

Department: Psychology

Course No: 133

Credits: 3

Title: General Psychology II

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Content Area: CA2-Social Sciences

Catalog Copy: 133. General Psychology II

Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 132. Not open for credit to students who have passed PSYC 135. May not be taken concurrently with PSYC 135.

Psychology as a social science. Research methodology, developmental, personality, clinical, abnormal and social psychology.

Course Information: a. Goals and Objectives: The overall goal of PSYC 133 is to introduce students to the “social science” perspective of psychological science by examining the determinants of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. These determinants include not only contemporary determinants (e.g., ability, motivation, and environmental opportunity) but also ontogenetic determinants (e.g., environmental and genetic) and historical determinants (phylogenetic and sociocultural). Throughout the course, the importance of the empirical approach (e.g. research methods and results) and of different theoretical perspectives are emphasized to both expose students to multiple, plausible explanations for behavior and to encourage students to critically evaluate these competing explanations in terms of the validity of the empirical evidence they offer and in terms of the plausibility, range of convenience, and limitations of competing theories.

b. Course Requirements: PSYC 133 is a three-credit course which consists of three hours of lecture each week. At some regional campus (i.e., currently Stamford, but soon at Hartford and Waterbury), students are also expected to participate in ongoing research for 1.5 hours each semester, and may participate in an

additional 3.5 hours each semester for extra credit. The course typically includes two mid-term and one final exam. Given the “small” class sizes, which range from seven to 46 enrollments), there are ample opportunities for in-class discussions and exercises, as well as written assignments.

c. Topics: The major topics covered in PSYC 133 include the following:

1. History of Psychology (e.g., philosophical, biological, evolutionary, behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic approaches).
2. Research Methods (qualitative and quantitative data, correlational and hypothesis testing research, theoretical explanations)
3. Child and Developmental Psychology – behavioral, cognitive, social and emotional development in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (aging).
4. Personality, Abnormal, and Clinical Psychology – intelligence, personality assessment and theories, stress and coping, psychological disorders and their treatment.
5. Motivation, Emotion, and Social Psychology – physiological (hunger, sex) and social (achievement, affiliation) motives, the biology and communication of emotion, social cognition, and social influence

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: GOAL 2: Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility.

In addition to introducing students to a wide range of topic areas in psychology (including the history of psychology, social science research methods, intelligence, human development, stress and coping, personality, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders, motivation, social cognition, and social influence), PSYC 133 exposes students to alternative accounts of many phenomena. As part of this emphasis on complementary explanatory models, instructors emphasize the simultaneous existence of multiple “levels of analysis” (i.e. genetic, molecular, biochemical and neuronal, intra-psychic, interpersonal, familial, cultural, societal, and secular) that elucidate different but related aspects of behavior. In this way, students are encouraged to be skeptical of simplistic explanations (including those that exist in the media and that are arrived at solely through “common sense”) and to appreciate and embrace the complexity of psychological processes that occur within themselves!

and in the world around them. In-class discussions augment this process by affording students exposure to viewpoints that may diverge from their own and that necessitate thoughtful reexamination of their assumptions about human nature.

GOAL 3: Acquire critical judgment.

By 1) articulating the differences between informal observation and rigorous scientific investigation of human behavior, 2) providing frequent examples of the empirical underpinnings of theoretical models, and 3) encouraging students to express their own opinions and to critique material that is presented in lectures and in their textbooks, instructors provide students intellectual tools for evaluating knowledge and practice in applying them to course-related concepts. This didactic process is usually supplemented by two experiential approaches – in-class discussions and participation in empirical studies that are conducted through the Department of Psychology, thereby familiarizing students with some of the logistical and phenomenological dimensions of knowledge-generation within psychology.

GOAL 6: Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience.

During the past few decades, psychologists have become increasingly cognizant of the influence of diversity-related factors (e.g. gender, race and ethnicity, age, physical and mental disability, and socioeconomic status) on aspects of human functioning that were once regarded as universal. Throughout the course, instructors point out the moderating effects of such variables (as revealed by empirical research), challenge students to examine their own implicit assumptions regarding the determinants of behavior, and encourage them to internalize more sophisticated and powerful views of the origins of psychological characteristics and processes.

GOAL 7: Acquire a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge.

PSYC 133 provides students a detailed overview of the scientific method that is used to generate knowledge about human behavior, cognition, and emotional functioning. As part of this coverage, students are informed of the self-perpetuating and self-correcting nature of structured empirical inquiry. (That is, specification of testable hypotheses is followed by implementation of a systematic study that yields data. Analyses of the data either confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses and may suggest refinements and/or extensions of the investigators' original ideas regarding phenomena of interest.) In addition, they are encouraged to view this process as broadly applicable to a variety of fields of study and thus as a powerful strategy for producing information and evaluating ideas. Finally, by discussing both historical and cutting-edge research paradigms (e.g., those that integrate psychological, biological, and genetic variables), students are able to appreciate the constant

tly evolving nature of social science methodology and to anticipate the directions that future investigators will follow to expand our understanding of the human condition.

CA2 Criteria: GOAL 1: Introduce students to theories and concepts of the social sciences.

PSYC 133 is a broad survey of the social science dimensions of the field of psychology. This includes human development across the life span, the origins of healthy and disordered personality and emotional

functioning, and behavioral phenomena that occur both within the individual and among groups of people (e.g., families, organizations, and societies).

GOAL 2: Introduce students to methods used in the social sciences, including considerations of the ethical problems social scientists face.

Students are exposed to the systematic methods that psychologists use to acquire data (including naturalistic observation, case study, survey, and experimental approaches). In addition, through instructors' discussions of classic investigations and their own involvement in the research of faculty, students become intimately familiar with the logistical characteristics of different types of studies and with ethical issues that must be considered by behavioral scientists (e.g., elicitation of sensitive information and use of deception).

GOAL 3: Introduce students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment.

An entire unit of the course is devoted to the work of psychologists who study social influence and the effects of the interpersonal and physical environments on the functioning of individuals. Specific topics include mechanisms of persuasion and attitude change, development of prejudice, factors that affect workplace productivity and job satisfaction, and effects of crowding and noise on emotional well-being.

GOAL 4: Provide students with tools to analyze social, political, or economic groups/organizations (such as families, communities, or governments) and to examine social issues and problems at the individual, cultural, societal, national, or international level. Social issues may include issues of gender, race, social class, political power, economic power, and cross-cultural interaction.

In the context of discussions of human development, instructors inform students of contemporary psychological theories of family organization and functioning (especially as these affect the development of personality, identity, values, and attitudes). Throughout the course, moreover, instructors highlight the moderating influences of demographic variables (e.g. gender, race and ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status) on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive phenomena.

