

Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
PSYC 4180 Section D
CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY
Fall/Winter 2020 – 2021

Instructor and T.A. Information

Instructor: Ed Haltrecht
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	4180 D
T.A.	Gifty Asare
Email	giftya@yorku.ca
Date/Tim	Mon 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C.
- HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- Students must be in an Honours program in Psychology and have completed at least 84 credits (excluding (EDUC) education courses)

Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

Course website: eClass/Moodle

Texts: There are no prescribed texts for this course. Any Stats texts or Research texts that you may have previously purchased will be helpful, but there is no need to purchase texts.

Exams: There are no exams in this course.

Time and Location

Audio-visual of Zoom sessions will be recorded and shared on eClass/Moodle. For some topics, lectures available on eClass (MOODLE) prior to live sessions on ZOOM
Online active support Mon 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

Please note that this is a course that depends on remote teaching and learning. There will be no activities on campus.

Technical requirements for taking the course:

1. Students will need equipment to gain access to eClass (Moodle).
2. Students will also need access to Zoom for video conferencing during tutorial sessions.
3. In addition to stable, higher-speed Internet connection, students will need a computer with webcam and microphone, and/or a smart device with these features.

A way to determine Internet connection and speed: there are online tests, such as Speedtest, that can be run.

Useful links describing computing information, resources and help for students:

[Student Guide to Moodle](#)

[Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)

[Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)

[Computing for Students Website](#)

[Student Guide to eLearning at York University](#)

Course Description

In this course students will develop and practice the critical thinking skills required to be analytical consumers of psychological research. The format of the course will be lectures, tutorials, peer-review sessions, and student presentations.

Program Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate ability to think critically about applications of psychological findings reported in the media.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of variety of ways to express psychological findings in everyday life.
3. Critically identify myths or stereotypes in common discourse.
4. Recognize limits of conclusions based on inferential statistics.

Specific Learning Objectives

In this course we will discuss and demonstrate the critical thinking skills required of analytical consumers and communicators of psychological research. Students will learn to gather, interpret, evaluate, and integrate distinct, and sometimes conflicting, theories and evidence in Psychology to arrive at an informed opinion. Students will also learn to communicate their informed opinions, both orally and in writing, at a level appropriate for the general public.

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

- Locate research articles on emerging trends and demonstrate critical thinking about research findings in Psychology
- Critically assess the methodology used to address specific research questions
- Critically assess the statistical analyses used in simple research designs
- Correctly interpret results from reported research and from the application of simple statistics
- Evaluate the credibility of scientific evidence and differentiate it from scientific conjecture
- Communicate, in writing and orally, the methods, results, and conclusions of a research study in layman terms
- Critically assess and communicate, in writing and orally, the validity and accuracy of media reports about psychological findings

Course Requirements and Assessment

In the first half of the course we will discuss and develop the basic skills required to gather, interpret, and critically evaluate research findings in Psychology. Emphasis will be placed on evaluating research studies based on key criteria, such as, construct validity, internal and external validity, and statistical validity. These concepts will be discussed and applied to both correlational and experimental studies and to both qualitative and quantitative studies. In addition, students will acquire hands-on experience making sound arguments based on the appropriate analysis and interpretation of simple data sets.

Students will apply their critical thinking skills in various real-world scenarios. Two main themes will be explored. In one theme students will be tasked with presenting, orally and in writing, the results of primary source research articles in a manner appropriate for the general public. For example, students could prepare an evidence-based report for teachers on the validity of learning styles or an evidence-based report for lawyers on the reliability of eyewitness testimony. The actual topics to be explored will be discussed in class and will be mutually agreed upon by the students and the Course Director.

In the other theme students will be tasked with critically evaluating the validity and accuracy of current media reports about psychological findings. These evaluations will involve comparing the original research article to the media report.

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Evaluating Media Report presentation (10 min)	Oct 19, 2020 (Group)	15%
Proposal presentation (10 min)	Nov 23, 2020 (Group)	20%
SPSS assignment (word document)	Feb 5, 2021 (Individual)	15%
Individual Media Report assignment (3 pages)	March 20, 2021 (Individual e-mail)	10%
Major Paper (15 to 25 pages)	April 16, 2021 (Individual e-mail)	40%
Total		100%

Description of Assignments

Please see eClass/Moodle.

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 2020-21](#))

Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams

Presentations can neither be rescheduled nor made-up. Missed presentations will receive a grade of zero. Late written assignments will be penalized 2% per day (i.e., 2/100), including each day of weekends. Students are required to submit a [HH/PSYC: Missed Test Form](#).

Students with a documented reason for missing a course deadline, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (e.g., [Attending Physician Statement](#)) 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 2020-21 - Important Dates

	YEAR (Y)
Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept. 22
Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct. 27
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Feb. 5
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript - see note below)	Feb. 6 - Apr. 12

***Note:** You may withdraw from a course using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W". The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

Attendance Policy

No attendance is taken.

Sept 14	Introduction	Forming groups of 3 – 5 students – Selecting research areas
Sept 21	Selecting research areas	
Sept 28	Selecting research areas	
Oct 5	Media Reports	
Oct 12	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
Oct 19 (NC)*	Assignment: Evaluating Media Report presentation (Group -worth 15%)	
Oct 26	Finding and evaluating Psychological Tests	
Nov 2	Proposal content	
Nov 9	Proposal marking rubric	
Nov 16	Proposal issues arising	
Nov 23 (NC)	Assignment: Proposal presentation (Group -worth 20%)	
Nov 30	Proposals - issues arising	
Jan 11	Learning SPSS	
Jan 18	Data analysis using SPSS	
Jan 25	Data analysis using SPSS	
Feb 1	Data analysis using SPSS	
Feb 5 (NC)	Assignment: SPSS analysis and interpretation (Individual -worth 15%)	
Feb 8	Creating Media Reports	
Feb 15 (NC)	NO CLASSES – READING WEEK	
Feb 22	Critical thinking Part 1	
Mar 1	Critical thinking Part 2	
Mar 8	Critical thinking Part 3	
Mar 15	Critical thinking Part 4	
Mar 20 (NC)	Assignment: Individual Media Report (Individual -3 pages – worth 10%)	
Mar 22	Writing Research Papers	
Mar 29	Writing Research Papers	
Apr 16 (NC)	Assignment: Major Paper (15 to 25 pages) (Individual worth 40%)	

***(NC) – NO ZOOM CLASS**

ETHICS AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) - <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/ascp/index-ascp.html>

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

Audio-visual recordings – both on eClass/Moodle and Zoom: 1) the recordings should be used for educational purposes only and as a means for enhancing accessibility; 2) students do not have permission to duplicate, copy and/or distribute the recordings outside of the class (these acts can violate not only copyright laws but also FIPPA and intellectual property rights); and 3) all recordings will be destroyed after the end of classes. Please see the Teaching commons going remote website particularly the section on Copyright and intellectual property at <https://bold.info.yorku.ca/> and <https://copyright.info.yorku.ca/students-reuse-of-teaching-materials-from-york-courses-2/> for some statements to use in your course outline about intellectual property.

1) Information about Academic Resources

Digital content: York University Libraries also has access to online content that can be linked (using permalinks) through eClass/Moodle. A Library guide on creating permalinks/stable links to articles/ebooks/electronic resources can be found in various databases/Omni (the new library catalogue) at <https://researchguides.library.yorku.ca/permalinks> -- that can be used in eClass/Moodle. When students click on the stable link, they will be asked to authenticate through Passport York and then they have full access to the online resource. Using these permalinks addresses copyright issues.

2) Information about Academic honesty and integrity

Please see the library resources, academic integrity, and copyright section of the Going Remote website at <https://bold.info.yorku.ca/>

In this course, we strive to maintain academic integrity to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing SPARK's [Academic Integrity module at the beginning of the course](#). Breaches of academic integrity range from cheating (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.) to aiding and abetting (helping someone else to cheat). All breaches in this course will be reported to the appropriate university authorities, and can be punishable according to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty."

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 university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Electronic Device Policy

This course will be delivered in an online format and therefore electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops) as permitted during class time for course-related purposes. It is expected that you would complete tests/exams in a manner that does not require consulting an unauthorized source during an examination.