

PSYC 380: Personality – Theory Development Paper Instructions

Overview:

To facilitate students' development of their personal theory on personality development students will submit a paper, worth thirty percent (**30%**) of their final grade, exploring their perceptions of themselves as budding theorists and their perceptions of human behavior. This APA formatted paper will serve as a culmination of student exploration of theorist/theory discussions with their text and within the class. ***Papers will be due by the final class of the semester, May 16 at 5:00 p.m. (EST)***; however, students can turn this paper in earlier, if they so choose.

Objectives:

- To cultivate critical thinking skills in students, pertaining to their own worldview on how personality and human nature evolves;
- To instantiate in students' learning of personality theories, the value of culture in theory development; and,
- To begin having students hear their own voices and lived experiences reflected within the personality theory literature.

Format:

- American Psychological Association (APA) style will be the only accepted format for this paper – to include a formatted title page; no abstract is needed;
- Twelve pt., Times New Roman font;
- Margins: 1.0 inch all around;
- Word document or PDF uploaded (i.e., for those with Mac Pages, please *Export To a PDF* and then upload);
- Page length is between four and six pages long; and,
- Voice is in third person for the entirety of the document, reflecting the structure and format of the chapters of your Feist, et al. (2013) text.

Paper Content:

- Introduction
- Brief biography providing aspects of your cultural background which influence how you view the world through your personal lens
- Explain your responses to the following dimensions of your ***Concept of Humanity***, which should map onto your beliefs about what undergirds your theory of human nature (e.g., basic needs, driving forces, etc.). The concepts reflected herein are from the first chapter in your Feist (2013) text:
 - ***Determinism vs. Free Choice***: Is human behavior predetermined by influences that exert control over it? If so, what do you believe are those forces? How do they exert their influences? If they are not predetermined by influences exerting control, how does one demonstrate the free will to choose who and how they want to be? How does this harken back to your own biographical sketch?
 - ***Pessimism vs. Optimism***: Are humans stuck with their respective lots in life? Or are they destined for change, greatness, and lives well-lived?

What evidence in your life and/or the lives of others around you suggested this?

- **Causality vs. Teleology:** Is behavior, in your view, a function of prior lived experience(s), or is it a function of a more goal directed, future driven force? In other words, is human life spent addressing past inadequacies or unmet basic needs or is it imbued with possibility and promise for the future? Take a risk here and own your personal beliefs, as they reflect your own bias(es) and are consistent with your biographical perspective.
- **Conscious vs. Unconscious Determinants of Behavior:** Are we, as human beings, aware of our motives, behaviors and reasons for behaving the way that we do or are we unaware? What contributes to our awareness or lack thereof?
- **Biological vs. Social Influences on Behavior:** Is personality or behavior influenced more so by one's biology, their social environment, etc.? What specifically in their biology, social environment or other is the driving force behind human behavior/personality?
- **Uniqueness vs. Similarity:** Is the focus of the study of personality squarely on that which makes people individuals versus that which makes them common among others? Should we explore the aspects of personality that reflect a uniqueness or a similarity among individuals?
- **Conclusion:** provide a summary of the major points associated with your concept of humanity and what this must mean for personality development overall.