

**Faculty of Health**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**HH/PSYC4220 A - Theories of Human Nature- Winter Term**  
**(Full Year 2021-2022)**  
**Mondays 8:30AM-11:30AM Eastern Standard Time**

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**Fall/Winter 2021-2022**

**Please note that this course will be offered in person**, meaning that **students are expected to attend our classes on Campus on Mondays from 8:30AM to 11:30 AM**

**Instructor:** Dr. Sayyed Mohsen Fatemi

**Email:** [smfatemi@yorku.ca](mailto:smfatemi@yorku.ca)

**Office Hours:** Based on appointment

**Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced**

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

- HH/PSYC 2021 3.00 (Statistical Methods I) or HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II)
- 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. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any course credit exclusions. Please be sure to check the Psychology program requirements and/or consult with either the Undergraduate Psychology Department or an academic advisor.

**Course Description:**

This course will discuss, examine and provide psychological views on human nature. We will explore how different psychological theories address human nature and offer interventions and solutions accordingly. Our discussions will often entail comparative analysis with examples and cases that delineate the relationship between underlying theoretical assumptions and their implications. We will critically study numerous schools of thought with their foundational components on human nature. Each school has a conception of human nature that addresses the basic issues of what it means to be human. Deep down their frameworks, special questions including free will or determinism, nature and nurture controversy, optimism and pessimism,

dependence or independence, uniqueness or universality of human nature will be examined and discussed.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in theories of human nature
2. Critically evaluate, synthesize and resolve conflicting results in theories of human nature
3. Articulate trends in human nature
4. Locate research articles and show critical thinking about research findings in theories of human nature
5. Express knowledge of human nature in written form.
6. Engage in evidence-based dialogue with course director and peers.
7. Demonstrate an ability to work with others.

### **Learning Skills**

- Students will read and gain an understanding of the essential components of several of the most influential theories of human nature
- Students will practice critical thinking about the theory and practice of human nature in written assignments and in-class exercises.
- Students will begin to develop their own therapeutic style by engaging in classroom exercises that rehearse the mechanics of some of the more common and current psychotherapy practices with a focus on human nature.
- Students will identify the philosophical foundation underlying each theory studied in class, and demonstrate how it shapes the development of theoretical constructs and models of intervention.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to convey a knowledgeable and evidence-based understanding of a specific theory of human nature covered in class.

**Required Textbook: The Psychology of Innerpeace: Discovering Heartfulness.**  
**Sayyed Mohsen Fatemi, Ph.D Cambridge University Press.**

Extra readings and notes will be uploaded to E-class on Moodle as the occasion arises.

**Assessments/Evaluation: (see below for full description)**

<b>Assessment (e.g. test, assignment, Exam)</b>	<b>% of total grade</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation</b>
Class participation and mini reflections	10.58	Ongoing
Term Test	20	April 4
Personal Theory Paper	5	March 7
Individual Presentation	10	February 28
Peer Review	6	February 21
Final Paper	15	March 28
	66.58	

**\*Please note that you have already received 33.42% toward your total grade for the course from the Fall term. The above grades for the Winter term will be calculated out of 100 and later converted to 66.58%**

**Turnitin Service and Moodle:** Students will hand in all written assignments to Turnitin – a service that York University has enrolled in, which helps professors identify plagiarism and helps students maintain academic honesty. You will be able to access Turnitin through the Moodle application for this course. ***Please note that I will be making use of Moodle to post important information and any changes to the course – be sure to check Moodle regularly***

**Class Participation**

Your proactive participation is an essential factor in your successful completion of the course.

Your consistent attendance, your active involvement in the class discussions, your mindful participation in class presentations and readings and your contributions to ideas sharing about class members' behaviour change projects would contribute to your proactive participation.

**Mini-reflections (P/F; for Engagement Points)**

Mini-reflections will be completed in class, and must be submitted to eClass by *11:59pm the day of class (Monday)*. These reflections will be based on provided questions regarding your learning and experiences throughout the course, and should take approximately 10

minutes to complete. There will be 12 mini-reflections due per term totalling 24 mini-reflections throughout the year. You will be graded on your best 10 out of 12 mini-reflections per term, meaning that if you miss up to a maximum of 2 mini-reflections per term you may still receive the full grade for the mini-reflections portion of your grade if the rest are completed successfully. However, beyond that **missed mini-reflection points cannot be made up**. Therefore, if you are unable to participate in a class beyond that, for whatever reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive marks for whatever you miss. **The mini-reflections will be worth a total of 10.58%.**

### **Term Test**

During the term, there will be one term test administered. The test will be based on the chapters of the text book and the lectures up to the week of the tests. The test will be multiple choice format. These tests are designed to help students maximize their understanding of the material being covered. There is no substitute for a missed test. **The test will be worth a total of 20%.**

### **Personal Theory Paper**

This will be an opportunity for you to explicate your own theory of human nature . Describe in your own words your view of human nature, and important factors that contribute to what it means to be human. Try and discern the underlying assumptions of human nature. Include a discussion about what you think motivates human beings and makes human beings . In addition, describe your theory of human nature and show how it is related to your theory of personality. Identify and define up to four core constructs that guide the way you think about human nature This can be a maximum of five pages. You may use the first person pronoun to describe your own theory. This needs to be a reflection of your own creative and critical thinking and should not be a description of an existing theory. **This paper will be worth a total of 5%.**

### **Individual Presentation (Film Analysis)**

Each student is expected to make a presentation to the rest of the class in the second term. It is suggested that you select a movie and analyze its content through the concepts and techniques that you have learned in class. Topics and presentation dates will be established early in the first term. You will need to have your topic and proposed readings approved. You will be expected to research your area of interest and present the material in a clear and organized manner. More specific guidelines regarding the expectations for the presentation will be discussed in class. **This presentation will be worth a total of 10%.**

### **Peer Review**

You will be required to submit a rough draft of your Final paper by February 2022. Upon submission, you will receive drafts from other peers to review. The purpose of the peer review is to help your peer improve his/her paper. You will be evaluated on the quality of your suggestions and the thoroughness of your reading. Failure to submit a draft will result in not having the opportunity to participate in peer review and losing the mark. **This will**

**be worth a total of 6%.** In reviewing the paper, you may want to follow the six section headings listed below.

1. What is good about the paper (in being critical, we must not forget to be encouraging and supportive as well!)?
2. Is the purpose of the paper clearly laid-out in a succinct introduction?
3. Are there any terms or concepts that need further clarification?
4. Is the evidence that the author provides to support his/her position good? Sufficient?
5. Are there other factors that the author might want to consider (other types of evidence, other points of view, etc.)?
6. Anything else that might be helpful to the author.

Write the peer review as though it were a letter to the author. Speak to him or her directly; there is no need to refer to him/her in the third person.

There is no need to summarize the work either. The author knows what he/she has written. Include in the peer review only suggestions on how to improve the paper and what you have found valuable in the work.

If you wish, the peer review can be written in bullet format (as long as you can still clearly express your suggestions to the author). I would expect that the review would be about 2-3 pages long.

### **Final Paper**

The term paper may be an elaboration of the same topic as the individual presentation, or students can choose a different topic (with approval of the Course Director). Details will be announced in class. The paper should be written in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Papers should be approximately 10-12 double spaced pages (2500-3000 words). **This presentation will be worth a total of 15%.**

### **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 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - [Grading Scheme for 2021-22](#))

## Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after the deadline including weekend days. If your assignment is late, you will be deducted a late penalty of 5% per day, including weekend days. **Late assignments will not be accepted after one week of the missed deadline (35% penalty).**

Students with a documented reason for missing a deadline, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (Attending Physician Statement which can be found at:

<http://myacademicrecord.students.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.

If you are missing a deadline due to illness, compassionate grounds, etc., you must contact me ([smfatemi@yorku.ca](mailto:smfatemi@yorku.ca) or [smfatemi@hotmail.com](mailto:smfatemi@hotmail.com)) to submit documentation within 48 hours of missing the deadline in order to have your work considered for grading without a late penalty.

## Important New Information Regarding Missed Tests

For any missed tests or late assignments, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office.

[HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the test/assignment.

## Add/Drop Deadlines

Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)

Sept. 21      Sept. 21      Jan. 23

Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)

Oct. 5   Oct. 26 Feb. 7

Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)    Nov. 12      Feb. 11      March 18

Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below) Nov. 13 - Dec. 7      Feb. 12 - April 10      March 19 - April 10

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are different, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the Refund Tables.

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

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.

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Important Dates](#)

### **Academic Integrity for Students**

York university takes academic integrity very seriously, please visit [an overview of Academic Integrity at York University](#) from the Office of the Vice-President Academic.

The following links will assist you in gaining a better understanding of academic integrity and point you to resources at York that can help you improve your writing and research skills:

- [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#)
- [Online Tutorial on Academic Integrity](#)
- [Information for Students on Text-Matching Software: Turnitin.com](#)
- [Beware! Says who? A pamphlet on how to avoid plagiarism](#)
- [Resources for students to help improve their writing and research skill](#)

### **Test Banks:**

The use of test banks is not permitted in this course and may be considered a potential breach of academic honesty. This includes but is not limited to; buying or selling 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:** 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 HH/PSYC4220A course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated.

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](#)

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.

**Lecture Schedule**

Each week I will post the week's assigned chapter(s) and topic(s) in an announcement on eClass.

## Instructor's bio

Dr. Sayyed Mohsen Fatemi, Ph.D. completed his postdoctoral studies in the department of psychology at Harvard University where he has also served as a Teaching Fellow, an Associate and a Fellow.

He is a frequently published author and has been the keynote speaker of numerous international conferences.

His publications appear in Springer, Wiley, Templeton Press, Routledge, Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press, Lexington publication, Palgrave McMillan, American Psychiatric Association, and Journals such as APA's Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology and International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis.

In addition to teaching at Harvard, he has also taught for the department of psychology at the University of British Columbia, York University, Western Washington University, University of Massachusetts in Boston, University of Toronto, Endicott College and Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis.



He brings mindfulness in his psychological and therapeutic interventions and has run training and coaching programs for clinicians, practitioners and corporate people in North America, Europe and overseas. He has been practicing psychotherapy and hypnotherapy for more than a decade.

Dr. Fatemi is the recipient of the Ellen Langer international Mindfulness Award and is an active member of APA with numerous presentations at APA annual meetings.

Furthermore, Dr. Fatemi has served as an associate professor of psychology and the chair of the Desk of North America at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad one of the top five universities in Iran.

Dr. Fatemi is also an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate Program in Psychology in the department of psychology at York University, Canada.