

PSYC*4900, Course Outline: Fall 2015

General Information

Course Title: Psychology Seminar

Course Description:

This course will address critical questions about the discipline of Psychology - those that have always been difficult to answer, and those recently posed by new developments in neuroscience. For example, what is Psychology? What does it mean to call it a science? And “Who are we that we need so much Psychology?” (De Vos, 2011, p. 2). The course will challenge you to think more broadly and deeply about the social, economic and historical contexts of Psychology. The main objective of the course is to provide perspectives from which to think about Psychology as it relates to the world around you.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Fall 2015

Class Schedule and Location: Wednesdays 11:30am – 2:20pm, MCKN 312

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Jeffery Yen

Instructor Email: jyen@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: Mackinnon Extension 3015; By appointment

GTA Information

GTA Name: Oriana Vaccarino

GTA Email: ovaccari@uoguelph.ca

GTA office location and office hours: Blackwood Hall 216; By appointment

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Reflect on and discuss critical questions about the nature of Psychology as a science and profession.
2. Understand and describe the meaning of key concepts such as ontology, epistemology and psychologisation.
3. Understand the alternatives provided by social constructionist perspectives, as well as their limits and problems.
4. Understand the importance of the broader social, economic and historical contexts within which Psychology exists.
5. Engage in academic and personal reflection on key psychological issues, both individually and with your peers.

Lecture Content:

Course topics and schedule:

Please see the course reading list below. This is a reading-intensive course.

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Reflection papers (10 x 8%)	One week after each class, by 5pm	80%	All
Participation in class discussion	N/A	20%	1 and 5

Additional Notes:

Participation in discussions **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.

Reflection papers (10x8%) **80%**

You are expected to submit one reflection paper for each seminar for which there are readings. Reflection papers are due within a week of each seminar, by 5pm (e.g., your paper for the class on Sept 23rd is due by Sept 30th at 5pm).

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 respectfully, coherently and reflexively.

Guidelines for reflection papers

The main aim of the reflection papers is to provide you with a written means of engaging with the week's readings and class discussions. **This means you need to write a paper for every class.**

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 theoretical ideas and personal life experiences; you can reflect on connections between course content and ideas in 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.

The reflection papers are not meant to be tightly argued statements of your final position on a matter, but rather a part of an ongoing reflection on new and sometimes complex ideas. Be aware, however, that I will look for evidence that you have actually read the course material when grading your papers.

I suggest writing your papers as soon as possible after each class, when the ideas and emotions are still fresh in your memory. Papers written directly after class tend to be better papers.

Format for submissions:

- APA referencing not required, but ok if you want to cite other materials
- 2-3 pages, double spaced
- Quality is more important than quantity!
- Submissions need to be electronic via the CourseLink dropbox (please double check that your file has uploaded)
- Use any of the following file formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .rtf.

Late penalties:

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

Other:

- If you miss class for legitimate reasons (e.g., illness) you will still need to submit a reflection paper.

Course Resources

Required Texts:

Topic: Is Psychology a science?

September 23

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.

September 30

Arnett, J. J. (2008). The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American. *American Psychologist*, 63(7), 602-614.

Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3), 61-83; discussion 83-135.

Moghaddam, F. M., & Lee, N. (2006). Double reification: The process of universalizing psychology in the three worlds. In A. C. Brock (Ed.), *Internationalizing the history of psychology* (pp. 163-182). New York: New York University Press.

Topic: Psychological methodology

October 7

Lambdin, C. (2012). Significance tests as sorcery: Science is empirical, significance tests are not. *Theory & Psychology*, 22(1), 67-90.

Danziger, K., & Dzinis, K. (1997). How psychology got its variables. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 38(1), 43-48.

October 14

Tseelon, E. (1991). The method is the message: On the meaning of methods as ideologies. *Theory & Psychology*, 1(3), 299-316.

Madigan, R., Johnson, S., & Linton, P. (1995). The language of psychology: APA style as epistemology. *American Psychologist*, 50(6), 428-436.

Topic: Ontological and epistemological alternatives: Social constructionism

October 21

Edley, N. (2001). Unravelling social constructionism. *Theory & Psychology, 11*(3), 433-441.

Potter, J. (2001). Wittgenstein and Austin. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse theory and practice* (pp. 39-48). London: Sage.

Billig, M. (2009). Discursive psychology, rhetoric and the issue of agency.[Texte anglais original]. *Semen. Revue De Sémio-linguistique Des Textes Et Discours, (27)*.

Optional:

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (Ch. 1: What is social constructionism?, pp. 1-27). London: Routledge.

October 28

Edwards, D., Ashmore, M., & Potter, J. (1995). Death and furniture: The rhetoric, politics and theology of bottom line arguments against relativism. *History of the Human Sciences, 8*(2), 25-49.

Nightingale, D. J., & Cromby, J. (2002). Social constructionism as ontology: Exposition and example. *Theory & Psychology, 12*(5), 701-713.

Topic: Culture, mental health and psychotherapy

November 4

Kirmayer, L., Simpson, C., & Cargo, M. (2003). Healing traditions: Culture, community and mental health promotion with Canadian Aboriginal peoples. *Australasian Psychiatry, 11*(sup1), S15-S23.

Madsen, O. J. (2015). Psychotherapists: Agents of change or maintenance men? In I. Parker (Ed.) *Handbook of Critical Psychology* (pp. 222-230). London: Routledge.

Fortieth class day November 6

Topic: Does neuroscience threaten Psychology with obsolescence?

November 11

Miller, G. A. (2010). Mistreating psychology in the decades of the brain. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5*(6), 716-743.

Topic: Psychology and power

November 18

Montero, M. (2015). Political psychology: Critical approaches to power. In I. Parker (Ed.) *Handbook of Critical Psychology* (pp. 137-144). London: Routledge.

November 25

Cruikshank, B. (1993). Revolutions within: Self-government and self-esteem. *Economy and Society*, 22(3), 327-344.

December 2

None.

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:

[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 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 6th. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Academic Calendar:
[Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)