

**Faculty of Health**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**PSYC 4220 6.0 B: THEORIES OF HUMAN NATURE**  
**Wednesday/8:30/FC 103**  
**Y/2019-20**

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**Instructor**

Instructor: Dianne Lawless, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Office: 277 BSB

Office Hours: by appointment

Email: [dlawless@yorku.ca](mailto:dlawless@yorku.ca)

**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.

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

**Course Description**

A critical examination of theories of human nature with special emphasis on their philosophical foundations and their influence on current psychological theories.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of theories of human nature.
2. Critically evaluate, synthesize and resolve conflicting results in theories of human nature.
3. Articulate trends in theories of human nature.
4. Locate research articles on theories of human nature and show critical thinking about research findings .
5. Express knowledge of theories 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.

## Specific Learning Objectives

- develop a conceptual understanding of their assumptions about human nature by using several different frameworks
- consider how varying theories of human nature shape the conceptualization of topics typically addressed in psychology, as well as influence the questions and research methods used to examine them
- reflect on how varying theories of human nature could influence the way we manage our lives and our relationships with others, as well as shape our aspirations we believe are possible and preferable.

## Required Text

Stevenson, L., Haberman, D., Matthews Wright, P. , Witt, C. (2018) Thirteen Theories of Human Nature (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

## Course Requirements and Assessment:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation (if known)</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Film Review	TBD	4%
Paper #1	October 2, 2019	4%
Test #1	October 30, 2019	18%
Paper #2	November 6, 2019	5%
Paper #3	November 27, 2019	6%
Test #2	January 29, 2020	22%
Seminar presentation	Feb. 5 – March 25, 2020	11%
Final Paper	April 1, 2020	19%
Participation		11%
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Total		100%

## Description of Assignments

### Film review

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. Grading as per Senate Policy

### In Class tests

Test #1 Oct. 30, 2019: Chapters 1-6 inclusive, plus lecture slides.

Test #2 Jan. 29, 2020: Chapters 7-13 inclusive, historical interlude, plus lecture slides

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. 2**, *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. 6** *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. See assignment guidelines on moodle for details.

**Paper # 3: A GLOBAL VIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY** approx. 3 pages double-spaced  
**DUE: NOV. 27** *e-copy to turnitin (through link on moodle)*

Most of what is published in psychology journals and textbooks takes a Western perspective and ignores the psychologies that have been developed by scholars across the globe to address standpoints/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 paper 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.

See assignment guidelines on moodle for details.

### **Seminar Presentation** February 5 to March 25, 2020

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-four. 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, with a demonstrated grasp of the material that is beyond an introductory level.

More specific guidelines regarding the expectations for the presentation will be discussed in class.

### **Final Paper** April 1, 2020

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). See moodle for assignment details

### **Participation**

Class participation will be evaluated based on **two** components. 9% will be 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. 2% will be based on providing a peer review for a minimum of four final group presentations.

### 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 2019-20](#)

### Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment:

For any missed tests, midterm exam 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 missed tests, midterm exam or late assignments.

In addition, to the online form, students documented reason for a missed tests, midterm exam or late assignments such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., MUST submit official documentation (e.g. [Attending Physician Statement](#)) within 48 hours.

[Timeline for submitting Attending Physician's Statement – 48 hours](#). Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. **One** make-up test will be held for students who have a documented absence. It is the student's responsibility to attend that test. Undocumented late papers that are late will be deducted 20% per day

### Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Fall/Winter 2019-20 - Important Dates](#)

	FALL (F)	YEAR (Y)	WINTER (W)
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept. 17	Sept. 17	Jan. 19
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct. 1	Oct. 22	Feb. 3
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Nov. 8	Feb. 3	March 13
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	Nov. 9 - Dec. 3	Feb. 4 - Apr. 5	March 14 - Apr. 5

**\*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.*

### **Information on Plagiarism Detection**

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

### **Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic devices are to be used in class for course work only. In respect for other students, refrain from using electronic devices in class for personal or entertainment purposes.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all seminar classes. While participation depends being in class, the grade for participation is not based on attendance – it is based on participation.

### **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 information [SPARK Academic Integrity modules](#). These modules explain principles of academic honesty.

### **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 4220B 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**

Sept. 4	Introduction Film: The history of psychology. Volume 1, Mind, self & soul DVD 11111
Sept. 11	Chapter 1: Confucianism Film: Family Values: The Chinese Family in Transition [electronic resource]
Sept. 18	Chapter 2: Upanishadic Hinduism Film: Eastern mystics [electronic resource]
Sept. 25	Chapter 3: Buddhism Film: When the iron bird flies [electronic resource]
Oct. 2	Chapter 4: Plato Due: Paper #1 creating a cultural metaphor

Oct. 9	Chapter 5: Aristotle <i>Film: Born to be good? DVD 14352</i>
Oct. 16	reading week – no class
Oct. 23	Chapter 6: The Bible Humanity in relation to God Film: No rest for the wicked [electronic resource]
Oct. 30	Test #1:
Nov. 6	Chapter 7: Islam Due: Paper #2: Proverbs from away
Nov. 13	Historical Interlude: Rise of Science Chapter 8: Kant Film: East to West. Episode 4, The Muslim Renaissance
Nov. 20	Chapter 9: Marx Film: People like us: Social class in America [electronic resource]
Nov. 27	Chapter 10: Freud Due: Paper #3 – Indigenous psychology
Jan. 8	Chapter 11: Sartre Film: Griefwalker [electronic resource]
Jan. 15	Chapter 12: Darwin Film: The history of science, Episode #6, Who are we? [electronic resource]
Jan 22	Chapter 13: Human Nature and Feminist Theory Film: Marilyn Waring on Women and Economics Show Two [electronic resource]
Jan. 29	Test #2:
Feb. 5	Student presentation
Feb. 12	Student presentation
Feb. 19	Reading week
Feb. 26	Student presentation
March 4	Student presentation
March 11	Student Presentation



March 18 Student presentation  
March 25 Student presentation  
April 1 Final paper due.