



PLNU Department of Psychology

PSY3000-1 Personality & Adult Development

4 Units

Fall 2026

INFORMATION	SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE
Instructor:	Kelsy L. Richardson, PhD
Contact Info:	(714) 504-0960; krichar1@pointloma.edu
Meeting Times:	Tues/Thurs, 10-11:45am; Ryan Learning 102
Office hours:	By appointment

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course & Catalog Description

As described in the Catalog, this course is: "An introductory survey of classic theories and contemporary empirical research in the psychology of personality and adult development. Emphasis is placed on the importance of developing a capacity for critical evaluation."

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and compare major theoretical approaches to personality psychology.
2. Explain personality in terms of traits, characteristic adaptations, and narrative identity.
3. Apply personality theories and concepts to case examples and everyday human behavior.
4. Explain patterns of personality development, stability, and change across adulthood.
5. Evaluate basic research methods, evidence, and assessment approaches used in personality psychology.
6. Analyze the influence of biological, social, cultural, relational, and life-experience factors on personality and identity.

7. Integrate multiple perspectives to develop a nuanced, evidence-based understanding of the whole person.
8. Develop greater self-awareness and interpersonal understanding by applying personality psychology concepts to their own patterns, experiences, and development, while cultivating empathy, curiosity, and appreciation for the diverse ways in which others think, feel, relate, and make meaning of their lives.

Required Texts

McAdams, D. P., & Dunlop, W. L. (2022). *The person: A new introduction to personality psychology* (6th ed.). Wiley.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 4-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 150 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

Assessment and Grading

The final grade will be based on a combination of weekly reading quizzes, four exams, and one paper.

Weekly Quizzes	130 (10 each)
Exam 1	60
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Assignments	100
Attendance/Participation	100
TOTAL	590

Grades will be based on the following:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Use of Technology

I am asking you not to use laptops:

I strongly recommend not using laptops in class. The reasons are three fold:

1. It is hard to not check other things, which impairs your learning. You most likely are not aware of the impairment, but the research is quite clear.
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html
2. Even if it doesn't impair your learning, it impairs others learning.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>
3. You write more but learn less. Writing your notes creates synthesis which increases your learning. <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>
http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2014/08/25/why-im-asking-you-not-to-use-laptops/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

So I am asking you not to use laptops unless you need or strongly prefer a laptop to take notes. In that case talk to me and we will make that work.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade. Your attendance and participation grade begins at 100 points. After your first absence, each following absence will result in a 20 point deduction. Tardies will result in a 5 point deduction up to 15 minutes, after which will be counted as an absence. Leaving class early without an approved excuse will be treated as an absence with a 20 point deduction.

Optional Final Paper: Understanding Yourself Through Personality Psychology (20 pts)

Purpose: Throughout this course, we have explored personality not simply as a collection of traits, but as a complex and developing system shaped by temperament, relationships, experiences, goals, values, culture, and the stories we tell about our lives. For this optional final paper, you will turn that lens toward yourself. The goal is not to diagnose or evaluate yourself, but to use concepts from personality psychology to develop a more thoughtful understanding of who you are, how you became that person, and how you may continue to develop throughout adulthood.

Write a 2–3 page reflection examining your own personality and development through concepts we have explored in this course. You do not need to answer every question below. Instead, use them to help you develop a thoughtful and cohesive reflection.

1. What am I generally like? — Personality Traits

Consider some of the relatively consistent patterns in how you think, feel, behave, and relate to others.

- Which personality traits seem particularly characteristic of you?
- How might you describe yourself using the Big Five?
- In what situations are these traits most noticeable?
- Are there ways in which your personality changes depending on the situation or people you are with?
- What strengths and challenges may accompany some of your traits?

2. What matters to me? — Goals, Values, and Motivations

Go beyond describing what you are like and consider what motivates you.

- What goals, values, relationships, or commitments are particularly important to you?
- What do you tend to seek out or avoid?
- What motivates important decisions in your life?
- Are there recurring needs, fears, desires, or conflicts that influence your choices?
- How do your goals and motivations help explain aspects of your personality that traits alone cannot?

3. How did I become this person? — Personality Development

Consider some of the influences that have contributed to your personality development.

- What relationships or experiences have been particularly influential?
- How has your family, culture, community, or social environment shaped you?
- Have important transitions or challenges changed how you understand yourself?
- What aspects of your personality seem relatively stable, and what aspects have changed?
- In what ways are you different now than you were earlier in your life?

You are never required to disclose experiences that feel too personal or uncomfortable to discuss in an academic assignment.

4. What story do I tell about myself? — Narrative Identity

Think about your life as a story that continues to develop.

- What experiences or memories feel especially important to your understanding of who you are?
- Are there recurring themes in how you describe yourself or your life?
- How do you make sense of difficult experiences, successes, relationships, or transitions?
- How does your understanding of your past influence who you believe you are today?
- What kind of person are you hoping to become?

5. What have I learned about myself and others? — Reflection

Conclude by reflecting on how studying personality psychology has affected the way you understand yourself.

Consider questions such as:

- What did you learn about yourself through this course?
- Did anything challenge or complicate the way you previously understood your personality?
- Are there aspects of yourself you now view with greater curiosity or compassion?
- Has learning about personality changed the way you understand people who are different from you?
- How might greater awareness of personality help you approach other people with more empathy and curiosity?
- What is one question about yourself that you are leaving this course still curious about?

****A Note About Personal Reflection:** This assignment invites meaningful self-reflection, but you are in control of what you choose to share. You do not need to disclose trauma, mental health concerns, family difficulties, or other private experiences to write a strong paper. You will be evaluated on your ability to thoughtfully apply concepts from personality psychology—not on how personal your disclosures are.

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In PSY3000 all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1 Tues 9/1 Thurs 9/3	Intro to Personality Psychology <i>Cont'd</i>		
WEEK 2 Tues 9/8 Thurs 9/10	Persons <i>Cont'd</i>	Ch. 1	Ch. 1 Reading Quiz
WEEK 3 Tues 9/15 Thurs 9/17	The Evolution of Human Nature <i>Cont'd</i>	Ch.2	Ch. 2 Reading Quiz
WEEK 4 Tues 9/22 Thurs 9/24	Social Learning & Culture <i>Cont'd</i>	Ch.3	Ch. 3 Reading Quiz
WEEK 5 Tues 9/29	EXAM 1 (Ch 1, 2, 3)		

Thurs 10/1	Dispositional Traits	Ch.4	Ch. 4 Reading Quiz
WEEK 6			
Tues 10/6	Dispositional traits cont'd		
Thurs 10/8	Extraversion & Neuroticism	Ch.5	Ch. 5 Reading Quiz
WEEK 7			
Tues 10/13	Extraversion & Neuroticism Cont'd		
Thurs 10/15	Agreeableness & Conscientiousness	Ch.6	Ch. 6 Reading Quiz
WEEK 8			
Tues 10/20	Agreeableness & Conscientiousness Cont'd		
Thurs 10/22	NO CLASS- FALL BREAK		
WEEK 9			
Tues 10/27	Openness to Experience	Ch.7	Ch.7 Reading Quiz
Thurs 10/29	<i>Cont'd</i>		
WEEK 10			
Tues 11/3	Stability & Change in Personality Traits	Ch.8	Ch. 8 Reading Quiz
Thurs 11/5	EXAM 2 (Ch 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8)		
WEEK 11			
Tues 11/10	Human Motivation	Ch.9	Ch. 9 Reading Quiz
Thurs 11/12	<i>Cont'd</i>		
WEEK 12			
Tues 11/17	The Moral Animal	Ch. 10	Ch. 10 Reading Quiz
Thurs 11/19	<i>Cont'd</i>		

WEEK 13			
Tues 11/24	Self & Other	Ch. 11	Ch. 11 Reading Quiz
Thurs 11/26	NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING		
WEEK 14		Ch.12	Ch. 12 Reading Quiz
Tues 12/1	Life Stories		
Thurs 12/3	<i>Cont'd</i>		
WEEK 15			
Tues 12/8	Personality Disorders	Ch.15	Ch. 15 Reading Quiz
Thurs 12/10	<i>Cont'd</i>		
WEEK 16			
Thurs 12/17	FINALS WEEK EXAM 3 (Ch 9, 10, 11,12 & 15) Thurs 12/17 at 10:30am-1pm		Optional Papers Due Thurs 12/17 by 11:59pm

