

# **PSYC\*6010, Course Outline: Fall 2016**

## **General Information**

Course Title: Learning Disorders: Research and Clinical Practice

Course Description:

This course examines various cognitive, social, and educational components of learning and language disorders and accompanying clinical methods of diagnosis and remediation.

Credit Weight: .50

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall

Class Schedule and Location: Monday 2:30-5:20; MCKN Room 309

## **Instructor Information**

Instructor Name: Arlene Young, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Instructor Email: ayoung09@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: MCKN EXT 3004: To be arranged

## **Course Content**

### **Specific Learning Outcomes:**

After completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- 1) appreciation for a broad range of theoretical approaches to understanding learning and disorders of learning
- 2) understanding of the controversy surrounding how learning disorders are defined and diagnosed
- 3) understanding of how to critically evaluate and select assessment instruments
- 4) knowledge of current research findings in the area of learning disorders
- 5) ability to integrate theory and empirical findings in order to plan assessments
- 6) emerging ability to integrate findings from several test batteries and other sources to write a clear and concise report
- 7) knowledge of appropriate and empirically supported recommendations for children's academic programs based on their cognitive profiles
- 8) understanding of social-emotional correlates of children with neurodevelopmental disorders
- 9) appreciation for issues of diversity with relevance to assessment and intervention

### **Seminar Content:**

The course will present various theoretical perspectives on learning disorders as well as current research findings. We will also address other neurodevelopmental disorders that have important implications for learning such as Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The course also covers methods of assessing learning as well as standardized academic measures and measures of cognitive processing and how to write an integrative assessment report. Various assignments will be completed to facilitate this integration and to further prepare students for later clinical work and academic studies.

Course material will span preschool through adulthood, second language learners, and different cultural groups. Students will be encouraged to relate research and theory to practice. Practical and ethical issues in working with the learning disabled population will be discussed.

### Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Test review – presentation & Handout	Assigned throughout semester	20% (10% for review and 10% for presentation)	3
LD assessment report – 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	October 17	20%	3-7
LD assessment report – final draft	Nov 14th	15%	3-8
Essay of special topics in LD	Nov 30th	35%	1-9
Contribution to weekly seminar	Throughout semester	10%	1-9

### Class Schedule\*

Class Date	Topic
Sept 12	Introduction, organization, and definitional Issues
Sept 19	Perspectives on LD and review of cognitive processing
Sept 26	Reading Disorders – cognitive processes (test review) – report writing
Oct 3	Reading Disorder Part 2 (reading comprehension) (test review) – Report writing
Oct 10	*****No Class*****
Oct 17	Specific Learning Disorder: Writing & Spelling; <b>LD Report draft #1 due</b>
Oct 24	Specific Learning Disorder: Mathematics (test review)
Oct 31	Comorbidity & LD: ADHD; Language Disorder, Anxiety
Nov 7	Autistic Spectrum disorders/motor disorders/NVLD/spatial processing
Nov 14	LD and social-emotional functioning, <b>LD final assessment report</b>
Nov 21	LD across the lifespan

Nov 28

Course wrap-up and discussion – Essay on special topics due Nov 30th

\*Please understand that topics and dates may need to be altered to accommodate for student interest and discussion. A schedule of readings will be given out during the first class meeting.

## Course Resources

### Required Texts:

H. L. Swanson, K. R. Harris, & S. Graham (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of Learning Disabilities: Second Edition*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Additional articles from journals and books listed on a reading list are required readings as seed material for class discussions. These articles are typically available via the library online journals. A complete list will be provided before the first class.

### Format:

Classes meet weekly September 14<sup>th</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup>. Each class will include lecture and discussion regarding research and theory, clinical practice considerations, and student presentations or discussion. Each week a set of common readings are to be completed by all students.

### Readings:

Articles from journals and books listed on a reading list are required readings as seed material for class discussions. These articles are grouped as common readings for all students, and unique readings for some students. Articles are typically available via the library online journals.

### Assignments:

1. **Contributions to the weekly seminars: (10% of final mark)**. This includes preparation for class, participation in discussions, and integrating the material of one's own unique reading and experience to class discussions. As part of their preparation for class, students will make a discussion post on the course website. The posting should be fairly brief but should highlight questions or issues that they would like to see discussed in the class to follow. This posting should be made by Sunday at noon so that I have time to incorporate the feedback into the class discussion on Monday.

2. Critical review of an assessment measure and class presentation (20% of final mark)

Preparing the written test review. Reviews should follow the format shown on the accompanying Test Review Form (see attached). In preparing your review, pay close attention to queries concerning what the tests/subtests/items "purportedly vs. actually" assess. You will also be expected to address the theoretical rationale underlying the test. Do not rely solely on test manuals or test reviewers to supply such information nor should you assume that test labels accurately reflect what is assessed. Think through the test yourself. In doing so, three strategies are suggested:

1. Take the test yourself and reflect on what you are doing as you respond.
2. Put yourself in the position of teaching or showing someone what they have to do to perform well on an item.
3. Try to hypothesize about where someone would have gone wrong if they had performed poorly on the item.

Finally, after reviewing a test, you should be competent to administer the instrument and score it. If not, you should be able to explain why. You are advised to bring a copy of the instrument.

Class presentation of test review.

In presenting your review in class you should NOT simply read everything on your completed Test Review Form. Printed copies of the completed forms should be made for distribution to the class on the day of your presentation. In addition, you should prepare a short (15-20 minute) talk that summarizes (or highlights) points in your completed written review. Your talk should place special emphasis on what in your opinion the test assesses. Following the oral synopsis, there will be time allowed for the student to demonstrate selected test items and answer questions about the test.

**4. LD assessment case report. (35% of final mark)** Students will be given assigned an assessment case with academic difficulties as a major concern. You will prepare a case report including background information, interpretation of a number of assessment measures and case formulation and recommendations. This assignment is designed to help you develop interpretive and report writing skills, learn about new tests, and relate research and theory to clinical work. You will have an opportunity to hand in portions of the report as you progress through the term. The first section should be handed in on **October 26th (worth 20%). This will include the sections up to the overall formulation/summary and recommendations section.** You will receive feedback and have the opportunity to improve your next draft and incorporate feedback for a revision and full assessment report due on **November 16th (worth 15%).**

**5. Essay on special topics and LD (35% of final mark).** This project involves students developing an more in depth knowledge of a specific subpopulation of individuals with LD or a special challenge for assessment or intervention. Specific topics will be decided on in consultation with course instructor but the following topics are suggested: challenges for differential diagnosis of LD in English language learners; assessing or determining recommendations for individuals with hearing or visual impairments; culturally competent assessment for LD, challenges of LD in the work place, and disentangling factors contributing to LD in offender populations. The essay should be between 10 and 12 double-spaced pages, and APA formatted. Further details on this assignment will be provided in class.

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading Policies**

#### **[Graduate Grade interpretation](#)**

In keeping with the Grade Interpretation listed in the Graduate Calendar (link above), grade interpretation for this course is as follows:

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Description
90-100	A+	Outstanding. The student demonstrated a mastery of the course material at a level of performance exceeding that of most scholarship students and warranting consideration for a graduation award.
80-89	A- to A	Very Good to Excellent. The student demonstrated a very good

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Description
		understanding of the material at a level of performance warranting scholarship consideration.
70-79	B	Acceptable to Good. The student demonstrated an adequate to good understanding of the course material at a level of performance sufficient to complete the program of study.
65-69	C	Minimally Acceptable. The student demonstrated an understanding of the material sufficient to pass the course but at a level of performance lower than expected from continuing graduate students.
0-64	F	An inadequate performance.

### **Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices:**

**Given that this course is discussion based and that fully engaged participation enhances the learning environment for all, cell phone and computer use should be limited to class content related activity only during class time.**

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Consideration**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Grounds for Academic Consideration](#)

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the [Graduate Calendar](#):  
**Accessibility**

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email [csdexams@uoguelph.ca](mailto:csdexams@uoguelph.ca) or the [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

### **Course Evaluation Information**

Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#) .

### **Drop date**

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is **November 4th** . For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).  
[Current Graduate Calendar](#)