

PSYC*6910, Course Outline: Winter 2017

General Information

Course Title: Critical Approaches to Applied Social 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.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Winter 2017

Class Schedule and Location: Tuesdays, 11:30am – 2:30pm, ROZH109

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Jeffery Yen

Instructor Email: jyen@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: MCKN 3015 (by appointment)

Please list all instructors.

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course, students should:

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 their efforts to “apply” psychological knowledge to social issues.

Content:

Course topics

We will cover the following topics:

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

Course format:

Each week, students will be required to read, and be prepared to discuss, one or more articles/books on that week’s topic. In the latter part of the course, students will be required to give presentations and lead discussion on their chosen research paper topic.

Class topics and schedule:

10 January	Introduction and course overview
17 January	What do we mean by “critical”?
24 January	Theoretical resources I: <i>Theorists of everyday life and standpoint</i>
31 January	Theoretical resources II: <i>Theorists of power, ideology and language</i>
7 February	What are the issues?
14 February	Neoliberalism and psychology
21 February	READING WEEK
28 February	Psychology, community and development
7 March	Poverty and precarity (debt, homelessness)
14 March	Racism, refugees and citizenship
21 March	Health, disability and technology
28 March	Student presentations
4 April	Student presentations
	Summary and conclusion

Required reading

Please see the accompanying reading list for details. This is a **reading intensive course**. All articles will be posted to Courselink, with the exception of the following book, which is assigned for the week of February 28th:

Klein, E. (2017). *Developing minds: Psychology, neoliberalism and power*. London: Routledge.

This title is currently available for purchase from the Routledge website or on Amazon.

Course assignments:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Reader response essays x 4	See below	20%	1, 4, 5
Major research paper	April 13 th	60%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Class participation	N/A	20%	1, 5

Additional Notes:

1. *Reader response essays:*
 - a. 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 via email to the instructor 48 hrs before class.
2. *Major research paper (due April 13th):*
 - a. 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:
 - i. a detailed description of the issue/problem;
 - ii. a discussion of the research, theory and personal experience that pertains to it;
 - iii. a description of your proposed study/intervention and the rationale for it;
 - iv. a conclusion in which you critically reflect on your proposal and your learning.
 - b. In the last two weeks of class, 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).
 - c. Your proposal/essay will be assessed on the extent to which it addresses the following questions (which relate directly to particular course objectives):
 - i. what core values underlie your proposed intervention?
 - ii. what particular theoretical approaches inform your proposed intervention?
 - iii. what are the roles of the psychologist(s) in your proposed intervention?
 - iv. how has the proposed intervention been affected by your own assumptions about communities, Canadian/global society, yourself, or people in general?

Course Policies

Grading Policies

See above

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.

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 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 **March 10th** . For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).

[Current Graduate Calendar](#)