Psychology 420:
Contemporary and Historical Issues in Psychology
Fall Semester, 2003
Monday & Wednesday, 1:00 – 2:20 Maxey 303

http://people.whitman.edu/~herbrawt/classes/420/psych420.html

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Course Goals and Overview
As the title reflects, this course combines two themes. Most psychology departments these days offer a course on the history and systems of psychology. We are hoping to go beyond the focus of such a traditional course and integrate history with current events and critical topics of debate in modern psychology. That’s not to say that the history of psychology is lacking in any important way, or undeserving of its own course. Rather, the idea is to distill a set of central questions from the history of psychology that will clarify current ideas and stimulate interesting discussion about what and why psychology is what it is today, where it has been, and where it might be going.

Given these goals, we hope the structure of the course makes sense. The first few weeks will be concerned with the surprisingly colorful history of psychology. It will be admittedly an abbreviated treatment, but given psychology’s youth as a field, we hope we, as a group, can do it justice (nevertheless, we heartily encourage you to take a “pure” history of psychology class if you ever have the opportunity). This “history” portion of the course will allow us to extract some key issues that seem to transcend historical context. In addition, we hope that to apply some of what we know about psychology to the very idea of history. For starters, consider that relating the history of anything (in this case, an intellectual tradition) involves perception and reconstruction, and therefore can be as misleading and confusing as the amusing illusions of vision and memory we all know about as students of psychology.

Following the history portion, we’ll turn our attention to the present, and the host of thorny ethical issues and heated debates that lie at the heart of our field. In examining these,
it will be useful to keep key historical questions in mind, as they will be valuable tools and sources of perspective. In taking and defending our own personal opinions, we may uncover some of the assumptions we make (consciously or not) about psychology and the mind. The critical requirement is to continue to question and challenge your own opinions about psychological issues. Hopefully, you’ll find deeper meaning in your own working assumptions about behavior. You may even change some previously unquestioned ideas.

One final goal of the course is to encourage you to find and develop your own voice as a psychologist (or at least as a person interested in psychology). This growth includes formulating and identifying your own consistent opinions, as well as being able to intelligently and articulately express them to others.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings**
Readings should be completed before each class meeting. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are especially critical – be sure to read them carefully.

**Wed, Sept. 3:**
**On this day in 1959** – The first organized child-care service facility at an APA convention opened in Cincinnati. Only a few children were served, and the effort was not repeated until 1971, when the Task Force on Women in Psychology and the APA Council of Representatives sponsored a service that cared for 355 children. A child-care service had been available in most subsequent years until 2000.

**In 2003: Introductions, course overview and mechanics**
- Distribute syllabi and AAR scales

**Mon, Sept. 8:**
**On this day in 1854** - The cornerstone was laid for the State Asylum for Idiots in Syracuse, New York, the first building in the United States expressly built for the care and training of people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. The institution's name was later changed to the Syracuse State School.

**In 2003: What should a capstone course do?**
- *Turn in AAR scale

**Wed, Sept. 10:**
**On this day in 1932** - B. F. Skinner made his first paper presentation to an APA convention. The paper was titled "The Rate of Establishment of a Discrimination" and was read in Room C of Goldwin Smith Hall at Cornell University shortly after 3:00 p.m. This room was also Edward B. Titchener's lecture room during his many years at Cornell.
In 2003: Psychology’s boot camp: APA style and the power of language

- Comments on Madigan et al. by Josselson & Lieblich; Brand; Vipond, and response by Madigan et al. (1996), *American Psychologist, 51*(6), 651-656.

Mon, Sept. 15:

**On this day in 1925** - The trustees of the University of Illinois approved the first sport psychology research laboratory in the United States. Coleman Roberts Griffith directed the lab until 1932, when it closed for lack of continued funding.

In 2003: Argument in Psychology


Wed, Sept. 17:

**On this day in 1904** - Oskar Pfungst began his examination of "Clever Hans," the horse supposedly endowed with human reasoning, reading, and mathematical abilities. Pfungst found that the horse's behavior was attributable to subtle cues from human observers. The case is often cited in discussions of experimenter expectancy effects.

In 2003: Philosophy and the origins of psychology


Mon, Sept. 22:

**On this day in 1904** - Robert MacDougall and Edward B. Titchener addressed the Section on Experimental Psychology of the International Congress of Arts and Sciences at the St. Louis World's Fair. The presentations were part of a week of scholarly activities accompanying the World's Fair.

In 2003: Physiology and the origins of psychology


Wed, Sept. 24:

**On this day in 1914** - John B. Watson's *Behavior: An Introduction to Comparative Psychology* was published.

In 2003: Mental chemistry and structuralism


**Mon, Sept. 29:**

*On this day in 1895* - Joseph Banks Rhine was born. Rhine mounted a sustained attempt to raise psychical research to scientific standards. His research on extrasensory perception was widely known and always a topic of controversy.

**In 2003: Kuhn, Part 1: Normal Science**


**Wed, Oct. 1:**

*On this day in 1917* — James McKeen Cattell was dismissed from Columbia University for pacifist objections to World War I. Cattell, a founder of the American Association of University Professors, had a history of confronting the university administration over the faculty's role in governance. He sued Columbia over his dismissal, won $40,000, and founded the Psychological Corporation with the money.

**In 2003: Darwinism and its cultural context; Functionalism**


**Mon, Oct. 6:**

*On this day in 1818* — The Charlestown branch of Massachusetts General Hospital, later named the McLean Asylum for the Insane, admitted its first patient, a young man believed by his father to be possessed by a devil. This early facility for people with mental illness also established one of the first American laboratories of experimental psychology and supported an active research program.

**In 2003: Kuhn 2: Anomalies and crises**

• *Kuhn, T.S. (1967).* *The structure of scientific revolutions*, chapters 5-8 (pp. 43-68; 74-91). New York: John Wiley.

• *Turn in debate preference cards*

**Wed, Oct. 8:**

*On this day in 1973* — The first World Mental Health Conference was held in Sydney, Australia.

**In 2003: Department responses to Driver-Linn**
• Receive debate assignment

Mon, Oct. 13:
On this day in 1970 — Senator John McClelland led the U.S. Senate in adopting a resolution to reject the report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. Basing its findings on extensive psychological and sociological research, the commission had found no evidence for a causal connection between pornography and criminal behavior or deviant sexual behavior.

In 2003: No Class, mid-semester break Have a wonderful time!

Wed, Oct. 15:
On this day in 1963 — Stanley Milgram's article "Behavioral Study of Obedience" was published in the Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology. Milgram's demonstration of situational control over destructive obedience has been of interest for over three decades. In 1981, this article was featured as a "citation classic" by the journal Current Contents.

In 2003: Debate Planning
• Come to class having read all of the material for your debate, prepared to discuss specifics with your group.

Mon, Oct. 20:
On this day in 1909 - The new U.S. Food and Drug Administration seized 40 barrels and 20 kegs of Coca-Cola syrup near Chattanooga, Tennessee, because Coca-Cola contained caffeine. Coca-Cola hired psychologist Harry Hollingworth to study the effects of caffeine on humans as part of its legal defense. Hollingworth's studies were models of experimental control across a broad range of conditions.

In 2003: Thorndike and the law of effect; Watsonian radical behaviorism; Gestalt Psychology

Wed, Oct. 22:
On this day in 1850 — Gustav Fechner received an insight into the mathematical nature of the mind-body relation. Both Fechner's law and the semireligious nature of his revelation are described in many histories of psychology, making this day known in psychology communities as Fechner Day.

In 2003: Kuhn 3: Scientific Revolutions; Kuhn’s book as Gestalt psychology applied to science

Mon, Oct. 27:
**On this day in 1982** - The *APA Monitor* announced completion of the APA's first television public service messages. Copies were sent to 400 television stations in the United States and were first broadcast in Little Rock, Chicago, and Orlando.

**In 2003: Debate #1: Should psychologists prescribe medication?**

Wed, Oct. 29:
**On this day in 1894** — Harvard University refused to admit Mary Whiton Calkins to doctoral candidacy, despite Hugo Münsterberg's testimony that she was the best student he had ever had at Harvard University. Harvard's refusal was based on Calkins's gender.

**In 2003: Debate #2: Are IQ tests helpful or damaging?**

Mon, Nov. 3:
**On this day in 1971** — Entered in B. F. Skinner's notebook: "Systems will always need change but not necessarily in the style of rebellion. Rebels are defined by their aversive techniques, not by the fact that they try to change things."

**In 2003: Debate #3: Should psychologists use animals in research?**


**Wed, Nov. 5:**

**On this day in 1885** — The first subject of Alfred Binet's studies of intelligence, his daughter Madeline, was born. Binet's first published account of infant development appeared in 1890.

**In 2003: Debate #4: Should psychologists study facts or promote values?**


**Mon, Nov. 10:**

**On this day in 1855** — Wilhelm Wundt received his MD degree, summa cum laude, at the University of Heidelberg. His doctoral thesis was on touch sensitivity in people with symptoms of hysteria. He subsequently placed first in the state medical board examination.

**In 2003: Debate #5: How should psychology deal with controversial research?**

Wed, Nov. 12:

**On this day in 1935** — The first modern surgery on the frontal lobes for treatment of mental disorders was performed by Egas Moniz at Santa Marta Hospital in Lisbon, Portugal. Moniz injected absolute alcohol into the frontal lobes of a mental patient through two holes drilled in the skull. Moniz later used a technique that severed neurons and led to the prefrontal lobotomy techniques of the 1940s.

**In 2003: Debate #6: Are diagnostic labels useful or dangerous?**

Mon, Nov. 17:

**On this day in 1932** — As a 28-year-old graduate student, B. F. Skinner wrote his plan of career goals for ages 30-60: (a) Publish experimental descriptions of behavior, (b) promote behaviorism and operational definitions of psychological constructs, (c) develop a scientific theory of knowledge, and (d) develop a nonscientific theory of knowledge.

**Debate #7: Should affirmative action be legal?**

Wed, Nov. 19:

**On this day in 1901** — John B. Watson began his first psychology experiment as a graduate student at the University of Chicago. He studied maze learning in rats.

**In 2003: Debate #8: Can/Should psychology be unified?**

Thanksgiving Break: Have a wonderful week!

Mon, Dec. 1:
**On this date in 1913** — Mary D. Salter Ainsworth was born. Ainsworth is known for her longitudinal naturalistic cross-cultural studies of mother-infant attachment and separation. She was strongly influenced by John Bowlby's theory of attachment. She received the APA Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions, 1987 and the APA Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, 1989.

**In 2003: Understanding debate responses: Logical Positivism vs. Social Constructionism vs. Post-modernism**

Wed, Dec. 3:
**On this date in 1895** — Anna Freud was born. Sigmund Freud's youngest daughter was his constant companion and became a prominent child psychoanalyst. She refined and expanded the concept of defense mechanisms of the ego. She founded the Hampstead Child Therapy Center in England.

**In 2003: Historical exercise: Freud Reinterpreted**

Mon Dec. 8:
**On this date in 1941** — The first data were gathered for the World War II studies later published under the title *The American Soldier*, edited by Samuel S. Stouffer. The attack on Pearl Harbor had occurred on the previous day. The official name of this series of studies was Studies in Social Psychology in World War II.

**In 2003: What is Psychology (not)?**


**Wed Dec 10:**

**On this date in 973** — Nobel prizes were awarded to Konrad Lorenz, Karl von Frisch, and Nikolaas Tinbergen for their ethological studies of animal behavior.

**In 2003: Present Finals, Course Evaluation**

• *you must be in class on this last day

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**Course Activities and Assignments**

1. **Course reading**
   
   This course uses tough reading and lots of it. Most of it is not written for undergraduate audiences, but rather for professional psychologists. We hope that it will challenge you and stretch your boundaries of psychological understanding. More importantly, this course should help you transition from the undergraduate level to becoming a professional member of the psychological discourse community. That said, we know you can handle the material, but be prepared to invest some extra time and effort. Like most articles written for professionals, the material is quite rich and will likely take extra time and multiple readings to fully digest. Therefore we recommend reading the material well (several days) in advance. Take some notes and then spend some time genuinely thinking about and digesting the contents.

   Listed readings should be read for the date listed. There is a lot of material for some days, so please plan ahead. If you have a busy week coming up, start a little earlier – class will be more enjoyable and your contributions will be more valuable to others. We have marked the most important readings with a star. These should definitely be read carefully before class; you can’t expect to understand the class without them. Unstarred readings are also important for writing papers and contributing to discussions. *Students who diligently and carefully read everything before class (whether adorned with a star or not) are most likely to make significant contributions to class, write creatively, and earn A’s.*

   To spread the good ideas around, and make discussions flow smoothly to the points that everyone is interested in, for each class period we’ll distribute a list of critical points compiled by you, the class. As you’re reading and digesting, make a list of the critical ideas you think a reader should take from that article. Sometimes these will be quite obvious, and most people will catch the same ones. More often however, there will be considerable variability. In this way, we hope we can reap the benefits of having the diversity of opinions...
and interpretations that come from having a large class size. Summarize three of what you see as the most critical points a reader should take from the reading (each in a brief sentence or two) and turn them in outside Wally’s office door by 8 am the day of class (so that we have time to type them up and make copies for everyone).

2. Class participation

If there is a single element that is critical to the success of this class, it is active class participation. Therefore it is crucial that you attend class and arrive prepared to intelligently discuss the day’s topic and readings. In this course, your classmates will also be depending on you to create an interesting, interactive environment (and we should mention, you will be depending on them for the same). We will do our best to stimulate an active, engaging environment by giving short, in-class writing assignments that encourage you to develop and contribute good ideas. If you have been inclined to sit back and let others do the talking, you’ll need to break out and contribute your energy and ideas to get the most out of Psych 420.

Positive, successful discussions happen when students listen to and constructively respond to each other. This can be difficult in a class as large as this one, so it’s important that we all work on being good discussants. Hone your ability to ask questions, clarify points, offer alternative opinions, diplomatically outline disagreements, and extend others’ points and ideas, and you’ll do well. We should also mention that your grade will depend in large part on both the regularity and the helpfulness of your comments.

Here are some ways you can contribute to discussion and the learning process:

- Offer information and/or opinion
- Ask for information and/or opinion
- Initiate a discussion
- Summarize points made
- Diagnose and articulate a difference of viewpoints
- Energize
- Check on your understanding by paraphrasing an important point
- Encourage others’ participation
- Offer humor
- Notice and make suggestion for time keeping and task preferences

3. Short position papers

Developing and defending your own views, and communicating them effectively and diplomatically are critical components of the class. Most classes ask you to comprehend, digest and report on others’ arguments (i.e. experts, academicians, writers). In this class, we want you to develop your OWN opinions. To do so effectively, you need to use other psychologists’ views to support, contextualize and buttress your arguments. There are no “correct” answers to these questions, but there are positions which are more effectively argued than others. The course reader is meant to be a resource of ideas from great thinkers, and a model for how to argue persuasively.
At regular intervals during the course, you will be writing short (3-5 page) papers that argue your position on a particular topic. Your course grade will be based on 4 out of 5 possible papers. This means you may complete only 4, if you are happy with all of them. Alternatively, if you complete all 5, your grade will be based on the best 4 of the 5. Thus, it will likely be to your advantage to complete all 5 (both in terms of grade economics and personal growth). Because it is to your advantage to get feedback on your writing as early as possible, everyone must write the first paper.

The position papers are due on the Friday dates indicated below (at 4 p.m.), and will be preceded by specific guidance about appropriate topics:
- September 19
- October 10
- October 24
- November 7
- November 21

Many of you have not written position papers before, so make sure that you carefully follow the instructions on the paper assignment, in the Course Writing Manual, and on feedback that we give you throughout the semester.

**Grading policy:**
Our aim in setting up this course structure is to encourage you to stay caught up with the reading by giving you many small writing assignments. In addition, our goal is to give you feedback that will enable you to become a stronger, more effective writer.

We plan help you with your writing in two ways:
1. **Alerting you to high expectations.** Although it should go without saying, we expect all of your writing for this course to be your best quality. It is simply not acceptable to turn in sloppy prose, mechanical errors, poor organization of ideas, etc. As college students you are expected to be literate and serious about your work. Please don’t embarrass yourself or insult me with anything less than your best. Here are some guidelines for grades:
   - 90-100% Superior work in terms of both form and content.
     - Virtually no mechanical errors (spelling, typos, grammar, syntax)
     - Ideas are clear and well organized
     - Understanding of material is impressive
     - Claims are backed up with references and quotations where appropriate
     - Insightful and thoughtful; goes beyond the given
   - 80-89% Competent, acceptable work, (average by Whitman standards)
     - Substantive, but not insightful
     - Weak on either form or content, or average on both
     - Understanding of material is adequate
     - Some, but not much thought beyond the given
     - Some, but not much referencing of ideas
   - 70-78% Weak, barely acceptable work (below Whitman standards)
     - So poorly written that ideas are not coming through
     - Understanding of material is minimal or inaccurate
     - Sloppy organization
Frequent mechanical problems
Anything less than a 70% represents unacceptable work

2. **Supporting you to do your best.** Just as we expect your best from you, as your professor, our job is to do our best to help you produce your best. We will spend a lot of energy and time reading and commenting on your papers, which we hope will be matched by your serious consideration of our comments. Our goal is to give you feedback that will help you improve your writing. If you do not understand what we are telling you, you are responsible for coming in to talk to us. We will try very hard to make feedback clear on the evaluation sheets and on your paper, but we won’t always succeed. Since feedback is a very expensive part of your education, if you do not understand it, we both have wasted a lot of time and energy. If you feel harshly or unfairly treated, please come in and talk about your feedback. Our aim is always to be supportive and challenging, and sometimes it is hard for to know how to balance these dimensions unless we know your reactions.

We will be reading each of your papers twice. The first time we will read them “blind”—that is, not knowing who has written them. The second time, we will read each one after having looked at your previous written work. The reason that we ask you to turn in all your papers each time is so that we can see how your writing is progressing through the course, and we will be looking for explicit improvement on each of the 5 scores on the feedback sheet. If we see that you are not using the feedback we won’t bother to make extensive written comments anymore. (You’ve got us on a reinforcement schedule, you know!) If we see that you are making improvements and conscientiously working with feedback, we will not only continue giving your writing our serious attention, but will grade you accordingly. In other words, the purpose of grading papers is to help you improve, and we will be looking for improvement.

Grades on papers are not based on how closely your opinions fit ours, but on the criteria specified on the feedback sheets (see p.15). Our opinions on all of these issues are mixed—we wouldn’t set them up as issues if we didn’t think there were excellent arguments on both sides. We are most impressed by papers that effectively handle counter-arguments, no matter what your position.

Good writing is specific to a discourse community. Writing which works well in the humanities may be problematic in psychology, which most psychologists consider to be a scientific discipline. Good writing in one psychology course may not be considered to be as strong in another, and differing evaluations by different professors are usually more than “subjective” opinions, though they are certainly always that, too. Just as psychology is a discourse community, so are various sub-fields in psychology. In Psych 420 we teach writing conventions that are sometimes different that standard APA format and we discuss the rationale and implications for these changes when we talk about writing as a disciplinary convention.

Learning to write well is like learning to speak a foreign language. Applying certain rules will help, but like language and culture, writing involves many tacit understandings. Consequently, it is not always easy to articulate a specific rule that might help you improve your writing, although often we can suggest rewording to remedy a particular problem. Please do not feel insulted or disempowered by our suggestions.
Learning to write well, and learning to teach others to write well, is a long-term process, which we look forward to sharing with you.

3. Re-writing papers

Good writing comes as a result of hard work and practice. Consequently, re-writing papers is one of the best things you can do to grow as a writer, and we welcome revisions of papers, as long as you:

1. Talk to one of us about how you plan to revise it. You should have a substantive plan about how to improve the paper (i.e., something that goes beyond mechanical and grammatical corrections)
2. Turn in the re-write within 1 week of when it was originally returned to you.
3. Turn it in along with the original paper and feedback.

To re-write a paper, follow these steps:

- Read and study comments on your papers, as well as the evaluation sheet.
- Reread writing manual, and make sure you understand all comments. Be prepared to ask specific questions about specific comments you do not understand.
- Make an appointment with one of us to talk about:
  - Comments on your paper (be sure to bring it!)
  - Your ideas about what you want to argue in your re-write
  - Your process and progress in writing (remember John Updike—see manual!)

Late policy:

We realize and appreciate that students are busy people, and that this is a demanding course. Because of this, we are usually willing to grant you short extensions, provided that:

1) you don’t make a habit of it; and
2) you ask in advance

We are invariably quite generous if a request is made a week in advance. As the due date approaches, we become less flexible. The night before an assignment is due, we can be remarkably stingy. The lesson here is to plan ahead and anticipate when you might need more time than your schedule allows. Rewrites and late papers may be returned somewhat slower than usual.

No extensions can be granted for the final because we will be presenting them on Dec. 10. Please take note that the final exam cannot be turned in late.

4. Debates

The meat of the “contemporary” aspect of the course will be guided, appropriately enough, by the promising young psychologists of tomorrow (that’s you guys). Aside from strengthening your planning, discussion and presentation skills, our class debates will provide a more experiential way for you to learn. In teams of 4 of 5 people, you will present one of the major contemporary questions that psychologists are discussing. You’ll need to meet with your debate team several times, both in and out of class, to plan a valuable and effective presentation. We encourage you to use creative ways to get your points across (skits, jokes, demonstrations, videos, etc), but be sure to plan your session so that each of you has at least 8 minutes of talking time, and that you present substantive ideas or arguments.
backed up by course reading. Also be sure to leave a chunk of time for general discussion of the questions and ideas raised.

These presentations should be carefully planned and researched, but also conducted with a minimum of notes. You should speak your ideas, rather than read them. Rebuttals should be focused on answering actual points made by the other team. Feel free to use your creativity and humor in your presentations, but make sure you also make serious points that you find intelligent, even if you don't personally support them.

This portion of the class will be evaluated by the instructor, yourself, and your team members, focusing on intellectual contributions, reliability, articulation, creativity, and overall contribution to the team effort. If you have to miss a team meeting you should notify all members in advance and be responsible for finding a suitable alternative meeting time.

Because we will be using some class time for debate team planning, you should notify in advance both of your professors, as well of your team members, of any excused absences for athletic travel, debate trips, etc. so that your team can work around your schedule.

List of debates and scheduled dates:
1. October 27 Prescription privileges
2. October 29 IQ tests
3. November 3 Laboratory animal research
4. November 5 Fact/Value problem
5. November 10 Controversial Research
6. November 12 Diagnostic labels
7. November 17 Affirmative Action
8. November 19 Unification of Psychology

5. Take-home final
The take-home final is designed to help you synthesize some of the most important ideas that you took from the course. Note that the word “you” is the operative one; each person will probably come away with a different set of striking or influential ideas and questions. This final will involve creating a course portfolio. To complete it successfully, save all worksheets, handouts, notes and papers throughout the course. Make sure you are in class on the last day (December 10) to present your final and do the course evaluation.

6. Summary of grade contributions:
40% Position papers
20% Debate participation
20% Final Exam
20% Attendance & participation
Advice from previous 420 students:

- Plan ahead! Sit down with your calendar and syllabus ASAP to plan out your workload. If you don’t plan ahead, debate, papers, and heavy reading will hit you like a brick wall, not an experience we would recommend.
- Do the reading twice if you can; you never get it the first time.
- It will all be worth it at the end of the semester when you’ll see how all the pieces fit together.
- Take the material seriously; it really can make you question the discipline and your role in it.
- Plan plenty of time to work on your debate!
- Start your papers early so you have time to go back and re-evaluate your arguments.
- Put yourself behind your arguments; if you can convince yourself, you’ll be more able to convince [the professors].
- Unless you get an A or A- on your first paper, rewrite it! That time and effort will help you immeasurably on your future papers.
- Work hard in this course! It has the potential to be both the hardest class you’ll take at Whitman and the one in which you’ll learn the most. Get excited to learn a lot about psychology and how you really feel about the major you chose to pursue at Whitman. ENJOY IT!
- Immerse yourself in all of the information that will be available to you. Make this class your first priority. Do the reading early and think about it in conjunction with other readings. It will help for those papers that quickly creep up on you. Use [the professors] to help you become a better writer. Everyone can improve. With guidance you will leave the class feeling accomplished and confident. Enjoy!
Psych 420 Feedback on Papers

Name of Writer____________________________ Paper # ___

Name of Reader____________________________


_____2. (10 pts) Clear line of thought: appropriate paragraphing, clear links between thoughts and ideas, well organized arguments.

_____3. (10 pts) Rigorous and accurate documentation of points: accurate comprehension of course text material; claims frequently backed up by references to reading, using APA format (author, year, p. #). Material from outside class referenced in bibliography. Appropriate use of quoted text to make points succinctly and insightfully.

_____4. (10 pts) Well crafted and lucid prose: no unclear referents, no repeating words or phrases, no passive sentence constructions, no unnecessary words.

_____5. (10 pts) Insight and creativity: analysis moves beyond what has been said in class and course texts; counterarguments handled effectively; uses original examples and/or makes original points; articulates personal insights.
Writing is easy; all you do is sit staring in front of your keyboard or a blank sheet of paper until little drops of blood form on your forehead.

attributed to both Gene Fowler and Red Smith

It’s easier if you believe in God, but not impossible if you don’t. If you believe, then this God of yours might be capable of relieving you of some of your perfectionism. Still, one of the most annoying things about God is that he never just touches you with his magic wand, like Glinda the Good, and gives you what you want. Like it would be so much skin off his nose. But he might give you the courage or the stamina to write lots and lots of terrible first drafts, and then you’d learn that good second drafts can spring from these, and you’d see that big sloppy imperfect messes have value.

Anne Lamont, Bird by Bird

The Whitman College Psychology Department is committed to teaching and expecting good writing. Writing is often hard work, but it is also richly rewarding and greatly empowering. Below are the Department’s guidelines for defining good writing. In addition, each faculty member has particular goals and strategies for specific papers and assignments. Our Department guidelines apply to all courses in psychology, but we designed them so that professors can supplement them for particular assignments.

General Principles

2. Good writing is continuous with good thinking. Ideas are inseparable from the language used to express them. It is simply not true that your ideas are clear if your writing is not. As your thinking gets clearer, so will your writing.

3. Good writing is actually good re-writing. As John Updike said, “Writing and rewriting are a constant search for what it is one is saying.” Very few people can put out a good first draft. Most of us have to get our ideas down and then cut, paste, restructure,
elaborate, drop, reorganize, and rewrite several times before a draft is really strong. This process takes diligence, emotional stamina, and lots of time and hard work.

**Common Errors to Avoid**

1. Do not use sexist (and other forms of discriminatory) language. See pp. 50-60 in the APA manual. Use [sic] to indicate the problem when quoting, as in “Man [sic] and Nature”. In general, avoid sexist referents by switching to plural forms. For example, avoid “A scientist should be aware of his assumptions”. Although “A scientist should be aware of his or her assumptions” is technically correct, a more elegant phrasing is “Scientists should be aware of their assumptions.”

2. Watch agreement problems such as “one should argue their own ideas”. By the way, “data” is the plural form of “datum”. To say “the data is good” is an agreement problem.

3. Get the distinction between it’s (a contraction of it and is) vs. its (possessive) and don’t use an apostrophe for the possessive.

4. Get the distinction between affect and effect. As nouns, affect is a feeling, effect is the result of a cause. As verbs, to affect is to partially influence and to effect is to create.

5. Avoid passive language such as “It is thought that...”. Who thinks it? Active constructions are much more accurate and powerful forms of phrasing.

6. Be careful about semi-colons vs. colons: use colons to introduce an oncoming phrase; semi-colons to separate two complete thoughts.

7. Avoid non-sequiturs, which we will denote with “NS”. A non sequitur occurs when a thought doesn’t follow logically from another. An example would be "Because psychology is becoming more diversified, it has always embraced science." The thought about science doesn’t follow logically from diversification.

8. Be careful about starting sentences with “This.” Always clarify what “this” refers to by adding a noun clause such as “This quality, or “This increasing trend” or “This new idea”. Add clarity to your prose by either avoiding “this” altogether, or immediately clarifying what “this” refers to by adding a noun immediately after the referent.

9. In general, avoid using second person pronoun as in “Psychology makes you aware of complicated environments”. Second person works well when giving instructions, as in this manual. If you want to make more general statements, a better construction is “Psychology makes one aware” or “psychology makes me aware.”
More Tips on Producing Lucid prose:
1. Use as few words as possible. Achieve lucidity by dropping unnecessary words from subsequent drafts.
2. Find transitional phrases and connecting thoughts between ideas. Your thinking ought to proceed logically from one idea to the next. Avoid lists. Avoid the phrases another point, and also relevant which make your thinking read like a grocery list, rather than a coherent discussion.
3. Avoid repeating words and phrases, especially in the same paragraph.
4. Don’t tell the reader what you are going to tell the reader. Just say it!
5. Don’t use the word feel when you mean think, believe, or assume. Incorrect use of the word feel is very common, and promotes a confusion between thoughts and feelings.
6. In general, avoid paragraphs of less than two sentences and more than a page.
7. Proofread your paper several times before submitting it and always have someone else (preferably in the class) do so as well. Trading papers is a good way to improve your effectiveness as a writer because you get help on your paper, as well as become sensitized to the role of the reader.

Requests for Formatting
1. Always number your pages at the top right corner, and make sure you staple them in correct order.
2. Use ragged right margins (do not justify).
3. Always retain a computer or photocopy of whatever you turn in. Remember, we have many papers coming in at many times during the semester.
4. Use good paper and make sure your printer ribbon is dark.
5. If possible, print your paper on recycled paper, using both sides of the sheet.

Recommended Reading:
Position Papers for Psychology 420

The great enemy of clear writing is insincerity. George Orwell

Most people’s writing lacks voice because they stop so often in mid-sentence and ponder, worry, or change their minds about which word to use or which direction to go in. A few people even speak without voice.

Writing with voice is writing into which someone has breathed. It has that fluency, rhythm, and liveliness that exist naturally in the speech of most people when they are enjoying a conversation. . .

Writing with real voice has the power to make you pay attention and understand—the words go deep. Peter Elbow

Your assignment is to argue a clear but sophisticated position, in 3-5 pages (do not go over 5, and do not use less than 12 pt. font). To argue your position, use the following guidelines.

1. Present your position in the first paragraph, and then go on to provide reasoning and handle counter-arguments. Do not list arguments in the introduction or conclusion of your paper. These papers are too short for repeating points. Instead, hit the ground running, and find an elegant way to conclude your paper without summarizing your points. Open your paper with a clear statement of your position, and then go on to back up your views with your reasons and examples. Do not waste space introducing an “interesting question” or summarizing your paper’s main points at the end. This assignment is too short to waste any space anywhere.
2. Present key points, documenting them in the context of reading and class material. Provide references to reading (put author and page # in parentheses) in text. Quoting authors can often help you accurately reflect the sense and tone of the argument, but use quotes judiciously. Do not repeat your points with quotes, and do not build your argument around them. Over-quoting is a common problem in this class.
3. Use first person throughout. You think this, question that, etc., so say so.
4. If possible, briefly mention implications for:
   psychologists/psychology
   your own behavior
5. Title your paper with an elegant phrase that illuminates your position. You will probably find your best title after the paper is written.
6. Quote material if and when the author’s phrasing adds an important idea and/or turn of phrase. Do not quote simply to quote, and do not repeat your own thinking with quotes. Graft the quoted material into a smooth flow in your own prose. Use the author’s words, but make the thinking your own. A good strategy is to pick up the author’s phrase in the middle of your own, as in
   Like Bevan, I worry about “the balkanization of psychology” (Bevan, 1991, p.475)
Rather than

Bevan states, “I worry about the possible consequences of what I see as the balkanization of psychology” (Bevan, 1991, p. 475). This statement is true.

The first construction flows much more smoothly, gives you ownership of the idea, and uses fewer words to do so.

7. Referencing: use APA format with the following exceptions:
   - Use footnotes to discuss asides, if appropriate.
   - Use first person. Put your own voice in high profile.
   - Avoid hedge words, unless they illuminate a complicated point that you will address.
   - Let distinctive metaphors and colorful word choices aid your communication and consider them, in particular, for your title.
   - Use a reference page only if you cite materials outside our course reader (which you are encouraged to do).

**Procedures for turning in papers:**

Please follow these instructions carefully:

1. Have a class member read your paper, give you suggestions, and sign your evaluation sheet that you fill out.
2. Use 12 pt font or larger. Provide page numbers on the upper right hand corner.
3. Fill the evaluation sheet yourself, assigning grades for each category, and explain in one or more sentences why you believe each grade is justified. Staple the evaluation sheet at the end of your paper, with a blank evaluation sheet behind it (for me to fill out).
4. Append an Author’s Note. Tell us how the paper went for you, how you regard the quality of this paper, and on what dimensions, in particular, you would like our feedback.
5. Staple your pages together (in correct order). Do not use paper clips.
6. Put your paper in your folder with your name on the back so that when we read it we will not know your identity. Hand it in with all previous papers in your folder, with the most recent paper behind it, etc.
7. Bring your folder to Division I office and leave it on the coffee table near the front door, in the box marked “Psych 420 Papers”. Papers are due Fridays at 4 p.m.