



## PSS 201: Introduction to Psychology

### Student Syllabus for the Adult Degree Programs

#### Course Description

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This is a foundational course. Myers defines psychology as a scientific study of behavior and mental processes. This study includes an exploration of how these processes are affected by the physical state, mental state, and external environment of an organism. Introduction to Psychology material applies not only to future courses in psychology, but also to sociology, education, business, biology, and other academic areas. Allow the course to challenge the way you understand others, yourself, your relationships, and your overall environment.

#### Course Introduction

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In modern psychological theory, researchers and practitioners discuss a model of people that focuses on our biological, psychological, and social components (the BPS model). One component that seems to be missing from this model is the spiritual aspect of humans. Thus, in this course, we will take a biological-psychological-social-spiritual (BPSS) perspective on understanding humans. We will use this model to organize our understanding of the psychological triad or our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

#### Course Outcomes

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Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate progress in mastering the factual and conceptual knowledge delivered in the lectures and text.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how the concepts of psychology apply practically.
3. Demonstrate the utility of a holistic bio-psych-social-spiritual model of humans.
4. Critically review and evaluate psychology from a Christian and personal worldview.

#### Course Texts

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Myers, D. G., & DeWall, C. N. (2014). *Psychology in everyday life* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Worth Publishers.  
ISBN-13: 978-1464109362  
ISBN-10: 1464109362

Myers, D. G., & Jeeves, M. A. (2003). *Psychology through the eyes of faith* (revised and updated edition). HarperOne.  
ISBN-13: 978-0060655570  
ISBN-10: 0060655577

## Textbook Disclaimer

The textbooks for this course were chosen because their primary content directly relates to the objectives of this course. At times, there may be items or issues that are not presented from a proper Christian worldview. As such, the textbooks do not represent an endorsement by Geneva College or the relevant academic department at Geneva College.

## Learning and Physical Disabilities Policy

Geneva College values diversity and inclusion and recognizes disabilities as an aspect of diversity. Our shared goal is to create learning environments that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive, ultimately leading to the success of our students in and beyond college. Therefore, Geneva College complies with the ADA as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act by affording reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations should contact Geneva's Student Success Center (SSC) to arrange a confidential appointment with the Director of the SSC before or during the first week of classes. (Some accommodations may take time to put into place, so it is advised to request this appointment as early as possible.) Legally, no retroactive accommodations can be provided. Accommodations for disabilities are available only as recommended by the SSC. Students whose accommodations are approved will be provided confidential letters which students should review and discuss with their instructors in relation to course requirements. Students who have questions about their right to benefits or have grievances under these statutes should contact the Director of the SSC. For more details, visit the [Student Success Center website](#) or call 724-847-5005.

## The Grading System in the ADP

The grading scale for the Adult Degree Program is A, B, C, D, and F. Geneva includes pluses (+) and minuses (-) in the determination of the grade point average (GPA). Grade points are assigned for each semester hour of credit earned according to the following system:

Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA	Explanation
<b>A</b>	<b>93.00% - 100.00%</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90.00% - 92.99%</b>	<b>3.7</b>	
<b>B+</b>	<b>87.00% - 89.99%</b>	<b>3.3</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>83.00% - 86.99%</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80.00% - 82.99%</b>	<b>2.7</b>	
<b>C+</b>	<b>77.00% - 79.99%</b>	<b>2.3</b>	
<b>C</b>	<b>73.00% - 76.99%</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

<b>C-</b>	<b>70.00% - 72.99%</b>	<b>1.7</b>	
<b>D+</b>	<b>67.00% - 69.99%</b>	<b>1.3</b>	
<b>D</b>	<b>63.00% - 66.99%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>Less than Satisfactory</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>60.00% - 62.99%</b>	<b>0.7</b>	
<b>F</b>	<b>&lt; 60.00%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>No Credit Given</b>
<b>WX, WP, WF</b>			<b>Withdrawal</b>

## Policy on Academic Honesty

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Geneva College has adopted a campus wide policy on academic honesty; the main portions of which are summarized here. Students should become aware of the fuller policy found in Appendix A of the student handbook.

When an instructor has reason to believe that dishonest behavior has occurred, the parties involved should be confronted as soon as possible by the instructor and notification made to the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies (see Appendix A of the student handbook).

Sanctions may be levied on the student, which could range from an informal warning to expulsion, based on the seriousness of the student's offense (see Appendix A of the student handbook).

Students may appeal any disciplinary action by following the procedure laid out in the College's Policy on Academic Honesty (see Appendix A of the student handbook).

Students are encouraged to visit [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org) in order to clarify what constitutes plagiarism as well as a number of other academic standards. This website also provides directives as to how to avoid committing this act and how to properly cite academic sources.

## Turnitin Policy

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Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Students must agree to the End User License Agreement (EULA) for Turnitin. Use of the Turnitin service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on Turnitin.com. Assignments that are not submitted through Turnitin will not be graded and will not receive credit.

## Course Evaluation

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Criteria	Points Breakdown	Points
Discussion Forums (8)	30 points each	240 points
Behavior Modification Project	Proposal = 15 points Baseline Summary = 15 points Reinforcement Week Summaries (3) = 15 points each Final Paper = 100 points	175 points
Worldview Reflections (5)	30 points each	150 points
Quizzes (8)	15 points each	120 points
Application Papers (2)	60 points each	120 points
Total		805 points

## Assignment Descriptions

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### *Discussion Forums*

Class participation is monitored by postings and responses in the discussion forum. Typically, class participation is composed of two parts:

- a. Part 1 – Requires you to go to your discussion forum and post a response to a question or prompt that is written in your syllabus by 11:55 pm (EST) Wednesday of your scheduled session week. Your instructor will generally respond to your post within 24 hours. Depending on the nature of the assignment, the instructor may have a follow up question for you, ask you for clarification or further details, or direct your conversation to someone else for rebuttal.
- b. Part 2 – Respond back to your instructor’s post. In addition, post a response to at least two of your fellow classmates’ postings, using 1 or 2 paragraphs. Your response should further the discussion (e.g., ask a question, provide further information or examples, or introduce a different opinion). In particular, one response to a classmate **MUST** be in the form of a question that seeks to further the conversation. Your question must be posed by 11:55 pm (EST) Friday of the scheduled session week so that your classmate has adequate time to answer it.

Likewise, if a question is posed to you by Friday night, you are also required to answer it.

Part 2 of these online activities (response to instructor, response to classmates’ questions of you, and responses to your classmates) must be completed by 11:55 pm (EST) Saturday of each session.

**NOTE:** How to earn full credit in discussion forums:

1. Become familiar with the discussion forum rubric, which is available to you in all of your Moodle classroom discussion forums.
2. Be thoughtful in your responses and incorporate examples from your personal and professional experiences and references to the course material (e.g., readings, lecture, videos, audio clips, scripture, etc.) when appropriate. Remember to cite all sources and references according to proper APA style.
3. Respond to the discussion contributions of at least 2 peers and be sure to adequately address all posts your instructor may pose to you throughout the week. This level of participation is REQUIRED as the minimum in all discussion forums (see the rubric for more detail).

Your posting and responses will be graded by your instructor. For a detailed description of your responsibility in discussion forum postings, please see the “Interacting in the Online Environment” section in the ADP Student Handbook.

### *Behavior Modification Project*

In this course, you will conduct a behavior modification project, using yourself as an experimental participant. For this project, you will be required to think of a personal habit or behavior that you want to change (e.g., stop binge watching *Doctor Who* episodes) or one that you would like to introduce (e.g., study for psychology every night, except Sunday). Using behavior modification techniques (also known as operant conditioning), you will either eliminate the undesired behavior or institute the desired behavior. This project will take approximately one month to complete, so plan accordingly.

The Behavior Modification Project will be worked on in several parts, allowing for feedback and comments from the instructor and culminating in the final project submission in Session 7.

#### **1. Identify the Target Behavior**

Identify a behavior that you wish to change, eliminate, or promote. The behavior should be specific and measurable. For example, if you want to lose weight, your target behavior shouldn't be “losing weight,” but instead, “changing my eating habits by only eating salads at lunch” or “walking for 20 minutes each day.” If your goal is to study for psychology, specify the number of minutes or pages you will study at a set time each day.

Part of identifying the target behavior is tracking how you currently perform on the target behavior. Therefore, the week prior to implementing your behavior modification plan, you must track how much or how little of the specific behavior you currently engage in. In your final project submission, you will need to include some type of graphical representation of this baseline.

#### **2. Identify an Appropriate Reinforcer**

The premise behind behavior modification is that behaviors increase if they are rewarded. So, in this course, we will increase desired behaviors by rewarding them (e.g., I practiced the piano for

20 minutes, so I get my reward for the day) and decrease undesired behaviors by rewarding non-occurrences (e.g., I really wanted to pick my nose, but I didn't, so I get my reward for the day). The key to the reward is that it should be something that you can provide relatively immediately, and it should be something that you enjoy (e.g., a coffee from a local coffee shop, reading a novel unrelated to school work, playing cards with friends, etc.). You must also determine how frequently the reinforcer will be administered.

In Session 1, you will submit a 1-page proposal describing your potential target behavior and a potential reinforcer for that behavior. Additionally, you will need to explain why you believe this specific reinforcer will be meaningful. Finally, you will need to include a potential plan for implementation. After submitting this proposal, your instructor will provide approval and/or additional direction and feedback.

### 3. **Implement the Plan**

Once you have identified and tracked a baseline behavior and have identified and planned how to administer your reinforcer, you are ready to implement the plan. For three weeks, you will need to follow the plan, administering the reinforcer when you have met your predetermined target behavior. Additionally, you will need to track how frequently you engage in the behavior or how long you engage in the behavior (as appropriate). In the final project submission, you will need to include some type of graphical representation of the target behavior.

For the baseline week and the three weeks in which you administer the reinforcement (Sessions 3-6), you will need to submit a brief summary of your data, including an explanation of how the administration of the reinforcer is working.

### 4. **Write about Your Experience**

In Session 7, you will submit a final paper on your Behavior Modification Project. Your final paper should be approximately 3-5 pages in length, not including graphs. Your paper should clearly describe the target behavior, along with your baseline performance on the target behavior. Additionally, you should clearly describe your chosen reinforcer, along with your implementation plan. Finally, reflect on your experience. Describe what it was like to have (or not have) your behavior changed. Why do you think the procedure worked (or did not work)? What could be improved in the procedure?

**NOTE:** Your grade will not be affected by the outcome of your experiment (i.e., your grade will not be lowered if your procedure did not work). However, you must be able to explain why the procedure did not work.

## *Worldview Reflections*

In this course, we will work toward developing a coherent worldview as it pertains to psychology and the Christian faith. For each worldview reflection paper, you will be assigned reading and then reflect on

how Christians can understand humans using psychology. Specific instructions for completing these written assignments can be found in the course outline below.

- Session 1: Worldview Reflection 1
- Session 2: Worldview Reflection 2
- Session 3: Worldview Reflection 3
- Session 4: Worldview Reflection 4
- Session 6: Worldview Reflection 5

Each of these written assignments will be graded on content, style, and timeliness. They should adhere to all page length requirements and typical APA style and formatting (double spacing, proper APA citations, etc.).

All Worldview Reflections are due by 11:55 pm (EST) Saturday of the designated session week.

## Quizzes

During this course, there will be eight quizzes that cover the essential elements of the text and help students review and identify important facets of psychology. These quizzes will include multiple choice questions.

- Session 1 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 1 (15 points)
- Session 2 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 2 (15 points)
- Session 3 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 3 (15 points)
- Session 4 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 4 (15 points)
- Session 5 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 5 (15 points)
- Session 6 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 6 (15 points)
- Session 7 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 7 (15 points)
- Session 8 – Students will take an online quiz on the material covered in Session 8 (15 points)

Students will be allowed to consult their text and notes when taking online quizzes. However, quizzes will be timed, and students will need to have a working knowledge of the material before taking the quiz. There will simply not be enough time to “look up” every answer in your texts and materials.

If a student does not take the quiz by Saturday at 11:55 pm (EST) of the designated session week, they will not have an opportunity to make it up.

## Application Papers

Throughout this course, you will be assessed on your ability to apply course concepts in real-world contexts through the submission of application papers. Specific instructions for completing these written assignments can be found in the course outline below.

- Session 5: Application Paper 1
- Session 8: Application Paper 2

Each of these written assignments will be graded on content, style, and timeliness. They should adhere to all page length requirements and typical APA style and formatting (double spacing, proper APA citations, etc.).

All Application Papers are due by 11:55 pm (EST) Saturday of the designated session week.

## Professional Skills in Your Online Courses

All courses in your Geneva College Online program will provide you with an opportunity to develop valuable skills that can positively influence your professional and career development. Each course at Geneva provides numerous opportunities to develop skills employers desire in their employees and job candidates in areas including, but not limited to, written communication, research, critical thinking, and decision-making. However, targeted skill sets are also developed through the learning in particular courses.

After successful completion of this course, you will be able to add these particular skills to your bank of professional assets:

### Research Skills



Skillful in compiling, organizing, and using data to enhance planning and effectiveness

### Synthesize/ Integrate



Adept at forming structures, patterns, and connections from information, ideas, and images

### Written Communication Skills



Ability to organize knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments and to convey meaning through well-constructed text

### Design Skills



Creation of a plan or convention for the construction of an object, system, or measurable human interaction



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