

Common Course Outline
PSYC 111
Personal Psychology
3 Credit Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

PSYC 111 – 3 Credits – Personal Psychology This course examines the biological, psychological, cultural and social forces that influence the functioning of the individual student, including: childhood experiences, significant individuals both past and present, ethnicity, notions of masculinity and femininity, genetics, conformity and conditioning, and values as well as crisis or loss events across the lifespan. The focus is on a highly personalized interaction with these issues through selected readings, lectures, video presentations, small group discussions, classroom activities, and optional student written / oral or artistic presentations on a self-selected topic.

3 credits - 3 weekly classroom hours; Prerequisite: None.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate that they have learned the fundamental theoretical perspectives, principles, concepts, and vocabulary for each of the topics listed in the “Major Topics” section below.
2. Compare and contrast the major theoretical perspectives pertaining to the nurture versus nature controversy. Identify recent studies which describe nurture’s dynamic impact on nature and nature’s dynamic impact on nurture as a process that begins at conception and is ongoing throughout our lives.
3. Explore and describe the personal attitudes and beliefs that underlie the student’s ethical standards, as these cognitions and value systems shape behavior from childhood forward both general and in times of stress.
4. Apply the concepts derived from the “Major Topics” section to one’s own unique experience as a child, teen, and adult - in a religiously, economically, ethnically, and culturally diverse community.
5. Communicate an understanding of how individuals are influenced by the parenting, schooling, and peer relationships they experience in childhood – along with loss or crisis events – which combine with biologic and genetic risk factors and are mitigated by protective factors such as cognitive competence, social support, coping skills, and other factors.
6. Recognize that psychology is a comparatively young science - given what has been learned about the brain since the beginning of the 1990’s - and is a continually evolving field of study that requires an ability to pursue lifelong learning both independently and collaboratively.
7. Identify his/her individual learning styles, academic strengths, and areas for future growth – as these pertain to studying the “Major Topics” in Personal Psychology.

Major Topics

Major topics include:

1. The old view: nature versus nurture. Newer, dynamic perspectives: Nature continuously influences nurture and nurture simultaneously and continuously influences nature.
2. Diversity and multicultural issues that impact human development and behavior across the lifespan, including ethnic as well as religious, social, and economic factors that influence behavior and shape one's sense of self and ability to work, love, or engage in other rewarding social relationships.
3. Early childhood learning experiences: parental "pathogens" such as perfectionism, over-coercion, over-submissiveness, over-indulgence, neglect, abuse, and hypochondriasis. Also the concepts of conflict-repetition and the mitigating impact of mindfulness, social support, various cognitions, competencies, and other protective factors.
4. Special issues related to cross-cultural differences which influence gender roles and behavior and which play out according to biologic influences and the presence or absence of mitigating factors.
5. What twin and adoption studies tell us about nurture and nature's dynamic interaction.

Course Requirements

Students must participate in instructional activities that include written assignments, discussions with classmates, quizzes and/or optional personal projects presented in written, oral or artistic form. Online learning opportunities are available, too.

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Attendance

A Critical Thinking Written Assignment – Applying the
Concepts Presented in Class and in the Assigned Readings
Online Discussions of Materials and/or E-Mail Conversations
Quizzes and/or Optional Personal Learning Projects

Writing: The individual faculty member will determine specific writing assignments. COLLEGE LEVEL WRITING SKILLS are required: proof-reading by sight; correct spelling, grammar and comma usage; clarity; idea organization; complete sentence and paragraph construction; and thoroughness.

Other Course Information

This course is an elective. It is an appealing course for those who want to study psychology to learn more about themselves. Those who enjoy class presentations and lively discussions on timely topics and issues will appreciate having the opportunity for reflection and the practical application of concepts in psychology.

Individual faculty members may include additional course objectives, major topics, and other course requirements to the minimum expectations stated in the Common Course Outline.

