

PSYC*4900-01, Course Outline: Winter 2016

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 synthesizes everything you have learned as a psychology major. 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.

Many 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: W16

Class Schedule and Location: Wednesdays 11:30-2:20 in MINS 017

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dan Meegan

Instructor Email: dan.meegan@uoguelph.ca

Office location and office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:30 in room 3018 of the Mackinnon Extension

Course Content

Specific 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 (8)
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

Learning Outcome	Facet	Definition	Mechanism of learning and assessment
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), False Memory (2), Neuroscience (3), Disorders (5), Moral Psychology (6), and Psychopathy (9)

Lecture Content:

Date	Activity / Assignment	Issue
Jan 13	Introduction	-
Jan 20	Seminar 1	The replicability crisis in psychology
Jan 27	Seminar 2	How do we distinguish a false memory from a lie?
Feb 3	Seminar 3	The downside of neuroscience
Feb 10	Seminar 4	Personnel selection: The search for the magic test
Feb 24	Seminar 5	Marketing a disorder because it has a profitable treatment
Feb 29	Issue Paper 1 due	-
Mar 2	Seminar 6	Moral psychology: Blaming & Shaming
Mar 9	Seminar 7	To each her own: What is feminism?

Mar 16	Seminar 8	On the future of social psychology
Mar 23	Seminar 9	So you think you can spot a psychopath
Mar 25	Lesson Plan Proposal issue title & group membership	-
Mar 30	Lesson Plan Proposal submit, present & vote	-
Apr 6	Seminar 10	to be determined
Apr 8	Issue Paper 2 due	-

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)
Seminar Discussant	Jan 20-Apr 6	27
Issue Paper 1	Feb 29	25
Lesson Plan Proposal	Mar 30	23
Issue Paper 2	Apr 8	25

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 seminar. Each seminar is worth 3%, but only your best 9 of 10 seminars will count, for a total of 27% 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. This should provide the feedback necessary to improve for the remaining seminars.

The *evaluation rubric* (available on Courselink) 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 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 the weekly entry in the Reading List document, which introduces the issue and places it in context, (2) reading all of the assigned readings, (3) thinking about what you have read, and (4) 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 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.

Attendance Policy:

Since the primary activity in this course is to participate in weekly seminars, attendance is mandatory. It is understood, however, that students may need to miss one class for reasons beyond their control. Each student is allowed to miss one of the ten seminars without a documented excuse and without making up the work. If a student misses one seminar, then her Seminar Discussant grade will be based on the nine discussions in which she participated. NOTE: To reward students who attend all ten seminars, the Seminar Discussant grade will be determined by their best nine grades.

If a student misses a second seminar, it must be for a legitimate reason (medical, psychological, or compassionate), and documentation must be provided. If this second absence is deemed legitimate by the instructor, then the student must demonstrate that they have read the readings and thought about how they would be discussed (see instructor for details), and her Seminar Discussant grade will be based on the eight discussions in which she participated. If, on the other hand, the student does not have a legitimate reason for the second absence, then she will receive a Seminar Discussant grade of zero for that seminar.

If a student misses a third seminar, no matter the reason, then she will be asked to drop the course. If this occurs beyond the fortieth class day (Mar 11), then the instructor will support the student's request for a [late drop](#).

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. Further guidance can be found in the *marking rubric* document, which is available on Courselink.

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 seven 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 5% 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 (Apr 6). 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 psychology and society, providing a context (see Reading List document on Courselink), and creating a reading list. However, the instructor encourages creative alternatives, so long as they engage the entire class in intellectual discussion.

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. Each group (or individual) should email the instructor with their issue title and group membership by no later than Mar 25.

The proposals will be presented to the entire class at our penultimate meeting (Mar 30). After all of the proposals are presented, we will vote to choose one proposal. "Winning" or "losing" the vote will have no bearing on your proposal grade. The instructor will instead grade each proposal based on its quality, as well as the quality of the presentation. A high quality proposal will have the following characteristics: (1) the issue is of importance to psychology and society, (2) the issue is of interest to psychology students, (3) the issue and readings have high potential for engaging students in a lively discussion, (4) the contextual

information necessary for understanding the issue is presented clearly and concisely, and (5) the readings are relevant, easy-to-read, and interesting.

The presentations should take the form of a story *pitch*. Imagine that you have written a script for a TV pilot or movie and you find yourself on an elevator with a big-time producer, to whom you have the duration of the elevator ride to pitch your idea. Your presentation should thus be brief (no more than 5 minutes) and designed to convince the rest of us (your audience) to vote for your issue.

In addition to the presentation, you should prepare the proposal in written form. It should be brief, and look like one of the weekly entries in the Reading List document written by the instructor for Issues 1-9. In other words, there should be an issue title, context, and a list of readings (including hyperlinks when available). This document should be uploaded to the appropriate dropbox folder by class time (11:30 am) on Mar 30. The dropbox is setup to accept individual rather than group submissions; therefore, one group member should submit the document, which should include the names of all group members.

Each group should have its readings ready to go should it win the vote; this includes URLs for any web content and pdf versions of anything that is not freely available on the web.

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 March 11 . For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)