

**Syllabus for  
Personality Traits and Personality Disorders  
Psychology 650, section 13 (3 credit hours), CRN 27739  
Psychology 450, section TBA (3 credit hours), CRN TBA**

**Instructor:** Geoffrey Miller  
**Where:** Logan Hall B15 (basement level)  
**When:** Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:30 pm

**Overview**

This new course considers human individual differences, personality traits, and personality disorders. We will focus on psychometrically validated dimensional constructs that show life-course stability, cross-cultural universality, and genetic heritability – especially the ‘Big Five’ traits of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. This course would be most appropriate for advanced undergraduates, or graduate students in psychology, biology, or anthropology who are interested in individual differences and mental health. The course will emphasize the benefits of including standard personality measures in almost all types of empirical psychology research and clinical assessment.

The course will cover:

- The nature and measurement of personality
- The genetics of personality
- The stability of personality across the life-course and across situations
- The social and moral psychology of personality
- Personality, culture, and sex differences
- Personality, stress, and physical health
- Dimensional vs. categorical models of personality disorders
- Relations between normal personality traits, personality disorders, and ‘Axis I’ disorders
- Schizotypal personality disorder and the schizophrenia spectrum
- Antisocial personality disorder, psychopathy, and criminality
- Narcissistic personality disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Personality assessment and what it predicts
- In less depth, we’ll also give some attention to schizoid, paranoid, histrionic, avoidant, and dependent personality disorders.

**Course mechanics**

We will meet once a week for two and a half hours. I expect punctuality. There will be a 10-15 minute break about half way through each meeting. If you have to miss a class for any reason, please let me know by email as soon as you know you’ll be absent. Unexplained absences will reduce your grade.

The course readings will require about 3 hours per week outside class, and will include selections from the textbook, plus some recent journal papers – which will be available as pdf files from Centennial Science Library electronic reserves.

**Required textbook:**

Matthews, G., Deary, I. J., & Whiteman, M. C. (2004). *Personality traits* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Cambridge U. Press. [paperback c. \$33 from UNM bookstore, amazon.com, half.com, etc.].

**Grading**

60%: one three-stage term paper, APA format, c. 5,000 words (20 pages double spaced): 10% for initial abstract and outline, 20% for rough draft, 30% for final draft, to be completed in successive months

40%: class attendance, participation, and prepared comments on readings  
no exams

**Instructors' contact details:**

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<http://www.unm.edu/~psych/faculty/gmiller.html>  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 11 am to noon, Logan Hall 160  
If you can't make office hours and you have a question, please call or email.

**Grading: depends on three kinds of work for this course**

**40%: class attendance, participation and preparation and presentation of xeroxed comments on the readings.** I expect regular attendance, knowledge of assigned readings, active participation, intellectual engagement, and well-prepared presentations concerning the readings. Each week, 2 to 4 students will be assigned to lead the discussion of the readings for the following week. Those students will be expected to write one page of discussion-provoking ideas and issues, and to distribute copies to each student in the class. These one-page commentaries should not review the target article or commentaries. Instead, they should articulate the student's own thoughts, reactions, and questions in response to the readings.

**60% of grade: one three-stage term paper**, APA format, c. 5,000 words (20 pages double spaced), methodologically oriented, including a critical assessment of a research literature and an outline of a possible study. Extra credit will be given for submitting the paper for publication to a reputable journal (e.g. as a theoretical note, literature review, etc.). The term paper is due in three stages:

- o **10% for provisional abstract, outline, and bibliography due February 14**
- o **20% for revised abstract, detailed outline, and revised bibliography due March 21**
- o **30% for final draft due May 2 (last day of class)**

no exams

## **Reading requirements**

Each week we will read and discuss material from the textbook, journal papers, and/or other book chapters. Please do not take this course if you cannot commit an average of two or three hours a week to the readings. The course's educational benefits depend on you doing the readings on time, so you can follow and participate in the class discussion. If you don't read them, you won't learn much; if you do read them attentively, you'll learn a lot. I expect all of each week's required readings to be completed well before class, so you have time to digest them, think about them, compare and contrast them, and prepare intelligent comments and questions about them. Last-minute reading will not result in good comprehension or good in-class discussion.

## **Preparing notes on the assigned readings for each class**

One week before each reading is due to be discussed, I will ask 2 to 4 student volunteers to each prepare a one-page set of notes, comments, and questions concerning that reading. I expect each student to volunteer for several such reading analyses throughout the semester. The quality of these analyses will form a substantial portion of your class participation grade, which is 40% of your final course grade.

When it is your week to present a reading, please bring enough copies of your one-page analysis to distribute to everyone else in the class. Assume that the other students have read the paper thoroughly and attentively, and want to know what you think of it. These analyses will serve to initiate class discussion of that reading.

The one-page analyses should have your name at the top, the date, and the APA-format reference for each reading as the header for your comments on that reading. Use numbered lists to identify your specific notes, comments, and questions under each reading. Please make at least three or four substantive comments on each reading – not simply summarizing the reading's main points, but offering some sort of critical analysis of the reading's ideas, or comparison to other readings, etc.

## **Details on the term paper**

This three-step writing assignment determines 60% of your course grade. You can choose any topic related to the course content and course readings. The final paper should be about 4,000 to 6,000 words, plus references. I care more about clarity, insight, research, and the flow of argument than about length per se.

Please plan to submit the final draft in standard APA (American Psychological Association) research paper format. This means computer-printed, double-spaced, single-sided, in 12 point Arial (preferably) or Times Roman font, with a proper title page, abstract, references, and page numbering. Consult the *APA Publication Manual* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) for more details.

My goal is for you to produce a paper that you could turn around and submit to a decent journal as a review or commentary piece to improve your C.V., and that you would be proud to submit in an application for a post-doc, tenure-track job, or clinical internship.

You'll get extra credit if you actually submit the term paper for publication in a reputable journal. Please provide a copy of your submission cover letter.

To make sure that you are thinking, researching, and writing the paper on a

good schedule throughout the semester, I require the following:

**1. February 14: Provisional abstract, outline, and bibliography due. A provisional topic statement/abstract (one paragraph), provisional outline of paper (about a page), and provisional bibliography.**

The bibliography should list about 10 to 20 references (not all from the syllabus here!), that you have actually read, with brief notes about their relevance to your paper. In the abstract, just let me know what you think you'll probably write about. If you change your mind, no problem, just tell me in an email later. But I want you to have some topic in mind by this date. Pick a topic that you feel passionate about – you'll have to live with it for several months! This topic statement/outline will determine 10% of the course grade. Late submissions will be penalized.

After you submit this outline and bibliography, come to our office hours at least once for my feedback. This is very important; I will try to make sure your paper looks viable and will try to give you some useful suggestions and references

**2. March 21: Revised abstract, detailed outline, and revised, annotated bibliography due.**

This should be a revised abstract based on our discussion of your topic's viability, plus a much more detailed outline of your term paper, clearly showing its planned structure, and a revised, more complete bibliography. The outline should be a few pages long, and each outline entry should be a clear, detailed, specific statement, not just a short, vague phrase. The flow of your paper's argument should be apparent.

In the annotated bibliography, use standard APA reference format, and please note each reference's relevance to your topic. A good annotation would be "This critically reviews 18 recent studies of domain-specific disgust effects, emphasizing the similarities between social disgust and cheater-detection, and between pathogen-avoidance disgust and nausea." A bad outline entry would be "Reviews disgust research".

After I get this outline, I will write comments and suggestions on it and return it to you as soon as I can. This should allow you to submit a really good final draft, and I hope it will help you improve your writing generally. Late submissions will be penalized.

**3. May 2 (last day of class): Final term paper due.**

This should be a highly polished document in correct format with no spelling or grammatical errors. It should represent the culmination of three months of research, thinking, and writing about a topic that passionately interests you. I will try to grade final drafts by the last day of exams. You will get extra credit for your term paper if you present documentary evidence (e.g. copy of an acknowledgement letter or email) that you have submitted it to a reputable journal.

**Structure of the term paper: The ideal paper would include the following elements:**

Title page: a decent, descriptive, memorable title, and all other information required for APA format

Abstract page: a concise, punchy abstract that interests the reader in your paper

Introduction: Start with a bang. Pose the problem that interests you, and how you'll approach it. Say where you stand, and why the reader should care. Be specific and clear; mix the theoretical and methodological level of discourse with real-life examples and issues; know when to be funny and when to be serious.

Body of the paper: depending on what you're writing about, this could include a literature review, a series of arguments, an overview of relevant ideas and research from a related area or field, a series of methodological analyses, criticism, and suggestions, or anything that advances your points. If you include literature reviews, don't do generic overviews – review the literature with a purpose, critically, as it pertains to your topic.

Research proposal: ideally, towards the end of your paper, you could sketch out a new empirical way to resolve one or more of the issues you've raised in your paper. This could be a brief outline of an experiment, an observational method, a meta-analysis or re-analysis of existing data, or any other method you think would be appropriate. If your proposal is good and you're still around UNM next semester, we could go ahead and do the work and publish it!

Bibliography: Only include things you've read. If you haven't read them and have only seen them cited by others, then use the format (name, date; as cited in: name, date). If your bibliography includes good, relevant papers and books that I haven't seen before, I will be impressed.

**Course schedule: List of assignments, readings, and topics for each class**

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No assignments before the first class  
 1: Jan 17     **Introduction to the course**

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Read before class:

- Matthews Ch. 1 (all), pp. 3-38: Introduction to personality traits (36 pp)
- Nettle, D. (2006). The evolution of personality variation in humans and other animals. *American Psychologist*, 61(6), 622-631. (8 pp text)
- Krueger, R. F., & Markon, K. E. (2006). Understanding psychopathology: Melding behavior genetics, personality, and quantitative psychology to develop an empirically based model. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15(3), 113-117. (4 pp text)

2: Jan 24     **Introduction to personality traits**

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Read before class:

Matthews Ch. 11 (all), pp. 294-324: Introduction to personality disorders (31 pp)  
 Saulsman, L. M., & Page, A. C. (2004). The five-factor model and personality disorder empirical literature: A meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23 (8), 1055-1085. (27 pp text)  
 Cramer, V., Torgersen, S., & Kringlen, E. (2006). Personality disorders and quality of life: A population study. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 47(3), 178-184. (6 pp text)

3: Jan 31      **Introduction to personality disorders**

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Read before class:

Matthews Ch. 6 (all), pp. 135-165: Genetics of personality (31 pp)  
 Penke, L., Denissen, J. J., & Miller, G. F. (in press for *European J. of Personality*). The evolutionary genetics of personality. (24 pp text)

4: Feb 7      **Genetics of personality traits**

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Read before class:

Matthews Ch. 3 (all), pp. 58-76: Trait stability across life (19 pp)  
 Matthews Ch. 4 (all), pp. 77-111: Stable traits and transient states (35 pp)  
 McGlashan, T. H., et al. (2005). Two-year prevalence and stability of individual DSM-IV criteria for schizotypal, borderline, avoidant, and obsessive-compulsive personality disorders: Toward a hybrid model of axis II disorders. *American J. of Psychiatry*, 162(5), 883-889. (6 pp text)

**Provisional abstract & outline due**

5: Feb 14      **Stable traits vs. transient states**  
 (Valentine's day!)

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Read before class:

Matthews Ch. 2 (all), pp. 39-52: Persons & situations (14 pp)  
 Matthews Ch. 8 (part), pp. 204-210, 227-237: Social psychology of personality (18 pp)  
 Miller, G. F. (in press). Sexual selection for moral virtues. *Quarterly Review of Biology*. (23 pp text)

6: Feb 21      **The social and moral psychology of personality**

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Read before class:

Matthews Ch. 2 (all), pp. 52-57: Cross-cultural universals (5 pp)  
 Wakefield, J. C. (2006). Personality disorder as harmful dysfunction:

DSMs cultural deviance criterion reconsidered. *J. of Personality Disorders*, 20(2), 157-169. (12 pp text)

Costa, P. T., Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: Robust and surprising findings. *J. of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(2), 322-331. (9 pp text)

7: Feb 28      **Personality, culture, and sex differences**

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Read before class (51 pp total):

Matthews Ch. 10 (all), pp. 273-293: Personality and health (20 pp)

Ellis, B. J., Jackson, J. J., & Boyce, W. T. (2006). The stress response systems: Universality and adaptive individual differences. *Developmental Review*, 26(2), 175-212. (32 pp text)

Kessler, R. C., et al. (2003). Comorbid mental disorders account for the role impairment of commonly occurring chronic physical disorders: Results from the National Comorbidity Survey. *J. of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(12), 1257-1266. (9 pp text)

8: March 7      **Personality, stress, and physical health**

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(Spring Break March 12-16: No UNM classes)

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Read before class:

Krueger, R. F. (2005). Continuity of axes I and II: Toward a unified model of personality, personality disorders, and clinical disorders. *J. of Personality Disorders*, 19(3), 233-261. (24 pp text)

Skodol, A. E., et al. (2005). Dimensional representations of DSM-IV personality disorders: Relationships to functional impairment. *American J. of Psychiatry*, 162(10), 1919-1925. (6 pp text)

Markon, K. E., & Krueger, R. F. (2005). Categorical and continuous models of liability to externalizing disorders - A direct comparison in NESARC. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(12), 1352-1359. (7 pp text)

Fossati, A., et al. (2006). Confirmatory factor analyses of DSM-IV cluster C personality disorder criteria. *J. of Personality Disorders*, 20(2), 186-203. (7 pp text)

**Revised abstract & detailed outline due**

9: March 21      **Dimensional vs. categorical models of personality disorders**

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Read before class:

- Kendler, K. S., et al. (2006). Dimensional representations of DSM-IV Cluster A personality disorders in a population-based sample of Norwegian twins: a multivariate study. *Psychological Medicine*, 36(11), 1583-1591. (8 pp text)
- Matthews Ch. 12 (part), pp. 350-354: Personality, intelligence, creativity (5 pp)
- Shaner, A., Miller, G. F., & Mintz, J. (2004). Schizophrenia as one extreme of a sexually selected fitness indicator. *Schizophrenia Research*, 70(1), 101-109. (9 pp)
- Nettle, D., & Clegg, H. (2006). Schizotypy, creativity, and mating success in humans. *Proc. Royal Soc. London B*, 273(1586), 611-615. (5 pp)

10: March 28 **Schizotypal Personality Disorder**

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Read before class:

- Hare, R. F. (2006). Psychopathy: A clinical and forensic overview. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 29(3), 709-724. (13 pp text)
- Raine, A. (2002). Biosocial studies of antisocial and violent behavior in children and adults: A review. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 30(4), 311-326. (13 pp text)
- Cale, E. M., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (2002). Histrionic personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder: Sex-differentiated manifestations of psychopathy? *J. of Personality Disorders*, 16(1), 52-72. (18 pp text)

11: April 4 **Antisocial Personality Disorder I**

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Read before class:

- Fazel, S., & Danesh, J. (2002). Serious mental disorders in 23,000 prisoners: A systematic review of 62 surveys. *Lancet*, 359(9306), 545-550. (5 pp text)
- Troisi, A. (2005). The concept of alternative strategies and its relevance to psychiatry and clinical psychology. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 29(1), 159-168. (8 pp text)
- Carey, G., & Gottesman, I. (2006). Genes and antisocial behavior: Perceived versus real threats to jurisprudence. *J. of Law, Medicine, and Ethics*, 34(2), 342-352. (9 pp text)
- Sapolsky, R. M. (2004). The frontal cortex and the criminal justice system. *Phil. Transactions Royal Soc. London B*, 359(1451), 1787-1796. (8 pp text)

12: April 11 **Antisocial Personality Disorder II**



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Read before class:

- Baumeister, R. F., et al. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science, Supplement*, 1-44 (39 pp text).
- Vazire, S., & Funder, D. C. (2006). Impulsivity and the self-defeating behavior of narcissists. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10(2), 154-165. (10 pp text)
- Foster, J. D., Shrira, I., & Campbell, W. K. (2006). Theoretical models of narcissism, sexuality, and relationship commitment. *J. of Social and Personal Relationships*, 23(3), 367-386. (18 pp text)

13: April 18     **Narcissistic Personality Disorder**

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Read before class:

- Lieb, K., et al. (2004). Borderline personality disorder. *Lancet*, 364(9432), 453-461. (7 pp text)
- Skodol, A. E., et al. (2002). The borderline diagnosis I: Psychopathology, comorbidity, and personality structure. *Biological Psychiatry*, 51(12), 936-950. (11 pp text)
- Gunderson, J. G., et al. (2006). Descriptive and longitudinal observations on the relationship of borderline personality disorder and bipolar disorder. *American J. of Psychiatry*, 163(7), 1173-1178. (5 pp text)
- Boggs, C. D., et al. (2005). Differential impairment as an indicator of sex bias in DSM-IV criteria for four personality disorders. *Psychological Assessment*, 17(4), 492-496. (5 pp text)

14: April 25     **Borderline Personality Disorder**

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Read before class:

- Matthews Ch. 13 (all), pp. 357-390: Personality assessment (34 pp)
- Judge, T. A., Heller, D., Mount, M. K. (2002). Five-factor model of personality and job satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *J. of Applied Psychology*, 87(3): 530-541. (7 pp text).
- Ozer, D. J., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2006). Personality and the prediction of consequential outcomes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 401-421. (16 pp text)

Complete ICES course ratings in class

**Final term paper due**

15: May 2     **Assessment and prediction**

(last class; no exams)

