

### **(1) HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY & RESEARCH METHODS (due June 26<sup>th</sup>)**

In your textbook (p. 41), Myers & DeWall argue that “psychology is not value free.” Do you agree with his opinion? (And remember, you’re definitely allowed to disagree.) Why or why not? If you agree, do you think all scientific disciplines are affected by values or is it just psychology? Regardless of whether you agree or disagree, what broad values or assumptions about the human condition (personal, political, cultural, or otherwise) do you bring to the table? Describe how these would either affect or not affect (depending on your answer) your personal study of psychology.

### **(2) THEORIES OF PERSONALITY (due June 27<sup>th</sup>)**

Choose a fictional character from a book, TV show, movie, or any other type of medium that I might have forgotten and analyze various aspects of their personality from more than one perspective (Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic, Humanistic, Trait, Social-Cognitive, or Self Theory) that we have covered in class. For example, do they make frequent use of Freudian defense mechanisms? Maybe they’re just a little bit *too close* with their mother? Are they so in touch with their inner experiences that Carl Rogers would be proud? Perhaps their ideal, ought, and actual selves aren’t entirely integrated? Does their behavior radically change from situation to situation or can you identify some pretty stable traits? Again, these are just examples. Don’t feel obligated to answer those particular questions. You really can take this assignment in any direction you choose, as long as you approach the analysis from more than one perspective. One final note, though: Since I may not be familiar with the character you choose, please make sure to include brief, relevant details (about them, the plot, etc.) as you see fit.

### **(3) NEUROSCIENCE (due June 28<sup>th</sup>)**

What is your verdict on the “not guilty by virtue of neuroscience” defense? Should it be admissible in court? If you think it should be admissible at least sometimes, under what circumstances should neuroscientific evidence absolve someone of a crime they truly did commit? Or should it ever? If someone is found guilty after claiming a “neuroscience defense,” what should their punishment be? Should it be different from everyone else’s? Is there really such thing as free will or personal responsibility? Again, feel free to take this in any (relevant) direction you choose. Those were just some thought questions (that you are more than welcome to directly answer if you like).

### **(4) GENETIC & ENVIRONMENTAL BASES OF BEHAVIOR (due June 29<sup>th</sup>)**

How are you similar (in terms of traits, values, behaviors, etc.) to your family members? How are you different? Do you think certain similarities might be genetically influenced? How and why do you think your individuality has emerged? How are you similar to or different from your friends? Have you picked up any traits/values/behaviors from them that you otherwise wouldn’t have picked up from your family?

**(5) DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (due June 30<sup>th</sup>)**

In 1904, G. Stanley Hall conceptualized adolescence as an inevitable period of “storm and stress” characterized by irrepressible moodiness and staunch rebellion against authority. For this prompt, please write about a specific instance during your adolescence when you acted defiantly or rebelled against authority (whether a specific person or a broad principle). What did you do and, if you can explain, why did you do it? How did other people respond to your defiance? After looking back and reflecting, do you stand by what you did or, in hindsight, does it now feel a little impulsive? Please specifically answer those guiding questions, but feel free to tackle any additional issues or address any other angles that I may have missed.

**Note:** Breaking a rule/social convention is different from breaking a law. Do not write about anything that could be reasonably construed as an illegal or criminal act, please and thank you. 😊

**(6) EMOTIONS, STRESS, & HEALTH (due July 5<sup>th</sup>)**

This one is for the creative writers in the group. This can be autobiographical or fictional or even a little bit of both, but write about an instance of very strong, viscerally experienced emotion(s). What happened? How did you (or your character) feel? What was going on physiologically? Really set the scene and try to make someone else feel like they’re able to feel what your character is feeling.

**(7) SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (due July 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Asch’s line experiment showed us the lengths to which people will go just to conform to the will of a group. For this assignment, I want you to deliberately violate a **benign** social norm (in public) and write about your experience. What did you do (or not do)? How did you feel? Did other people react to you? If so, how did they react and why do you think that was the case? Did you respond? If so, how?

**Important:** Do not, I repeat, **DO NOT** violate any city, state, or federal laws, USC Summer Programs rules, or tenets of basic human decency in pursuit of your non-conformity. If you have any doubts whatsoever, please run your idea by me.

**(8) SENSATION & PERCEPTION (due July 6<sup>th</sup>)**

ESP (extrasensory perception, p. 272-274 in your textbook) has long been regarded as a parapsychological phenomenon that doesn’t merit scholars’ time or attention. However, a recently published, academically vetted study (Bem, 2011; *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*) claims to have found evidence of precognition—the ability to “know” the future before it happens. Although the study was deemed acceptable for publication by the journal, it has attracted a great deal of public and scientific criticism. So, ESP... Do you buy it? Why or why not?

**(9a) LEARNING (due July 7<sup>th</sup>)**

The link between violent media and violent behavior is certainly complicated. Do you think violent media can, in any way, be blamed for violent behavior? If so, to what extent? Should there be laws restricting children's access to violent media? Why or why not?

**(9b) MEMORY (due July 7<sup>th</sup>)**

A great deal of research attests to the fallibility of memory. In few settings are the implications of this research more pronounced than in the courtroom. Even with the most honest of intentions, it is possible that eyewitnesses might not always accurately recall the details of a crime. On the other hand, systematically distrusting eyewitnesses could potentially set a dangerous legal precedent, especially if other forms of evidence are limited or entirely unavailable. In your opinion, what level of trust should the legal system place in eyewitness testimony? Are there specific circumstances in which eyewitnesses should be either fully trusted or distrusted? Be sure to defend your opinion and also refute the counterargument.

**(10) UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS (due July 12<sup>th</sup>)**

Choose a character from a work of fiction purported to have a mental illness. What condition(s) do you think they had? What were their symptoms? How did they interact with other people? How were they treated by other people and society at large? Accepted? Stigmatized? From either what we have learned in class or personal experience, do you believe it was an accurate portrayal of the condition? Again, please provide details so that I can fully understand/appreciate your response even if I have no idea who your character of choice is.

**(11) TREATING MENTAL ILLNESS (due July 13<sup>th</sup>)**

This assignment is your opportunity to reflect, in writing, on our trip to the museum. What stood out to you most? Was there anything that was said that you absolutely agreed or vehemently disagreed with? Do you think psychiatry really is an "Industry of Death?" This question is intended to be open-ended. Please reflect in any way that is meaningful to you.

**(12) CONSCIOUSNESS, SLEEP, & ALTERED STATES (due July 17<sup>th</sup>)**

Do you believe that addiction is a disease? Defend your opinion and refute the counterargument. (This is clearly a very loaded prompt, so here are some optional thought questions to get you going: What does it mean to be addicted to something? What can people get addicted to? What does it mean to use the word "disease" to refer to something? What differentiates diseases from non-diseases? What are some implications of labeling something as a "disease?")

**(13) LANGUAGE & MOTIVATION (due July 18<sup>th</sup>)**

Aside from basic physiological needs, the need to belong is one of the strongest human motivations. Every April, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Alliance sponsors a [National Day of Silence](#) to raise awareness for children and teens who are bullied, feel little to no sense of belonging, and suffer in silence every day. For this assignment, you will have the opportunity to participate in your own personal Day of Silence and reflect on the experience. (If you choose to complete this assignment, your Day of Silence must be on a weekend. I will also have speaking cards available that you can hand out to people who might be confused why you've gone silent.) Of course, I can't grade you on how seriously you take this assignment because I have no way of knowing how you have gone about your day. However, for the full experience, I recommend going completely silent by forgoing all social media, in addition to speaking. You should refrain from engaging in any kind of online activity that might serve as a substitute for real-world contact that would cause you to feel any kind of social belonging or approval.

This prompt is also intended to be open-ended, so please reflect in any way that is meaningful for you. Here are some ideas to get you thinking... What did you do over the course of the day? How did you feel? How did other people react to you? Did you slip up and speak at some point? And it's definitely okay if you did. How did you feel when you finally did speak/meaningfully interact with people again? Are there people at your school who might be going through this kind of alienation every day? Did this experience change your perspective?

**(14) COGNITION & INTELLIGENCE (due July 19<sup>th</sup>)**

What role should standardized testing play in education and public policy? Do you feel like it's an accurate indicator of intelligence or cognitive abilities? If not, what do high scores on these tests indicate? Do you consider standardized testing a necessary evil or just plain evil? Defend your opinion and refute the counterargument.