

PSYC*4900-02, Course Outline: Fall 2015

General Information

Course Title: Psychology Seminar

Course Description:

This course is intended as a capstone experience, meaning that we will explore issues in a way that capitalizes on what you have learned in previous courses. Each week we will break into small groups to discuss an issue of interest to contemporary psychology.

Usually, the issue is also of interest to society as a whole, and we will use a non-academic characterization of the issue as a starting point. The seminars will thus involve not only the verbal sharing of facts and opinions but also the search for relevant information (from academic psychology and related fields). Thus, it is important that you bring an Internet-linked device to class if you can.

Most of the issues are controversial, and it is important that we treat alternative viewpoints with respect. It is hoped that the atmosphere of the seminar discussions will resemble an English coffeehouse or French salon more than a classroom. In other words, there should be lively, good-natured, intellectual debate with active participation by all.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall 2015

Class Schedule and Location: Fridays 11:30-2:20 in MCKN 312

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dan Meegan

Instructor Email: dan.meegan@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: Thursdays 11:30-1:30 in room 3018 of the Mackinnon Extension

GTA Information

GTAs: Carolyn Roy (croy03@uoguelph.ca), Cailin Stamarski (cstamars@uoguelph.ca)

GTA office location and office hours: The GTAs do not hold office hours

Course Content

Learning Outcomes:

The table below summarizes the learning outcomes targeted by this course:

Learning Outcome	Facet	Definition	Mechanism of learning and assessment
Critical & Creative Thinking	Depth & Breadth of Understanding	Demonstrates knowledge of key concepts in psychology , and integrates that knowledge across disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries	Readings, Seminar Discussions, Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal
Critical & Creative Thinking	Inquiry & Analysis	A systematic process of exploring issues, objects and works in psychology through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed conclusions or judgments	Readings, Seminar Discussions, Papers
Critical & Creative Thinking	Creativity	Involves the ability to adapt to situations of change, to initiate change and to take intellectual risk	Seminar Discussions, Lesson Plan Proposal
Literacy	Information Literacy	The ability to know when there is a need for information, where to locate it and the ability to identify the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats	Seminar Discussions, Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal
Literacy	Methodological Literacy	The ability to understand, evaluate, and design appropriate methodologies for rigorous psychological science	Readings and Seminar Discussions, particularly related to Reproducibility (1) and Social Psychology (6)
Global Understanding	Sense of Historical Development	Understanding of psychology in a modern society; its limitations and developments	Readings, Seminar Discussions, Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal
Communication	Oral Communication	Includes interpersonal skills, oral speaking and active listening as they apply to psychology	Seminar Discussions, Lesson Plan Proposal presentation
Communication	Written Communication	The ability to express one's ideas and summarize theory and research in written form	Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal
Communication	Reading Comprehension	The understanding of theoretical and empirical literature in psychology	Readings, Seminar Discussions, Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal

Communication	Integrative Communication	A mental process that integrates existing psychological knowledge to develop and communicate new knowledge	Seminar Discussions, Papers, Lesson Plan Proposal
Professional & Ethical Behaviour	Teamwork	Working together in a respectful and collaborative manner to complete tasks	Seminar Discussions, Lesson Plan Proposal
Professional & Ethical Behaviour	Ethical Reasoning	Includes learning to make judgments about whether research has been conducted and used in an ethical manner, as well as exploring how psychological research can be used as a guide for making moral judgments about the behaviour of others.	Readings and Seminar Discussions, particularly related to Reproducibility (1), Neuroscience (2), False Memory (3), Disorders (4), Moral Psychology (8), and Psychopathy (9)

Lecture Content:

Date	Activity / Assignment	Issue
Sep 11	Introduction	-
Sep 18	Seminar 1	Psychology's reproducibility crisis Example: Intuitive cooperation
Sep 25	Seminar 2	The downside of neuroscience Examples: Education, Addiction
Oct 2	Seminar 3	How do we distinguish a false memory from a lie? Examples; Brian Williams, Ray Gosling
Oct 9	Seminar 4	Personnel selection: The search for the magic test
Oct 16	Seminar 5	Marketing a disorder because it has a profitable treatment
Oct 21	Issue Paper 1 due	-
Oct 23	Seminar 6	Social psychology sucks – can it be fixed?
Oct 30	Seminar 7	Tech industry weirdness: Experiments in organizational structure

Nov 6	Seminar 8	Moral psychology: Blaming & Shaming
Nov 13	Seminar 9	So you think you can spot a psychopath
Nov 20	Lesson Plan Proposal due present & vote	-
Nov 27	Seminar 10	to be determined
Dec 2	Issue Paper 2 due	-

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)
Seminar Discussant	weekly	40
Issue Paper 1	October 21	20
Lesson Plan Proposal	November 20	20
Issue Paper 2	December 2	20

Additional Notes (if required):

Seminar Discussant:

New groups will be created randomly every week, each with a maximum of 5 discussants. At the end of each seminar, you will complete peer-evaluations of the other discussants in your group, using a rubric provided by the instructor. An average of your group members' scores for you will determine your discussant grade for that week. The lowest and highest scores will first be dropped, though, as a means to eliminate negative and positive bias. Each week is worth 4% towards your final grade. As there are 10 seminars, discussion participation is worth 40% of your final grade.

It is important to protect the anonymity of peer-evaluators. For this reason, discussant grades will not be released on a weekly basis. Instead they will be released every two weeks, and your grade will be an average of the previous two seminars (8% of your final grade). This should provide the feedback necessary to improve for the remaining seminars.

The evaluation rubric is designed to capture a discussant's contribution without simply evaluating their place on the extraversion-introversion continuum. If you feel that the rubric does not capture your

contribution, then please talk to the instructor, who is willing to consider modifying it for the remaining seminars.

Peer evaluation runs the risk of collusion among students, and also requires that all students are willing and able to be critical of their peers. If we have world-class discussions every week, and everyone makes important contributions, then the instructor will be happy to see that everyone is receiving A+ evaluations. If, on the other hand, high grades are being given for mediocre contributions to mediocre discussions, then we have a problem. The instructor thus reserves the right to change, at any time, the way in which discussants are evaluated.

Preparation for each seminar, at a minimum, consists of: (1) reading all of the assigned readings, (2) thinking about what you have read, and (3) preparing to discuss the issue with your group. Such preparation probably means taking notes and preparing talking points, although this written contribution will not be evaluated (at least not directly).

Preparation might also include the search for additional reading materials of relevance to the issue. As mentioned above, some such searching and reading will take place during the three hour seminar. But you are also encouraged to do some of this work in advance, especially if it is an issue about which you are passionate, and/or you plan to write an issue paper about it.

Issue Papers:

The first issue paper is due mid-semester and is based on one of the issues discussed in Seminars 1-5, and the second issue paper is due at the end of the semester and is based on one of the issues discussed in Seminars 6-10.

Presumably, you will choose the issue that you find most interesting. Chances are that your group discussion will only have scratched the surface of what psychological science has to say about the issue, and the paper is an opportunity for you to dig deeper as an individual. Has the literature reached any consensus on the issue? If not, what are the alternative viewpoints, and what evidence has each brought to bear? What is your personal opinion on the relative strengths of each viewpoint? Can you think of any studies that might help to resolve the debate? What interests you about this issue? Is there a personal connection that you'd like to share?

The paper should be 5-10 pages (not including title page and reference section), double-spaced, with one inch margins and 12-point font. There should be in-text citations where necessary and a reference section listing the works cited. APA style (cite authors then list references alphabetically by first author's surname) is fine, but it is neither required nor evaluated. Quality is way more important than quantity; do not extend to ten pages a paper that could be written in five pages simply because you assume that bigger is better.

Papers should be uploaded to the course's Courselink dropbox by the end of the deadline day (see schedule below). It is your responsibility to confirm that your paper has uploaded properly. Your paper

should be in Word (doc, docx) or Acrobat (pdf) format. The file naming convention should be “LastnamePaper#” (e.g., Kim would use “Kardashian1” to name her Issue Paper 1). Late papers will be penalized 10% per day.

Lesson Plan Proposal:

The instructor has chosen the issue for nine of our seminars, and would like students to choose the issue for our tenth and final seminar (Nov 27). To this end, students will prepare a proposal for how we should spend our last meeting together. This most likely means mimicking what the instructor prepared for the first nine seminars. In other words, choosing an issue of relevance to society and psychology, and creating a reading list. However, the instructor encourages creative alternatives, so long as they engage the entire class in intellectual discussion.

The proposals will be presented to the entire class at our penultimate meeting (Nov 20). After all of the proposals are presented, we will vote to choose one proposal. “Winning” or “losing” this vote will have no bearing on the proposal grade. The instructor will instead grade each proposal based on its quality (the lesson plan proposal should be submitted in written form) and the quality of its presentation.

You can choose to work on this project alone, or you can form a group with three or fewer of your fellow students. All members of a group will receive the same grade.

Course Resources

Readings:

Readings will be made available on the Courselink site.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

[Undergraduate Grading Procedures](#)

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

Please ask the instructor if you would like to record audio during lectures. He will probably say “yes.” Do not reproduce or share without permission.

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 Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or see the website: [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 6. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Academic Calendar: [Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)