

Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
HH/PSYC 2010 3.0 Section P
WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY
Wednesday 11:30 AM -2:30 PM in ACE 004
Winter 2020

Instructor and T.A. Information

Instructor: Julie Conder
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Course Prerequisite(s):

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

Course website: [Moodle](#)

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 find and evaluate credible scholarly literature.

Specific Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate ability to cite sources appropriately according to APA standards.
2. Place a claim into context within the relevant academic literature
3. Distinguish and effectively use different types of research literature (i.e. reviews, meta-analyses, individual studies etc.) to support an argument
4. Demonstrate proficiency with spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence structure
5. Demonstrate ability to adhere to the conventions of academic writing in psychology
6. Develop a clear written claim statement and provide evidence from scholarly sources to support it
7. Structure academic writing to effectively communicate a claim and supporting detail with logical flow
8. Explore, consider, and rebut alternative points of view in academic prose
9. Consider and communicate the implications of a claim
10. Give and receive peer feedback as part of a regular revision process
11. Appreciate the difference between conjecture and interpretation of data
12. Appreciate when empirical observation vs. theoretical analysis / synthesis is needed to support a claim

Required Texts

- There is no required text for this course; required readings will be posted on Moodle.

Recommended texts:

Greene, A. E. (2013). Writing science in plain English. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Participation component: includes Writing exercises (7x2 drafts, plus peer feedback); Essay components (9); Mini-reflections (12)	throughout	15%
Components 1-4 of Essay	Feb 5 – Feb 12, 2020 (rolling)	20%
Components 1-6 of Essay	Feb 26 – Mar 4, 2020 (rolling)	20%
Best writing exercise	April 1, 2020	10%
Final Essay	April 1 – April 6, 2020 (rolling)	35%
Total		100%

General 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
- 2 hours working on essay outside of class (essay components, and overall development)

Description of Assignments:

Writing Exercises:

During week 2 to week 8 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 Moodle by *10 pm the next day*. Then, in the following 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 exercises will overlap so that you will be working on a different stage of up to 2 writing assignments per week. See your Writing Exercises Guide 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 ANY reason, you will lose the opportunity to receive participation marks for the missed work. At the end of the course, you will be asked to select your Best Writing Exercise and submit it for evaluation. In appropriate circumstances, and 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.**

Mini-reflections:

Mini-reflections will be completed in class for participation points. These reflections will be based on provided questions regarding your learning and experiences throughout the course, and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. **Missed mini-reflection points cannot be made up.** 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.

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 2 through week 11, 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 grading on a pass/fail

basis) and one copy to 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 via Moodle for TA/instructor feedback and graded credit on two occasions:

Essay components 1-4; due Feb 5 through Feb 12

Essay components 1-6; due Feb 26 through March 4

Please note that these assignments have **rolling deadlines**, which means submission is open from the beginning date to the end date of the submission period. It is up to you to manage your time appropriately and decide when the best submission time for you is. Due to the range of days provided for submission, **no extensions will be granted on EC 1-4 and EC 1-6.** (See below for details on submission of late work, special circumstances 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?
- Should marijuana be legalized?
- Should students be allowed to use laptops in the classroom?

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

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PARTICIPATION: Writing Exercises, weekly Essay Components, and Mini Reflections make up your participation grade. **The deadlines for these are fixed and cannot be extended.** Therefore, if you are unable to submit a draft or feedback, **for ANY reason**, you will lose the opportunity to receive participation marks for the missed work. At the beginning of the course, you will be awarded 3 “free” points – the equivalent of missing about 1.5 classes. In light of this policy, requests to submit missed work will not be entertained.

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)

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).**

Points missed for Writing Exercises, weekly Essay Components, 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) 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](#)

Important dates

Last date to add a course **without** permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)
Last date to add a course **with permission** of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)
Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)

Winter

Jan 19

Feb 3

Mar 19

Important dates

Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a “W” on the transcript – see note below)

Winter

Mar 14 –
Apr 5

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 are subject to change)

	Date	Topic	Due:
Week 1	Jan 8	Introduction	
Week 2	Jan 15	Conducting research, APA style, paraphrasing, library resources	Weekly Writing Exercises begin (Moodle; see Writing Exercises Guide for deadlines –Starting this week, you will submit 3 Writing Exercises online per week) 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 3	Jan 22	Evaluating sources; summarizing	EC 2
Week 4	Jan 29	Context, key definitions; comparing points of view	EC 3
Week 5	Feb 5	Understanding claims & support	EC 4 EC 1-4 due submission period begins
Week 6	Feb 12	Constructing an argument; counterarguments; rhetorical analysis; assumptions	EC 5 EC 1-4 due submission period ends
	Feb 19	<i>Reading Week – no classes</i>	
Week 7	Feb 26		EC 6 due Writing workshop EC 1-6 submission period begins
Week 8	Mar 4	Organizational structure; conclusions	(no weekly EC due) EC 1-6 submission period ends

Week 9	Mar 11	Critiquing arguments	EC 7
Week 10	Mar 18	Revision	EC 8
Week 11	Mar 25	Editing	EC 9
Week 12	Apr 1		Writing workshop Best Writing Exercise due Final paper submission period begins
	Apr 6		Final Paper submission period ends