Please read this syllabus carefully. It is your responsibility to know the information contained in this document.

**Instructor:** Regina Schuller  
245 BSB  
736-2100 x 33190  
**Office Hrs:** Monday: 9:30 - 11:00

**Textbook:** The readings for the course are contained in a **customized text for PSYC4020 3.0** that is available in the bookstore – the chapters in the customized text have been selected from *Social Psychology, 1st Canadian edition* (Brehm, Kassin, Fein, & Burke, 2008) and *Forensic Psychology* (Wrightsman & Porter, 2006). The text material will be supplemented with journal articles that you can access from the Moodle website.

**Course Objectives**

This seminar will explore applied applications of social psychological research in the legal area. Specifically, using tools and methods from social psychology, we will examine some of the legal assumptions about human nature that underlie legal procedures and practices from a social psychological perspective: What does this research tell us about the operation of these practices? What are the strengths of this research? What are the weaknesses?

**Class Format**

The format of the course is comprised of three-hour meetings once a week. The course is heavily reading- and discussion-based. Written assessments have been kept to a minimum so that you may focus your energy and time this semester on completing the assigned readings, contributing to discussion in each of our class meetings, and developing a research proposal.

For each class, you are assigned readings from a variety of sources (text, journal articles). It is reasonable to expect that in a 4000-level course students will have sufficient background and be sufficiently interested in the topics to contribute to the class sessions. Class time will be a forum for presentation and discussion, with some lecturing by the instructor. Obviously, the degree to which we are successful in attaining the above goals are highly dependent on our preparation and participation in class. To ensure active and full participation, it is expected that you will attend all classes, critically read all of the assigned materials prior to class, and come to class prepared to discuss the material. This does not mean that the number of times a student speaks will be monitored; it simply means that a seminar is a cooperative venture and in order for it to be successful, all students must be willing to give their views and thoughts to the class.
Course Requirements and Assessment

Your final grade in the course will be out of 100% and will be based on: weekly reading reports (5%); participation (10%); group presentation of assigned reading (10%); brief written report of trial court visit (15%); and a research proposal (25% for the oral presentation of the proposal and 35% for the written research proposal).

For the first half of the course, two journal articles in addition to the text reading are assigned (there is also an optional reading, which you may elect to read as well). See the detailed list of readings under Class Schedule. You are asked to complete both readings before our class meeting on that date.

1. Reading reports: 5% of your final grade

Before every class, you will be required to turn in “reaction notes,” you will submit a one-page reading report, summarizing the two readings you completed (e.g., main point of the article, important strength, important weakness). Comments might include criticisms of the research, ideas for future research, or general thoughts on integrating the current weeks’ readings with other assigned material. Basically, these are notes or thoughts that occur as you read the materials, and that you might bring up in class discussion. You should divide this one page into two sections: one section for each reading that you completed. I will read your reading reports but the reading reports will not be graded. You will simply receive 5% credit for completing this component. Please note, however, that marks will be deducted if your reading reports do not reflect a serious effort on your part to consider and report on the readings. You are not required to submit a reading report on the day that you are one of the assigned group presenters (see below).

Late reading reports will not be accepted. Late reading reports are those not submitted on the day the reading was assigned to the class (reports can be submitted at class or prior class by emailing your report to me directly (schuller@yorku.ca). Any late reading report will be considered a missed reading report if it is not received by 3:30 pm on the day it is due.

2. Class participation: 10% of your final grade

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Each student must read all assigned text material and articles before each class and come to class prepared to discuss the readings (completing your reading reports will help prepare you). In the latter part of the course, you are expected to come to class for the student presentations. You cannot earn participation marks if you do not attend class. You will be also evaluated on the quality of your contributions and insights. A quality comment possesses one or more of the following properties:

- Reflects a consideration of issues addressed in assigned readings and previous class discussions and lectures
- Offers a unique, but relevant, perspective
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward
• Builds on other comments
• Transcends the "I feel" syndrome. That is, it reflects a critical analysis of some aspect of the assigned material (e.g., methodological, theoretical, applied)

3. Presentation of Assigned Article (10% of your final grade)

For each of the assigned readings, students will be responsible for being discussion leaders. Each week two to three students (depending on the number in the class) will present a summary and discussion of one of the assigned readings. The students will summarize the goals, key issues, and major points of the paper, along with its strengths and weaknesses. Discussion leaders for each article will work in teams of two to three (depending on the number in the class). The discussion leaders are expected to come to class prepared to lead the class in a discussion of one of the assigned articles for the day. It is up to you to co-ordinate your group, and to decide how you would like to allocate the work. You may structure the work in any way you like – e.g., each person may present for a few minutes, or you may divide all of the tasks between you, I will leave it to you to decide how you want to proceed. Please note, however, that all people assigned to a particular article will receive the same mark for this assessment. If you are absent from class on the day that you are due to present, you will receive 0 on this assignment.

Your presentation should last approximately 20 minutes (not including class discussion) and you should be prepared to answer questions from the other students and from me. You should end your presentation with three questions that you would like to direct to the class, to stimulate further discussion on the material you have presented. You should be prepared to initiate and guide a brief class discussion on the material with the class. This should last approximately 20 minutes, but I will allow more time for class discussion if it is warranted.

You should include some visual aids as part of your presentations. I will assume that your visual aids will be in PowerPoint format. You should bring your presentation to class on a memory stick on the day you are due to present. Please be sure to test your presentation file before you bring it to class.

If you plan on using any other type of visual aid (e.g., overheads, a movie clip), you must discuss this with me before your presentation, and you must give me some lead time to organize the appropriate facilities.

Choosing a reading: Please email me with your chosen article before 5 pm on Friday, Jan 6th. You must email me at schuller@yorku.ca.

Subject line of your email should be: “group presentation”. In the text of the email, please list:
(1) Your full name
(2) The reading that you would like to present
(3) The date under which this reading is listed
Everyone will be assigned to a reading on a 1st first come - 1st served basis. I will consider that the time at which you request your reading is the time at which you ask me directly or your email appears in my inbox.

(Please note: Even if you have organized more than one person to present a particular reading, each person who wants to be assigned that reading should email me individually with their own separate request for that reading.)

If the reading that you request is available at the time that you request it, you will receive an email reply from me, confirming your presentation. If the reading that you request is no longer available at the time that you request it, you will receive an email reply from me, asking you to re-select a reading. I will maintain a list of the readings on Moodle that are still available for presentation.

(Please note: Even if a reading appears available on this list, by the time you email me, the reading may have already been taken by someone else. Please be patient and flexible in this process. The best way to ensure that you are assigned a reading that you want is to select your reading and email me as soon as possible.)

**Important note: 4 pm on Wednesday January 11th is the absolute deadline for you to sign up for your group presentation assignment. If you do not have a presentation assignment submitted by the deadline you will be assigned one.**

I will post the final presentation of the groups on Moodle on January 13th. The schedule will not be changed after this time. It is your responsibility to check the schedule to ensure that it displays your correct presentation date.

4. **Trial court visit: 15% of your final grade**

For your assignment you will visit the Toronto Courthouse (Superior Court of Justice) at 361 University Ave and you will visit and observe one or more of the current criminal trials that are going on at the time. For this assignment, you will write a report on your observations in the courthouse. The exact nature of the paper will vary tremendously depending upon your own experience in court. In the paper, you will focus on the social psychologically issues that you noticed in court (see Court Visit Assignment). **This assignment is due March 1st, 2012. Assignments received after the deadline will be subject to a late penalty of 20% per day, including weekends.**

5. **Research Proposal: 25% oral presentation, 35% written submission**

A central goal of this course is to identify areas in which the current state of theorizing and research in social psychology and law interface. The topic for the research proposal will focus on issues associated with the topic of the course. Consistent with this approach, each student will be required to provide an oral presentation of the proposal as well as a final paper in which social psychological research is used to address some unresolved or applied question in law.
Oral Presentation: The second half of the course will be devoted to student presentations of their research proposals, with approximately 5 students presenting each day (depending on the number in the class). Each student will make a 20 minute presentation of their research proposal. Your proposal will involve the use of PowerPoint and will include the following: description of the problem or issue, a specific statement of the research question, hypotheses, key variable to be manipulated or measured (independent variables, dependent variables), the design of the research (experimental, correlational), participants, procedures, proposed analyses, etc. After each presentation, 10 minutes will be allotted for the class to ask questions, clarify issues, and provide suggestions and feedback. The power point presentation used must be submitted following the presentation.

Important note: January 26th (11:59 pm) is the deadline for you to sign up for your seminar presentation (you can of course sign up earlier). If you have not submitted a preferred date by January 26th, you will assigned a date.

Everyone will be assigned to a date on a 1st come – 1st served basis. I will consider that the time at which you request your reading is the time at which your email appears in my inbox.

If the date that you request is available at the time that you request it, you will receive an email reply from me, confirming your presentation. If the date that you request is no longer available at the time that you request it, you will receive an email reply from me, asking you to re-select a reading. I will maintain a list of the dates that are still available on Moodle.

Final Paper: Following the research proposal presentation, each student will submit a 10 page (double spaced), typed, APA style, proposal electronically to me as a word document. The paper will take the form of a research proposal: a problem is identified and a study is proposed that addresses this problem. In short, you will design/propose a study to investigate a research question that you think is relevant and important to our understanding. The final paper will be maximum of 10 pages in length (double-spaced) with at least 5 references from peer-reviewed academic journals. The written proposal will involve the following two sections: Introduction (e.g., literature review, statement of the issue, statement of the purpose of the research question, hypotheses) and Methods (e.g., participants, design, materials, procedures, potential analyses). Note that you will not collect data as part of this assignment. The final paper must include a title page, reference section (APA style), and appendix if needed. These sections are in addition to the 10 pages for the primary proposal.

The final research paper must be submitted to me two weeks following your oral presentation. Lateness will be penalized at a rate of 20% per day. Late assignments are those submitted after 11:59 pm on the date of your due date.

Drop Date: The last date to drop the course without academic penalty is March 9, 2012
General Information and Resources

Important information for students regarding University policies, including Academic Honesty/Integrity (see below as well) can be found at: http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/ The University does not look favourably on cheating of any kind and the penalties for doing so are very harsh. Become familiar with the rules and regulations regarding cheating/plagiarism and academic honesty. Go to the following website http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/ and read the section ‘For Students.’

Cheating: Cheating is the attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation. Among the forms this kind of dishonesty can take are: obtaining a copy of an examination before it is officially available or learning an examination question before it is officially available; copying another person’s answer to an examination question; consulting an unauthorized source during an examination; obtaining assistance by means of documentary, electronic or other aids which are not approved by the instructor; or changing a score or a record of an examination result.

Impersonation: It is a breach of academic honesty to have someone impersonate one’s self in class, in a test or examination, or in connection with any other type of assignment in a course. Both the impersonator and the individual impersonated may be charged.

Plagiarism and other misappropriation of the work of another: Plagiarism is the representation of another person’s ideas or writing as one’s own. The most obvious form of this kind of dishonesty is the presentation of all or part of another person’s published work as something one has written. However, paraphrasing another’s writing without proper acknowledgment may also be considered plagiarism. It is also a violation of academic honesty to represent another’s artistic or technical work or creation as one’s own. This is not to say that students should not use the work of others with the proper acknowledgment.

Sanctions for Academic Misconduct

When verified, a violation of academic honesty may lead to the following penalties:

1. Oral or written disciplinary warning or reprimand;
2. A make-up assignment or examination;
3. Lower grade or failure on assignment or examination;
4. Failure in the course;
5. Suspension from the University for a definite period;
6. Notation on transcript;
7. Withholding or rescinding a York degree, diploma or certificate

Resources

A number of important resources are available to students of York University. Most directly relevant to this course is the Centre for Academic Writing. For details, please visit their website (http://www.arts.yorku.ca/caw/).

As well, the university offers both academic and crisis counselling services. For details, please visit the Counseling and Development Centre website (http://www.yorku.ca/cds/).
Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of any course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

Students with physical, learning or psychiatric disabilities who require accommodation in teaching style of evaluation methods should discuss this with the Course Director early in the year so that appropriate arrangements can be made.