

**Faculty of Health  
Department of Psychology  
PSYC 4180 6.0 C  
CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY  
Fall/Winter 2017-2018; Tuesdays 11:30-2:30 in R S201**

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**Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: Alistair P. Mapp

Office: 217 BSB

Office Hours: See Moodle

Email: amapp@yorku.ca

T.A.	Vanessa Foot
Email	nessa23@yorku.ca
Office	See Moodle
Office Hours	See Moodle

**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:** [Moodle](#)

**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 that are provided to them.

In the second half of the course 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.

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Test	October 24, 2017	10%
Article Assignment	November 28, 2017	15%
SPSS Assignment	February 6, 2018	15%
Media Report Assignment	February 27, 2018	20%
Student Presentations	March 6-27, 2018	10%
Target Audience Assignment	April 3, 2018	20%
Attendance and Participation		10%
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Total		100%

### **Description of Assignments**

Please see 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 2017-18](#))

### **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 with a documented reason for missing a course test, 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.

If you miss a test you will be given **one** chance to write a make-up test if, and only if, you complete the [HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#), which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office. Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original test date will result in a grade of zero for the missed test. For more detailed instructions, please refer to the *Rules Governing Missed Tests/Exams* link on the Moodle.

### **Add/Drop Deadlines**

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

	<b>FALL (F)</b>	<b>YEAR (Y)</b>	<b>WINTER (W)</b>
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept. 20	Sept. 20	Jan. 17
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct. 4	Oct. 18	Jan. 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Nov. 10	Feb. 9	March 9
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript – see note below)	Nov. 11 - Dec. 4	Feb. 10 - Apr. 6	March 10 - Apr. 6

**\*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**

Attendance is mandatory and comprises a graded component of the course.

### **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.

### **Electronic Devices During a Test/Examination**

Electronic mobile devices of any kind are not allowed during a test or examination. Students are required to turn off and secure any electronic mobile device in their bag which is to be placed under the chair while a test/exam is in progress. Any student observed with an electronic device during a test/exam may be reported to the Undergraduate Office for a potential breach of 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 [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 4180 6.0C 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.

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