

**Faculty of Health  
Department of Psychology  
Theories of Human Nature  
Wednesday, 2:30-5:30 (MC 212)**

**Course:** HH Psyc 4220 6 Section B  
<https://moodle.yorku.ca/>

**Course Webpage:**

**Term:** Fall/Winter 2015-2016

**Prerequisites:**

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.

**Course Instructor**

Diane Lawless

Office number: 277 BSB

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30-12:30 by appt.

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Secretary: Agnes Levstik – 281 BSB - 736-2100 ext 55125

**Readings:** Stevenson, L., Haberman, D., Matthews Wright, P. (2013) Twelve Theories of Human Nature (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings as assigned

**Course objectives:**

- become familiar with a variety of philosophical perspectives
- develop a conceptual understanding of their assumptions about human nature by using several different frameworks
- consider how varying theories of human nature would shape the conceptualization of topics typically addressed in psychology, as well as influence the research methods and questions used to examine them

- reflect on how they could influence the way we manage our lives and our relationships with others, as well as shape the kinds of people possible for us to be.

**Class format:** The classes will be in the form of a seminar. The first half of the course will include lectures, films, class discussion, and experiential exercises to help stimulate learning. The latter section of the course will entail student presentations on a variety of topics recommended by the course director and chosen by the student.

**MOODLE:** You are responsible for checking the course website <https://moodle.yorku.ca/> frequently for assignment guidelines, notes, and other key class updates and information

**EVALUATION**

Film review	(3%)
In-Class tests: Test #1	(19%) Oct. 28
Test #2	(22%) Jan. 20
Three written assignments #1:	4% Oct.14
#2:	6% Nov. 11
#3:	5% Dec. 2
Seminar Presentation	(12%)
Final paper	(19%)
Participation:	(10%)

**Conversion Table**

Percentage:	90-100	80-89	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	55-59	50-54	49	<48
Letter Grade	A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	E	F

“Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.”

Information on Academic Honesty, Student Conduct Standards, Religious Observance Accommodation and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: It is also expected that students are familiar with the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage-

[http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate\\_cte\\_main\\_pages/ccas.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm)

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Film review (3%)

A part of each class will be devoted to a film review. Students will sign up in groups of three to be a discussant. Film discussants will need to preview the film. All films are available in the York library. Because viewing time is limited to 10-15 minutes, you will need to select a portion of the film you believe would be most useful for the class. After the class views the selected portions, you will give your reactions and facilitate a class discussion. N.B.: This is NOT a presentation. Your objective is to help promote a class discussion. *Please note: the library takes reserved films off of the shelf 1 week prior to the viewing date. This means students will need to review their films more than a week before the show date.*

### In Class tests

Test #1 (19%) October 28, 2015

Test #2 Jan. 20, 2016

Both tests will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay style questions covering the text, assigned readings, and all powerpoint slides covered to date. The second test is not cumulative.

**Paper #1: CULTURAL METAPHORS** (2-3 pages typed, double spaced). **DUE OCT. 14:** *hard copy in class, e-copy to turnitin (through link on moodle)*

It is often difficult to convey to others exactly what a specific culture is like. Metaphors can allow us to more easily grasp a new concept by framing it in terms of something familiar. Martin J. Gannon (2002) proposes the use of cultural metaphors as a way to easily express a cultural mindset and compare it to that of other cultures. These metaphors involve identifying an activity or phenomenon that most members of a culture would view as important, and then using it as a metaphor for describing key features of the cultural group. While cultural metaphors are generalizations and will not apply to all members of a group, these metaphors can provide a framework for beginning to understand and compare cultural groups

Directions: Construct your own cultural metaphor for a culture with which you are familiar. See assignment guidelines on moodle course page for details

**Paper #2: Understanding proverbs from away.** 2-3 pages double spaced  
**DUE: NOV. 11** *hard copy in class, e-copy to turnitin (through link on moodle)*

With their expressed consent, interview a person from a culture different from your own and ask them to identify a proverb that is common to their culture (e.g., time is money; no man is an island; for every hand there is a glove). Ask them to choose four or five dimensions of their culture to explain its meaning. Be sure to ask for elaboration and clarification to help you grasp its interpretation. Reflect back the meaning as you understand it and ask for feedback. In your paper, present the proverb and identify the culture. Provide a clear and comprehensive written account of its meaning as explained by your informant. Identify three aspects of human nature that are embedded in this metaphor and explain your choices.

**Paper # 3: A GLOBAL VIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY** approx. 3 pages double-spaced  
**DUE: DEC. 2** *hard copy in class, e-copy to turnitin (through link on moodle)*

Most of what is published in psychology journals and textbooks takes a Western perspective (or Western indigenous perspective) and ignores the psychologies that have been developed by scholars across the globe to address concerns relevant to their own cultures. The purpose of this activity is twofold. First, it will acquaint you with some of the research interests of psychologists outside of Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Second, it will encourage you to think about some of the influences on what is considered Western psychology.

Directions: For this activity you are asked to search a psychology database (such as PsycLIT or PsycINFO) to locate a journal article reporting on **a specific research study** developed in a "non-Western" context. Such articles are often categorized under the heading of "indigenous psychology". **N:B:** this needs to be a research article, not a literature review or proposed model.

1. Provide the complete citation for your article
2. In two or three paragraphs, summarize this study. Include a description its purpose, the participants, procedures, and results.
3. Identify two underlying assumptions about human nature that are embedded in the article. Explain your choices.

**Seminar Presentation (12%)** January 27 to March 23, 2016

Each student is expected to give a presentation to the rest of the class in the second term. Your one-hour presentation will be done in groups of three. The

presentation can include lecture, audiovisual material, class exercises, and guided group discussion. A list of suggested topics will be provided. Feel free to discuss additional topics with the course director. Topics and presentation dates will be established early in the first term. You will need to have your proposed topic approved by the course director. You will be expected to discuss the conceptual and research literature in 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.

### **Final Paper (19%) April 1, 2015**

The final term paper may be an elaboration of the same topic as the seminar 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).

### **Participation (10%)**

Class participation will be evaluated based on active and informed participation and reflection in all class discussions and exercises. Please note, this mark is not based on attendance per se, however, it goes without saying that attendance is necessary in order to participate. It will be helpful to prepare for each meeting by completing the assigned readings prior to each class.

### **A NOTE ON PAPERS AND EVALUATION:**

Papers that are late will be deducted 20% per day. Exceptions are made for illness, family death or exceptional circumstances; however, a completed Attending Physician's statement form (available on the Registrar's website) or official documentation will be required in these cases a completed. The same documentation will be required for missed tests. The University has subscribed to the Turnitin service which helps professors identify internet plagiarism and helps students maintain academic integrity. The work submitted by students in this course will be submitted to Turnitin. Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements

Cheating/Plagiarism. 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

<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.htm>

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

### **Expected Lecture Schedule**

Sept. 16	Introduction The history of psychology. Volume 1, Mind, self & soul DVD 11111
Sept. 23	Chapter 1: Confucianism Communicating with the Chinese: International Business Communication [electronic resource]
Sept. 30	Chapter 2: Upanishadic Hinduism Connected [electronic resource]
Oct. 7	Chapter 3: Buddhism Film: When the iron bird flies [electronic resource]
Oct. 14	Chapter 4: Plato <b>Due:</b> Paper #1 creating a cultural metaphor

Oct. 21	Chapter 5: Aristotle Born to be good? DVD 14352
Oct. 28	<b>Test #1</b>
Nov. 4	Chapter 6: The Bible Humanity in relation to God No rest for the wicked [electronic resource]
Nov. 11	Chapter 7: Islam The Faith Project (6 parts): Kashif <b>Due:</b> Paper #2: Proverbs from away
Nov. 18	Chapter 8: Kant Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia [electronic resource]
Nov. 25	Chapter 9: Marx Film: People like us: Social class in America
Dec. 2	Chapter 10: Freud <b>Due:</b> Paper #3 – Indigenous psychology
Jan. 6	Chapter 11: Sartre Jean-Paul Sartre [videorecording] : the road to freedom [electronic resource]
Jan. 13	Chapter 12: Darwin The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey [electronic resource]
Jan. 20	Test #2
Jan. 27	Student presentation
Feb. 3	Student presentation
<i>Feb. 6</i>	<i>Last day to drop class without academic penalty</i>
Feb. 10	Student presentation
Feb. 17	Reading week
Feb. 24	Student presentation

March 2	Student presentation
March 9	Student Presentation
March 16	Student presentation
March 23	Student presentation
March 30	Final paper due.