



Integrating Social Justice into the Study of Personality

Reframing Personality Psychology through Equity and Inclusion

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Course Overview

Psychologists have developed several key approaches to explain what shapes our personality:

- Psychoanalytic – focuses on unconscious motives and early experiences (e.g., Freud).
- Trait – describes personality using stable characteristics, like introversion or openness.
- Biological – explores the influence of genetics and brain processes.
- Humanistic – emphasizes personal growth and self-actualization.
- Behavioral/Social Learning – sees personality as shaped by environment and learned experiences.
- Cognitive – how our thoughts and beliefs influence who we are.



Applying Personality Theories to Ourselves

This course helps you connect personality theories to your own experiences:

- Engage in self-assessments and reflections to explore your unique traits and patterns.
- Understand how your behaviors, relationships, and personal narratives connect to key theories.
- Develop greater self-awareness and appreciation for individual differences.



Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will:

- Understand classic theories and influential psychologists in the study of personality.
- Be able to analyze your own personality through multiple psychological lenses.
- Recognize how social and cultural contexts shape personality development.


JET Project Overview

- **Goal:** Integrate social justice concepts into an advanced undergraduate Personality Psychology course (see previous slides).
- **Reflection:** These theories are rooted in individualistic, Western, male, and socioeconomically privileged perspectives that emphasize autonomy and view individuals as independent and unique.
- **Aim:** Broaden the theories taught in the course to directly address the individualistic biases identified in traditional approaches by (1) integrating collectivist perspectives and a wider range of cultural viewpoints, and (2) emphasizing how cultural, social, and structural forces shape personality development.




Rationale and Need

Classic theories are often taught as universal but are culturally biased.

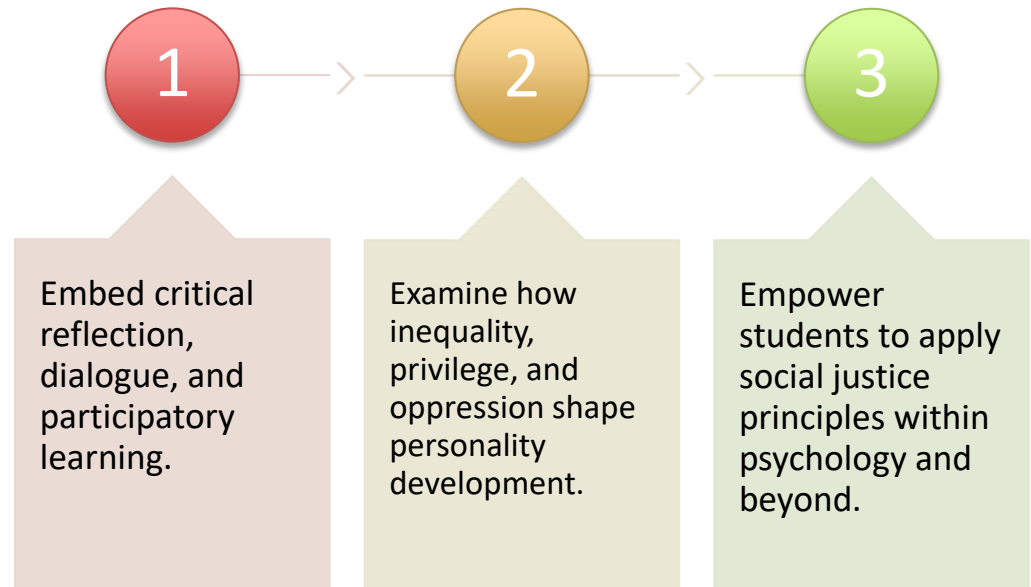


Students need to critically analyze how theory reflects and perpetuates cultural norms.



Promotes understanding of personality as shaped by systems of power.

Project Objectives



Project Activities

Integrate case studies highlighting cultural diversity and structural inequities.

Reflective writing: Students analyze their own identities and perspectives.

Class discussions exploring biases in theory and assessment.

Collaborative projects: Redesign aspects of a theory through an equity lens.

Implementation Timeline



**FALL 2025 –
PLANNING &
CONSULTATION:
COLLABORATE WITH
CTL AND
DEPARTMENT
COLLEAGUES.**



**DECEMBER 2026 –
MATERIAL
DEVELOPMENT:
CREATE INCLUSIVE
READINGS,
ASSIGNMENTS, AND
ASSESSMENTS.**



**SPRING 2026 –
IMPLEMENTATION:
TEACH REVISED
COURSE; COLLECT
STUDENT
FEEDBACK.**



**SUMMER 2026 –
EVALUATION &
REVISION: ASSESS
IMPACT, REFINE
CURRICULUM,
SHARE FINDINGS.**

Assessment Methods

Pre- and post-course reflections on social justice understanding.

Student feedback on inclusivity and engagement.

Analysis of assignments for critical thinking and cultural awareness.

Peer observation and review from DU departmental colleagues and CTL staff.

Indicators of Impact



Increased student awareness of cultural bias in psychological theories.



Improved self-reflection on privilege, identity, and context.



Positive feedback on engagement and inclusivity.



Model for equity-oriented teaching that could inform other courses.

Resources Needed

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL): inclusive pedagogy workshops.

University of Denver's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI): consultation on equitable course design.

DU Departmental and CTL support: peer review and feedback.



Collaboration

- Feedback from JET Capstone project and regular feedback from CU's CTL through the Certificate in College Teaching I am simultaneously earning.
- Present preliminary results CTL teaching colloquium.
- Invite faculty input on assessment and materials by working with Dr. Kateri McRae, Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology, University of Denver (kateri.mcrae@du.edu).

Broader Impact

- Model can be scaled to other psychology courses.
- Contributes to inclusive curriculum reform across departments.
- Prepares students for culturally competent practice and research.



Conclusion / Call to Action

- Integrating social justice enhances both academic rigor and social awareness.
- Encourages students to see psychology as a tool for equity.
- Next step: Launch, assess, and refine Spring/Summer 2026.

