

**Faculty of Health  
Department of Psychology  
HH/PSYC 2010 3.0 Section M  
WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY  
Thursday 7-10 PM in RS 203  
Winter 2018**

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**Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: Julie Conder  
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Email: conder@yorku.ca

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**Course Prerequisite(s):**

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

**Course website:** [Moodle](#)

**Nelson MindTap website:** <https://login.nelsonbrain.com/course/MTPNPD9PB1S8>

**Course Description**

This course develops university-level writing and communication ability. Students will write about psychological content; however, this course aims to develop general written communication skills that are broadly transferable. Emphasis will be placed on learning to write coherent arguments and explanations. Students will learn how psychological texts present information to effectively communicate with a reader. Students will develop the capacity to critique and improve their own writing. Critical thinking and logical reasoning skills are taught and practiced for the purpose of improving written communication. By analyzing exemplary psychological writing students will discover the form and structure of effective writing in Psychology. Readings and class discussions will increase understanding of how to write effectively. In-class writing exercises will be used to practice principles and ideas discussed. Providing feedback on the writing of peers will increase students' capacity to reflect on and improve their own writing. Students will be guided, step-by-step, through the process of completing a larger writing assignment. Extensive feedback will be provided and multiple drafts of writing assignments will be completed. This course will prepare students for advanced writing assignments in upper year University courses and contribute to overall progress towards the advanced level of literacy expected of an educated citizen. At the end of the course, students will be able to develop a written argument on a controversial issue in psychology.

**Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basics of scientific writing.
2. Demonstrate effective written communication.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically about written communication.
4. Demonstrate the ability to locate and identify valid, credible, and rigorous psychological research.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the basics of referencing using APA style.

### Specific Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge of the effective use of a variety of written communication skills.
- Describe and critique different approaches to writing in psychology.
- Identify appropriate writing techniques for communication in psychology.
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret and communicate the provisional and cumulative nature psychological conclusions.
- Detect and use effective form and structure in psychological writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to work with others.
- Demonstrate the ability to review peer’s written work.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop written argument with valid supporting evidence.

### Required Texts

- Lipschutz, G., Scarry, S., & Scarry, J. (2017). *The Canadian Writer’s Workplace*. 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. Nelson Education.
- Haig, J., & MacMillan, V. (2018). *Cites and Sources: An APA Documentation Guide*. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Nelson.

### Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Writing exercises (8X2 drafts, plus peer feedback); Essay components (8); mini-reflections (12) (pass/fail); Aplia Grammar Units (pass/fail)	Various	20%
Best in-class writing exercise	March 29, 2018	10%
Components 1-4 of Essay	February 8, 2018	20%
Components 5-6 of Essay	March 1, 2018	20%
Final Essay	April 5, 2018	30%
Total		100%

### Class Structure:

- 50 mins: Lecture/Class discussion
- 25 mins: Classroom writing exercises (~ 200 words, submitted online for feedback)
- 15 mins: Provide feedback to peer on classroom writing exercises
- 20 min: Break
- 50 mins: Classroom work on Essay (i.e. in class peer review and instructor led guidance)

### Homework per week:

- 30 minutes revising classroom writing exercise & uploading drafts and feedback

- 1.5 hours reading assigned books / articles & completing online grammar units
- 2 hours working on essay outside of class

## **Description of Assignments:**

### **Writing Exercises:**

During week 2 to week 9 you will spend 25 minutes in class writing on a topic related to the lecture. What you write in class (i.e. first draft of the writing exercise) must be uploaded to the website by *10 pm the next day*. Then, in the next class, you will take 15 minutes to read a peer's first draft and provide feedback. Your feedback must be uploaded to the website by *10 pm the next day*. Finally, you will spend 30 minutes revising your writing based on the feedback you receive and upload a final draft by *10 pm on the day before the next class*. All of this work will be done online on the Moodle site. Writing assignments will overlap so that you will be working on a different stage of up to 2 writing assignments per week. See course schedule for more details. Given everything is being done online, you will still be able to participate if you have to miss class. **However, the deadlines for uploading drafts and feedback are fixed and cannot be extended.** Therefore, if you are unable to submit a draft or feedback, for whatever reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive participation marks for whatever you miss. At the very end of the course you will be asked to select your best writing exercise and submit it for evaluation by the instructor. With appropriate documentation the deadline for the submission of your best writing exercise can be extended.

**\*\*For a complete guide to Writing Exercises and deadlines, see Writing Exercises Guide on Moodle.**

### **Online Aplia grammar units:**

Over the duration of the course you will be expected to complete 13 online grammar units via the Nelson Aplia website (see above). These units are due on Wednesday, April 5. You must receive 50% or higher on the units and you will have 3 tries to do so. If you do not receive 50% or higher on the unit after 3 tries, you will not receive credit.

The units will be available for you to complete at any time; however, it is recommended that you complete one per week. Each unit will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Each unit will address a foundational writing skill that will not be discussed in detail during class time. For example, units will address foundational skills such as punctuation, grammar, style and word choice. All of this work will be done online.

### **Essay and Essay Components:**

Over the duration of the course you will write one argumentative essay on a controversial issue in psychology. This essay will be broken down into smaller assignments (Essay Components) that together will build to the final essay. Each week we will spend time in class working on your essay. You will also be expected to spend some time outside of class working on your essay. From week 3 through week 10, you will be expected to come to class with two hard copies of a particular component of your essay – one copy will be submitted to the instructor (for marking on a pass/fail basis) and one copy will be shared with your peer in class in order to receive feedback. **The deadlines for bringing individual Essay Components to the class for feedback are fixed and**

**cannot be extended.** Therefore, if you are unable to participate in a class, for whatever reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive marks for whatever you miss.

You will also submit essay components for TA/instructor feedback and graded credit on two occasions:

Essay components 1-4; due Feb 8

Essay components 5-6; due Mar 1

With appropriate documentation, deadlines for submission of components 1-4 and 5-6 of your essay to the TA/Course instructor for grading can be extended (see below for more information on missed work and required documentation).

**\*\*For a complete guide to Essay Components and deadlines, see Essay Components Guide on Moodle.**

### **Choosing an Essay Topic**

Your essay for this class must be argumentative. This means that you will choose a controversial issue in psychology and choose a position that you will argue (and support with empirical evidence) regarding that topic.

Example essay topics\*:

- Can people be addicted to video games?
- Are children with ADHD prescribed medication too often?
- Why has depression become such a widespread illness?
- Why are superhero movies so popular?
- Has the Internet had an overall positive or negative effect on human relationships?
- Should marijuana be legalized?

*\*These topics are examples. You may use these or may choose your own topic. Be aware that your topic **must** be a controversial issue that may be reasonably argued from two sides.*

### **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 - [calendars.students.yorku.ca/2016-2017/academic-and-financial-information/academic-services/grades-and-grading-schemes](http://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2016-2017/academic-and-financial-information/academic-services/grades-and-grading-schemes))

### **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 3% per day, including weekend days. Late assignments will not be accepted after one week of the missed deadline (21% off).

## **Points missed for Writing Exercises, weekly Essay Components, Aplia grammar units, and mini-reflections cannot be made up.**

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 ([conder@yorku.ca](mailto:conder@yorku.ca)) 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**

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

<b>Important dates</b>	<b>Winter</b>
Last date to add a course <b>without</b> permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Jan 17
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Jan 31
Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Mar 9
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a "W" on the transcript – see note below)	Mar 10 – Apr 6

## **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.

### **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 PSYC 2010 3.0 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.

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](#)

## Course Schedule:

*(topics, but not assignment deadlines, are subject to change)*

	Date	Topic	Readings for next week	Due:
Week 1	Jan 4	Introduction	Ch 14; Ch 15	
Week 2	Jan 11	Conducting research, APA style, paraphrasing	Ch 24 (omit 24-4); Ch 18-1; Ch 23-1; 23-4; 23-5	Weekly Writing Exercises begin (Moodle; see Writing Exercises Guide for deadlines –Starting this week, you will submit 3 Writing Exercises per week)
Week 3	Jan 18	Library resources, researching, & evaluating sources; summarizing	Ch 20-1 through 20-9	Essay Components weekly submission begins (EC 1 due, two hard copies to class; starting this week, you will submit one hard copy EC per week - see Essay Components Guide on Moodle for details)
Week 4	Jan 25	Context, key definitions; comparing points of view	Ch 19	EC 2
Week 5	Feb 1	Understanding claims & support	Ch 25	EC 3
Week 6	Feb 8	Constructing an argument; counterarguments; rhetorical analysis; assumptions	Ch 20-10; Ch 18-2, 18-3	EC 4 <b>Essay Components 1-4 due</b>
Week 7	Feb 15	Organizational structure; conclusions		EC 5
	<i>Feb 22</i>	<i>Feb 17-25 break – no class</i>		
Week 8	Mar 1	Critiquing arguments	Ch 18-4	EC 6 <b>Essay Components 5-6 due</b>
Week 9	Mar 8	Revision	Ch 22	EC 7
Week 10	Mar 15	Editing	Ch 21	EC 8
Week 11	Mar 22	Writing workshop		
Week 12	Mar 29	Writing workshop		<b>Best Writing Exercise due</b>

	Apr 5 (Weds)	<i>Study day - no class</i>		<b>Mindtap Aplia units 1-13 due</b> <b>**FINAL PAPER DUE**</b>
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