

Personnel Psychology

PSY 462-01

Semester:	Spring 2025	Instructor:	Eric Christensen, Ph.D.
Meeting day:	Thursday	E-mail:	ericchristensen@sfsu.edu
Meeting time:	6:00 – 8:45 p.m.	Office hours:	Zoom, By Appointment
Location:	HSS 310		

Type of Course: HyFlex – Simultaneous Broadcast (attend in-person or remotely via Zoom)

Course Description from SFSU Bulletin: The focus of this course is on the application of psychological principles to personnel selection and related practices in organizations. Designed for the psychology major interested in developing proficiency in personnel techniques.

Course Materials: This is a Zero-Cost Materials Course. Reading materials and articles will be made available throughout the semester via Canvas and/or the SFSU library website. There is no textbook for this course.

Course Overview:

Personnel Psychology is “the branch of industrial and organizational psychology that deals with the selection, placement, training, promotion, evaluation, and counseling of employees.” (American Psychological Association)

Personnel psychology is an applied science focusing on the “I” (Industrial) component of Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology. Therefore, my primary goal is to prepare you with an understanding of the theoretical principles of the field and an awareness of the challenges of practicing our specialty in organizational settings. This course is designed as a high-level overview of the field of Personnel Psychology. Our approach will be that of reflection and participation. Together we will navigate through the foundations of our field, in both theory and practice. To that end, the course will be balanced between research and practitioner-oriented viewpoints.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Identify fundamental personnel concepts, topics, and methods;
- Explain how personnel psychology can be applied to benefit workplace behavior;
- Prepare and deliver an HR-oriented oral presentation;
- Write a personnel psychology-focused paper in APA style; and
- Discuss personnel issues facing organizations in the current environment.

Learning Activities

You are expected to take an active role in the learning process and engage in the course materials, exercises, activities, etc. The learning activities for this course are:

A) Attendance and Participation – (30% of Course Grade)

Your participation is a key element of this course. Much of the learning will occur through reflection and inquiry. It is expected that you will come to class prepared and ready to contribute, whether in person or remotely. **Coming to class prepared means that you have read the assigned material for the week** and have reflected on it in a way that allows you to engage meaningfully with the lecture component. If you are unable to attend a class session, it is your responsibility to review the lecture content asynchronously.

Each class session will conclude with an experiential learning activity. You will be asked to log your completion of the activity each week, and this will factor into your participation grade.

Consideration is also given to a) speaking during appropriate times about the topic at hand, contributing to everyone's learning of the material (not just talking for the sake of talking), b) being professional/respectful of others in the class including peers, the instructor, guest speakers, visitors, etc. c) arriving to class on time and prepared (whether in person or remotely), d) refraining from private conversations/text messaging/web surfing during class time, and e) offering comments/questions that help to create a positive learning environment.

B) Quizzes – (30% of Course Grade)

There will be four quizzes spaced out evenly during the semester. The quizzes will be multiple-choice format and can be completed online. It is acceptable to use course materials to answer the questions, but you are not allowed to collaborate with others in deriving your responses.

C) Final Paper – (25% of Course Grade)

You are required to write a final paper on a topic related to personnel psychology. The paper is designed to give you experience writing an academic paper and to provide you with the opportunity to explore a single area of personnel psychology. The paper should follow APA guidelines in citing your sources. You will be asked to structure your paper according to the following outline:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Topic of Interest
 - a) Summary of the topic and relevance to modern HR management
 - b) Artificial intelligence (AI) analysis***
- 3) Conclusion/implications for the future

Although there is no limit as to how long the paper can be, you should write at least 7 pages (double-spaced, not including references).

***AI analysis section:** Include a section in your paper about the impact of AI on your topic. You can actually use AI to write part of this section, but if you do, you must also include a reflection in your own words about the quality of the AI content. Aside from this section, AI should not be used to write your paper. Wikipedia is not a valid academic source, but can be used to identify legitimate research sources from the citations within.

D) Oral Presentation – (15% of Course Grade)

One of the most important competencies for college graduates is the ability to communicate orally. Students of personnel psychology must possess the ability to communicate concepts to audiences who are unfamiliar with the topic at hand. During the last two weeks of class, you will deliver a 5-minute presentation on the same topic you have chosen for your paper. The goal will be to present the topic in a way that is succinct, jargon-free, and engaging. Your classmates will have the opportunity to ask one or two questions following your presentation. The presentation can take place either in-person during class or via recorded video file posted to Canvas (e.g., YouTube link). Presenting in person is encouraged but may be limited due to time constraints.

E) Extra Credit (TBD) – On occasion, I may offer opportunities to earn extra credit.

Late work: Assignments submitted after the respective deadline must include written documentation of a circumstance that prevented the student from submitting on time.

Canvas: I utilize Canvas to communicate with the class, to post assignments, and to provide supplemental reading materials. If you are attending the class remotely, the lecture streams will be available through Canvas. The university requires that your SFSU e-mail account be used for Canvas communications. It is your responsibility to check this account for information related to this class.

Disability Access: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/415-338-2472, video phone/415-335-7210) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Title IX Coordinator by completing the report form available at <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>, emailing vpasem@sfsu.edu or calling 338-2032.

To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

- The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/
- Counseling and Psychological Services Center: (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>
- For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

Religious Holidays: The faculty of San Francisco State University shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed.

SESSION	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS
1/30	Introduction/Classroom Administration Issues
2/6	Overview of the Field
2/13	Job Analysis and Testing
2/20	Recruiting (incl. interviewing) and Employee Selection/Placement !! Quiz 1 due 2/21
2/27	Training and Development
3/6	Performance Measurement/Appraisal/Evaluation and Feedback
3/13	Motivation and Compensation/Rewards !! Quiz 2 due 3/14
3/20	Work Attitudes: Job Satisfaction & Organizational Commitment
3/27	Spring Recess – CAMPUS CLOSED
4/3	Employee/Labor Relations and Counseling of Employees
4/10	Morale !! Quiz 3 due 4/11
4/17	Leadership and Succession Planning
4/24	Organizational Climate
5/1	Human Factors and Ergonomics !! Quiz 4 due 5/2
5/8	!! Class Presentations
5/15	!! Class Presentations (!! Final Paper Due 5/23)

***Note – I reserve the right to add/change topics, assignments, and deadlines throughout the semester**