

**SCHEDULE TO BE CONFIRMED**  
**Faculty of Health**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**PSYC 4190 M**  
**Health Psychology Seminar: Critical Approaches to Health Psychology**  
**Winter, 2020**

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**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Michaela Hynie  
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**Course Location:**

DB 0015

**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 substitute
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 3170 3.00 (Health Psychology)
- Students must be in an Honours program in Psychology and have completed at least 84 credits (excluding (EDUC) education courses)

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

**Course Description**

Health psychology in North America has often been framed in terms of the biopsychosocial approach, an approach that focuses on individual behaviour, personal choice and responsibility, and social cognition as a way of understanding the psychology of physical health. The goal of this seminar is to stimulate discussion and foster understanding of other critical models of health psychology, those that emphasize social context, political systems, and power relations.

The course will focus on the theories and methods of critical health psychology, community health psychology and public health psychology, approaches to health psychology that share an emphasis on how the broader social context constructs and shapes health and illness, both locally and globally.

**Learning Outcomes**

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

- 1) Understand the main models of, or approaches to, the psychology of health and well-being
- 2) Critically assess how social and policy discourse construct our understanding of health and well-being
- 3) Understand a range of different methodological approaches to health psychology research

### **Specific Learning Objectives**

- 1) Define the key elements of a critical approach to health psychology
- 2) Understand how different approaches to health psychology evolved in recent history and the factors that led to their development
- 3) Apply a critical lens to health messages and policies, with an emphasis on meaning, equality and justice
- 4) Identify strategies for community engagement in health promotion
- 5) Understand the relationship between qualitative methods and critical psychology approaches
- 6) Develop a deep understanding of the role of social construction in representations of health and illness, health behaviour and health promotion

### **Required Text**

There is no single text. Rather, required readings are journal papers that are identified in the syllabus

### **DRAFT Course Requirements and Assessment**

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Assignment 1		20%
Assignment 2		20%
Assignment 3		20%
Assignment 4		20%
Presentation 1		5%
Presentation 2		5%
In-Class Reflection Papers (best 2 of 3)		10%
Total		100%

### **Description of Assessments**

#### **ASSIGNMENTS (80%)**

Assignments are intended to provide you with the basis to have discussions with the other students in the class. They give you a chance to go in depth into one study or issue and one method. They are also linked to two other class components that are intended to provide breadth: the class presentations and the in-class reflection papers (see below). As such, the assignments are highly focussed and very brief and structured to encourage reflection and sharing of ideas.

#### **Assignment 1: Exploring lived experience of health and illness (20%)**

**Due: January 27, 2020, 3 to 5 pages, double spaced.**

In this assignment, we explore how people make meaning from personal experience of illness. This assignment involves reading and reporting on a first-person account of illness or a health-related experience. This can be taken from a blog, magazine article or an in-depth newspaper article. It must be autobiographical (the person must be describing their own experience) and have enough detail to allow for analysis of the underlying nature and meaning of the experience.

You will be reporting on the aspects of the experience as described by the individual and how it aligns with and differs from that described in an academic paper addressing the phenomenology of the same illness or experience.

**Assignment 2: Identifying social representations (20%)**

**Due February 24, 2020: 3 to 5 pages, double spaced**

In this assignment, you will be contributing to a small group discourse analysis. The goal of this assignment is to explore and document how representations of health and illness are constructed through language; how we speak about them. You will be submitting an individual assignment but then working with the other students in your group to develop a summary of the themes you have identified, which you will present to class

**Assignment 3: Health promotion in context (20%)**

**Due, March 9, 3 to 5 pages, double spaced**

The focus of this assignment is to find literature on how social conditions (locally, nationally, globally) affect health related behaviours. Your task will be to identify a government led health promotion campaign that focuses on changing behaviour, and to analyze it in terms of its basic assumptions about the causes of health and illness, and the conditions that affect behaviour. You will be aided and supported in your analysis by 3 to 5 academic papers that identify the contextual, social and political factors that contribute to these behaviours or health conditions.

**Assignment 4: Community action in health (20%)**

**Due March 23, 3 to 5 pages, double spaced**

This is a group assignment but you will be submitting your assignment individually. The focus of this assignment is to look at interventions that are intended to engage the community in the process of critically reflecting on what is affecting their health and collaboratively developing an intervention to address it. You will work with a group that has selected a community health issue. Individually, you will find an example of a specific intervention and/or theories about how to apply participatory or action-based activity to create community change (2 to 4 references). In your paper, you will explain the strength and weaknesses of the intervention from the perspective of ethics, representation, and possibilities for effective change at the social versus community versus individual level.

As a group, you will present the interventions you have found to other group members and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Collectively you will either pick the intervention that you think is the strongest and explain why, reporting back to class. You can also come up with your own intervention as a group instead.

**PRESENTATIONS (10%)**

Students will be very briefly presenting their assignments as “case studies” to provide a range of examples of different issues in different contexts. Presentations will be very brief and relatively informal, and are intended to stimulate discussion and serve as the basis for in-class reflection papers.

**Presentation 1: Case studies of subjective experience of health and illness (5%)**

**January 27, 2020: 5 minutes, maximum 2 PPT slides**

You will briefly present the story you identified in Assignment 1 and the key themes that emerged, along with their sample quotes/images. Presentations will be in clusters, by topic

**Presentation 2: Case studies of health behaviour promotion (5%)**

**March 9, 2020: 5 minutes, maximum three PPT slides**

You will briefly present the health campaign you identified in Assignment 3, followed by a simple presentation of one or two key assumptions in the campaign, and one or two key contextual/political/social factors that are not being taken into account by the campaign. Identify the support for the assumptions through an example. Use a citation from critical health psychology research/literature to support the argument for missing context.

**IN-CLASS REFLECTION PAPERS (10%)**

These reflections are intended to get you think about and engage with your fellow students' presentations, identify common themes, note what is missing or inconsistent, and link to the readings and class material. You will have only 15 minutes to write these at the end of class (they are intended to be only 1 page long) and your final grade will be based on the best 2 out of 3. Please bring a laptop or other device that will allow you to upload your paper to Moodle before leaving class!

**In-Class Reflection Paper 1: Subjective experiences of health and illness (5%)**

**January 27, 2020, 1 page, written in class**

These are 1 page thought papers based on the presentations you have seen in class. Pick one of the topic themes (not your own) and, based on the presentations you have seen and your own readings, reflect on possible reasons for similarities and differences in experience between the cases.

**In-Class Reflection Paper 2: Social representations of health and illness (5%)**

**February 24, 2020, 1 page, written in class**

Pick one of the topic themes (not your own) and, based on the summaries offered by the other students, class discussion and your own readings, reflect on how these representations can create or reflect equality and inequality, power differences, or result in marginalization or profit.

**In-Class Reflection Paper 3: Health promotion in context (5%)**

**March 9, 2020, 1 page, written in class**

Across the different health promotion campaigns presented in class, what are the most common assumptions shared by the campaigns? Which social context factors are the least likely to be addressed? Why might this pattern of assumption and exclusion exist? Use the readings as well as presentations to support your interpretation.

**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 - <http://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2016-2017/academic-and-financial-information/academic-services/grades-and-grading-schemes>)

### **Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams**

Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (Attending Physician Statement which can be found at: <http://registrar.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.

Assignments submitted late will have 5% deducted. Check that your assignment is visible on Moodle after you have submitted it! If it is submitted as draft that is okay, as long as it is visible.

### **Add/Drop Deadlines**

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

<b>Important dates</b>	<b>Fall (F)</b>	<b>Year (Y)</b>	<b>Winter (W)</b>
Last date to add a course <b>without</b> permission 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
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 “W” on the transcript – see note below)	Nov. 9 - Dec. 3	Feb. 4 - Apr. 5	Mar 14 - Apr. 5

### **Electronic Device Policy**

The class includes in-class writing assignments and note taking. Ideally you will do those on a computer in class and submit directly into Moodle.

### **Attendance Policy**

You are expected to attend class and each others’ presentations. Many of the class assignments include an in-class element so attendance is necessary.

### **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.

**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 Schedule:

Jan 6	What does it mean to be critical? Models of health psychology Definitions and key terms
Jan 13	Situating critical psychology in history
Jan 20	The subjective experience of health and illness Methods for studying individual experiences
Jan 27	<b>Assignment 1 due</b> <b>Presentation 1</b> <b>In-class reflection paper 1</b>
Feb 3	The social construction of health and illness Methods for exploring social construction
Feb 10	Health equity and disparities
Feb 17	<a href="#">WINTER READING WEEK</a>
Feb 24	<b>Assignment 2</b> Group work <b>In-class reflection paper 2</b>
Mar 2	Critical Public Health Health promotion Health literacy
Mar 9	<b>Assignment 3</b> <b>Presentation 2</b> <b>In-class reflection paper 3</b>
Mar 16	Critical community psychology Health Technologies Methods for social change
Mar 23	<b>Assignment 4</b> Group work
Mar 30	Global critical health psychology