Grading Guidelines PSY1250/PSYC1220 Fall 2023

General information on how to grade the exam:

* The grading guidelines describe an ideal answer, as well as a minimum answer. The minimum answer is what we expect from a response that should pass the exam. The ideal answer is just that, an ideal, and therefore one cannot expect the student to include all the points from the ideal answer. If a student writes a good paper that also describes most of the points from the ideal answer, this should be rewarded with a top grade.
* The exam lasts for two hours, and this will limit how much the students can include in their answer.
* The ideal answer describes several relevant elements, but this does not mean that other elements can also be drawn into a good assignment, even if this is not described in the grading guidance. The grading guidance is not a checklist, remember this is an essay exam and not a "multiple choice".
* The candidate should be rewarded for essay structure – clarity in structure and introduction/conclusion.
* Students must respond to two of the three questions. Therefore, it is the average of these two that constitutes the complete grade. Remember that in cases of doubt, such an average should always be calculated in favor of the student.
* If one of the tasks is evaluated as fail, the entire exam is failed.
* It is necessary to have knowledge of the curriculum to grade the exam tasks. Consult the curriculum literature if you are in doubt about anything.

Regarding empirical data, students should be rewarded for accuracy in their empirical presentations, but it is not expected that studies be referred to by name and year. Instead, it is important that the candidate demonstrates an overview and understanding of the findings.

The curriculum for the course is:

**Book:**

Larsen, R.J., Buss, D.M., & Wismeijer, A., Song, J., van den Berg, S. (2021). Personality psychology. Domains of knowledge about human nature. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Chapters 1-6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19

**Articles:**

Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2018). Revisiting our reappraisal of the (surprisingly few) benefits of high self-esteem. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 13, 137-140. DOI: 10.1177/1745691617701185

Bleidorn, W. (2015). What accounts for personality maturation in early adulthood? Current Directions in Psychological Science, 24, 245-252. DOI: 10.1177/0963721414568662

Reznick, D. (2001). Natural selection: Introduction.  Encyclopedia of Life Sciences, 1-7. doi: 10.1038/npg.els.0001750

Turkheimer, E. (2000). Three laws of behavior genetics and what they mean. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9, 160-164. DOI: 10.1111/1467-8721.00084

Tyrer, P., Reed, G. M., & Crawford, M. J. (2015). Classification, assessment, prevalence, and effect of personality disorder. Lancet, 385(9969), 717-726. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61995-4

QUESTION 1:

**Define borderline personality disorder. Discuss challenges to treating personality disorders for the clinician and the patient.**

**Ideal answer**

An **ideal answer** provides a definition of borderline personality disorder:

* A cluster B personality disorder including pervasive pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, sense of self and emotions.
* Provides a general overview of typical symptoms of borderline personality disorder, including a few of the criteria below:
  + Chronic feelings of emptiness
  + Emotional instability
  + Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment
  + Markedly unstable self-image
  + Impulsive behaviour in at least two self-damaging areas
  + Inappropriate anger
  + Unstable interpersonal relationships
  + Recurrent suicidal/self-harm behaviour
  + Transient, stress related paranoid or dissociative symptoms

In addition, key considerations for treatment challenges in borderline personality disorder should be discussed and include several of the following:

* Traditionally personality disorders are difficult to treat. Treatment plan mainly consists of psychotherapy, although in some cases medication may be added and hospitalization when an individual poses a safety risk to themselves or others
* In psychotherapy the goal is to improve functioning, emotion regulation, reduce impulsivity and improve relationships
* A key challenge to treatment is the high levels of comorbidity (multiple diagnoses at the same time) present in individuals who reach criteria for borderline personality disorder
* Often people with borderline personality disorder present because of other complaints such as self-harm, anxiety or depression
* Discusses several factors that make for a challenging patient-client relationship for example: low self-esteem, dissociations, splitting or the therapeutic relationship itself
* Mentions some of the therapeutic approaches for this disorder including psychoanalysis, ego-supporting and ego-building therapy

**Minimum answer**

A **minimum answer** would give a broad definition of borderline personality disorder as a personality disorder characterized by severe mood swings, impulsive behaviour and difficulty forming stable personal relationships. In addition, there would be a few examples of how characteristics of the disorder make for a challenge in treatment.

# QUESTION 2:

**Using an evolutionary psychology perspective, explain the development of human emotions and how this relates to principles of natural selection.**

**Ideal answer**

An **ideal answer** would include a clear definition of natural selection, using several of the following points:

* Defined as the process by which organisms better adapted to their environment tend to survive and produce more offspring
* Mention Charles Darwin and his role in our understanding of natural selection
* Mention the 4 key principles of natural selection :
  + Individual differences
  + transmission to the offspring by heredity
  + more offspring are produced than necessary to replace the parents
  + only some individuals survive and reproduce
* Mention different varieties of selection (directional selection, stabilizing selection, balancing selection, disruptive selection)

In addition, the role of adaptation in the emergence and maintenance of emotions should be discussed, drawing on several of the below concepts:

* Discuss how emotions exist because they serve an adaptive role, often informing us of what may happen i.e., potential threats
* Demonstrate how emotions relate to natural selection, highlighting that being able to respond to environmental stimuli is an important factor in survival
* Illustrates how being responsive to the emotions of others was also important for survival
* Indicate how some emotions were adaptive under previous environments but may be maladaptive in our modern world
* Show how emotions evolved from simpler functions from previous species
* Gives some contrast to the various ways we try to describe emotional states in comparison to the more narrowly defined personality traits

**Minimum answer**

A **minimal answer** would include a complete definition of natural selection as well discussion on how emotions are adaptive.

# QUESTION 3:

**Describe different models of personality and discuss reasons for why the five-factor model has become the most popular framework to describe basic personality traits.**

**Ideal answer**

An ideal response provides an account of the different personality models that have been developed in the history of personality psychology, including the five-factor model:

* Describe some early attempts to identify important personality traits, such as Allport’s, Catell’s and/or Wiggin’s work on personality traits.
* Describe the lexical approach and how it is used to identify important personality traits
* Describe the Big Five personality traits, and how they have been identified through lexical studies.

Moreover, an ideal response provides a discussion of why the five-factor model has become a dominating framework to describe personality traits. Such a discussion can include:

* Replicability: Studies have repeatedly identified the Big Five traits, also across cultures
* The Big Five personality traits can be considered purely descriptive and are therefore not related to a specific theoretical approach.
* Number of traits: The relative few number of traits makes it easy to provide a broad overview over an individual’s personality profile.

**Minimum answer**

The candidate must be able to describe the five-factor model and at least one other model of personality and give indications why the five-factor model has been the prevalent model of personality.