

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
 Department of Psychology and Philosophy  
 Psychology 289: Psychology of Adjustment (Spring 2008)  
 Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 12:00-12:50, AB-IV 205

**Instructor:** Audrey K. Miller, Ph.D.

**Phone:** 936.294.4745

**Email:** audrey.k.miller@shsu.edu

**Office:** AB-IV 312

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 and by appointment (Note: It is best, due to potentially unforeseeable faculty responsibilities, you confirm in advance my availability for office meetings.)

**Course Description:** This course concerns psychological approaches to dealing with the challenges of life. Content includes understanding yourself and social influences, managing stress and health promotion, improving interpersonal relationships, and acclimating to personal and societal changes. The most important goals of this course include the following:

- 1) ***Gaining factual knowledge*** about the psychology of adjustment including terminology (what language do psychologists use?), empirical methods (how do psychologists observe the world and test their ideas?), research findings (what does psychological science teach us about how people adjust?), and trends in personal and social change (how do we adapt to change?).
- 2) ***Learning fundamental principals, generalizations, or theories*** about differing psychological perspectives on human adjustment. Reasonable minds disagree about how we develop, cope, and adapt to our worlds. What major principles do various theorists and research outcomes support?
- 3) ***Learning to apply course material*** to our own lives in an effort to improve personal and interpersonal problem solving and decision making and therein enhance happiness.

**Required Textbook:**

- Weiten, W., & Lloyd, M. A. (2006). *Psychology applied to modern life: Adjustment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

**Book Companion Website:**

- [http://psychology.wadsworth.com/weiten\\_lloyd8e](http://psychology.wadsworth.com/weiten_lloyd8e) (includes learning aids such as flashcards, crossword puzzles, web links, and tutorial quizzes)

**Instructor's Expectations:** Adjustment is an exciting course for those interested in gaining knowledge about psychological theories and scientific data that may be directly applied to personal life enhancement. To accomplish course goals, students should 1) read assigned material (prepare yourself for lectures by reading material in advance so that you can ask any questions you might have) and 2) pay attention in class. I encourage class participation and require mutual respect, especially given that this course lends itself to voluntary sharing of personal experiences. University policy requires a record of student attendance (I define an absence as failure to sign the roll sheet) and suggests grade penalty for greater than 3 absences (I define grade penalty as 5% reduction in your total course points for each absence greater than 3). Except under extreme circumstances and with the instructor's prior approval, students will receive zero credit for assignments/examinations missed due to tardiness or absence. Ringing cell phones and other electronic recreation devices will be dismissed (you carrying them) from the classroom. Do not cheat. Academic dishonesty (see University policy for definitions) will guarantee you a "0" and may result in formal disciplinary actions. Only students who attend and participate respectfully and honestly in class may be considered for an upward 1-to-2-point curve of borderline final grades. Finally, ENJOY!!!

## **COURSE SCHEDULE/GRADES**

This course is arranged in accord with the organization of your textbook, and four examinations will be tied to material covered therein. You will need to provide your own #2 pencils and “Scan-Tron” answer sheets for each examination. Valuable learning resources, including glossaries, chapter reviews, practice activities, and test questions, included within the text and on the supplemental website, should help in your preparation. Although examination dates are subject to change depending on class progress, a good faith approximation of these is provided below.

### **Part One: The Dynamics of Adjustment (Examination February 11, 2008, 40 points)**

- Chapter 1: Adjusting to Modern Life
- Chapter 2: Theories of Personality
- Chapter 3: Stress and Its Effects
- Chapter 4: Coping Processes

### **Part Two: The Interpersonal Realm (Examination March 19, 2008, 40 points)**

- Chapter 5: The Self
- Chapter 6: Social Cognition and Social Influence
- Chapter 7: Interpersonal Communication
- Chapter 8: Friendship and Love
- Chapter 9: Marriage and Intimate Relationships

### **Part Three: Developmental Transitions (Examination April 14, 2008, 40 points)**

- Chapter 10: Gender and Behavior
- Chapter 11: Development in Adolescence and Adulthood
- Chapter 12: Careers and Work
- Chapter 13: Development and Expression of Sexuality

### **Part Four: Mental and Physical Health (Examination May 5, 2008, 40 points)**

- Chapter 14: Psychology and Physical Health
- Chapter 15: Psychological Disorders
- Chapter 16: Psychotherapy

In addition to examinations, you will complete one **reaction paper in which you consider, “What does the psychology of adjustment mean to me?”** You may consider this question from the perspective of any of the diverse perspectives discussed within the class (e.g., “I agree with X that adjustment has most to do with..., and here’s why I think so”), or you may take a more personal approach by considering ways in which you have applied course material to your own life (e.g., “Learning about coping with traumatic events has helped me adjust to loss in my own life...”). That is, depending on your preference, you are welcome to approach this paper either analytically (e.g., comparing theory) or from a narrative slant (e.g., considering personal impact). Also, you are encouraged to consider this assignment throughout the course of the semester in order to facilitate the end product. For example, you might journal about your insights into and reactions about course material that especially impacts you. Your paper should be typed in 10-to-12-point font, double spaced with 1” margins, and 3 pages in length. Plagiarism (which anti-plagiarism software may be used to detect) will guarantee you a “0.” You are welcome to turn your reaction paper in early, but the hard deadline is the beginning of class (late papers, which include those resulting from tardiness, will not be accepted), on **May 7, 2008**. It is worth a possible **40 points**.

**Total possible course points = 200**

## COURSE GRADES, continued

**Final course grades** will be based on the highest point total achieved in the class. Class members' grades will be distributed from that highest grade as follows:

- A = 90-100% of highest point total
- B = 80-89% of highest point total
- C = 70-79% of highest point total
- D = 60-69% of highest point total
- F = Less than 60% of highest point total

## FINAL NOTES

### Other Important Policies:

*Per University policy*, **students with a disability** that affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

*Per Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code*, an institution of higher education excuses a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the **observance of a religious holy day**, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. *Per University policy 861001*, a student for whom this section is relevant should present to the instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe within which the missed assignments/examinations are to be completed.