



Personality Psychology 4203, Section X-10
Fall 2026

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Don Knox, Ph.D.

Email: don.knox@msutexas.edu

Required Text:

Larsen, R.J. and Buss, D.M. Personality Psychology 8th McGraw-Hill.

Office Hours – 10:00 – 11:50 MWF OD 116

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Define personality.
2. Describe the methods of science used in the study of personality.
3. Describe and distinguish among the major theoretical approaches to understanding personality including the psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, existential, trait, and cognitive perspectives with a focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.
4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the methods used to assess personality.

Above and beyond this, we will approach the field of psychology critically as "a way of approaching and analyzing the world (Wade & Tavris, 1990, p. xvii)." This means that we will explore how to think critically about psychological phenomena and be skeptical about what we read.

As such, class discussions and projects will be designed to encourage your own exploration of personality psychology. Through the study of this field, you are likely to find that much of what we know in psychology directly relates to, and has the capacity to enrich, our experience of everyday life.

5. This is an Online course. Office hours are not for individual/group face to face instruction for this course.

EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES

Discussions: There will be 10 discussion questions. There two dates for each discussion. The first is posted on the D2L calendar and that is for your initial response. The second due date will be posted on each discussion and that is when your response to another student is due.

Examinations: There are four major exams. Each of the exams will cover ~5 chapters. Each of these exams is worth 15% of your grade. They are multiple-choice and each will consist of 50 - 70 questions. Respondus Monitor/Lockdown Browser will be used for exams. Make arrangements early, if needed to ensure the Respondus product works on your computer. MSU-Texas computer labs have this program installed.

Me Papers: Ten percent of your grade (10%) will be determined based on your completion of Four Theme Papers (Me Papers). These papers will be no less than 750 words each and will need to be submitted electronically via D2L. The papers will consist of your application of concepts discussed in class, covered in your text, and the assessments we complete in class to you and your life. The idea is to get a good grasp on who you are and be confident your abilities using the textbook and posted surveys as a reference. Each Unit ME paper focuses on applying the theories presented in those chapters.

Research Paper: Ten percent of your grade will be determined by a written research paper. The topic of the paper can be any one of the domains listed in the text book TOC. These papers are a formal writing assignment. APA style will be followed and the additional rules of Academic Honesty listed in the syllabus will be strictly adhered to for this assignment. These papers will be turned in through D2L and they will be checked for plagiarism and the use of AI and /or ChaptGPT and other similar services. Purchasing a paper from a company like termpapers.com is a form of academic dishonesty. All paraphrased information must be cited as well as direct quotes. At least 6 academic sources are required including at least one original work by the one of the researchers of your research domain (ex. Eysenck if researching Dispositional Domain). These papers will be at a minimum of 2500 words (does not include cover page, abstract, reference page).

Honors Requirement: An additional 10 percent of your grade in this class will be based upon the completion of the paper above but this paper must be a minimum of 3000 words. In addition to the paper, you will complete a poster presentation that will include at least 4 assessment instruments from your chosen domain, how they are used and why they are used by therapists. This poster presentation will be presented to the class.

Grading:

Breakdown of Grades		
Regular Exams	4 @ 150 points each = 600 points	60% (not averaged)
Me Papers	4 @ 50 points each = 200 points	20%
Research Paper	100 points	10%
Discussions	10 @ 10 each = 100 points	10%

Then use the following scale (there is no rounding or extra credit):

Grading Scale	
900– 1000	A
800– 890	B
700– 790	C
600– 690	D
Below 600	F

III. RELEVANT CLASS, PROGRAM AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Late submission of theme papers. Not allowed.

Academic Dishonesty: Please do not cheat or plagiarize. The MSU policy on cheating and plagiarism is in the MSU Student Handbook and Activities Calendar (Code of Student Conduct, Item 11) and I encourage you to review it. Additional information regarding the Academic Dishonesty policy is available from the Dean of Students office, in Clark Student Center. Cheating or engaging in plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) and/or a letter grade of “F” for the course!!!!!! If you find yourself even *thinking about* cheating on an exam or copying someone else’s work, please *talk to me* instead of doing it!!! This includes the use of AI and/or ChatGPT.

Wikipedia

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in this class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Written assignments will be run through a plagiarism and AI checker called Turn It In. If at any point Turn It In identifies that a student used AI to complete an assignment (such as ChatGPT), an automatic grade of zero will be given to the assignment.

Dropping the course: Please let me know if you plan on dropping the course. Often times, a student will decide to drop a course based upon their own perception of their progress. If I notice a student dropping back, I will do everything possible to bring that student up to speed. Let me help you make the decision to drop. This course is laid out so that a good portion of the grading will be completed prior to the drop date. I will have a section in the "my grades" that will indicate your progress to date to help you in your decision-making process.

Instructor Drop: An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

I will closely follow this policy in terms of your conduct in our online class. Anything that is disruptive to the class will result in you being Instructor Dropped from the class with a grade of F. I will enforce this policy in that my obligation is to provide the best and most informative course that I can. I cannot do that when there is behavior that disrupts the class. This also includes attempting to dominate or "teach" the class, interrupting the course frequently with stories that are not facilitative or relevant to the flow of the class, using electronics during class that are not directly related to the class material, and talking frequently to one's peers while course is being held. Any other behaviors that are deemed disruptive will also be enforced as deemed by our Code of Conduct policy. Remember that there are stories and questions that are facilitative to our class discussions, and some that are obstructive.

Informed Consent: This information is to inform the student of the limits of confidentiality while enrolled at MSU Texas or any other state school. Due to federal and state law, faculty and staff working for an university are required to report any information that falls under Title IX. Any student who indicates experiencing sexual abuse/misconduct, physical/emotional abuse, domestic violence, stalking, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or related experiences will have an incident report sent to either the MSU Texas Title IX and/or the Dean of Student's office. Student disclosure may occur via a face-to-face meeting, in-class self-disclosure, email, statement made in a written assignment, etc. If a student asks a faculty or staff person not to share the information, please note that by law, we have to report and I will report. Please note that as students, you may be aware of classmates/dormmates struggling and can make an incident report at: [Student Referrals and Incident Reporting Forms](https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas) or <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>

Report forms are:

Bias Incident Reporting Form
Campus Incident Report Form
Concerning Student Behavior Form
General Student Complaint Form

Sexual Misconduct Report Form
Student Alert Form

College Policies and Procedures

Can be found at the bottom of the MSU home page or at [Human Resources Policy](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. Any evidence of cheating will result in a grade of "F" and being reported to the [Dean of Students](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals

to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the FBI video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Student Code of Conduct

MWSU's official policy in the University's Code of Student Conduct on page 52, states:

Instructor Drop: An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor’s drop of a student takes precedence over the student initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods, the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed

"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, We, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to

complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters.

We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student.

We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate.

Cell Phones and Pagers: Please turn all cell phones and pagers off (no sound) during class. DO NOT text message during class. DO NOT answer your cell phone in class. Exceptions include emergency calls (e.g., birth of child, family member in hospital). Students who are unable to comply will not be allowed to attend class.

Note

Students with disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before accommodations can be provided. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact me and must provide documentation by Disability Support Services. The Director of Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397-4140, TDD (940) 397-4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Midwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability and complies with Section 504 and Public Law 101336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) in its admissions, accessibility, treatment and employment of individuals in its programs and activities.

A copy of the ADA Compliance Document is available online at [disability faq](#). It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications. Students who require special accommodations must register with Disability Support Services before these accommodations can be provided. An Accommodation Request Form can be obtained at [Accommodation Request](#).

NOTE: THE COURSE SYLLABUS PROVIDES A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS MAY BE NECESSARY. FINAL EXAM DATE IS FIRM

Test 1 (Ch 1-5)	9/14 - 9/18
ME 1	9/18

Test 2 (Ch 6-11)	10/12 – 10/16
ME 2	10/16
Test 3 (Ch 12-17)	11/9 – 11/13
ME 3	11/13
Research paper	11/16
Test 4	11/30 – 12/4
ME 4	12/4
Discussions	Weekly

Tips for success:

Here are some tips for success in my classes. Some students have the mindset that Internet classes are easier because you can use your book or that it is self-paced. Both of these things are untrue. Students that struggle with the time element with my tests typically do not read the chapters. There simply is not enough time to look everything up in the textbook when you take the quizzes or exams. You get the same amount of time on them that my traditional classroom students get – you get three hours of college credit just like they do – why should your tests be any different? I have deadlines and I do not allow for late work or extra credit. Same is true in my traditional classrooms. I really want each of you to succeed in this class and do well in life. In a very small way, I get to be a part of your successes and failures from here on out and that is a privilege for me.

1. Get your work done early. I will not accept late work for any reason. Unfortunately, some will test this policy and wait until one minute has passed from the deadline and then attempt to give me a myriad of excuses. I will not accept late work or more importantly, treat students differently. Early work is encouraged! Some of you will wait until late in the day something is due to complete items. That is fine but there is no instructor support. I consider this waiting until the last moment. Items are typically available the weekend before they are due for those of you that can only get work done on the weekend. I urge you not to wait.
2. Do not copy and paste information from other sources - I will do my best to get you dismissed from the college if I catch you plagiarizing. I want your opinions not "wikipedia" or "course hero" and your opinions are so much more important to me.
3. I do not believe in extra credit. If you have time for extra credit assignments, then you have time to complete the needed assignments and study. Please do not ask for extra credit or special consideration. All students deserve the same opportunities and considerations.
4. I promise you that you will get the grade you earn. Those that complete all items tend to earn very good grades. Please exceed the minimum word count requirements. Assignments less than the minimum will not be graded. Just like in life, please exceed minimal expectations in college.

5. Please use your MSU Texas student email account. While I usually reply to email within **24 business** hours but please allow 48 business hours. On weekends and holidays, please do not expect a response until 24 to 48 business hours after that period ends. If you cannot access your MSU Texas email account, then please contact the IT support people. They do a fantastic job in helping people out with their email issues.

6. I will not open any email attachments. I will not open attachments sent through the D2L message system. Please do not send them. Only use the assignment links provided. It is preferred that you attach your writing assignments there. I will open those attachments. Make sure that you only use *.doc. *.docx or *.rtf files. I cannot open any other file types.

7. If you decide that you need to use Chrome as your browser, please be aware that while the browser is compatible with D2L - your computer may not be set up in manner that allows that compatibility to be 100%. I urge you to clear out your Internet cache prior to loading assignments or taking exams. This is your responsibility. This has nothing to do with MSU or D2L - it is a problem that resides in your computer set up. There is a possibility that you will load a blank document or not have your answers saved while testing may happen if you do not follow this advice.