

# Huntingdon College

## Adult Degree Completion Program

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**COURSE NUMBER: PSYC 311**  
**COURSE NAME: Psychology of Women**  
**Spring 2009, Session 1, Brewton**

**INSTRUCTOR'S NAME:** Wendi Huff

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will focus on areas of psychological and social functioning most relevant to women. The following topics will be discussed: child development, sexuality, work, development of self, gender and psychological disorders, relationships and friendships, violence, motherhood, and images of women in culture. Important works from psychodynamic, social learning, developmental, and cognitive perspectives will form the foundation of the course.

**PREREQUISITE: PSYC 201 recommended but not required**

**TEXT REQUIRED:** Matlin, Margaret; *The Psychology of Women*; Cengage Publishing  
(see Huntingdon College book list for current edition and ISBN)

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of research, theories, themes, and concepts as related to the groundwork of the study of women and gender
- Analyze media messages for gender stereotypes
- Discuss how gender is created and maintained by social processes
- Critically evaluate the similarities *tradition* and the *differences tradition* claims about the differences between men and women
- Identify similarities and differences between genders and the biological and sociological reasons for those differences
- Examine theories and research that explain how gender is acquired, the experiences adolescent girls encounter during physical and sexual change and the various theories explaining the impact of social demands on them
- Discuss the cultural construction of sexual desire, romance, and norms for sexual behavior
- Examine the various close relationships now available to women and their need for intimacy and equality in these relationships
- Analyze the diverse experiences of women as mothers and the physical and psychological consequences of pregnancy and birth
- Analyze employment patterns and work legislation as they regard women
- Discuss the role transitions of midlife and the important role of past and present poverty of women lives
- Examine feminist theory to issues such as domestic violence and sexual assault
- Identify various influences on women's physical and mental health
- Recognize personal role in making a better future for women

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA:**

1. **Weekly Module Question Sheets:** Attached are five Module Question Sheets, one of which is due at each of the five class meetings. Students are to carefully read the assigned pages in the text for each module and are to clearly and completely, in writing, answer all questions on the corresponding Question Sheet. This work will serve not only to easily demonstrate that a student has read and comprehended the text material for each week, but also to focus the student's attention on that which is most closely related to the objectives and outcomes already outlined for the course. The questions may also serve as the basis for class review and discussion of weekly material, augmented by the instructor's lectures, and they may, as well, be used as review guides and possible questions for the final exam. **Each Question Sheet will be 10% of the total course grade, making five sheets worth 50% of the final score.** This assures that students who consistently and regularly complete their course work will be rewarded for their diligence.
2. **Class Project:** Each student will prepare a 20 minute oral presentation for the class. Students preparing an oral presentation are required to get instructor approval of their topic by the second week of class and should work with the instructor to schedule their presentations at the most appropriate point in the course. All students are reminded that the Huntingdon College Honor Code applies to all course work, and are warned that any violation of the Honor Code will result in a grade of "F" for the class and will also be reported to the Huntingdon College Judicial Board for possible action. Students are therefore encouraged to seek guidance from the instructor with respect to any questions or uncertainty, especially regarding the issue of plagiarism. **This Class Project will count 25% of the final grade.**
3. **Final Exam:** There will be one in-class exam given the last class period. Questions may come from class lectures, discussion, and the Module Question Sheets. **The Exam counts 25% of the class grade.**

<b>Grading Elements</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Weekly Questions	50%
Class Project	25%
Final Exam	25%
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100%</b>

**GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS** - Describe the point range for each letter grade.

A = 90-100  
B = 80-89  
C = 70-79  
D = 60-69  
F = 59-below

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

**Absences and Tardiness – All students are required to attend the first session.**

Those who do not attend the first session will be automatically dropped from the course. Students with more than one absence will receive an "F" for the course. Since this class meets only five times, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing three weeks of a regular term. If you cannot attend a class you must let the instructor know via email as soon as possible. In case of absences you are responsible for obtaining all handouts and assignments. Tardiness may result in a deduction in your class participation grade. Excessive tardiness may count as an absence.

**Participation** –Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation requires students to come to class prepared to actively participate, which makes the classroom experience more meaningful. However, participation is not just speaking out in class. The contributions made by the student should be related to the course content and meaningful to the class discussion.

**Late Assignments** – Explain whether late assignments will be accepted and what penalty might be imposed if the assignment is late. Also specify what assignments can be turned in late. This will allow the student to make informed decisions.

**Accommodation of Special Needs-** Huntingdon College makes every reasonable accommodation for disabilities that have been processed and approved through our Disability Services Committee in accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to request disability-related services at Huntingdon College, students must self-identify to the Disabilities Intake Coordinator, Camilla Irvin, and provide appropriate and up-to-date documentation to verify their disability or special needs. After the accommodations have been approved by the Disability Services Committee, the 504 Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Olenik Dorman, will notify your professor(s) of the committee's decision. If you have any questions regarding reasonable accommodation or need to request disability-related services, please contact Disability Services at (334) 833-4432 or e-mail at [disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu).

**Academic Honesty** –Plagiarism is literary theft. Failure to cite the author of any language or of any ideas *which are not your own creation* is plagiarism. This includes any text you might paraphrase, as well. Anyone is capable of searching the Internet or any printed media; your research paper is intended to broaden your knowledge, stimulate your creativity, and make you think, analyze, and learn. It is not consistent with the College Honor Code, nor with scholarly expectations to submit work which is not the product of your own thinking and research. Severe penalties will result upon the submission of any work found to be plagiarized, including potential failure of the entire course. It is easy and simple to properly cite all sources used in your paper. Take no risks – cite your sources.

**First Night Assignment -**

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1:**

Read Chapters 1-3 in the course text.

Module Questions:

1. Describe the early research related to gender and the psychology of women.
2. Briefly trace the development of the psychology of women from its early beginnings to the current state of the discipline.

3. Imagine that a family has twins, a girl named Suzan and a boy named Jim. Based on the information on families and gender typing, how would you predict that their parents would treat Suzan and Jim? Discuss four areas in which parents might respond differently to boys and girls: (a) gender typed activity, and (b) discussion of emotion, (c) aggression, and (d) independence.

**Week 2:**

Read Chapters 4-6 in the course text

Module Questions

1. Imagine that you are teaching high school and that a group of teachers has obtained a large grant for a program on improving the lives of female adolescents. Review the topics in chapter four, and suggest 8-10 important topics that this program should address.
2. What kinds of factors influence gender differences in aggression? Combining as many factors as possible, describe a situation in which gender differences are likely to be exaggerated and a situation in which they are likely to be minimal.

**Week 3:**

Read chapters 7-9 in the course text.

Module Questions:

1. What is evolutionary psychology, and how does it explain women's and men's choices for an ideal romantic partner? Why is it inadequate in explaining romantic relationships in the current century? How can the social-roles theory account for that research? Finally, why would evolutionary psychology have difficulty accounting for lesbian relationships?
2. Describe attitudes about sexuality in the current era. Does the sexual double standard still hold true in North America in the twenty-first century.

**Week 4:**

Read chapters 10-12

Module Questions:

1. Describe how people react to pregnant women. How might these reactions contribute to women's emotional response to pregnancy? Be sure to discuss both hostile and benevolent sexism.
2. What is a disability, and how do women with disabilities differ from one another? In what ways does the life of a woman with a disability differ from the life of a woman who is not disabled?

**Week 5:**

Read chapters 13-15

Final Exam---

Module Questions:

1. What are some of the physical symptoms of menopause? What psychological reactions do women have to menopause. Imagine that a middle-age friend is now experiencing menopause. What information would you tell her about hormone replacement therapy?
2. What information do we have about sexual harassment, rape, and abuse, with respect to countries outside North America? Is this information substantially different from information about violence against women in North America?