

B.A. in Liberal Studies: Sample Psychology Courses

PSY 306/SCI 304 Physiological Psychology: Brain and Behavior

3 Units

The fundamentals of the central nervous system are presented through illustrated lectures and discussions, emphasizing implications for behavior (both normal and abnormal) so that students develop an awareness of biological contributions to psychological processes and experience.

PSY 307 History and Systems of Psychology

3 Units

This course provides an overview of historical tendencies in the history of psychology and introduces participants to some of the major systems that have developed during the past century. Emphasis is placed on the social context in which psychology originated and the philosophical issues underlying central psychological controversies. The course touches on the Eastern philosophy of Zen Buddhism, the Japanese psychotherapy of Morita and Naikan, and African healing traditions. Students explore the manner in which psychology functions in the present world as a form of practice and ideology

PSY 311 Contemporary Modes of Counseling

3 Units

This course is designed to analyze critically various contemporary modes of counseling, such as existential, psychoanalytic, behaviorism, and client-centered. Theoretical, philosophical, and developmental perspectives are used. Students are challenged by means of demanding analyses and comparisons.

PSY 316 Western Theories of Personality

3 Units

This course provides an intermediate-level examination of various theoretical approaches to the study of personality. Viewpoints considered include Freud, Jung, Adler, and Rogers, the ego psychologists, the social learning theorists, and the existentialists. Students compare and contrast theories as well as apply concepts to cases.

PSY 319/HUM 365 Ethics in Counseling and Psychotherapy

3 Units

This course explores fundamental ethical theories and applies them to an understanding of professional ethics in counseling. A variety of Western views are addressed including deontological, utilitarian, virtue ethics, and egoistic theories. The class includes several cross-cultural theories such as Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Buddhist. Students scrutinize basic ethical dilemmas encountered in the work of being a psychologist, as well as engaging in the debate about what is moral, how do we make choices about right and wrong, and what are the responsibilities we shoulder in our advice-giving and in our influence over another person's life.

PSY 326A/SOC 335A Human Sexuality

3 Units

This course explores the complex issues of sexuality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and “normal” and “abnormal” sexual behavior/ practices through the lens of social constructionism. In so doing, the course investigates the philosophical underpinnings of “natural” sexuality while challenging the assumptions and beliefs upon which it is built. The course attempts to deconstruct the notion of an innate, transhistorical, and transcultural sexual body through the examination of the scientific, psychological, moral, cultural, and political constructs that have shaped this discourse.

PSY 346A/SOC 346A Sexual Minorities: A Survey of Angeleno Subculture

3 Units

This survey course of sexual minorities of Los Angeles explores constructions of community and identity within an oppositional environment. Groups studied include lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, swingers and polyfolk, sex workers, porn capitalists, criminals and victims, pervs and paraphiliacs. Students are expected to make at least 3 independent field trips.

PSY 358A Community Psychology: Defining Problems and Creating Solutions

3 Units

This course teaches students to develop skills in examining social problems and solutions from an ecological, multi-dimensional perspective. The relationships between problem definitions, solutions and the process of change are emphasized. Community Psychology theory, research, and action are applied to specific social issues such as homelessness, chronic mental illness, AIDS, cultural oppression, and the destruction of our natural environment. Topics include primary prevention, empowerment, clinical interventions, global issues, and roles for non-professionals in community psychology.

PSY 365A Psychoanalytic Theory

3 Units

This course is designed to acquaint students with the broadest terms and scope of psychoanalysis, its position vis-à-vis science and psychology, and its implications for the being of human beings. The evolution of psychoanalysis in terms of ego psychology, object relations, and self-psychology is addressed. The aim of the course is to provide a broad theoretical and philosophical foundation within which students may situate and understand specific concepts in subsequent studies.

PSY 371 The Politics of Psychology

3 Units

This course investigates the social, economic, and political contexts of the contemporary practice of psychology. Approaching the subject from a variety of disciplinary perspectives raises substantive questions concerning the role of psychologists in the politics of psychology. This course intends to broaden the horizons of understanding of the discipline’s history, present day social practices, and future potential.

PSY 370/HUM 392 Moral Psychology in the Dramatic Film

3 Units

This course analyzes several dramatic films in class with the application of the theories of moral psychology of John Rawls, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget and Albert Erdynast. Through class analyses and discussions, students will learn to apply these developmental and social contract theories. Likely films include: Casablanca, Thirteen Days, Impromptu, The Insider.

PSY 390AR Developmental Conceptions of Compassion and the Sense of the Beautiful

3 Units

This workshop presents the results of a study with Western Buddhist Monks and Nuns. These include: 1) the identification of several levels of conceptions of compassion, 2) findings on the relationships between conceptions of Karma and ethical principles of compassion, and 3) findings that provide a basis for the study of the relations between ethical development and aesthetic development. Research protocols for the study of ethical development and aesthetic development will be discussed. Students learn to administer and analyze research instruments on ethical and aesthetic development for academic credit.

PSY 435A LGBT Identity Issues: Theories of Personality, Racial and Cultural Concerns

3 Units

This survey course covers various theories of gay psychology. Students examine how the subject of homosexuality has been treated throughout the ages in various cultures, focusing primarily on its treatment within the field of psychology. From Freud to Skinner, students explore what various theorists have had to say about the development of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular. Students also examine how these differing schools of thought have influenced culture and the ways in which gays and lesbians are treated in the clinical setting. Finally, the course addresses the lively debate currently going on between constructionists and essentialists as a way of understanding the development of homosexuality and the gay psyche.