

Psychology 613 & 805
History and Systems in Psychology

Instructor: Ruth Ann Atchley, PhD.

Contact information: ratchley @ku.edu, office hours: 11-12:30 TR

Course: 1-2:20 TR in 547 Fraser Hall

Textbook: An Introduction to the History of Psychology, Hergenhahn (2005)

Course goals:

This course is designed to allow you to examine the history and philosophical ideas that have influenced the development of the scientific field of psychology. Most psychology courses you will take are designed to help you understand the human mind and human behavior. This class is very different. In this class we will study the field of psychology itself. This endeavor will be challenging in part because as psychology students we are all very used to studying theories and data and trying to explain how and why the human mind works the way it does. Here we will look at the history of how humans have tried to understand other humans. This will include the study of influential theories such as functionalism, behaviorism, or Gestalt psychology, but we will not argue the relative merits of these theories based on experimental data. Instead we will learn about the scientists that developed these theories, the context in which the theories developed and the subsequent modifications that were made to each theory. Thus, this course is more of a history or philosophy course than a traditional psychology course. But understanding this material will benefit anyone that wants to be a professional in the field of psychology.

Your responsibilities:

Because this course is so different in content from your usual psychology class it must also be different in its format. A traditional lecture format would not be a very effective way for you to learn this material. Mastery of this material, given its philosophical nature, will only happen if you have a chance to think, write, and talk about these ideas and theories. Therefore, in each class period I will keep the lecture to a minimum (only about 20 minutes). The second part of class (about 15 minutes) will be taken up with writing about a topic from the course material. You will be writing almost everyday in this class. So this means that you must always come to class prepared. If you do not read the material the night before, you can not write about it in class. Finally, the last and probably most important part of the class period will be spent in discussing the ideas that you have been writing about. Each day, students will read to the class what they have been writing and we will discuss the material. Everyone should be able to participate in this discussion, because everyone will have been writing on the topic of discussion.

Course grading:

Bi-weekly essay assignments (10% per assignment)	70%
Class participation	15%
Final essay	15%

Bi-weekly essay assignments:

Each class period you will be writing a short essay on a topic from the course material. On every other Tuesday you will be asked to turn in an assignment that draws on what you have written in these previous in-class assignments and on your notes from the in-class discussion in order to answer a more extended essay. Because the questions will be based on the writing and discussion from class you should make sure you reference your earlier writing during these bi-weekly take-home assignments. When I grade I will look most closely at the following aspects of your answer:

- (1) I will be evaluating if you fully understand the issues and ideas that you read about.
- (2) I will be judging if you incorporated the ideas introduced in the in-class discussion.
- (3) I will be evaluating the general clarity of your writing.

Final essay assignment:

The final essay assignment will be composed of 2 or 3 essay questions that will require you to discuss issues that span the full semester. These final essays will focus on more global issues that were discussed throughout the semester.

Key dates in the semester:

Aug 19: First day of class

Sept 7: Essay assignment 1 due

Sept 21: Essay assignment 2 due

Oct 5: Essay assignment 3 due

Oct 14: no class (Fall break)

Oct 19: Essay assignment 4 due

Nov 2: Essay assignment 5 due

Nov 16: Essay assignment 6 due

Nov 25: no class (Thanksgiving)

Dec 9: Essay assignment 7 due

Dec 16: Final essay due