

School of Continuing and Professional Studies
DePaul University

IN 307 (Integrative Learning)
Psychology of Personal Change: A Biopsychosocial Approach
Course Syllabus
Spring 2021

Instructor:	Joseph C. Chen, Ph.D.	Online Synchronous via Zoom
Email:	jchen31@depaul.edu (preferred method)	Tuesdays 5:45 -7:45 PM
Phone:	(312) 362-7391	March 30 – June 8
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why is making change so difficult? A quick walk down the aisle of a bookstore will reveal a wide assortment of texts promoting an array of viewpoints and strategies for change. From medical advice to career development to personal interest, these books aim to provide the reader with a model and process for change, usually by presenting guidelines on how to improve a situation and/or to decrease harmful practices. How can we be sure that the presented methodology is grounded and viable? This course will take an in-depth look at the psychology of personal change and the factors that are associated with it. To begin looking at how change occurs, we will draw on several disciplines that will provide an overview of how thoughts and behaviors become patterns and habits (i.e., how individuals get ‘stuck in a rut’). From a biological perspective, we will learn how communication in our brain strengthens or weakens according to how often thoughts and behaviors occur. From a psychosocial perspective, we will observe how patterns and habits develop through processes such as learning, observation, and environmental and sociocultural influences. With the help of these perspectives, students will form a foundational understanding of how humans develop their patterns and thoughts, and construct a working model of change focusing on factors that increase the likelihood of success. Lastly, students will be able to apply their knowledge of the working model to analyze a program of change within an area of interest.

LEARNING MODALITY

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, and for the health and safety of students and faculty, the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) has decided to move Spring quarter courses online. This course is delivered as a live synchronous modality, which means that we will meet real-time for class via the virtual meeting platform, Zoom (unique link to be provided to enrolled students), Tuesdays from 5:45 PM – 7:45 PM. Students will need to have access to a computer/tablet and a stable internet connection. Those using computers can click on the Zoom link directly, whereas those using a tablet will need to download the free Zoom app. Please note that using a mobile phone to connect to Zoom is not recommended due to suboptimal learning experience and the need to clearly see the screen for Powerpoint slides and breakout discussions.

There will be 3 optional 1-hour open office hours sessions 4/16, 5/14, and 6/4.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

SCPS students in the credit-based programs and DePaul students from other colleges, please see the first box. SCPS BAIFA students, please see the second, shaded box.

FOR SCPS CREDIT-BASED STUDENTS (BAPS, BADA, DCM) AND OTHER DEPAUL STUDENTS

Students will register for 4 credits.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and understand essential brain physiology and mechanisms that underlie human behavior and pattern formation.
2. Identify and explain the main tenets, strengths, and weaknesses of cognitive and behavioral psychological theories.
3. Identify and explain core models of social influences on human behavior.
4. Integrate biological, psychological, and social models into a cohesive framework of human behavior and change.
5. Critically analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a model of change in a self-help book of choice.
6. Identify and apply the biopsychosocial model to one’s personal experience.

Learning Outcomes 1-4 are met through lecture, learning resources, and discussions.

Learning Outcome 5 is met through utilizing students’ understanding of the biopsychosocial model in evaluating the effectiveness of a self-help of choice. Students will identify the model(s) of change in the self-help book and compare/contrast to the biopsychosocial model.

Learning Outcome 6 is met through students’ reflection on application of the learning material to their own experiences.

FOR SCPS BAIFA STUDENTS – COMPETENCES OFFERED (2 credits each)

BAIFA students will typically register for both E1 and E2 competences for a total of 4 credits.

- E1:** Can understand and explain a) how humans develop habits/patterns and b) how change occurs from a broad viewpoint incorporating scientific and historical evidence from biological, psychological and social influences.
- Can trace the historical viewpoints of behavior and change that have helped and hindered our understanding of the process
 - Can identify the interconnectedness of how human behavior and thought corresponds to brain changes
 - Can articulate a perspective on the change process based on an analysis of the research

The **E1** competence is met through a review of the main theories of human psychology focusing on how they integrate with neurophysiology into a collective, multifaceted framework for understanding human behavior and change.

- E2:** Can evaluate a program of change of interest by incorporating key factors from biological, psychological, and social perspectives
- Can articulate the strengths and weaknesses of a current approach of change
 - Can provide recommendations to improve the efficacy of a current approach of change
 - Can apply the program to an area of personal life

The **E2** competence is met through the critical evaluation of a student-chosen established model of change and personal reflection regarding a change area of interest.

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

We will use a variety of learning methods to understand the psychology of personal change.

Reading materials are focused around three general perspectives on personal change: neuroscience, psychological science, and group dynamics.

Required Texts:

Students will not be required to purchase textbooks for this course. All readings will be on electronic course reserve. Readings assigned are to be due the day of class. There will be required readings, which will be covered in class. Recommended readings are suggested if you are interested in further study and are not required. See the class schedule below.

Students **are** required to either purchase or obtain a book that covers a change area of interest. This book will be used for the Final Investigative Project (FIP).

Class lectures discussions will be vital as we work together as a group to understand the psychology of personal change. The extent of participation will determine the quality of the course – thus students are encouraged to come prepared and to engage.

The course has a strong emphasis on application. Therefore, students will be asked experiential questions and prompts, and when available, engage in experiential exercises.

Reflective writing will be used to facilitate synthesis and consolidation of learning. Students will gain insight into their own experience as well as the implications of their learning.

LEARNING DELIVERABLES AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Online Discussion Posts (20 points each) – Almost weekly online discussions will be posted on D2L on the day after each class. The online discussions can vary and will be an article or current

event that relates to what we discuss in class. Students are expected to participate in these online discussions and post at least one comment with your thoughts/opinion by the designated due date every week. Students are highly advised to post early on so that an actual online discussion can occur. Students are encouraged to post more than once, as this will facilitate discussion during class as well. Online posts will be graded based mostly on quality and depth of thought. Please use decorum, etiquette, and proper grammar in your posts. There is no minimum or maximum length requirement. Due: 4/5, 4/12, 4/19, 4/26, 5/10, 5/17, 5/24, 5/31

Grammar	= 5 points
<u>Quality/Depth of thought</u>	= 20 points
Total	= 25 points

Insight Papers (50 points each) – These papers consist of three major components. First, students will be asked to engage in an activity to do during the week. The activity will be practical and relate to a concept discussed in the current week’s lecture. Second, students will provide comments related to their experience doing the activity. Third, students will provide insights into how to use the learning from that activity and the week’s lecture and apply it to their personal area of change. Questions will be provided to help guide your thinking. You will be evaluated on depth of thinking. Due: 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 4/27, 5/11, 5/18, 5/25, 6/1

Grammar	= 5 points
Insights gained on activity	= 20 points
<u>Insights gained on application to change area</u>	= 25 points
Total	= 50 points

Book Review (100 points) – This book review provides you the opportunity to summarize and understand the main premises of the book of interest. Vital to this review is your understanding of what the author(s) posits as 1) the reason that negative patterns happen and 2) the underlying theory or model for change. It is crucial that you read the book more than once to fully comprehend its basic tenets for in-depth analysis for the Final Investigative Project. Due: 5/4

Grammar	= 5 points
Comprehensiveness of Review	= 55 points
<u>Demonstration of Understanding Foundational Tenets</u>	= 40 points
Total	= 100 points

Critical Analysis Project (300 points) – The Critical Analysis Project will be due Finals Week (Week 11). Early submissions are encouraged. The Project will assess your ability to understand a program of change that is of interest to you in the form of a book, analyze and assess its utility, and provide sound recommendations to improve it. If you have consistently provided quality Insight Papers throughout the quarter, the final project should be relatively straightforward. The bulk of the assessment for the final project will be your analysis of the book and the recommendations that you provide. The paper should be APA-style or MLA-style (your choice). Page length should be around 13-15 pages; however, quality is of more importance. Due: 6/8

Grammar	= 30 points
Analysis of book	= 170 points
<u>Recommendations</u>	= 100 points
Total	= 300 points

Attendance and Participation (100 points): Class attendance and participation is a necessary part of this course. In accordance with DePaul policy, students who fail to attend more than 2 classes will receive a failing grade. If you foresee absences, please let me know ASAP, preferably at the beginning of the quarter and we will arrange for you to complete assignments. If an emergency arises, please contact me and we can discuss how to proceed.

Late Work: Late submissions will be allowed one week past the due date. Work submitted after one week past the due date will not be accepted and you will not receive credit for that assignment. If there are circumstances that preclude you from submitting within the allotted timeframe, please actively discuss with me.

Overall Grading Scale:

Attendance (10 Total)	= 100 points (10 points each)
Online Discussion Posts (8 Total)	= 160 points (20 points each)
Insights Papers (8 Total)	= 400 points (50 points each)
Book Review	= 100 points
Critical Analysis Project	= 300 points
Total	= 1060 points

A	= ≥ 980	C+	= 821 to 842	D-	= 631 to 661
A-	= 949 to 979	C	= 768 to 820	Fail	< 661
B+	= 927 to 948	C-	= 737 to 767		
B	= 874 to 926	D+	= 715 to 736		
B-	= 843 to 873	D	= 662 to 714		

Minimum SCPS Grade Policy: SCPS degree programs with majors (BAPSBA, BAPSC, BAHA, BADA, BANM, and BALS) require a grade of C- or better in courses taken at DePaul or transfer work applied to course requirements in the Major and in the LL 261: Essay Writing course in the College Core. All other course requirements in these programs can be completed with a grade of D or better. SCPS degree completion major programs (BAABS and BALS) require a C- or better in all courses taken at DePaul applied to those programs. SCPS competence-based programs (BAIFA, BAC, BAGB and BAECE) require a D or better in courses taken at DePaul or transfer work applied to competence requirements

Incomplete (IN) Grade: This process follows university [policy](#). A student who encounters an unusual or unforeseeable circumstance that prevents her/him from completing the course requirements by the end of the term may request a time extension to complete the work.

- The student must formally initiate the request by submitting the [Contract for Issuance of](#)

[Incomplete Grade form](#) (via email, word doc), no later than week 10 (or prior to the final week of a shorter-term course).

- *The instructor has discretion* to approve or not approve the student's request for an IN grade.
- *The instructor has discretion* to set the deadline for completion of the work, which may be earlier but no later than two quarters (not counting Summer term).
- The instructor *may not* enter an IN grade on behalf of a student without a completed and agreed upon contract.
- The student is alerted that IN grades are not considered by Financial Aid as evidence of satisfactory academic progress.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (March 30): Introduction to the Course

Required Readings Due:

- Cooper, S. (2012). The transtheoretical or stages of change model. *Change: Models and Processes*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas.

Recommended Readings:

- Prochaska, J.O. and Norcross, J.C. (2001). Stages of Change. *Psychotherapy* 38(4), 443-448.

Homework Due:

- None

Week Two (April 6): Biological Factors - The Brain

Required Readings Due:

- Martin, G.N. (2016). Chapter 3: The nervous system and how it works. *Essential Biological Psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Section 3.1 – 3.8 [pages 43-52]; Section 3.12 – 3.13 [55-60])
- Martin, G.N. (2016). Chapter 4: The brain: It's structures, regions and functions. *Essential Biological Psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Section 4.1 – 4.3 [pages 64-67]; Section 4.6 – 4.17 [70-87])

Recommended Readings:

- Kandel, E.R. & Squire, L.R. (2000). Breaking down the scientific barriers to the study of brain and mind. *Science*, 290, 1113-1120
- Sudhof, T.C. & Malenka, RC. (2008). Understanding synapses: Past, present, and future. *Neuron*, 60, 469-476.

Homework Due:

- Critical Analysis Project Book and Topic (Due 4/6 @ 8 AM)
- Online Discussion 1 (Due 4/5 @ 8 AM)

- IP 1 (Due 4/6 @ 8 AM)

Week Three (April 13): Biological Factors – Brain Plasticity

Required Readings Due:

- Doidge, Norman. (2007). A Woman Perpetually Falling. *The Brain that Changes Itself*. New York: Penguin.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. (2005). Seven Seconds in the Bronx: The Delicate Art of Mind Reading. *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*. Back Bay Books: New York.
- Steele, C.M. and J. Aronson. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69(5), 797-811.

Recommended Readings:

- Bargh, John A., Chen, Mark, and Burrows, Lara. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype activation on action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71(2), 230-244.
- Galton, Francis. (1884). The Measurement of Character. *Fortnightly Review* 36: 179-185.
- Galton, Francis. Natural Abilities and the Comparative Worth of Races. Pp. 248-252 in *A History of Psychology: Original Sources and Contemporary Research*. Ed. Ludy T. Benjamin, Jr. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988.
- Lynn, R. (1991). Race differences in intelligence: A global perspective. *Mankind Quarterly* 31, 255-296.
- Andreasen, N. C., and et al. (1993). Intelligence and brain structure in normal individuals. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 150(1), 130-134.
- Simonton, Dean Keith. (2003). Francis Galton's Hereditary Genius: Its Place in the History and Psychology of Science. Pp. 3-18 in *The Anatomy of Impact: What Makes the Great Works of Psychology Great*. Ed. Robert J. Sternberg. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 2 (Due 4/12 @ 8 AM)
- IP 2 (Due 4/13 @ 8 AM)

Open Office Hour (April 16)

Week Four (April 20): Biological Factors - Physical Sensations

Required Readings Due:

- Siegel, D.J. & Bryson, P. (2012). Two brains are better than two. *The Whole Brain Child*. Atlanta, GA: Bantam.
- Van der Kolk, B. (2014). Lessons from Vietnam Veterans. *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 3 (Due 4/19 @ 8 AM)
- IP 3 (Due 4/20 @ 8 AM)

Week Five (April 27): Psychological Factors - Behavior

Required Readings Due:

- Watson, John B. (1913). Psychology as the Behaviourist Views It. *Psychological Review* 20(2), 158-177.
- Skinner, B.F. (1958). Reinforcement today. *American Psychologist*, 13(3), 94-99.
- Harris, R. (2011). Fueling up. *The Confidence Gap*. Boulder, CO: Trumpeter.

Recommended Readings:

- [Brief Biography on John Watson](http://www.jhu.edu/~jhumag/0400web/35.html) (<http://www.jhu.edu/~jhumag/0400web/35.html>)
- Watson, John B., and Rosalie Rayner. (1920). Conditioned Emotional Reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 3(1), 1-14.

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 4 (Due 4/26 @ 8 AM)
- IP 4 (Due 4/27 @ 8 AM)

Week Six (May 4): Psychological Factors - Thoughts/Cognitions

Required Readings Due:

- Ellis, A., & Bernard, M.E. (1985). What is rational-emotive therapy? *Clinical Applications of Rational-Emotive Therapy*. Pp. 1-30.
- Beck, A.T. (1997). The past and future of cognitive therapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 6, 276-284.
- Dweck, C. (2012). The mindsets. *Mindset*. New York, NY: Ballantine.

Recommended Readings Due:

- Ellis, A. (1993). Reflections on rational-emotive therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61(2), 199-201.

Homework Due:

- Book Review (Due 5/4 @ 8 AM)

Week Seven (May 11): Psychological Factors - Emotions

Required Readings Due:

- Van der Kolk, B. (2014). Body-brain connections. *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Southam-Gerow, M.A. (2013). The science of emotions. *Emotion Regulation in Children and Adolescents: A Practitioner's Guide*, Guilford.

Recommended Readings:

- The Science of Emotions (<https://online.uwa.edu/news/emotional-psychology/>)

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 5 (Due 5/10 @ 8 AM)
- IP 5 (Due 5/11 @ 8 AM)

Open Office Hour (May 14)

Week Eight (May 18): Social Influences

Required Readings Due:

- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, 44(9), 1175-1184.

Recommended Readings:

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191-215.

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 6 (Due 5/17 @ 8 AM)
- IP 6 (Due 5/18 @ 8 AM)

Week Nine (May 25): Social Influences

Required Readings Due:

- Mullen, B., & Goethals, G.R., (1987). Social comparison theory: Self-evaluation and group life, *Theories of Group Behavior*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Festinger, L. (1954). Theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7, 117-14.

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 7 (Due 5/24 @ 8 AM)
- IP 7 (Due 5/25 @ 8 AM)

Week Ten (June 1): Homeostasis and Equilibrium

Required Readings Due:

- None

Homework Due:

- Online Discussion 8 (Due 5/31 @ 8 AM)
- IP 8 (Due 6/1 @ 8 AM)

Open Office Hour (June 4)

Week Eleven (June 8): No Class

Homework Due:

- Critical Analysis Project Due (Due 6/8 before midnight)
- All question/comments/concerns addressed by today

COURSE POLICIES

Describe here the specific policies and procedures the instructor has for the course that are additional to the college/university policies, for example, classroom/discussion etiquette, late work, code of responsibility, etc. Include how changes to the syllabus will be communicated. (Changes to the originally published course syllabus used to select/register for a course should be communicated in the first session/week of the course in writing; if significant assignment changes are made during the course it should be done officially with the consensus approval of students.)

Select the applicable policies below (i.e., UGRAD and/or GRAD) depending on the level of your course. Include the statement:

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

[APA citation format](#) (GRAD) [Academic Integrity Policy](#) (GRAD)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#) (UGRAD)

[Incomplete \(IN\) and Research \(R\) Grades Expiration Policy](#)

[Withdrawal/Drop Policy](#) and [Withdrawal Tuition](#)

[Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability](#)

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

[Protection of Human Research Participants](#)

Other Resources for Students

[University Center for Writing-based Learning](#)

[Dean of Students Office](#)

Instructor Bio

Joseph C. Chen is a member of the DePaul University faculty, serving as an Associate Professor and Director of the Office of Prior Learning Assessment in the University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. He earned his B.A. in Psychology from Wheaton College (IL) and completed his doctoral degree at Virginia Commonwealth University, obtaining both a M.S. and Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. As part of his doctoral education, he completed both a predoctoral internship and a postdoctoral clinical fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley. A licensed clinical psychologist, he maintains his own private practice and is part of a group practice. His research interests revolve around the change process, specifically focused on change within educative and acculturative contexts.

Additional Considerations

Additional information for the instructor's consideration in planning the syllabus may be provided in this section, especially to address unique programmatic needs.

Recording of Classroom Sessions Conducted via Videoconference tools:

- Synchronous teaching sessions can be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes. These recordings will be made available only to students presently enrolled in the course via password protected links. Links will be posted via the course webpages on D2L and viable for the present term only.
- Students are prohibited from sharing class recordings or disclosing the links to a class session to anyone outside of the course.
- Students have the right to protect their privacy during recordings by appearing in an audio-only mode; pseudonymous usernames can be used by students, if shared offline with the instructor.
- Instructors may retain portions of the recordings that contain their intellectual property consistent with University policy, with students' identifying information removed.