



Psychology 431 – L01

Current Issues in Psychopathology

Winter 2013

Instructor:	Dr. Raymond Gunter	Lecture Location:	ST 130
Phone:	403-944-4784	Lecture Days/Time:	T 18:00-20:50
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Office Hours:	By appointment		

Course Description and Goals

Discussion of current developments and controversies in the assessment, etiology, and treatment of psychopathology. Students will focus on improving their critical thinking skills via discussion of controversial issues in the field of abnormal and clinical psychology.

Prerequisites

Psyc 312 – Experimental Design and Quantitative Methods for Psychology
Psyc 385 – Abnormal Psychology

Required Text

Halgin, R.P. (2010). Taking Sides: Clashing views on controversial issues in abnormal psychology (7th Edition). Dushkin/MacGraw Hill. Available in the University Bookstore. Other readings will be available for download on Blackboard.

Evaluation

1. 30% of your mark will be based on a multiple choice and short essay question mid-term exam scheduled during class time. The exam will cover all material covered in class prior to the exam date, together with corresponding text chapters and assigned readings.
2. 35% of your mark is based on a class presentation/debate. A team of 2 people will debate another team of 2 people on a contentious issue in clinical psychology. A position paper must be submitted **at the time of the presentation**. The position paper is worth 25% of your grade and the debate itself is worth 10%.
3. 35% of your mark is based on a final 2-hour exam scheduled by the Registrar during the final examination period. The exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions from the text, class presentations and lectures. The exam will cover all material presented during the debates, together with information covered in team position papers (which will be posted on blackboard).

Points will be deducted for any papers handed in late. Late papers must be turned in to the Psychology main office, 275 Administration Building. Late papers will be subjected to a 10% penalty per day, including weekends.

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-).

Attendance

Exam content will be based on the assigned readings from the textbook, and on any topic covered during lecture, including class presentations by your peers. It is unlikely that students will be able to do well in this course if they miss the lecture component. Changes in the syllabus are *probable* at the discretion of the instructor, and if you miss classes being up-to-date on new deadlines and/or material is entirely your responsibility. If you must be absent, please arrange to get notes from other classmates. Lecture notes will be posted on the blackboard either BEFORE or AFTER each lecture, depending on timing and other factors. Students are allowed to tape record (audio) my lectures. I am typically available on e-mail or directly after class to answer specific questions or field other issues. However, asking me to recap an entire missed lecture for you (or something to the effect of “Sorry, I zoned out for the first half of your lecture, can you give me the Coles notes version please?”) will earn you a polite but firm rejoinder.

Tentative Lecture Schedule

Day	Date	Topic	Readings
T	Jan 8	**NO CLASS DUE TO INSTRUCTOR ABSENCE**	None
T	Jan 15	Course introduction, bookkeeping issues re. debates, Does emotional intelligence exist?	Assigned reading (Blackboard)
T	Jan 22	Positive Psychology: Implications for the treatment of psychopathology	Assigned reading (Blackboard)
T	Jan 29	Abstinence versus harm reduction in treatment of substance use disorders, What should DSM-V look like?	Assigned reading (Blackboard)
T	Feb 5	Should psychologists be able to prescribe medication? Are some psychotherapies harmful?	Assigned reading (Blackboard), Halgin text (prescription privileges)
T	Feb 12	Do people truly make rational decisions about their well-being? Are human beings becoming more violent? Or less?	Assigned readings (Blackboard)
T	Feb 19	READING WEEK, NO CLASS!	
T	Feb 26	MIDTERM EXAM	
T	Mar 5	Is bipolar disorder “manufactured” by drug companies?	Assigned readings (Blackboard)
T	Mar 12	Debates 1,2	
T	Mar 19	Debates 3,4	
T	Mar 26	Debates 5,6	
T	Apr 2	Debates 7,8	
T	Apr 9	Debate 9	
T	Apr 16	TBA	
		Final Exam (scheduled by Registrar)	

Rationale: Presentations at 400-level psychology courses are common. The experience can be invaluable in preparing you for future oral reports, whether for graduate school, professional school or work settings. Some of the material in Psychology 431 lends itself to a debate-style presentation. The textbook is organized in a pro/con format. For every topic in the text, there is compelling evidence on both sides of the issue. There is no right or wrong answer to each issue. Rather, the debates provide the opportunity to review evidence in detail (i.e., sort out opinion/myth from fact), promote discussion and critical evaluation of the issue.

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Debate Format: A team of 2 people will debate another team of 2 people on a contentious issue in abnormal or clinical psychology. Twenty to 25 minutes is allotted for each team's presentation and 5 to 10 minutes for each team's rebuttal. The order of speakers will be 1) Yes side – main presentation, 2) No side – main presentation, 3) Yes side – rebuttal, 4) No side – rebuttal. 5) Class discussion. Your presentation should be delivered via Powerpoint. A copy of your presentation will be posted on blackboard for your classmates to study. You don't need to provide extensive background on the topic selected except how it pertains to your side of the issue. The debates are intended to be enjoyable, so feel free to use cartoons, video clips, class demonstrations, etc. However, it is important to keep them professional. During the Rebuttal, choose a few major points the other side presented and attempt to dispute them with your evidence or arguments. Your rebuttals should be based on logic and opposing data, not just on opinion that is not based on evidence. During the Class discussion, questions from the class can be directed at one or both groups. At the end of each debate the class will evaluate each team on the quality of presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting materials on a 10-point scale, with space for comments. These ratings will not be used for the grade assignment. Each team will be provided with the class rating averages, a summary of the comments and feedback.

Paper: A 10 to 12 page (double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman) position paper must be submitted at the time of the presentation (each team hands in ONE paper, which you have both contributed to writing). The paper gives you the opportunity to expand on your presentation points in greater detail. Please note that is not sufficient to use the general argument that the "research is flawed" to support your side. All research is flawed in some way. Provide specific criticisms of why research on the topic is flawed, and how this affects the credibility of the evidence. Whenever possible, look at the preponderance of evidence (e.g., results from meta-analyses) and not just one or two studies that have findings supporting your position. The paper should be in APA format and have at least 8 to 10 references. Please review primary source material (original articles) in addition to secondary sources. Use headings to structure the text please! You can use tables to summarize arguments or specific evidence, although the bulk of the paper should be written in complete sentences like a regular term paper. An electronic copy of the paper should also be submitted. It will be posted on Blackboard for the other students to download and study.

Choosing a debate topic: You may choose any of the topics from your textbook for your presentation, EXCEPT for the topics that have been chosen for lectures. New research is published on these topics on a regular basis, so don't restrict your coverage of the issue to data presented in the chapters. Selection of the topic is first come, first served. Once you have your group together, provide me with your 1st and 2nd choices for topic (name of topic and whether you want pro or con side). You can also choose a topic that does not appear in the text but you will need to find another team of students willing to debate the other side of the issue. All topics are finalized on the date listed in the lecture schedule.

Group work: The majority of students have no problems working together in preparing for the presentations. However, occasionally a team experiences problems within their group. The most common concern I hear is that one person in the group is not doing his or her share. A few suggestions to prevent this from happening are:

1. Divide the work up logically with clear expectations on length and quality.
2. Set deadlines in advance of the presentation date to review the material within your group. For example, if you are each writing a section of the paper, have it ready at least one week before the due date to review, edit, and condense the material to everyone's satisfaction.
3. Have open discussions on how the work is going and who in the group should be doing more or less. Electing a team leader is not a bad idea provided the individual delegates work equally and the leader is not expecting to do everything him or herself.
4. Please be mindful of individual strengths and weaknesses. Some students are better writers, while others are better at public speaking. Divide up the work according to the strengths of your group members. I do suggest, however, that both team members participate in the presentation.

If you are experiencing problems within your group and can not resolve them internally **please talk to me well before the presentation date!** We can probably work out a solution. Please do not wait until after the presentation is done and the paper is submitted to tell me about the problem.

Grading for debate portion:

Your overall grade will be based of quality of the presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting material. The total 30 marks for the debate breaks down as follows:

- 20 marks for the paper (writing, organization, consistent use of APA style)
- 5 marks for the quality of presentation (e.g., use of A/V aids, organization, clarity of speakers, flow of the presentation, rebuttal comments)
- 5 marks for soundness of arguments (use of empirical evidence vs. opinions, use of material outside of textbook chapter).

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. 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

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. 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 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.

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 (2) 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>

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 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

Student Union VP Academic: Phone: 403-220-3911

suvpaca@ucalgary.ca

Student Union Faculty Rep.: Phone: 403-220-3913

socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course with no “W” notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **January 18, 2013**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **January 21, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Apr 16th, 2013**.