q5 on Kohut's Self Psychology Presentations (cont.)
10 Nov. 18	Self-Psychology (cont.) Q&A and office hour	No new reading is assigned for today's class. Use the time to continue reading Millon's text	
11 Nov. 25	1. Attachment Theory: Bowlby and Ainsworth. Contemporary research on adult attachment. Second presentation teaming up and brainstorming. Q&A and office hour	On attachment from the course kit: Hazan and Shaver (1987): Romantic love.	Q6 on Hazan and Shaver's paper
12 Dec. 2	1. <u>Planning the second presentation: Topics and dates.</u> 2. A case illustration (from CBC's Fifth Estate: Over the Edge). Q&A and office hour	Millon: Chapter 3 from the course kit or from the textbook for winter term	Q7 on Millon's chapter 3

ATTENTION: Make sure you have enough feedback on your performance in the course prior to the last date to drop the course without receiving a grade. Check the specific date on previous pages.

Happy Holidays!

Winter

#	Behavioural irregularity	Reading	Presenting Students
1 Jan. 6	1. A general introduction: Personality styles and disorders 2. Pitch your second presentation Q&A and office hour	You have read once Millon's text. Time to read again your reading notes.	
2 Jan. 13	1 Antisocial 2 Avoidant (a bonus to first teams presenting) Q&A and office hour	Reread the corresponding chapters in your textbook	Q9 A, Av
3 Jan. 20	3 OC 4 Dependent 5 Histrionic Q&A and office hour	Reread the corresponding chapters in your textbook	Q10 OC, D, H
4 Jan. 27	6 Schizoid 7 Paranoid 8 Narcissistic Q&A and office hour	Reread the corresponding chapters in your textbook	Q11 Scid, P, N
5 Feb. 3*	9 Borderline 10 Schizotypal Q&A and office hour	Reread the corresponding chapters in your textbook	Q12 B, Scty
6 Feb. 10	First final Presentations (a bonus) Q&A and office hour		1 2
7 Feb. 24	Final Presentations Q&A and office hour		3 4
8 Mar. 3	Final Presentations Q&A and office hour		5 6
9 Mar. 10	Final Presentations Q&A and office hour		7 8
10 Mar. 17	Final Presentations Q&A and office hour		9 10

11 Mar. 24	Final Presentations Q&A and office hour		11 12
12 Mac. 31	TBA		

*ATTENTION: Make sure you have enough feedback on your performance in the course prior to the last date to drop the course without receiving a grade. Check the specific date on previous pages.

Last date to submit final paper is April 4, 2025, by midnight.