

PSYC*6910 - Critical Approaches to Applied Social Psychology

Winter 2025 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to critical approaches to applied social psychology. The course will address theoretical traditions and methodologies that take as their starting point a reflexive critique and evaluation of culture, society, and its institutions.

Department(s): **Department of Psychology**

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to theoretical and methodological resources for doing critical research in applied social psychology. The course will require students to reflect on what is meant by the term “critical,” and to bring their own observations and insights into dialogue with theoretical perspectives that question the nature of social and psychological reality. Though the course will cover approaches that are “applied” in the traditional sense, it will also focus on the potential role for critique in eliciting social change through such means as stimulating public debate and informing substantive policy development.

Lecture Content:

We will cover the following topics:

- What do we mean by “critical”?
- The role of theory
- Critical theoretical perspectives, including:
 - Feminism
 - Marxism and Critical theory
 - Post-structuralism
 - Post-colonialism
- Social issues (not exhaustive)
 - Poverty and precarity
 - Gender and sexuality
 - Health, disability and technology
 - Racism and colonialism
 - Politics

Lecture Schedule

Fri 8:30am-11:20am in GRHM*2302 (1/6 to 4/21)

Instructor Information

Kieran O'Doherty
Professor
Email: odohertk@uoguelph.ca
Office: MacKinnon Extension 3014
Office Hours:
Tuesday 1-2pm

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Optional	The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Psychology	O'Doherty, K. C., & Hodgetts, D. (eds)	9781473969261

Learning Resources

Course Resources

All readings for the course are provided on CourseLink. Please check the course schedule for when readings will be discussed in class. Students are expected to have read relevant readings before class and be prepared to discuss them.

Campus Resources Course Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors/>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons/>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

Textbook / Learning Resource	Required / Recommended	Cost
Handbook of Applied Social Psychology (2019)	Optional	\$264.09

Students are advised that prices are often determined by the publisher or bookstore and may be subject to change.

Course Level Learning Outcomes

The successful student, upon completion of this course will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of critical scholarship in social psychology as it has been applied to social issues and specific problems;
2. Be able to use critical scholarship as a foundation for an analysis of research and practice in at least one domain of applied social psychology;
3. Be able to select and argue for the value of a particular theoretical approach for social issues related to their own research programs;
4. Be able to analyse the politics of psychological expertise and intervention;
5. Develop reflexive awareness of their own role as psychological experts and its implications for efforts to "apply" psychological knowledge to social issues.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Weekly Activities

In class Participation 20%

This will be based on quality of meaningful engagement in class discussions based on course readings. It is expected that students have read all required readings and are able to discuss them with colleagues. Students are expected to attend every class, except in the case of emergencies, and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If it becomes evident that students have not prepared for class discussion (i.e., have not done the readings), this will be reflected in the participation grade.

It is an expectation in this course that you attend classes. If you do not attend a class, you cannot participate, and a participation grade of zero will be assigned for that class. You can miss 2 classes without penalty. This is an automatic accommodation to account for occasional illness or other reasons. For this reason, please do not ask for accommodation for missing 1 class on the grounds that you have already missed 2 classes previously. If you miss more than 2 classes, this will affect your grade. Work conflicts are not an acceptable reason for not participating in class.

Reader response essays 20%

These (~1000 word) essays should provide a tightly argued response to the readings for that week. They should rely on a close reading of the texts. At the start of term, students will sign up for their four weeks to submit a response essay. Essays will be due 48 hrs before class. Please upload essays on the dropbox of Courselink.

Major research paper 40%

The purpose of this assignment will be to write a proposal/essay of 12 – 15 pages on a particular social issue in which you select a theoretical approach, formulate a plan to study/intervene in it, and explain the research and rationale that informs it. The paper should include the following:

1. a detailed description of the issue/problem;
2. a discussion of the research, theory and personal experience that pertains to it;
3. a description of your proposed study/intervention and the rationale for it;
4. a conclusion in which you critically reflect on your proposal and your learning.

Your proposal/essay will be assessed on the extent to which it addresses the following questions (which relate directly to particular course objectives):

1. What core assumptions and values underlie your proposed intervention/program?
2. What particular theoretical approaches inform your proposed intervention/program, and why were they chosen?
3. What are the roles of the psychologist(s) in your proposed intervention?
4. What “reflexive” issues might be relevant to your work?

Oral presentation 20%

Towards the end of the course, you will give a 20 minute presentation based on your research, reading, and thinking about your proposal/essay. This will be an opportunity to try out your ideas, stimulate discussion and debate, and get feedback from the class. You should also prepare some questions for the class to help them think through the issues with you (roughly 10 - 15 minute discussion).

Assessment Breakdown

{NOTE: instructor can add another row by hitting "TAB" button when they are at the end of the row}

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
In-class participation	20%	n/a
Reader response essays x 4	20%	see below
Oral presentation	20%	see below
Major research paper	40%	April 9, 2025, 5pm

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Winter 2025 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: April 04

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments on CourseLink.

Late Assignment

10% subtracted for each day late up to a maximum of 3 days (after that assignments receive an automatic zero).

Course Standard Statements

Course Policies

ChatGPT

The use of ChatGPT or other text generators is not permitted in this course. The objectives of this course are to develop skills in critical reasoning and development of reasoned arguments. The assignments you will be writing are the key activity to achieve this. You need to cognitively process these ideas and work to articulate them in writing to develop your skills. Use of AI text generators will bypass these cognitive pathways and thus prevent you from developing the skills yourself. Use of ChatGPT or other text generators in this course will be considered Academic Misconduct.

CSAHS Graduate Academic Misconduct Policy

The *Academic Misconduct Policy* is detailed in the Graduate Calendar. 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.

Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. 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.

Standard Statements for Graduate Courses

Academic Integrity

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 (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 business days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas/>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodation of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>)

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/>) dropping courses are available in the Graduate Calendar (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/registration/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators/>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources. (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year/>) The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/grounds-academic-consideration/>).