

## PERSONALITY TERM PAPER

Apply the theories of personality that have been covered in the course to an understanding of one person. The person must be a real person, not a fictional or mythological figure. Base your paper on a published biographical or autobiographical book, in addition to the text. You should discuss all of the theories covered in the course in your paper, though you may choose to concentrate on some more than others.

Be detailed in your discussion of how theoretical concepts apply. There is no need to explain the theoretical concepts in the paper. (You may presume that the reader knows the theories.) Focus on how the theoretical concepts *apply* to the one person you are trying to understand. Cite specific details from the biography to support your interpretations.

Cite references that you use for direct quotations and for factual material. Ordinarily, only two references will be necessary: the biography (or autobiography) and the text. If you wish to do more detailed reading about personality theory or about the biography, you may include more references, but that is not necessary or expected. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that you understand the theories well enough to apply them appropriately, with insight.

In organizing your final paper, consider your options. Most often, it is helpful to have a brief (approximately 2 pages) overview of the person's life at the outset of the paper. After that, you may proceed theory by theory, which has the advantage of reminding you to cover each theory, but the disadvantage that you may be tempted to return repeatedly to the same biographical information without integrating the various theories. Alternatively, you may select some major biographical themes – certain traits or life events – and discuss each of these in a separate section of the paper, pulling from various theories for each section. The advantage of this approach is that theoretical discussions are more thoughtfully compared, but the disadvantage is that you might neglect some of the theories.

Three brief progress reports will be collected.

**Assignment #1:** List the biographical source (book) you will be using. Use APA format (or the format used in the class text), and include all bibliographical information.

**Assignment #2:** In one page (prose or outline), summarize your thoughts about how the material covered so far (chapters 1-6) applies to this person.

**Assignment #3:** In 1-3 pages (prose or outline), summarize how the trait and learning interpretations (chapters 7-11) apply to the biography you are analyzing.

*The purpose of these assignments is to ensure that you are thinking critically about the theories throughout the course. As a result, no credit will be given for assignments that are more than a day or two late.*

As described on the syllabus, the final paper is due 4/29, and you should be prepared to present *selected parts* of it informally, orally, in class. Submit two copies of your final paper. One will be returned to you, with the instructor's comments. The other copy will be kept in a course file. Please be sure that both copies are identical in every way (including the cover page).

**Suggested Length:** 15 to 20 pages (Longer papers are acceptable. Shorter papers will not be penalized for length, but be sure that you are discussing theories adequately, which is difficult to do in a paper much less than 15 pages.)