

**Marshall University**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Study Guide for Master's Comprehensive Exam**  
(Revision 05/2009)

The psychology master's comprehensive exam consists of a multiple choice test organized around courses in the curriculum. You will answer 100 questions out of the more than 200 questions on the exam. You will be required to answer the first 50 questions which contain 15 questions on statistics, 15 questions on biological influences on behavior, 15 questions on cognitive psychology and 5 questions on ethics. For the other 50 items on the test you can choose the areas represented, however, you must answer all 10 questions in the areas you choose. This means that after the 50 core questions you will choose 5 other courses to be tested on. Below we have listed the concepts you should be familiar with for each course you choose. There should be questions on these concepts and only these concepts in each field. Courses are listed in numerical order below. Some courses are not in the study guide.

This form will be updated as new material becomes available.

**PSY 502 (Advanced Social Psychology)**

Internal and External Attributions

Augmenting and Discounting Principles

Errors and Biases

Fundamental Attribution Error

Self-serving Bias

Illusory Correlation

Negativity bias

Heuristics (Representativeness and Availability)

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Schemas (Prototypes, Exemplars, and Subtyping)

Social comparisons (Self-verification and Self-enhancement)

Social Identity

Self-presentation

Attitudes

Cognitive Consistency Theories (Balance Theory and Cognitive Dissonance Theory)

Central Route/Systematic Processing & Peripheral Route/Heuristic Processing

Normative and Informational Influence

Compliance techniques (door-in-the-face, "that's not all," Foot-in-the-door, low-ball effect)

Norm of reciprocity

Conformity (Sherif's autokinetic effect and Asch's Line studies)

Obedience (Milgram studies)

Factors that affect liking (Proximity, Familiarity, Similarity and Physical attractiveness)

Prejudice, Stereotypes, and Discrimination (interpersonal and institutional)

Ingroups vs. outgroups (outgroup homogeneity effect)

Stereotype threat

Social facilitation, social inhibition, and social loafing

Deindividuation

Group polarization

Prosocial behavior

Bystander Effect

Aggression: Biological and cultural influences

### **PSY 503 (Applied Social Psychology)**

Definition of conflict

Conflict strategies

Conflict spirals – definition, description and how to avoid them

Negative judgment spiral

Signs of constructive and destructive conflict

High context and low context cultures

Individualistic cultures and collectivist cultures and their beliefs about conflict Attributions

Linkey's three rules for conflict management

Gottman's four horsemen

Soft start-ups

Turning accusations or complaints into requests

Realistic expectations about conflict

Negotiation, mediation and arbitration

Conflict goals

The difference between "postponing with a promise" and autistic withdrawal

How self-serving biases influence conflicts

Issues of Power

Role of arousal in conflict

### **PSY 506 (Psychometrics)**

- Classical Test Theory: obtained score = true score + measurement error

- reliability vs. validity

- types of reliability (test-retest, split-half, alternate forms, inter-rater, inter-item)

- types of validity (face, content, construct, criterion-related (predictive, concurrent))

- item difficulty vs. item discrimination

- norm-referenced vs. criterion-referenced tests

- speed tests vs. power tests

- standard error of measurement

- standard scores (Z-scores, T-scores, percentile, etc.)

- types of distributions (normal, positively skewed, negatively skewed, etc.)

- criterion-keyed tests

- how the above ideas apply to personality tests (e.g., MMPI, Rorschach), intelligence tests (Binet, Wechsler), etc.

### **PSY 508 – (Abnormal Psychology)**

General diagnostic criteria (depression, anxiety disorders, etc.)

Theoretical perspectives on etiology (behavioral, psychodynamic, cognitive, etc.)

The nature of personality disorders

The suicidal or potentially violent individual Basic approaches to treatment

Five axis diagnosis

Mood Disorders incling: major depressive episode; manic episode; hypomanic episode; mixed episode

Impulse Control Disorders

V codes

Conveying diagnostic uncertainty

Personality Disorders

Anxiety Disorders including: panic disorder; PTSD; GAD; Acute Stress Disorder

Sexual & Gender Identity Disorders

Treatment planning – components that may make up a treatment plan (i.e. long term goal, objective, intervention, etc.)

Common interventions for disorders often seen (i.e. mood disorder, anxiety disorders, substance abuse/dependence)

Childhood Disorders including: ODD; conduct disorder; learning disabilities and pervasive developmental disorders; shyness

Eating Disorders

Adjustment Disorders

Schizophrenia spectrum disorders including: schizophrenia; schizophreniform; schizoaffective

Multicultural components/considerations to diagnosing

### **PSY 516 (Psychology of Learning)**

Classical, Instrumental, & Operant Conditioning – characteristics

Law of Effect

Acquired Taste Aversion

Intermittent reinforcement

Drive & Incentive motivation

Independent & Dependent variables in conditioning

CS, CR, UCR, UCS Acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery

Shaping, Autoshaping

Constraints on learning

Positive & Negative Reinforcement & punishment

Positive and Negative Contingencies

Cumulative Record (in operant conditioning)

Schedules of reinforcement

Generalization & discrimination

Systematic desensitization

Behavior Modification

Habituation & Sensitization

### **PSY 517 (Intermediate Statistics)**

measures of central tendency and variability

Pearson correlation & associated issues (causality, restricted range, non-linearity,  $r^2$ )

null & alternative hypotheses

within-group variability vs. between-group variability

p-values & -levels & statistical significance

type I and type II errors

power

effects of sample size, between-group variability, and within-group variability on power

omnibus test vs. contrasts/comparisons

controlling type I error-rate when performing multiple comparisons

main effects vs. interactions

within-subjects vs. between-subjects vs. split-plot ANOVA designs (similarities & differences, advantages & disadvantages of each)

choosing the appropriate statistical test for various designs

choosing the appropriate statistical test for various hypotheses

### **PSY 518 (Personnel Psychology)**

(1) Definition of Personnel Psychology (Subfields; Differences between HR and Personnel Psychology)

(2) Employment Discrimination (Disparate Impact vs. Disparate Treatment; Protected Classes; EEOC; OFFCP)

(3) Criterion Contamination, Criterion Deficiency, Criterion Relevance; Ultimate/Actual Criterion

(4) Adverse Impact and the 4/5th rule

(5) Multiple Hurdle vs. Multiple Cutoff Selection Methods

(6) Personnel Selection Techniques (Weighted Application Blanks, Interviews, Employment Tests, Honesty Tests, Drug Testing)

### **Psy 520 (I/O)**

History and development of I/O psy, pay attention to major influential characters, psychologists, legal incidents, and legal regulations.

1. Concepts and applications of research designs, methods, and procedures, together with statistical terminology

2. pay attention to chapters of work motivation, performance appraisal, job analysis, leadership, training/development, job satisfaction, organization and team work. For each chapter, be aware of representative theories, models, and researchers. More importantly, also be able to compare and contrast in terms of their similarities, differences, concerns, and/or criticisms. The best to do is to creatively rationalize them in real work settings.

3. understand the team work, team interaction, and evaluation of team 4. In general be able to perceive applications and significant art and science of I/O Psy in the workplace

5. Be aware of the trends of I/O psy along with the changes of the future industrial world.

### **Psychology 526 (Cross Cultural Psychology)**

Be familiar with:

1. Research methods commonly applied in cross cultural investigations and the objectives / goals of this kind of research

2. Cross cultural findings associated with the general areas of perception, language and emotion.

3. Current cross cultural findings with regard to intelligence and memory.

4. Definitions commonly used to disseminate cross cultural findings (such as race, ethnicity, nationality, etc).

5. Social psychological principles that have been specifically considered in the context of cross cultural research (stereotyping, attribution theory, various biases, ect.).

6. The anchored continuums / dimensions that are frequently used to describe cultures (such as individualism / collectivism, masculinity / femininity, power distance, gender roles, etc.).

### **PSY 533 (Current Models of Psychotherapy)**

Definitions of key concepts associated with each of the major models of therapy  
Primary therapeutic techniques associated with each major model, and how each is purported to help with therapy.

How each major model accounts for primary clinical problems ( e.g. anxiety, depression, marital or family problems, personality disorders)

Similarities and differences in therapy strategies

Applicability of therapy approaches to different populations (e.g. children, inpatient, varied cultural groups).

Research on therapy effectiveness, outcome comparisons across different therapy models

Approaches to psychotherapy integration; common factors across therapy models

### **PSY 560 (History & Systems)**

Kuhn's notions of scientific progress and change

The notion of explanation from orthodox or neopositivistic models of science.

The types of theories put forth by Gestalt psychologists

Wundt and James' notions of the unconscious as compared to the psychoanalysts

Freud's view of experimental testing of his theory.

Positivism and how it considers the goals of psychology.

The philosophy of science adopted by behaviorism

Tolmin versus Hullian theories of learning.

Notions of clinical psychology before WWII.

Why applied psychology was having a difficult time making it in more mainstream psychology departments throughout the 1920s and 1930s in American psychological history.

The discoveries in the 1960s and 1970s in animal research led to the disproof of the tenants of behaviorism

### **PSY 605 (Ethical and Legal Issues)**

Applicability of the APA

Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct Ethical Principles which underlie the Standards associated with Education, Therapy, Assessment and Research

Confidentiality

Multiple Relationships

Bartering

Harassment

Exploitation

Informed Consent

Processes of ethical decision making and/or attempting to resolve ethical concerns

### **Psychology 610 (Psychological Assessment of Adults)**

You should be entirely familiar with a variety of instruments (in particular, you should have great familiarity with the MMPI-2, MCMI-III, WAIS-3, Woodcock-Johnson Test of

Achievement, WIAT, WRAT, Bender's Visual / Motor Gestalt Test, WMS; you should be aware of and somewhat familiar with one or more procedures for assessment of malingering, the Rorschach, Draw-A-Person, and TAT). With regard to these instruments and with recognition that you will have had more experience with some instruments than with others, you should be prepared for questions related to any or all of the following:

1. The rules related to test selection (age, reading level, referral question, standardization, etc).
2. The types of instruments (such as objective, achievement, diagnostic, etc).
3. The scored components (including basic and validity scales, indexes, categories and/or subtests) on each assessment instrument and (generally) what they each measure or assess; the common scoring levels / "cut offs" associated with these.
4. The procedures / processes used to administer, score, and interpret the findings from these instruments.
5. Be conversant with regard to determining the validity of findings as they relate to components of tests, to instruments used singly, and to instruments used in battery assessments.
6. The components of a good mental status evaluation, behavioral observation session, and history taking; what constitutes an appropriate referral question.
7. How various instruments were developed.

### **PSY 611 (Child Assessment)**

Know basic properties of WPPSI-III and WISC-IV

Know interpretive schemes for IQ and achievement tests

Understand the role of factor analysis in test construction

Confidence Intervals

Understand the nature and properties of IQ scores and the factors that affect them

Know different types of test scores and their properties

Know the role of culture and its impact on assessment results

### **PSY 617 (Applied Developmental Psychology)**

Understand the concept of Epigenesis (Determined vs. Probabilistic)

Understand distinctions among types of attachment and current status of attachment research

Understand distinctions between organismic and mechanistic models

Know basic developmental milestones

Understand Piaget's theory of cognitive development and current status of the research on stages

### **PSY 627 (Social Psychological Basis of Groups)**

Definitions of group, group norms, roles,

Personal identity vs social identity

Individualistic & collectivist cultures characteristics  
Task leader vs socioemotional leader  
Contingency theories of leadership (Fiedler's, Hershey & Blanchard's, and Vroom & Yetton's)  
Social facilitation and social loafing  
Social categorization theory  
Prejudice and overcoming it  
Distributive fairness, procedural fairness and interactional fairness  
Equity theory  
Groupthink and other group decision making processes  
Groups and status processes  
Cognitive neoassociationist theory (Berkowitz) and aggression  
Social Dominance orientation  
Conformity Majority influence and minority influence  
Group polarization

### **Psychology 630 (Adult Therapy)**

Importance of identifying recurrent themes in psychotherapy  
How to establishing a collaborative relationship  
Importance of understanding client's anxiety  
Hierarchy in therapy  
How to approach client's affect  
How to handle countertransference  
When do clients become dependent on the therapist  
The corrective emotional experience

### **PSY 650 (Performance Appraisal)**

(1) Rater Training Techniques (Frame of Reference, Rater Error, Decision-Making, Rater Observation)  
(2) Measurement of Performance; Scales of Measurement; Methods of Assessing Reliability/Validity of Ratings  
(3) Performance Appraisal Methods (Graphic Rating Scales, Forced Distributions, Ranking Techniques, Goal Setting, Behavioral Observation Scales, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales, Mixed Standard Scales, Forced Choice Scales, Essay Methods, Field Review)  
(4) 360 degree Performance Appraisal  
(5) Administrative vs. Research Uses of Appraisal Information

### **PSY 672 (Cognitive Psychology)**

Atkinson-Shiffrin Model  
Sensory Memory, STM, LTM, working memory, iconic, echoic, attention  
Serial Position Curve

Encoding,  
Storage,  
Retrieval  
Signal Detection Theory  
Retrograde and anterograde amnesia  
Eyewitness Testimony – Loftus  
Top down Processing, Bottom up Processing  
Serial and Parallel Processing  
Self-terminating & exhaustive search  
Pattern recognition  
Schemas Control processes in memory  
Interference theory  
Episodic, semantic, procedural, declarative & nondeclarative memory  
Levels-of-processing  
General characteristics of cognitive models  
Dichotic Listening  
Consolidation Theory  
Mnemonics  
Implicit and explicit memory  
State-dependent memory  
Influences on Perception  
Assimilation and Accommodation

### **PSY 674/540 (Biological Basis)**

4 lobes of the cerebral cortex (frontal, occipital, parietal, temporal)  
neural communication (synapses, action potential, ion channels, neurotransmitter release)  
structure of the cerebral cortex (lobes, sulci, gyri)  
major sensory cortices (visual, auditory, motor, somatosensory, thalamus)  
brain damage (Alzheimer's disease, subdural hematoma)  
language areas (Broca, Wernicke)  
hypothalamus (functions)  
Divisions of nervous system  
Types of neurons  
Structure of neurons  
Action potentials  
Membrane potentials  
Synaptic communication  
Structure of brain and spinal cord  
Directions in nervous system  
Neurotransmitters and behavior  
Sensory receptors and pathways  
Sensory deficits