

PSYC*3000(01), Course Outline: Winter 2026

General Information

Course Title: Historical and Critical Perspectives on Psychology

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to help students understand the socio-historical and theoretical context of modern psychological research and practice. This includes: 1) evaluating basic assumptions underlying modern psychology by drawing on historical, theoretical and philosophical perspectives, and 2) investigating historical and current controversies within psychology. Topics may include the question of psychology's scientific status, the assumptions embedded in psychological theory and research methodology, social constructionism, free will/agency, and the relations between psychology, power, ethics, and politics.

Credit Weight: 0.5 credits

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Winter 2026

Class Schedule and Location: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30, MacDonald (MAC) 149

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Pat Barclay

Instructor Email: barclayp@uoguelph.ca

Office location: MacKinnon 3009 (in MacKinnon Extension), 519-824-4120 ext. 58247

Office hours: Drop-in Wed 9:00-11:00 in 3009 Mackinnon or by phone (ext. 58247) Additional office hours available by appointment (incl. Zoom, Teams, or phone)

GTA Information

GTA Name: Emma-Sunshine MacKereth, Shruti Chandrashekhar Nadkarni, Jessica Kespe

GTA Email: emackere@uoguelph.ca, snadkarn@uoguelph.ca, jkespe@uoguelph.ca

GTA office location and office hours: by appointment

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify key theories and issues in the history of psychological research and practice, and explain how they relate to modern issues (Psychology LOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.2)

2. Identify theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying psychological research and practice, and explain how these assumptions affect what psychologists accept as true (Psychology LOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.3)
3. Understand how knowledge of psychology's history can help to make sense of its assumptions, limitations, and strengths (Psychology LOs: 3.2)
4. Analyze, evaluate, and reflect on these issues in relation to your own interests in psychology (Psychology LOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 5.2, 5.3)
5. Express your ideas effectively by participating in class/seminar discussions and written responses to readings and lecture material (Psychology LOs: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1)
6. Demonstrate appropriate academic independence, personal organization, and time management in completing assigned course tasks (Psychology LO: 5.5)

Lecture Content:

The class will consist of discussions in small and large groups on various historical, theoretical, and methodological issues, including:

- Why history and critique?
- Is psychology universal? If so, what aspects?
- "Schools" of psychology (behaviourism, humanistic, cognitive)
- Nature and nurture
- Predictability
- Has there actually been "progress" in psychology?
- Psychology, race, and racism
- Psychology and politics
- The uses of theory in psychology

Labs: N/A

Seminars: N/A (all discussions will take place during class time)

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
In-class papers with Critical Analysis (4 worth 12.5% each)	Mon Jan 19 in-class Mon Feb 9 in-class Mon March 2 in-class Wed March 11 in-class	50%	All
Participation in class discussion	N/A (in class)	20%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Final Exam: writing Critical Analysis papers on final two topics (15% each)	Thurs April 9 th 2:30PM-4:30PM Location TBA	30%	All

Additional Notes (if required):

Participation in discussion (20%):

This will be based on quality of meaningful engagement in class discussions. If a student has not contributed sufficiently for a grade to be allocated, I may call on them to give an oral presentation in class. I expect students to attend every class, except in the case of emergencies, and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. This means doing the readings before class.

Guidelines for class discussion:

Class discussions are the main component of this course. Their main purpose is to provide an opportunity to explore ideas and to clarify your understanding of course material. For this reason, it is to be expected that you will change your mind, perhaps several times, on topics and issues in the course. Your discussion grade is not based on whether you agree or disagree with the course readings or with others in your class, but on the ways in which you are able to do so coherently, reflexively, and respectfully.

Absences:

You are expected to attend and participate in every class. If you are unable to attend, let your TA know as soon as possible. We will excuse up to two classes without documentation with no questions asked – after that, you must provide some evidence to excuse your absence.

Critical Analysis Papers (4 x 12.5%), 50% total

You are expected to write four Critical Analysis Papers during the course, based on topics covered since the previous paper (see groupings in the Schedule of Topics & Readings). These are written during class time on the assigned days (Mon Jan 19th, Mon Feb 9th, Mon March 2nd, Wed March 11th) on your own laptop. We will use Respondus Lockdown Browser, so make sure you download and test Lockdown Browser in advance. We will have paper available if people prefer, but laptop is recommended.

You must plan your Critical Analysis Paper in advance, including the structure, and then arrive to class ready to write it. You are to create an outline of up to 200 words (maximum) summarizing what you plan to discuss: point form only (no complete sentences allowed), organized into paragraphs so you know what you'll discuss where. You must upload this outline to the Courselink Dropbox *before* you write the paper. You may then bring a printed copy of this outline into class to help you write the paper, and you must hand it in when you submit your paper. Grades will be deducted if your outline is too long or resembles a fully pre-written essay that you are simply re-transcribing during class.

Guidelines for Critical Analysis Papers

The main aim of the Critical Analysis Papers is to provide you with a written means of engaging with the week's readings and class discussions. There is no strict rule for how to write your papers, as long as they reflect an attempt to critically and creatively engage with, and make sense of, the ideas and topics raised for the week. For example, you can write about links between history, theoretical ideas and personal life experiences; you can reflect on connections between course content and ideas in other courses or other disciplines; or you can engage with

course material on its own terms, using theory and philosophical concepts from the readings and other parts of the course. If your opinion about an issue changes during the course, you can write about this in a reflection paper. In later papers, you may also want to use them to explore broader themes that appear to link the course topics together. For suggestions, see the handout on CourseLink on “How to Write a Reflection Paper”.

The reflection papers are meant to be part of an ongoing reflection on new and sometimes complex ideas, and you can expect that your ideas about things will change as the course progresses. This means that your papers can be exploratory. Be aware, however, that your TAs and I will look for evidence that you have actually read the course material when grading your papers.

Remember: you're not getting graded on your opinions – you're getting graded on your arguments. This means you must back them up, give the reasons behind them, and elaborate on the logic and evidence. You are to discuss your thoughts on the issues – what are you adding to the conversation?

Format for submissions of Critical Analysis Papers:

- No specific word limit, but aim for the equivalent of 700-900 words (2-3 pages double spaced) to ensure you have time to finish during class time; you may write more if you have time
- Quality is more important than quantity!
- Outside material not required, but if you do bring in outside sources, cite them. APA is preferred but not mandatory
- Submissions will be online in the format provided in class (typically a CourseLink Quiz).

If you miss the scheduled class to write, then contact me ASAP to arrange something. Contact me if you know you'll be away, and we will schedule an alternate time.

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

If you typically write quizzes or papers in Student Accessibility Services, you must book these yourself as soon as possible. SAS requires at least two weeks advance notice, so if you delay, you may miss the deadline – they have a “missed deadline appeal form” that might be successful for the first paper, but probably not for the later papers or the final exam. I cannot offer your quiz-writing or paper-writing accommodations in class because of our constraints (e.g., another course uses the room after us).

Final examination date and time: Thurs Apr 9th 2:30PM-4:30PM (location TBA). Worth 30% of the final grade

The final exam will consist of the in-person writing of two Critical Analysis papers on the final two topics (Topics 5 & 6). In other words, it will be very much like the in-class Critical Analysis papers, except: a) at a different time and location; and b) with only 120 min for the two papers combined.

Course Resources

Required Texts:

Benjafield, J. G. (2012). *Psychology: A Concise History*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. This book is available at the University of Guelph Bookstore for \$22.99.

Other Resources:

The required text is very concise – truth in advertising! – so most of the classes will have additional readings. I will provide a Reading List, and the associated readings are available for free on Courselink.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

Regrades

We are happy to offer re-grades for any Critical Analysis Paper if you feel that you have been misinterpreted or graded unfairly. After all, graders are human too and can make errors. Before doing so, I recommend you talk to the person who graded your paper (e.g., TA) for clarification and advice. However, TAs cannot change the grade once it is assigned – only the instructor can do this. If you still feel you deserve a higher grade after talking to the TA, then submit your paper to the instructor for a formal regrade – you must submit both the graded version and a clean version. All requests for a re-grade MUST be submitted in writing along with a rationale justifying why you deserve a higher grade. We will not entertain verbal requests, only written requests accompanied by the graded paper with the TA's comments. This takes the emotion out of the process and makes it so that you are evaluated based on what is written on the paper. The instructor (Pat Barclay) will re-grade the paper, and the new grade will stand whether it is higher or lower than the original grade. **This means that your paper's grade could go up or down after a regrade attempt, depending on whether the instructor's assessment of the paper is more or less favourable than the TA's assessment.** 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 of a mistake having been made - we are all human - but we must all accept the possibility that mistake could have worked against you or in your favour. If you **do** legitimately feel that you have been misinterpreted or that we missed your point or graded it too harshly, then by all means submit your rationale for a re-grade.

[Undergraduate Grading Procedures](#)

E-mail Correspondence

I encourage you to ask questions about the course, about the content, and the assignments. However, please ask these questions either **during class, before or after class**. If you would like to have a one-on-one conversation, please see or call me **during my office hours**. Because of extremely high email volume during term, I will not respond to emails relating to course content, exam format, or assignment that are covered in the course outline or were discussed in class.

Course Policy on Group Work:

You are encouraged to discuss ideas with others to sharpen your arguments – this is collaborative learning. Class discussions are expected to be group enterprises, and you may continue discussing the issues after class. However, you may not collaborate on the actual planning of the Critical Analysis papers. To this end, I recommend differentiating your paper from others' papers.

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

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.

Course Policy regarding use of Generative AI (GenAI) including ChatGPT:

There are good and bad uses of GenAI: it can help students learn or avoid learning, depending on how they use it. It can enhance your learning if you use it to help you understand something or to study, but you would avoid learning if you were to rely on it to generate outputs. Even when GenAI is an option, you should still understand the underlying material: someone who understands the concepts can ask better questions and use better prompts – and get better results – than someone with little understanding.

In this class, GenAI would reduce the likelihood that you accomplish the Learning Objectives. GenAI is good at summarizing, but this would earn a poor grade on the Critical Analysis Papers. Instead, the papers are primarily graded on something that GenAI is weak at: creativity, originality, and making novel connections across topics or fields. Thus, an AI-generated paper might be well-written, but would not be as creative, original, or discipline-spanning as a student-written paper.

To ensure that students do not use GenAI to avoid learning, there are only a few allowable uses of AI in this class. You are allowed to use AI to help re-explain any of the course topics and to test your understanding of the topics. All other uses are prohibited – including producing any outputs for this class (e.g., Critical Analysis Papers) – unless you have written approval from the instructor about another allowable use. The assessments in this course are structured to reduce the chances that students use GenAI to avoid learning. You need to write the Critical Analysis Papers yourself in class.

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 [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email accessibility@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 Monday April 6th. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).

[Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)

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).

Additional Course Information

Course instructors are allowed to use software to help in detecting plagiarism or unauthorized copying of student assignments. Plagiarism is one of the most common types of academic misconduct on our campus. Plagiarism involves students using the work, ideas and/or the exact wording of other people or sources without giving proper credit to others for the work, ideas and/or words in their papers. Students can unintentionally commit misconduct because they do not know how to reference outside sources properly or because they don't check their work carefully enough before handing it in. 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.

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin.com to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to prevent plagiarism in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.