Welcome to the capstone experience of the psychology major! In this Senior Seminar we shall read, analyze, and debate several of the great books in the discipline. As Thoreau put it (Walden), “To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit is a noble exercise.” This writing-intensive course will function as a small, discussion-based seminar.

The first course in this sequence, Psyc 490, surveyed the broad spectrum of schools and developments in the history of psychology. This course, by contrast, examines a few primary sources or “great books” in psychology with emphasis on critical examination and expository writing. By tradition, this course serves as the capstone experience for psychology students.

Catalog Description:

(Prerequisites: Senior standing; a grade of C or higher in Psyc. 490) This seminar, designed for students with a major or minor in Psychology, will entail critical reading, analysis, and debate of selections from the seminal literature in psychology, including selected works of William James, Sigmund Freud, and B. F. Skinner. Individual professors will choose additional readings on the basis of their interests and student preferences. Spring only. (The course is designated writing intensive.)

Faculty Information:

Instructor: John C. Norcross, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychology
Office hours: Monday 11:20 - 12:50, Tuesday 9:00 - 11:00, and by appointment
Office: 224 Alumni Memorial Hall
Contacts: 570-941-7638 (office); norcross@scranton.edu (e-mail)
Web page: www.scranton.edu/faculty/norcross/index.php

Student Learning Outcomes:

(1) to deepen your knowledge of major psychological theories by reading primary texts in the history of psychology as evidenced by performance on quizzes, preparation of papers, and participation in discussions (Psychology Department’s goal 1 of Knowledge Base in Psychology)
(2) to nurture your ability to critically read and analyze “great books” in psychology as evidenced by preparation of papers and participation in discussions (Psychology Department’s goal 2 of Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking)
(3) to develop your speaking and leadership skills in a small group as evidenced by your co-facilitation performance and seminar discussion (Psychology Department’s goal 4 of Communication and goal 5 of Professional Development)
(4) to improve your writing skills appreciate for professionals in the social/behavioral sciences as evidenced by preparation of multiple expository papers (Psychology Department’s goal 4 of Communication and goal 5 of Professional Development as well as the goals of the Writing Intensive curriculum)
Books/Required Readings:


Performance and Evaluation:

Your performance in this capstone course will be assessed through your class participation, written assignments, quiz performance, and class co-facilitation. The schedule for all assessments appears with the course schedule on a subsequent page.

Regular attendance and participation are essential for understanding the subject matter and for attaining a passing grade. Indeed, approximately one-quarter of your final grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your in-class participation, as jointly assessed by yourself, your peers, and your professor. The criteria by which you will be evaluated are demonstration of: faithful attendance; familiarity with text assignments; content mastery; communication skills; ability to disagree constructively; synthesis/integration; creativity; and application.

Your written work will consist of six brief papers. The minimum length of the papers is 750 words; the maximum length is 1,000 words. Guidelines for their preparation are attached. All written assignments will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

The papers are to be typed (double-spaced) and are due at the beginning of class. Please record your word count at the end of each paper and place your name on the back of the last page. Avoid cover sheets and extra blank pages (save trees!). You are encouraged (but not required) to print your paper double sided or on the unused side of previously printed sheets so that we use both sides of the paper before recycling.

Alternatives to the written assignments are encouraged (as approved by the professor). Some possibilities include meeting of the minds dialogues between people holding disparate views, imagined interviews with an author, and classroom debates with another student on a particular topic.

In addition to the reaction papers, you will be asked to co-facilitate one class with the professor. A schedule for the co-facilitation will be constructed on the first day of class. You do not prepare a formal paper for the class that you co-facilitate; instead, you will prepare three discussion questions that will assist you in cofacilitating the class. Guidelines for cofacilitating the class are attached.

Eight multiple-choice quizzes will be administered at the beginning of the respective class periods. These quizzes are designed to reward your reading and to evaluate your comprehension of the assigned material. Your scores on six of these eight quizzes will count toward your course grade.
Thus, you can earn up to 170 possible points:

- class participation (40 possible points)
- best six of eight papers (60 possible points)
- best six of eight quizzes (60 possible points)
- one class co-facilitation (10 possible points)

In addition, completion (outside of class time) of the Major Field Achievement Test in Psychology is required to complete the course.

**Course Policies:**

This course is intended as a capstone experience or senior seminar for psychology majors, and your behavior should reflect the commitment and experience of a senior psychology major. You are responsible for all announcements made and material covered in class. Make-up quizzes are *not* offered; a missed quiz is a dropped quiz. Late papers are *not* accepted. If you know in advance that you will miss a class, please deliver or email your paper *before* that class begins.

Please refer to the University’s *Academic Code of Honesty*. Plagiarism or dishonest quiz behavior on your part will result in the assignment of a grade of F for the course and the Dean’s Office will be notified.

You are encouraged to participate fully and civilly in class. You are not competing for grades, but cooperating for learning. At the same time, we will not tolerate disruptive or offensive behavior that is antithetical to our university ideals or that is contrary to a conducive learning environment.

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements, should contact the professor privately as soon as possible. In order to receive appropriate accommodations, students with disabilities must register with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and provide medical documentation.

The Writing Center helps students become better writers. Consultants will work one-on-one with students to discuss students’ work and provide feedback at any stage of the writing process. To meet with a writing consultant, stop by during the Writing Center’s regular hours of operation, call 570-941-6147 to schedule an appointment, or complete the Writing Assistance Request Form online. Take advantage of the Writing Center and the optional writing conference with your professor (which also enables you to rewrite and resubmit one of your early papers).

Kindly turn off your cell phone while in class. Violation of this policy will demand a mild punishment that will enhance our learning, but one that will not infringe on your eighth amendment rights.

The syllabus is subject to revision. Any revisions will be announced in class. On rare occasion, you may also receive-mail announcements through Desire2Learn, so please check your University e-mail account.
### Course Outline and Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Welcome, Capstone Experience, Great Books</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Freud, 4-9, Lectures I through III</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Freud, Lectures V, IX through XII</td>
<td>Paper 1 (dream analysis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>James (online and handouts)</td>
<td>Quiz 2, Paper 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Frankl, pages 3 - 93</td>
<td>Quiz 3, Paper 3 (meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Skinner, pages v-xvi, Chapters 1 through 14</td>
<td>Quiz 4, Paper 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Spring Break; no class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Skinner, Chapters 15 through 25</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Skinner, Chapters 26 through 36</td>
<td>Paper 5 (no media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Easter Monday; no class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Gilligan, pages ix to 63</td>
<td>Quiz 6, Paper 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Student Choice: Bandura, Gilligan, or Rogers</td>
<td>Quiz 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Wilson, Preface, Chapters 1, 2, and 4</td>
<td>Quiz 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Wilson, Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9</td>
<td>Paper 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Evaluation, Closure, and Celebration</td>
<td>Paper 8 (letter to freshmen)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for Cofacilitating

Ψ Each student is asked to cofacilitate one class meeting with the professor. You do not prepare a paper for the class that you co-facilitate, but you do complete the quiz if one is scheduled for that day.
Ψ Meet with the professor the week before you are scheduled to cofacilitate in order to receive a copy of the professor’s notes/resource materials. After the class, return the notes to the professor.
Ψ Read the assignment and prepare 3 typed discussion questions before reading the professor’s materials.
Ψ Your professor will arrive a few minutes before class to review and refine your questions. After the class, hand the professor your questions.
Ψ The professor will begin the class with announcements and an introduction, and he will end the class as well. In between, you are primarily responsible for facilitating the class discussion.
Ψ You typically have time to ask five to seven discussion questions during the class period. Please plan accordingly. Select questions from the professor’s notes and ask one or two of the discussion questions you have prepared.
Ψ Your task is to facilitate discussion, not to lecture. Accordingly, engage your peers in addressing the questions, as opposed to answering the questions yourself. When cofacilitating, learn to hold back on your own thoughts.
Ψ When posing a question, please provide a context and introduction for it. Instead of simply asking the question, give a few sentences explaining it or placing it in the context of the assigned readings.
Ψ Many of the interesting points in the reading will generate multiple questions. However, when posing questions in class, please ask one at a time. Avoid asking multiple-part questions.
Ψ We seek informed discussion and respectful debate among graduating psychology majors. If your peers respond with a simple “I agree” or “I don’t see it that way,” gently prompt and encourage them to elaborate on their responses. E.g., “What makes you say so?” “Could you elaborate on your reasons?”
Ψ Try to involve all students in the class discussions; learn to draw out contributions. Do not let a single student dominate. Instead, call on different students; ask quiet students for their opinions; and go around the seminar table once and ask everyone for a focused response.
Ψ Thought-provoking questions require time to answer. Pause before expecting or requesting responses; we all need time to formulate answers to questions of any complexity. Offer encouragement, maintain eye contact, and let the question stand for 15 seconds.
Ψ Reward and praise students for contributing. A simple “thank you” typically suffices. The reward is contingent on a genuine effort to contribute, not on providing a “correct” or super answer.
Ψ Your cofacilitation will be graded on the same scale as your papers: 10/9 (an A) is excellent work; 8 (a B) is good work; 7 (a C) is satisfactory work; and 6 (a D) is below standards.
Ψ The grading criteria for evaluating the cofacilitation follow (adapted from Lathrop, 2006): Facilitation; preparation; organization; interest; engagement; initiative; quality of the three questions; peer feedback.
Ψ Spend a few minutes with your professor immediately after class to review the peer feedback, rate your performance on these criteria, discuss the cofacilitation experience, and receive his written feedback on your performance.
Guidelines for Written Assignments

Reaction Papers

The reaction papers afford you a rich opportunity to grapple with the readings, to reflect on their implications, and to integrate this information with previous psychology courses, research and clinical practica, and personal experiences. Your written work should be concise, lively, and thoughtful. Stimulating will assume equal precedence with scholarly.

The purpose of these written assignments is not to abstract or summarize the article. We shall assume that you, your classmates, and I have read the material. Instead, you are asked to react and respond to the material. Remember: these are reaction papers, not summary papers.

Establish a balance between depth and breadth in your papers. The number of reactions or arguments in your papers should range between four and eight. This range will ensure that each of your points receives sufficient coverage or depth, without ruminating on a single topic.

Some helpful hints on preparing your reaction papers:
(1) Let Us Know You Read It: This can be accomplished through many means. Some of the more frequent means are thoughtful analyses, inclusion of occasional quotes, and reference to specific or unusual details. I encourage you to select your favorite quote from the work and write about its meaning and implications. Select points throughout the assigned pages, in contrast to a single chapter, to demonstrate that you absorbed the entire assignment.

(2) Let Us Know You Thought about It: General impressions of the material, what you found most interesting, amplification of central points, the positives and the flaws of the work, agreement or disagreement with the author, questions you would like answered -- all are ways of expressing your analytical reasoning. Avoid the pedestrian summary; stretch your mind and wrestle with the material.

(3) Let Us Know You Related It to Something: The "something" is varied and of your choosing. Examples include previous courses, research studies, controversial issues in psychology, current events, and life experiences. We want the written assignments to reflect operative knowledge in addition to declarative knowledge.

(4) Let Us Know You Are Engaged in Active Questioning: Knowledge acquires its vitality through active questioning, not through passive knowing. Try to broach provocative matters by raising questions, try to be creative in penetrating the core of disciplined thought, try to become caught up in constructive inquiry. In other words, catch the fever! (Refer to the attached page for suggestions on wording your questions to enhance our critical thinking.)

(5) Let Us Know You Are Improving Your Writing: We expect your skill in writing reaction papers to develop over the course of the semester. Please learn from written feedback provided on your earlier papers, from general comments presented in class, and from your own efforts to sharpen your skills. Take advantage of the Writing Center and the optional writing conference with your professor (which enables you to rewrite and resubmit one of your early papers).
Papers 1, 3, and 5

Alternatives to the standard reaction papers are encouraged for three of the written assignments and required for your final assignment (see next section). For paper 1 on Freud, you may elect to prepare a dream analysis. To do so, please read the distributed letter from Miss Fields first and then read the assigned chapters, which will provide you with interpretations for virtually all of the symbols in her dream. Respond to Fields’ 1927 letter as though you were Freud. Design it as a letter from Freud and begin it, “Dear Miss Fields.” Provide a dream interpretation using the material from the assigned chapters in letter form. Assume the veracity of Freud’s position. Begin by analyzing specific elements of the dream and then address the general meaning of the entire dream.

For paper 3 on Frankl, reflect on your personal search for meaning. Using specific themes, quotes and passages from the assigned reading, write about what will constitute a life of meaning for you. If we were to meet at a University of Scranton reunion in 30 years hence, what criteria would you use to determine if you have lived a meaningful life? Elaborate on two to four core meanings in your anticipated life. Avoid the pedestrian laundry list; instead focus on the core sources of meaning for you.

For paper 5, Skinner rails against passive leisure on many counts: it represents unproductive time, rarely contributes to personal or cultural survival, and much of it is hurtful (e.g., alcohol, gambling, television). What’s more, most leisure constitutes wasted potential. For this paper, you will avoid all media (e.g., television, internet) not school or work-related for a entire week and then summarize your experiences and the results of your behavioral experiment. Another alternative is to avoid all gossiping and lying for an entire week!

Letter to Incoming Psychology Students

The final written assignment (paper 8) is required as one of your six papers and consists of A Letter to Incoming Psychology Students. The letter (which will be shared with new psychology students) will summarize your experiences, offer some advice, and perhaps share some regrets about your years as a University of Scranton psychology major. Tis a goodbye letter to the University of Scranton.

Craft it as a letter and address it to “Dear Incoming Psychology Major.” It should be more than 750 words, two full double-spaced pages at minimum. Please type it neatly and proofread it completely. Either sign your letter at the end or put your name on the back of the last page: Your choice.

The criteria for grading your letters are thoughtfulness of content, clarity of expression, writing ability, and the like. The criteria do not include how positive or negative your letters are; strive to be balanced and honest.

Feel free and empowered to write anything, with two caveats. First, do not mention any professor by name. Mention experiences, courses, club activities, and the like that may indirectly identify individual faculty, but no names -- whether in a positive or negative vein. Second, say it all with sincerity and respect. The dual intents are to reflect on your experiences here and to guide incoming students.

We request your letter in two forms. Send it as an attachment to donna.rupp@scranton.edu and bring a hard copy to our last class meeting.