

# PSYC\*4900, Course Outline: Fall 2016

## General Information

**Course Title: Psychology Seminar**

### **Course Description:**

In this course, students will critically examine the nature and practice of Psychology as a scientific discipline. Rather than cover new material & knowledge, we will discuss philosophical & practical issues. These include: the role of science in psychological inquiry; the appropriate unit of study for psychology; the generalizability of psychological findings; the role (if any) of social constructionism; the influence of language and “classic tales” on psychological inquiry; the dissemination of scientific findings; the interaction between psychological science & politics; and the ethics of psychological research & practice. We will also cover the “nature vs. nurture” false dichotomy, and how nature & nurture interact and *must* interact.

Much of psychology focuses on the causal psychological mechanisms that cause behaviour within each person, e.g. the emotions, thoughts, cognitive decision rules, hormones, and neurological processes (etc.) that trigger behaviour – in other words, anything that happens *within an individual* when behaviour is produced. However, this is only one of four possible levels at which we can analyze behaviour. In the second part of the course, we will examine the other three of the Four Levels of Analysis:

- Development (“Ontogeny”): How do the particular psychological mechanisms – whatever they happen to be – arise *within an individual’s lifespan*?
- Origins (“Phylogeny”): When did those psychological mechanisms (& behaviours) arise in evolutionary or cultural history, and what precursors did they come from?
- Function: Why do those particular psychological mechanisms exist at all in *anyone*? Why does the brain develop that way? What is the advantage of having those mechanisms (i.e. what is the behaviour *for*), and what selective pressures cause them to arise and persist?

**Credit Weight: 0.5**

**Academic Department (or campus): Psychology**

**Semester Offering: Fall 2016**

**Class Schedule and Location: Mondays 2:30-5:20, Alexander 218**

## Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Pat Barclay

Instructor Email: [barclayp@uoguelph.ca](mailto:barclayp@uoguelph.ca)

Office location and office hours: Drop-in Tues 3PM-4PM & Wed 10AM-11AM, no apt. needed, Additional office hours available by appointment (incl. Skype or phone)

## **GTA Information**

GTA Name: TBA

GTA Email: TBA

GTA office location and office hours: Office hours by appointment

## **Course Content**

### **Specific Learning Outcomes:**

1.1 Creative & Critical Thinking: Depth & Breadth of Understanding (Level 3: Master)

1.2 Creative & Critical Thinking: Inquiry & Analysis (Level 3: Master)

1.4 Creative & Critical Thinking: Creativity (Level 3: Master)

4.1 Communicating: Oral Communication (Level 3: Master)

4.2 Communicating: Written Communication (Level 3: Master)

4.3 Communicating: Reading Comprehension (Level 3: Master)

4.4 Communicating: Integrative Communication (Level 3: Master)

5.1 Professional & Ethical Behaviour: Teamwork (Level 3: Master)

**Lecture Content: student-led discussion-based examination of issues.**

**Labs: None**

**Seminars: No additional seminars beyond the weekly scheduled slots (Mon 2:30-5:20)**

### **Course Assignments and Tests:**

<b>Assignment or Test</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Contribution to Final Mark (%)</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes Assessed</b>
Weekly discussion Q's	3 hours before classes	10% total	4.3
Discussion in class	In each class	10% total	1.2, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1
Test – Agile Gene	Fri Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> in class	10%	1.1, 1.2
Logbooks (1 for each class, 12 total)	Fri Sept 23 (classes 1-2) Fri Oct 7 (classes 3-4) Fri Oct 28 (classes 5-6) Fri Nov 17 (classes 7-9) Fri Dec 9 (classes 10-12) All the above are at 5PM	70% total: best 10 out of 12 at 7% each	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

### **Additional Notes (if required):**

*Class participation (10%):* This is intended to be a student-led discussion course, so all students are expected to contribute to class discussions in a positive manner. This is your opportunity to learn from each other. You will likely disagree with each other and with me on some issues, and this is fine, but everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and to present (and take) such disagreements in a constructive manner. Participation in class

discussion is worth 10% of your grade. Grades are based on a combination of quality and frequency, with more weight on the former – the best contributions move the discussion forward. If you must miss a class, please inform me as soon as possible before or after.

*Discussion questions (10%):* Students should prepare for the discussion by generating points or questions that they feel will add to the discussion of the topics. Before each class (other than the first class), students should briefly submit their two best discussion points (10%). These can be questions for the class, brief points about the readings or the topics raised, or anything else that will add to the discussion. These should be brief: one sentence each or point form is fine if it's a good question, a paragraph is usually too long (except where you absolutely need to establish some premises before the question makes sense). These will be graded on quality, and I will take your best 10 out of 11. Questions are due in Courselink 3 hours before class (11:30 AM Monday) at the latest. Note: if you can also paste your questions into the "comments" section of your Courselink submission, it would make things much easier for me; this is not necessary, but it is much appreciated.

*Test on Agile Gene (10%):* Nature and nurture is arguably the biggest debate in psychology in the last century, so you need to understand exactly why this is a false dichotomy, how nature & nurture interact, and why they *must* interact. The book *The Agile Gene* helps clarify this. To ensure that you read and understand the ideas in this book, you will be tested on this material.

*Logbooks (70% total, best 10 out of 12 entries are worth 7% each):* You will be asked to keep a journal of thoughts & reflections on the ideas and issues discussed in each class, with one journal entry for each class. *This has to be more than just a summary or description of the readings and discussion:* this is your opportunity to critically examine the issues in greater depth and convey your independent thoughts and creativity. You have considerable rein as to what to include. Suggestions include your reflections & evaluations of the material, connections to other issues raised, and extensions, criticisms, or applications of the issues. For example, one strategy is to critically evaluate the authors' argument(s) in light of what was discussed in class, their strengths and weaknesses, and then present your own conclusions and (most importantly) the reasons for those conclusions. See the handout "How to Write a Log" (posted on Courselink). Any strategy is fine: you earn grades for how well you execute your strategy and back up your points. ***Make sure that you back up your points by explaining the how and why,*** for example *how* something works and *why* a point is important. This log must demonstrate not only that you have done the readings *and* attended class, but that you have been actively intellectually engaged in both, and that you understand the reasons for accepting or rejecting a particular viewpoint. It is your responsibility to be clear about what you are contributing: if it is not clear that you have said anything beyond banalities, you will be graded accordingly. You are free to agree or disagree with any point that I or anyone else have raised, but make sure to argue your case. You are actively encouraged to draw from any discipline, course, or theoretical perspective. It is recommended that you do your journal entry for each class shortly after class while the topics and discussion are still fresh in your mind and the prevent last-minute rushes. Do not worry if your thoughts or opinions change over the course of the semester – this is part of learning. You are encouraged to discuss ideas with others to sharpen your arguments – this is collaborative learning. However, ***you may not collaborate on the actual writing of the logs.*** To this end, I recommend differentiating your log entry from others' logs.

Each logbook entry (i.e., each class) should be three double-spaced pages, give or take ½ a page. Please focus on quality rather than quantity – a concise and well-presented short entry is better than a padded and verbose long entry. The first two classes' logs are due on **Fri. Sept 23rd**, classes 3 & 4 on **Fri. Oct 7th**, weeks 5 & 6 on **Fri Oct 28th** (note extra week because of Fall Break), weeks 7-9 on **Fri Nov 17th**, and weeks 10-12 on **Fri Dec 9th** (this is in the exam period because there is no final exam). They are due by 5PM at my office, and you must also provide a backup copy on D2L/Courselink (just in case). I will take your best 10 out of 12 log entries, and each of them will be worth 7% (70% total). A late penalty of 10% per day will apply unless appropriate documentation is provided.

*Format for logbook submission:* Each log entry should be ~3 double-spaced pages, 12-point font, Times New Roman font, with a cover page for your name for blind grading... your name & ID should *only* be on the cover page. **You must also submit a back-up on Courselink** (you will not be graded down if this e-copy is late or absent, but it is your responsibility to be able to prove on-time submission of any week's log in the event of mishaps; the Courselink back-up copy does this.)

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Texts:**

Ridley, M. (2003). *The Agile Gene*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

***Yes, you are required to read the whole book, and will be tested on it, so START EARLY.***

There are also a number of required readings posted on Courselink. These must be read before each class. See schedule of topics.

### **Other Resources:**

I have posted the other required readings on Courselink. These must be read before class. See schedule of topics.

## **Course Policies**

### **Regrade Policy**

I will gladly entertain requests for a regrade on either your logs or on the test, but your request must be put in writing. I will regrade the whole thing (e.g. whole test, multiple logs submitted together), and the new grade stands whether it is higher or lower than the original. Please see the following for details:

I am happy to discuss our comments or grades with you. Please feel free to come by office hours or arrange a time to meet. During this meeting, we can discuss the ideas, clarify what the comments meant, and give tips for improvement. However, I will not change any grades during

the actual meeting... only in response to a written justification. If you do disagree with your grade, or feel that I have grossly misinterpreted something you have written, I will gladly entertain requests for a re-grading. To request a regrade, the reasons for your request (and your argument as to why you deserve a higher grade) *must* be clearly spelled out ***in writing*** and submitted along with the test/logs. This takes the emotion out of the process and makes it so that the grade is assigned based on what is actually written. To request a re-grade, submit in writing a re-grade request along with the graded log and a fresh unmarked copy of your log (which I will read first to form a new opinion).

A word of caution: I re-grade the entire assignment (e.g. the whole test or both logs in a submission) rather than just a specific section of your choice, and the new total grade will hold. This could cause your grade to go up or down or stay the same, depending on whether the second reading (and consideration of your rationale) is more or less favourable than the first. As such, I would advise against using this option to “dig” for extra points unless you legitimately feel that you have been misinterpreted or unjustly graded. I am open to the possibility having made a mistake – we are all human – but we must all accept the possibility that the mistake could have worked against you or in your favour. If you **do** legitimately feel that you have been misinterpreted or that I missed your point or graded it too harshly, then by all means submit your rationale for a regrade.

Because I will re-grade the whole assignment, you will want to look at *all* the sections: it is possible that you have been graded too hard on one section but too easy on another (e.g. a misinterpretation that gives you the benefit of the doubt). These misinterpretations for and against you should balance out on average, and if they do then you would receive the grade you actually deserve (but for different components than expected). By requesting a re-grade, you would be arguing that overall you have been misinterpreted for the worse more often than you have been misinterpreted for the better, such that you deserve a higher grade overall. You can't just pick the sections that worked against you; you have to look at all of them. By requesting a re-grade, you are saying that your overall grade is lower than you deserve, and I will be the final arbiter of what you actually deserve as an overall grade. As such, you may want to talk to me about your overall score in order to get an overall assessment on *\*all\** sections (not just the ones where you disagree with the grade). I have certainly agreed with some re-grade requests in the past, and if you have a legitimate complaint overall then I will probably agree with you. At the same time, I am merely asking that you recognize the possibility that you actually deserve a lower grade overall because some sections of the assignment were graded higher than they should have been. As such, resubmitting will give you the overall grade you deserve... whether this is higher or lower than the original.

Before submitting a regrade request, please consider the following. When grading, I approach each paper with the expectation that it will be average. Grades advance or drop depending on both content and style; for an A-/A-/A+, the paper must impress me with exceptional thoughtfulness, reasoning, and presentation. “A” papers involves hard (but rewarding) work! A solid “B” is a mark of achievement which reflects critical reasoning and/or thorough research and solid writing skills. Please refer to Chapter VIII of the Undergraduate Calendar for descriptions of what constitutes an A, B, C, D, & E.

### **Course Policy on Group Work:**

You are encouraged to discuss ideas with others to sharpen your arguments – this is collaborative learning. However, you may not collaborate on the actual writing of the logs. To this end, I recommend differentiating your log entry from others' logs.

### **Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:**

Because we want students to feel free to voice their opinions and raise questions on challenging topics, electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

## **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:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

### **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 Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

## 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 Fri. Nov 4th. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).  
[Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)

## Additional Course Information

### Schedule of Topics

*Class 1 Sept 12: Psychology as a Science:* Is psychology a science? If so, what makes it a science? Should it be a science? Why or why not?

Shermer, M. (video) [Baloney Detection Kit](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUB4j0n2UDU): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUB4j0n2UDU>

*Class 2 Sept 19: Framings and Foundations:* What would a science of psychology look like? How can we investigate something we can't see? Is psychology too divided & focused on "small Q's"?

Kimble, G. A. (1994). A frame of reference for psychology. *American Psychologist*, 49(6), 510-519.

Bevan, W. (1991) Contemporary psychology: a tour inside the onion. *American Psychologist*, 46(5), 475-483.

*Class 3 Sept 26: On the Generalizability of Psychological Findings:* To what extent can we generalize from psychology studies? To what extent do we need to?

Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61-135. **Important Note: just read the main article. You do NOT have to read all the commentaries (unless you really want to).**

Mook, D. (1983). In defense of external invalidity. *American Psychologist*, 38, 379-387.



*Class 4 Oct 3: Social Constructionism and Psychology:* To what extent is our psychology (and our findings) socially constructed? Does this matter, and why? What does it even mean to say that something is “socially constructed”? Is this perspective useful, and if so, how?

Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40, 266-275.

Sokal, A. (1996). Transgressing the boundaries: toward a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity. *Social Text*, 46-47, 217-252. **Important Note: you do NOT have to read the whole thing. Read several pages, and if you're having any trouble with the article, then skip to the next article. Please trust me on this.**

Sokal, A. (1996). A physicist experiments with cultural studies. *Lingua Franca*, 6, 62-64.

Edley, N. (2001). Unravelling social constructionism. *Theory & Psychology*, 11, 433-441.

*Oct 10: No class (Thanksgiving), class rescheduled for Fri. Dec 2nd*

*Class 5 Oct 17: On the Role of Experts in Decisions:* Is human judgment overrated, and would we be better automating our decisions? What are the (dis)advantages of this? What should the role of expert practitioners be in *any* area (e.g. clinicians, doctors, social workers)? Why should(n't) we mandate evidence-based practice everywhere? Note: these two articles argue against each other, so we must resolve this discrepancy. What's your position, & **why?**

Dawes, R. M., Faust, D., & Meehl, P. E. (1989). Clinical versus actuarial judgment. *Science*, 243, 1668-1674.

Gupta, M. (2007). Does evidence-based medicine apply to psychiatry? *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 28, 103-120.

*Class 6 Oct 24: The Role of Narrative & Journalism:* How do narratives influence research and how findings get accepted? How accurate are popular portrayals of psychology studies? What is science journalism like, and what *should* it be like?

Manning, R., Levine, M., & Collins, A. (2007). The Kitty Genovese Murder and the Social Psychology of Helping. *American Psychologist*, 62(6), 555-562.

Murcott, T. (2009). Science journalism: toppling the priesthood. *Nature*, 459, 1054-1055.

Rensberger, B. (2009). Science journalism: too close for comfort. *Nature*, 459, 1055-1056.

Barclay, P. (2010). Altruism as a courtship display: Some effects of third-party generosity on audience perceptions. *British Journal of Psychology*, 101, 123-135.

5 popular articles covering that article (UoG press release, BBC, Business Week, Montreal Gazette, Daily Express)

*Class 7 Oct 31: Nature via Nurture:* We all pay lip service to believing that “nature vs. nurture is a false dichotomy”, but what does this really mean? How do nature & nurture interact, and why *must* they interact? What is development actually like?

Ridley, M. (2003). *The Agile Gene*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

**Yes, you are required to read the whole book. Start early.**



*Class 8 Nov 7: Origins of Human Psychology: Homology and Convergence:* How are humans similar and different from other animals? What can we learn from studying closely related species (homology) and from other species that have faced similar ecological pressures (convergence)? How does this simplify or complicate our view of human behaviour?

Online talk: Robert Sapolsky (2009) [The Uniqueness of Humans](#) (given at Stanford).

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/robert\\_sapolsky\\_the\\_uniqueness\\_of\\_humans.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/robert_sapolsky_the_uniqueness_of_humans.html)

**Note: Yes, the “reading” this week is only a video, which is about 40 min long.**

*Class 9 Nov 14: The Function(s) of Behavior:* What are the functions of our various emotions and other psychological mechanisms? How is it useful to know this?

Nesse, R. (1998). Emotional disorders in evolutionary perspective. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 71, 397-415.

Barclay, P. (2013). Pathways to Abnormal Revenge and Forgiveness. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36(1), 17-18.

Daly, M. (forthcoming). How evolutionary thinking inspires and disciplines psychological hypotheses. Book chapter.

**The following is optional, but is highly recommended if you have no evolutionary background**

Neuberg, S. L., Kenrick, D. T., & Schaller, M. (2010). Evolutionary social psychology. In S.T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.) *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 76-796. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

*Class 10 Nov 21: Science and Politics:* To what extent do these interact? How should they?

Rose, S., Ceci, S., & Williams, W. M. (2009). Should scientists study race and IQ? (Two articles: NO and YES) *Nature*, 457, 786-789.

Various authors. (2009). Correspondence arising from “Should scientists study race and IQ?” *Nature*, 458, 145-147.

Lillienfeld, S. O. (2002). When worlds collide: social science, politics, and the Rind et al (1998) child sexual abuse meta-analysis. *American Psychologist*, 57, 176-188.

*Class 11 Nov 28: Ethics:* What is considered ethical practice for psychologists? What happens when one ethical principle conflicts with another?

Canadian Psychological Association. (2000). [Canadian code of ethics for psychologists](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Available at: <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/committees/ethics/codeofethics/>

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060-1073.

Miller, G. (2009). Terrorism charges against grad student raise questions. *Science*, 326, 1609.

*Class 12 Dec 2: Applications of Psychology to Global Problems:* How can we use what we’ve learned to make positive change in the world?

Kazdin, A. E. (2009). Psychological science’s contributions to a sustainable environment: extending our reach to a grand challenge of society. *American Psychologist*, 64, 339-356.

Engelhart, K. (2013, July 22). United Kingdom tests behavioural economics on taxpayers. *Maclean’s*, pp. 36-37. (Note: I’ve posted the website version from July 15)