

Module: Personality and Individual Differences

GSSR Doctoral School 2025/26

Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences

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Office hours: please contact me during class or by e-mail

Course format: lecture with elements of seminar

Summer semester

10 hours (5 meetings)

First meeting: 24.02.2026

Tuesdays, 11:00-12:30, IPPAN (Jaracza 1) conference room, face-to-face

Description of the course: This course is part of the General Psychology in Modules class. During this module, we will discuss the historical and contemporary approaches to personality. The most commonly used methods for personality assessment will be discussed in detail, with hands-on experience in taking personality tests. We will also talk about how personality and individual differences relate to mental and physical health and how new technologies may enhance the assessment process, focusing on potential misuse and ethical considerations. Parts of the course will be in the form of a lecture, and other parts will rely on students' engagement (reading and presenting articles, presenting research design involving personality measures).

Aim of the course: Review of selected issues related to personality psychology and individual differences.

Course format: Lecture with interactive elements. Students will be required to prepare short presentations (and present them in class) related to various personality psychology approaches, theories, and/or methods. The presentations will be a starting point for discussions.

Course materials will be available on the Classroom platform, and details will be given at the first meeting.

Assessment criteria:

A multiple-choice test result will serve as a grading tool. There will be 12 questions addressing course topics. Additionally, points will be given for the class activities. The scores from the presentation and the final test will be summed up for the total score for the module. Final grades will be based on students' scores.

This course is part of the General Psychology course. There is one grade for all three modules. From each module you can get max. 18 points:

Cognitive Psychology - 2 points for each correct answer

Neuropsychology - 2 points for each correct answer

Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences - 1 point for each correct answer and additionally max. 8 points for your activity in the classroom.

Maximum total points: 54.

Number of points that pass the exam: 50% + 1 point, i.e. 28 points.

Participation in the classes is mandatory. One absence is acceptable.

Topics:

1. General introduction to personality theory and models: What is personality? Selected historical and contemporary approaches to personality (dynamic, structural, integrative, crisis of personality models); trait theories vs. alternative paradigms.
2. Selected explanatory models of personality: cognitive, social-cognitive, evolutionary, and developmental approaches.
3. Selected trait models: what are traits, what they can and cannot tell us about a person.
4. Personality and mental and physical health.
5. Personality assessment.
6. Personality and individual differences: temperament, affect, regulative processes.
7. AI in personality prediction and ethical considerations; the future of personality science.

Course outcomes:

Knowledge. The student knows and understands:

- Historical and contemporary approaches to personality
- the main scientific developments in personality and individual differences;
- the methodology of personality research
- rules for dissemination of scientific results, including through open access.

Skills. The student is able to:

- take advantage of knowledge from different academic fields to creatively identify, formulate and innovatively solve complex problems or perform research activities, especially:
 - to define the aim and subject of the research, formulate a research hypothesis

- develop research methods, techniques, and tools and use them creatively
- draw conclusions on the basis of research results
- perform critical analysis and evaluation of the results of scientific research, expert activities and other works of a creative nature and their contribution to knowledge;
- transfer the results of research studies to the economic and social spheres.

Social competencies. The student is ready to:

- critically evaluate the achievements of personality psychology;
- critically evaluate one's contributions to the development of that field;
- recognize the value of knowledge in solving cognitive and practical problems.

Reading list (additional papers will be given during class)

- Ashton, M. C., & Lee, K. (2007). Empirical, Theoretical, and Practical Advantages of the HEXACO Model of Personality Structure. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11(2), 150–166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868306294907>
- Carver, C. S., & White, T. L. (1994). Behavioral inhibition, behavioral activation, and affective responses to impending reward and punishment: The BIS/BAS Scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(2), 319–333. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.2.319>
- Corr, P. J., & Cooper, A. J. (2016). The Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory of Personality Questionnaire (RST-PQ): Development and validation. *Psychological Assessment*, 28(11), 1427–1440. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000273>
- Cattell, H. E. P., & Mead, A. D. (2008). The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). In G. Boyle, G. Matthews, & D. Saklofske, *The SAGE Handbook of Personality Theory and Assessment: Volume 2—Personality Measurement and Testing* (pp. 135–159). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200479.n7>
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (2009). The Five-Factor Model and the NEO Inventories. In *Oxford Handbook of Personality Assessment* (Issue January 2012). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195366877.013.0016>
- Cyniak-Cieciura, M., Popiel, A., Zawadzki, B., ... Topanova, G. T. (2024). Development of a Culture-Common Formal Characteristics of Behavior – Temperament Markers Inventory (FCB-TMI-CC). *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2024.2363967>
- Youyou, W., Kosinski, M., & Stillwell, D. (2015). Computer-based personality judgments are more accurate than those made by humans. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(4), 1036-1040.