

Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
HH/PSYC 2010 3.0 Section A
WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY
Thursday 8:30-11:30 in FC 106
Fall 2017

Instructor and T.A. Information

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Course Prerequisite(s):

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C.

Course website: [Moodle](#)

Connect website: <http://connect.mheducation.com/class/p-2010-psyc-2010---winter-2017>

Course Description

This course develops university-level writing ability. Students will write about psychological content; however, this course aims to develop general written communication skills that are broadly transferable. Emphasis will be placed on learning to write coherent arguments and explanations. Students will learn how psychological texts ‘work’ to effectively communicate with a reader. Students will develop the capacity to critique and improve their own writing. Critical thinking and logical reasoning skills are taught and practiced for the purpose of improving written communication. By analyzing exemplary psychological writing students will discover the form and structure of effective writing in Psychology. Readings and class discussions will increase understanding of how to write effectively. In-class writing exercises will be used to practice principles and ideas discussed. Providing feedback on the writing of peers will increase students’ capacity to reflect on their own writing. Students will be guided, step-by-step, through the process of completing a larger writing assignment. Extensive feedback will be provided and multiple drafts of writing assignments will be completed. This course will prepare students for advanced writing assignments in upper year University courses and contribute to overall progress towards the advanced level of literacy expected of an educated citizen. At the end of the course, students will be able to develop a written argument on a controversial issue in psychology.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basics of scientific writing.
2. Demonstrate effective written communication.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically about written communication.
4. Demonstrate the ability to locate and identify valid, credible, and rigorous psychological research.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the basics of referencing using APA style.

Specific Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge of the effective use of a variety of written communication skills.
- Describe and critique different approaches to writing in psychology.
- Identify appropriate writing techniques for communication in psychology.
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret and communicate the provisional and cumulative nature psychological conclusions.
- Detect and use effective form and structure in psychological writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to work with others.
- Demonstrate the ability to review peer’s written work.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop written argument with supporting evidence.

Required Text

- Langan, J., and Winstanley, S. (2014). *Essay Writing Skills with readings*. 7th Ed. McGraw-Hill Ryerson

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Writing exercises (8X2 drafts, plus peer feedback); Essay components (10) & Grammar Units (12) (pass/fail)	Various	30%
Best in-class writing exercise	November 30, 2017	10%
Components 1-4 of Essay	October 12, 2017	15%
Components 1-6 of Essay	November 2, 2017	20%
Final Essay	December 8, 2017	25%
Total		100%

Class Structure:

- 50 mins: Lecture/Class discussion
- 25 mins: Classroom writing exercises (max 200 words, submitted online for feedback)
- 15 mins: Provide feedback to peer on classroom writing exercises
- 20 min: Break
- 50 mins: Classroom work on Essay (i.e. in class peer review and instructor led guidance)

Homework per week:

- 30 minutes revising classroom writing exercise & uploading drafts and feedback
- 1.5 hours reading assigned books / articles & completing online grammar units
- 2 hours working on essay outside of class

Description of Assignments:

Writing Exercises:

During week 2 to week 9 you will spend 25 minutes in class writing on a topic related to the lecture. What you write in class (i.e. first draft of the writing exercise) must be uploaded to the website by *10 pm on the same day*. Then, in the next class, you will take 15 minutes to read a peer's first draft and provide feedback. Your feedback must be uploaded to the website by *10 pm on the same day*. Finally, you will spend 30 minutes revising your writing based on the feedback you receive and upload a final draft by *10 pm on the day before the next class*. All of this work will be done online on the Moodle site. Writing assignments will overlap so that you will be working on a different stage of up to 2 writing assignments per week. See course schedule for more details. Given everything is being done online you will still be able to participate if you have to miss class for some reason. However, the deadlines for uploading drafts and feedback are fixed and can't be extended. Therefore, if you are unable to submit a draft or feedback, for whatever reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive participation marks for whatever you miss. At the very end of the course you will be asked to select your best writing exercise and submit it for evaluation by the instructor. With appropriate documentation the deadline for the submission of your best writing exercise can be extended.

Writing exercise 1: Paraphrase the first paragraph (not the abstract) of journal article #1.

Draft 1: Sept 14 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Sept 21 by 10 pm

Final: Sept 27 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 2: Summarize paragraphs 2,3, & 4 of journal article #1.

Draft 1: Sept 21 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Sept 28 by 10 pm

Final: Oct 4 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 3: Compare the points of view expressed in journal articles #1 and #2.

Draft 1: Sept 28 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Oct 5 by 10 pm

Final: Oct 11 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 4: What is the purpose, audience and claim of article #1? How does the author support and justify the claim?

Draft 1: Oct 5 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Oct 12 by 10 pm

Final: Oct 18 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 5: Make note of, and describe, any foundational assumptions made by the author of article #1.

Draft 1: Oct 12 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Oct 19 by 10 pm

Final: Nov 1 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 6: Describe the organizational structure of article #1. That is, explain what is being accomplished by each of the paragraphs.

Draft 1: Oct 19 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Nov 2 by 10 pm

Final: Nov 8 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 7: Describe what the author accomplishes in the conclusion section of article #1.

Draft 1: Nov 2 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Nov 9 by 10 pm

Final: Nov 15 by 10 pm

Writing exercise 8: Describe how you could revise either the introduction or the conclusion of article #1.

Draft 1: Nov 9 by 10 pm

Peer feedback: Nov 16 by 10 pm

Final: Nov 22 by 10 pm

***Submission of best writing exercise**

Nov 30 by 10 pm

Online grammar units:

Over the duration of the course you will be expected to complete 12 on-line grammar units via the Connect website (see above). The units will be available for you to complete at anytime; however, it is recommended that you complete one per week. Each module will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and is paced according to your unique learning needs. Each module will address a foundational writing skill that will not be discussed in detail during class time. For example, units will address foundational skills such as punctuation, grammar, style and word choice. All of this work will be done online. You will receive credit for doing the units (pass/fail).

Essay:

Over the duration of the course you will write one argumentative essay on a controversial issue in psychology. This essay will be broken down into smaller assignments that together will build to the final essay. Each week we will spend time in class working on your essay. You will also be expected to spend some time outside of class working on your essay. Some weeks you will be expected to come to class with two hard copies of a particular component of your essay – one copy will be submitted to the instructor (for marking on a pass/fail basis) and one copy will be shared with your peer in class in order to receive feedback. Some weeks you will be expected to come to class with one hard copy of a particular component of your essay to submit to your TA /Course Instructor for evaluation and feedback. The deadlines for bringing components of your essay to the class for feedback are fixed and can't be extended. Therefore, if you are unable to participate in a class, for whatever reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive participation marks for whatever you miss. However, with appropriate documentation, deadlines for submission of components of your essay to the TA/Course instructor for grading can be extended.

Example essay topics:

Can people be addicted to video games?

What causes people to behave in pro-social ways?

Are children with ADHD prescribed medication too often?

Are youth spending too much time on computer screens?

Is emotional intelligence more important than traditional IQ?

Why are superhero movies so popular?

Would people be healthier and happier if they used less social media?

What are the best ways to break a habit?

Has the Internet had an overall positive or negative effect on human relationships?

Does divorce have a lasting impact on children?

Why are people influenced by commercials?

Are people who have a mental illness violent?

Why is it difficult to quit smoking?

Are people influenced by the kind of music they listen to?

Should marijuana be legalized?

What are the most important qualities of a good student?

What are the main causes of obesity?

Can a change of diet effectively treat depression?

Why has depression become such a wide spread mental illness?

*These topics are examples and may be used without instructor approval. If you wish to write your paper on a different topic, please meet with your instructor for topic approval before beginning your work.

Essay component 1: Preliminary thoughts on controversial issue (approx. 300 words)

-bring two hard copies to class on September 14

Essay component 2: Working annotated bibliography (min 5 references)

-bring two hard copies to class on September 21

Essay component 3: Context & definitions of key concepts (approx. 500 words)

-bring two hard copies to class on September 28

Essay component 4: Preliminary point of view or claim (approx. 300 words)

-bring two hard copies to class on October 5

****Submit hard copy of revised components 1-4 to instructor on October 12***

Essay component 5: Preliminary alternative points of view or claims. Include evidence and arguments in favour of and opposing each alternative (approx. 1000 words)

-bring two hard copies to class on October 12

Essay component 6: Preliminary structure of your essay (one or two sentences for every paragraph)

-bring two hard copies to class on October 19

***Submit hard copy of revised components 1-4, & components 5-6 to instructor on November 2**

Essay component 7: Preliminary conclusion of your essay (approx. 500 words)

-bring two hard copies to class on November 2

Essay component 8: First full draft of your essay

-bring two hard copies to class on November 9

Essay component 9: Second full draft of your essay

-bring two hard copies to class on November 16

Essay component 10: Third full draft of your essay

-bring two hard copies to class on November 23

***Submit hard copy of final version of your essay to instructor on December 8**

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - [Grading Scheme for 2017-18](#))

Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams

Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (Attending Physician Statement which can be found at: <http://registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attending-physicians-statement.pdf>) may request accommodation from the Course Instructor. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Fall/Winter 2017-18 - Important Dates](#)

Important dates

Last date to add a course **without** permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)
Last date to add a course **with permission** of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)
Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a "W" on the transcript – see note below)

Fall

Sept. 20

Oct. 4

Nov. 10

Nov. 11 -
Dec. 4

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#).

Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as “Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation” (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or “encouraging, enabling or causing others” (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The [York University Accessibility Hub](#) is your online stop for accessibility on campus. The [Accessibility Hub](#) provides tools, assistance and resources. Policy Statement

Policy: York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations and adaptations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs.

The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses.

Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder.

For Further Information please refer to: [York university academic accommodation for students with disabilities policy](#)

Course Materials Copyright Information:

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 2010 3.0 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#)

Course Schedule:

Week 1: September 7: Introduction to course, purpose of writing & picking a topic

In class self reflection exercise

-What are your strengths and weaknesses as a writer? What are your goals for the course?

Essay

-Introduce argumentative essay assignment

Read the following for week 2: Chapter 1; Chapter 2(p. 13-23); Chapter 16; Chapter 17(p. 267-269)

Week 2: September 14: Gathering information, APA style, paraphrasing & visit from librarian

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 1: Paraphrase the first paragraph of journal article #1

Essay

-Submit (1) Preliminary Thoughts on Topic to peer in class

Read the following for week 3: Chapter 17; Chapter 18

Week 3: September 21: Context, defining key concepts, introduction & summarizing

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 2: Summarize paragraphs 2, 3, & 4 of journal article #1

Peer feedback on writing exercise 1

Essay

-Submit (2) annotation of preliminary bibliography to peer in class

Read the following for week 4: Chapter 2; Chapter 14; Chapter 13

Week 4: September 28: What is my claim? & Comparing points of view

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 3: Compare the points of view expressed in journal articles #1 & #2

Essay

-Submit (3) Context & definitions of key concepts to peer in class

Read the following for week 5: Chapter 12

Week 5: October 5: Constructing an argument & Rhetorical analysis

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 4: What is the purpose, audience and claim of article #1? How does the author support and justify the claim?

Essay

-Submit (4) Preliminary claim to peer in class

Read the following for week 6: Chapter 3

Week 6: October 12: Constructing an argument cont. & What's being taken for granted?

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 5: Make note of, and describe, any foundational assumptions made by the author of article #1

Essay

-Submit (5) Preliminary alternative claims to peer in class. Include evidence and arguments in favour of and opposing this alternative claim / point of view

-Submit (most recent versions of 1-4) to TA / Instructor

Week 7: October 19: Critiquing ones own view & Uncovering structure

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 6: Describe the organizational structure of article#1.

Essay

-Submit (6) Preliminary structure of your essay to peer in class.

Read the following for week 8: Chapter 4

Week 8: November 2: Concluding & Articulating implications

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 7: Describe what the author accomplishes in the conclusion section of article #1.

Essay

-Submit (7) Preliminary conclusion of your essay to peer in class.

-Submit (most recent versions of 1-6) to TA / Instructor.

Read the following for week 9: Chapter 5

Week 9: November 9: Revision, Revision, Revision

Class Writing Exercise

Writing exercise 8: Describe how you could revise either the introduction or the conclusion of article #1

Essay

-Submit (8) first draft of your essay to peer in class.

Read the following for week 10: Chapter 6

Week 10: November 16: Editing, removing clutter and simplifying

Class Writing Exercise

No new writing exercises, continue with previous exercises to completion

Essay

-Submit (9) second draft of your essay to peer in class.

Read the following for week 11: Chapter 19

Week 11: November 23: Individual feedback on essay

Class Writing Exercise

No new writing exercises, continue with previous exercises to completion

Essay

-Submit (10) third draft of your essay to peer in class

Week 12: November 30: Individual feedback on essay

Class Writing Exercise

-Submit best writing exercise. Writing exercises are completed.

Essay

-bring final draft of your essay to class for feedback

Templates for Assignments

Essay component 1: Preliminary thoughts on controversial issue (approx. 300 words):

Use at least 2 of the following 'prewriting strategies' discussed in the class and in the text book (i.e. freewriting, questioning, lists, diagramming)

Essay component 2: Annotation of preliminary bibliography. For each of the 5 sources you must (approx. 250 words per source):

-Provide the full bibliographic citation

Examples of APA citation (see numerous web sources for more help):

For a book: Author, A.A. (Year of Publication). *Title of work*. Publisher City, State: Publisher.

For a journal article: Author, A.A.. (Publication Year). Article title. *Periodical Title*, Volume(Issue), pp.-pp.

-Summarize the source (which may include some of the following: main point / central claim / argument structure, methodology)

-Note how related to other sources (i.e. make links)

-Evaluate credibility & value

-State how the source will be useful for your essay

Essay component 3: Preliminary description of context & definition of key concepts (approx. 500 words):

-Define the 5 most important and/or technical concepts you have encountered so far

-Consider the following kinds of questions:

This is an important issue to address today because...

People first began to talk about this issue in...because...

Previously people did not think about this issue because...

This issue seems to hinge on how people think about...

Over time societies approach to this issue has changed in the following ways...

There appears to be various schools of thought on this issue including...

Historically, this issue has been more or less of a concern depending on...

Essay component 4: Preliminary point of view/claim (approx. 300 words):

In my essay I will address the following controversial question...

Although there are a number of possible points of view regarding this issue, currently I plan to argue (i.e., give your answer to the controversial question)....

My current reasons and arguments for my point of view or answer are as follows...

Essay component 5: Preliminary alternative claims with evidence (approx. 1000 words):

In my essay I will address the following controversial question...

Although there are a number of possible points of view regarding this issue, currently I plan to argue (i.e., give your answer to the controversial question)....

Three alternative claims / points of view (i.e. answers to the controversial question) are as follows...

The following facts and arguments support Alternative 1...However, the following facts and arguments argue against Alternative 1 and ultimately make Alternative 1 less compelling than my point of view...

The following facts and arguments support Alternative 2...However, the following facts and arguments argue against Alternative 2 and ultimately make Alternative 1 less compelling than my point of view...

The following facts and arguments support Alternative 3...However, the following facts and arguments argue against Alternative 3 and ultimately make Alternative 1 less compelling than my point of view...

Essay component 6: Preliminary structure of your essay (one or two sentences for every paragraph in your essay):

Create an outline which describes the purpose or function of each paragraph in your essay.

Note: You should NOT summarize the content of each paragraph but rather make describe why each paragraph is present and what purpose it serves.

Essay component 7: Preliminary conclusion of your essay (approx. 500 words):

The conclusion should guide the reader out of the essay. This is where you restate your claim and then put your claim into a larger context. Convince the reader that your claim has value and importance. Why does the claim you have come to matter? What are the new possibilities now that your claim has been established? Acknowledge limits to your argument without under-cutting yourself.

Essay component 8: Full draft of your essay:

This is your first full draft of your essay. The essay should be completed so you can begin the process of revision.

Rubrics for feedback and TA evaluation

I) Rubric for online peer feedback on writing exercises & for various essay components (taken from SPARK)

Please use the following prompts to provide feedback to your peer. Chose 2 prompts that ask you to indicate where in the writing things could be improved and 2 prompts that ask you to complete a sentence based on your reading of the work.

- Please indicate any places in the essay where you find yourself becoming confused. (areas in the draft that may require clarification)
- Please indicate any points in the essay that you find hard to believe. (areas in the draft that may require more evidence or examples)
- Please indicate any ideas you would like to know more about. (ideas in the draft that could be given more prominence or be developed more fully)
- Please indicate any place in the essay where you would like to have an example, or more examples. (portions of the draft that require more examples)
- Please indicate any portion of the essay where you are having trouble seeing the connection to the rest of the essay. (portions of the draft that may not belong in the essay, or that may need improved transition or relationship statements)
- Please complete the following sentence: After reading your essay, it appears to me that your main idea is _____. (whether you have been clear about your focus. Beware of blaming your reader for not recognizing your main idea; ask yourself how you need to revise the draft to focus it more clearly)
- Please complete the following sentence: After reading your essay, it seems to me that the main reason that these ideas are important is _____. (whether you have made the relevance of your essay clear. Consider what revisions are needed so that your reader isn't left asking, "so what?")
- Please complete the following sentence: After reading your essay, what I don't quite understand is _____. (portions of your draft where you may need further explanation, examples or development)
- Please complete the following sentence: The idea I found most interesting in your essay was _____. (ideas in the draft that could be given more prominence or be developed more fully)

II) Essay grading rubric TA will use for final version of essay

Clear statement of claim / point of view (3 points)	
Context & Definitions (4 points)	
My Position (12 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restate claim - Support position with valid evidence and arguments (8 points) - Weaknesses in other position (4 points) 	
Conclusion (3 points)	

<p>References (4 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At least 5 peer reviewed journal articles – All sources are appropriately cited using APA style in the body of the paper and in the Reference section 	
<p>Overall Evaluation of Presentation/Argument (12 points)</p>	

Example organization for essay

1. Title

- Should be a single phrase
- Not more than 10-14 words
- Example: "Capital punishment: Should it be abolished?"
- Should clearly articulate the focus and content of your paper

2. Claim statement

- This should be a short paragraph
- State the question to be addressed in the paper. Example: "The question to be addressed in this essay is the following: Is capital punishment ever justified?"
- Then give a statement about what your answer to the question is (i.e., your claim). Example: "This paper will argue that capital punishment is never justified, even in cases of first degree murder."
- **Make sure the reader is fully clear on your claim / point of view and how your claim relates to the central issue/alternative perspectives (see below). This is the position that you will be defending later in the paper.**

3. Context & Key Definitions

- Briefly describe the historical, social, scientific context for the issue that you would like to discuss. For some issues, there may be a quite a substantial historical context. In this case, do your best to summarize it in just a few paragraphs. For other issues, there may be less historical context, so very little reduction of information will be required.
- Remember to discuss the history of the controversy or how viewpoints on the controversial questions have changed over time.
- A textbook is a good starting point for finding the historical context for many topics. For other hints, look at general books on the topic (often they include an introductory chapter that covers historical context).

- In this section you should also clearly define the key concepts you will be using in your essay.

4. My claim / point of view

- For this section, I would like you to develop and articulate a convincing argument for one particular view on the issue at hand.
- In this section you should restate your position on the central issue, and then go on to give a persuasive argument for why your position is the best one. In doing so, you should make attempts to use logical argument, information from historical context (if relevant), arguments articulated by others (remember to reference them), and relevant scientific studies that have been described in your sources.
- In addition to supporting your own position, you will want to address any weaknesses that you see in the other positions on the issue (i.e., the competing positions that you described in the previous section). Example: "...Those who argue against capital punishment often cite the uniform nature of crime statistics across regions with and without capital punishment as evidence that it does not work. However, these arguments do not take into account the density of population (i.e., urban versus rural) within region, and demographic differences between regions that could even out the distribution of criminal activity..."
- **Remember: The whole purpose of this section is to convince the reader that your position is a valid one, and that you can back it up.**

5. Conclusion

- In this section, you want to provide a summary of the issue and your own position on the issue. Follow this up with a brief review of the evidence that you used to support your position (as well as any evidence that argues against any competing positions).
- This is not the time to introduce new ideas and evidence
- Try to end your paper with a bang, or to leave the reader with a strong statement on your view of the issue. This is just a quick review of the first few sections of the paper. No need to repeat yourself too much here, but give a good summary of the issue as you see it, and what your position is on it.