

**Psychology 405 - 01**
**Contemporary Theories in Psychology**
**Winter 2017**

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### Course Description

This course will focus on two interrelated sets of issues: (a) a critical examination of selected major theories and systems in twentieth century psychology, and (b) the development of new theory and methods of inquiry that have evolved from the critiques of these theories. In the process of examining these issues we will discuss the nature of science and psychology's place in science, and such concepts as theory, explanation, reductionism, determinism, intentionality and agency.

To emphasize theory is not to disparage research but to examine the presumed goal of all scientific activity, namely the development of theoretical statements which have as their aim either explanation (that is, they are 'true' statements about the world) or a pragmatic function (they allow the user to do things in the world not possible without the theory). Further, we will examine the questions that have been asked about the relationship between data and theory in science generally and in psychology in particular.

The course will then attempt to understand the relationship between explanations that work at different levels. Is a biological (physiological/neurological) explanation preferred over a psychological one? Is a cognitive or a behavioral explanation a 'true' explanation? Are 'explanations' preferred over 'reasons' in psychology? Is data more important than theory, or is theory required so that we can 'see' the data? All of these questions take place in a social and historical context that will be discussed as the course proceeds.

What then of particular theoretical claims in psychology? We will examine some foundational topics to evaluate the nature of knowledge claims about these topics and the different ways of evaluating these claims.

### Course Learning Outcomes

The Department of Psychology is committed to student knowledge and skill development. The table below lists the key learning outcomes for this course, the program-learning outcomes they facilitate (see [psyc.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/program-learning-outcomes](http://psyc.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/program-learning-outcomes)), and the expected level of achievement.

Course Learning Outcomes	PLO(s)	Level(s)
Identify the major foundational positions in contemporary psychology and locate them in any individual piece of research	1	A

Critically evaluate article reports of studies and be able to identify in complex arguments the way in which psychological theory is constructed out of its basic building blocks	2, 10	A, A
Be able to discuss fundamentals of philosophy of science as these apply to psychology	2, 10	A, A
Be able to discuss fundamentals of philosophy of mind as these apply to psychology	2, 10	A, A
Propose an entirely novel theoretical concept and outline its utility	2, 6	A, A

Notes. PLOs = Program-Learning Outcomes: 1 = demonstrate knowledge of psychological sciences, 2 = think critically and solve problems, 3 = conduct research and analyze data, 4 = communicate effectively, 5 = demonstrate information literacy, 6 = understand and implement ethical principles, 7 = apply psychological knowledge and skills. Level of PLO achievement facilitated by this course: I = introductory, C = competency, A = advanced.

### Prerequisites

PSYC 200 and 201 – Principles of psychology, or equivalent, and one senior half course in psychology.

### Required Text

Sacha, B. & Looren de Jong, H (2013). *Theoretical Issues in Psychology*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Sage. Text is available in the University Bookstore.

### Evaluation

Course Requirements: 3 Mini-Papers (40%), 2 Term-Tests (24%) and a Final Exam (36%).

I. Three Mini-papers: due as outlined below:

1. Monday, February 13
2. Friday, March 17
3. Friday, April 7

Your paper will address the questions outlined on D2L. The first mini-paper is worth only 12% of your final grade, a chance to get warmed up to this kind of assignment. The second and third are worth 14% each. In total, this means that your papers add up to 40% of your total grade.

In grading your papers I will be looking for the following: (a) clarity of language use and presentation, writing style and overall format and (b) the content of the argument or case you make, its relationship to the literature you cite and the general strength of your case. ‘Strength’ can mean both logical structure and rhetorical force; this will depend in part on how you are answering a question. In general, (a) and (b) here are, metaphorically, like ‘artistic impression’ and ‘technical merit’ in figure skating competitions (a borrowed metaphor from Dr. Marini in Education). By having you write multiple papers and tests (instead of one large one) the assessment ought to approach validity and reliability.

You can be late with one of the three papers (3 days maximum) without asking me or requiring permission. More than one late will require an excuse or I will deduct marks for lateness (10% per day).

Please note that I will not, under any circumstances, accept papers that are sent to me electronically. It is difficult and tedious to grade material on a computer screen hence I will only accept hard copies of your papers.

II. Two term-tests: These tests will consist of short answer questions based on the readings and lecture material (12% each for a total of 24%).

1. Friday, February 3
2. Wednesday, March 8

III. Final Exam: Scheduled by the registrar. This test will be cumulative, consisting of short answer questions based on readings and lecture material (value is 36%).

Note: The use of class notes or the textbook, computers, phones, iPads, or calculators is prohibited during the exams in this course.

### **Department of Psychology Grade Distribution Policy**

The distribution of grades in Psychology courses (the percentage of A grades, B grades, etc.) will be similar to the distribution of grades in other courses in the Faculty of Arts. The Department monitors the grade distributions of 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses in the Faculty to ensure that the grade distributions in Psychology courses are comparable. Based on these reviews, students can expect that 1) up to 30% of grades in 200- and 300-level psychology courses will be “A” grades (A+, A, and A-), and 2) up to 40% of grades 400-level psychology courses will be “A” grades.

### **Department of Psychology Criteria for Letter Grades**

Psychology professors use the following criteria when assigning letter grades:

*A+ grade: Exceptional Performance.* An A+ grade indicates near perfect performance on multiple choice and short answer exams. For research papers/essays/course projects/presentations, an A+ grade is awarded for exceptional work deserving of special recognition and is therefore not a common grade.

*A, A- Range: Excellent Performance.* Superior understanding of course material. Written work is very strong in terms of critical and original thinking, content, organization, and the expression of ideas, and demonstrates student’s thorough knowledge of subject matter.

*B Range: Good Performance.* Above average understanding of course material. Written work shows evidence of critical thinking and attention to organization and editing but could be improved in form and/or content.

*C Range: Satisfactory Performance.* Adequate understanding of course material. Knowledge of basic concepts and terminology is demonstrated. Written work is satisfactory and meets essential requirements but could be improved significantly in form and content. Note: All prerequisites for courses offered by the Faculty of Arts must be met with a minimum grade of C-.

*D range: Marginally meets standards.* Minimal understanding of subject matter. Written work is marginally acceptable and meets basic requirements but requires substantial improvements in form and content. Student has not mastered course material at a level sufficient for advancement into more senior courses in the same or related subjects.

*F grade: Course standards not met.* Inadequate understanding of subject matter. Written work does not meet basic requirements. Student has not demonstrated knowledge of course material at a level sufficient for course credit.

### Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

### Tentative Lecture Schedule

Date	Topic	Chapter
M Jan 09	Course outline/Introduction <i>Winter term lectures begin.</i>	
W Jan 11	Science: why, and how? Some Basic Concepts in Scientific Method	1
F Jan 13	Science: why, and how? Some Basic Concepts in Scientific Method	1
M Jan 16	Science: why, and how? Some Basic Concepts in Scientific Method	1
W Jan 18	Kinds of Explanations: Laws, Interpretations and Functions	2
F Jan 20	Kinds of Explanations: Laws, Interpretations and Functions <i>Last day to drop Winter Term half-courses.</i>	2
M Jan 23	Kinds of Explanations: Laws, Interpretations and Functions <i>Last day to add or swap Winter Term half courses.</i> <i>Last day for change of registration from audit to credit or credit to audit.</i>	2
W Jan 25	Philosophy of Science (1): Logical Positivism and its Failure	3
F Jan 27	Philosophy of Science (1): Logical Positivism and its Failure <i>Fee payment deadline for Winter Term fees.</i>	3
M Jan 30	Philosophy of Science (1): Logical Positivism and its Failure	3
W Feb 1	Philosophy of Science (1): Logical Positivism and its Failure	3
<b>F Feb 3</b>	<b>Term-Test 1</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>
M Feb 6	Philosophy of Science (2): Criticism and Alternatives to Positivism	4
W Feb 8	Philosophy of Science (2): Criticism and Alternatives to Positivism	4

F Feb 10	Philosophy of Science (2): Criticism and Alternatives to Positivism	4
M Feb 13	Philosophy of Science (2): Criticism and Alternatives to Positivism	4
W Feb 15	Sociology and Psychology of Science	5
F Feb 17	Sociology and Psychology of Science	5
Feb 19- 26	Reading Week. No lectures. University open (except Family Day).	
M Feb 20	Alberta Family Day, University closed (except Taylor Family Digital Library, Law, Medical, Gallagher and Business Libraries). No lectures.	
M Feb 27	Sociology and Psychology of Science	5
W Mar 1	Introducing Philosophy of Mind, Brain and Cognition	6
F Mar 3	Introducing Philosophy of Mind, Brain and Cognition	6
M Mar 6	Introducing Philosophy of Mind, Brain and Cognition	6
<b>W Mar 8</b>	<b>Term-Test 2</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>
F Mar 10	Modern Approaches to Mind (1): The Language-based view: Functionalism and the Computational Theory of Mind	7
M Mar 13	Modern Approaches to Mind (1): The Language-based view: Functionalism and the Computational Theory of Mind	7
W Mar 15	Modern Approaches to Mind (1): The Language-based view: Functionalism and the Computational Theory of Mind	7
F Mar 17	Modern Approaches to Mind (1): The Language-based view: Functionalism and the Computational Theory of Mind	7
M Mar 20	Modern Approaches to Mind (2): The Brain-based view: Neurophilosophy, Connectionism and Dynamicism	8
W Mar 22	Modern Approaches to Mind (2): The Brain-based view: Neurophilosophy, Connectionism and Dynamicism	8
F Mar 24	Modern Approaches to Mind (2): The Brain-based view: Neurophilosophy, Connectionism and Dynamicism	8
M Mar 27	The Extended Mind: Biology, Body, and Environment	9
W Mar 39	The Extended Mind: Biology, Body, and Environment	9

F Mar 31	The Extended Mind: Biology, Body, and Environment	9
M Apr 3	Consciousness and Free Will	10
W Apr 5	Consciousness and Free Will	10
F Apr 7	Consciousness and Free Will	10
M Apr 10	Wrap-up/Buffer	
W Apr 12	<i>Winter Term Lectures End. Last day to withdraw from full courses and Winter Term half courses.</i>	
F Apr 14	<i>Good Friday. No Classes. University Closed</i>	
Apr 15- 26	<i>Winter Term Final Examinations.</i>	

### **Reappraisal of Grades**

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class; no reappraisal of term work is permitted after the 15 days. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

### **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

### **Academic Accommodation**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services ; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf).

Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

### **Absence From A Test/Exam**

Makeup tests/exams are **NOT** an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have up to 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. **Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam during exam make-up hours provided by the department** <http://psychology.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/exam-review-and-makeup-exams> If a student cannot write their final exam on the date assigned by the Registrar's Office, they need to apply for a deferred exam [http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred\\_final](http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred_final). Under no circumstances will this be accommodated by the department.

### **Travel During Exams**

Consistent with University regulations, students are expected to be available to write scheduled exams at any time during the official December and April examination periods. Requests to write a make-up exam because of conflicting travel plans (e.g., flight bookings) will NOT be considered by the department. Students are advised to wait until the final examination schedule is posted before making any travel arrangements. **If a student cannot write their final exam on the date assigned by the Registrar's Office, they need to apply for a deferred exam** [http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred\\_final](http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred_final). Under no circumstances will this be accommodated by the department.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**

The FOIP legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve tests and assignments from a public place. Therefore, tests and assignments may be returned to students during class/lab, or during office hours, or will be made available only for viewing during exam review sessions scheduled by the Department. Tests and assignments will be shredded after one year. Instructors should take care to not link students' names with their grades, UCIDs, or other FOIP-sensitive information

### **Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)**

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. **A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation.** The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research

studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **April 12, 2017**.

### **Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Student Organizations**

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 130 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

**Student Union VP Academic:** Phone: 403-220-3911 [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)

**Student Union Faculty Rep.:** [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **Student Ombudsman's Office**

The Office of the Student Ombudsmen provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. The office can be reached at 403-220-6420 or [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>)

### **Safewalk**

The safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus. This service is free and available 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year.

Call 403-220-5333.

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **January 20, 2017**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **January 23, 2017**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **April 12, 2017**.