

Psychology 360: Personality Research

William Revelle

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1 Instructor

William Revelle

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2 Class time and office hours

MW 3:30-5:30. Office Hours: 2-4 Tuesday or by appointment (Zoom address is 847-491-7700)

3 Course Overview

3.1 Description

The basic theme of this course is that the proper study of human behavior should include an examination of individual differences in affect, behavior and cognition. This course will include an examination of the sources (both biological and environmental), the correlates, and the consequences of individual differences in at least four different dimensions of personality, intellect, and temperament. Roughly one-third of the course will be devoted to reviewing current theories of personality, another third to outlining the steps in the measurement of personality, and the final third to designing and conducting experiments to evaluate current theoretical controversies in the field. Much of the reading will be come from current journal articles and recent review papers.

Prerequisites: Statistics (Psychology 201), [Research Methods in Psychology \(205\)](#) and Personality Theory (215). (The first two are required, the last is highly recommended.)

The first part of the course is meant to provide a rapid overview of current theories of personality, particularly as they apply to real world performance. Tests of these theories are possible research projects. During the second third of the course, while preparing to conduct the research projects, class lectures and assignments will discuss the fundamentals of psychometric theory. The third section of the course will be devoted to other current topics in the field of personality research.

3.2 Requirements and methods of evaluation

A research proposal that reviews a relevant body of the personality literature, proposes a theoretical question, and suggests how to answer it. The review should be the equivalent of the introduction of a journal article, and the proposed method to test the theoretical question should demonstrate sophistication in research design. The paper should conclude with a summary of how the data will be analyzed and the pattern of expected results. To be written in APA style. I encourage you to discuss the possible topic with me ahead of time for suggested readings. (Due October 18). (30%)

A midterm exam that will cover the various theories of personality and performance discussed in class and in the readings. Sample questions will be distributed before the exam. (November 3rd) (30%)

A final research project that will include a review of the relevant literature, development of a personality questionnaire from an existing data base of 250K participants and 900 temperament, ability, and interest items. The scales developed by each person may be correlated with those of existing scales as well as scales developed by the class. To be written in APA style . (Due December 10th). (30%)

A final exam that will cover the basic concepts of the course. (December 10). (This final exam is optional and will be weighted equally with the other exams and projects. That is, if taken, all projects have a 22% weight. If not taken, all projects have a 30% weight.

Class and discussion group participation. This is a class on research methods and theories. It is necessary for all members of the class to participate in proposing alternative models and evaluating the theories presented. This may be done in class discussion, as well as extraclass interaction. Computerized conferencing will be used as well. Email discussion with the instructor and teaching assistant is strongly encouraged. (10

3.3 Goals

1. To introduce you to fundamental skills in psychological research.
2. To facilitate your understanding of substantive courses in psychology.
3. To make you a better consumer of scientific information
4. To improve your ability to write and read scientific papers.

3.4 Prerequisites

Psychology 201 (statistics) or equivalent.

[Research Methods in Psychology \(205\)](#)

Psychology 215: Personality Theory

4 Suggested (but certainly not required) Texts

John, O.P. and Naumann, L.P. and Soto, C.J. (2008) Handbook of personality: Theory and research. Guilford Press. N.Y.

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Von Stumm, S., and Furnham, A. (2011). The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Individual Differences, volume 1. Wiley-Blackwell.

Robins, R.W., Fraley, R. C., Krueger, R.F., (2007) Handbook of research methods in personality psychology. New York, N.Y. Guilford.

4.0.1 Recent papers from the Personality-Motivation-Cognition lab

Zola, A., Condon, D.M. and Revelle, W. [The Convergence of Self and Informant Reports in a Large Online Sample](#) *Collabra: Psychology* (2021) 7 (1): 25983.

Revelle, W., Dworak, E.M. and Condon, D.M. [Exploring the persome](#): The power of the item in understanding personality structure. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2021, (169).

Revelle, W. and Wilt. J. (2021) [The dynamics of personality](#). In John Rauthman: the Handbook of Personality Dynamics and Processes.

Revelle, W., Wilt, J., & Condon, D. (2011). [Individual differences and differential psychology](#): A brief history and prospect. In Chamorro- Premuzic, T., Furnham, A., and von Stumm, S., editors, Handbook of Individual Differences, chapter 1, pages 3-38. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford

Revelle and Oehlberg (2008) [Integrating experimental and observational personality research](#). *Journal of Personality*

Wilt, J. and Revelle, W. (2017). [Extraversion](#). In Widiger, T., editor, The Oxford Handbook of the Five Factor Model. Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y

Smillie, L. D., Cooper, A., Wilt, J., and Revelle, W. (2012). [Do extraverts get more bang for the buck?](#) refining the affective-reactivity hypothesis of extraversion. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 103(2), 306-326.

Wilt, J., Bleidorn, W., and Revelle, W. (2016). [Finding a life worth living](#): Meaning in life and graduation from college. European Journal of Personality, DOI: 10.1002/per.2046

5 Teaching Method

Lectures, discussions, and research-related activities

6 Comment

This course is the third in the methodology sequence for the psychology major. It uses the statistical concepts learned in 201 and research concepts of experimental design, causal inference, and broad research methods offered in 205. Then, it applies these methodologies to the substantive question of individual differences in human behavior.

7 Statistical software

Unlike most of the other courses you might take, we will use the powerful statistical system R ([R Core Team, 2021](#)) for our data analysis. We will not use SPSS. My students and I use R (as do active researchers at many other universities) because it provides access to new development in statistical analysis. We will take advantage of the power of R and the *psych* package ([Revelle, 2021](#)) in R which was developed specifically for psychological research.

The use of computers in psychological research will be emphasized and students will be able to access supplementary materials available on departmental and off campus file servers. Although prior experience with computers is not necessary, the use of computers will be emphasized, particularly for data analysis.

8 Class notes and supplementary material

Supplementary material will be available from the detailed outline available on the web. This will include the lecture notes for each class. Note that the links on this outline will change to reflect the specific results for that class day. You should plan on consulting the detailed syllabus before each class.

9 The following is taken from the Northwestern Registrar

9.1 Academic Integrity

Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>

9.2 Accessibility Statement

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic

setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

9.3 Covid-19 testing compliance statement

COVID-19 Classroom Expectations Statement Students, faculty, and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the COVID-19 Code of Conduct. With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

Policies regarding masking and social distancing evolve as the public health situation changes. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with current masking, testing, Symptom Tracking, and social distancing requirements:

In some classes, masking and/or social distancing may be required as a result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation for the instructor or a student in the class even when not generally required on campus. In such cases, the instructor will notify the class.

No food is allowed inside classrooms. Drinks are permitted, but please keep your face covering on and use a straw.

Faculty may assign seats in some classes to help facilitate contact tracing in the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats. If a student fails to comply with the COVID-19 Code of Conduct or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

9.4 Guidance on Class Recording

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by me for educational purpose and available to the class during the quarter. I will communicate how you can access the recordings. Portions of the course that contain images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

9.5 Prohibition of recording of class sessions by students

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact AccessibleNU. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's Copyright Policy, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

9.6 Support for Wellness and Mental Health

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

10 Outline (to be added to frequently – keep checking)

This is the abbreviated form of the syllabus, The full syllabus is at
<https://personality-project.org/courses/360.syllabus.21.pdf>

Current version of September 27, 2021

10.1 News of changes

September 27: Updated the first week's links.

11 Daily assignments and notes

Week 1	Topic Multiple approaches to personality research	Lecture Notes Introduction to the course	Readings Revelle, Wilt and Condon (2011) Individual differences and differential psychology: A brief history and prospect Revelle and Oehlberg (2008) Integrating experimental and observational personality research	Secondary Readings Take the SAPA inventory your scores are anonymous Revelle (2007) Experimental Approaches to Personality Research
2a	Personality Taxonomies	Taxonomies of Personality The Big Few	Revelle (1995) Personality Processes	Revelle, Condon and Wilt (2011) Methodological Advances in Differential Psychology Romer and Revelle (1984) A critique of the systematic distortion hypothesis
2b	Extraversion	Extraversion	Wilt and Revelle (2016) Extraversion	The personality coefficient

12 Daily detail— Still in progress

1. Sept 22: [Revelle, Wilt and Condon \(2011\)](#) Individual differences and differential psychology: A brief history and prospect
[Revelle and Oehlberg \(2008\)](#) Integrating experimental and observational personality research
[Revelle \(1995\)](#) Personality Processes: Annual Review of Psychology. (Requires using a VPN to NU if not on campus.)

References

- R Core Team (2021). *R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria.
- Revelle, W. (2021). *psych: Procedures for Psychological, Psychometric, and Personality Research*. Northwestern University, Evanston, <https://CRAN.r-project.org/package=psych>. R package version 2.1.6.