



Department of Psychology

Psychology 431 – Current Issues in Psychopathology

Summer 06 - COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor:	Shervin Vakili, Ph.D.	Location:	Admin 140
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Lecture Day/Time: MW 6- 8:45

Course Description and Goals:

Discussion of current developments and controversies in the assessment, etiology and treatment of psychopathology. Emphasis will be on teaching students how to strengthen their critical thinking skills using controversial issues in the fields of abnormal and clinical psychology as a basis for discussion and debate. Course format will be lectures with a strong expectation for student involvement in class discussions.

Required Textbook:

Halgin, R. P. (2007). Taking sides: Clashing views in abnormal psychology (fourth edition). MacGraw Hill, Iowa. Other readings will be available for purchase from the PSYCHS office.

University of Calgary Curriculum Objectives

This course addresses the following curriculum objectives set forth by the University of Calgary: (1) developing skills in the analysis of problems in clinical psychology, (2) assessment and interpretation of often conflicting evidence on controversies in the field of abnormal psychology, (3) ability to effectively assimilate and organize information from multiple sources such as primary and secondary data sources, and (4) strengthening skills in oral and written reports.

Attendance:

Exam content will be based on the assigned readings from the textbook, **and** on any topic covered during lecture. 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 possible 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. I regret being unable provide class notes if you miss lectures. I don't believe in posting entire lecture notes on the blackboard, I believe note taking focuses attention and enhances learning through multi-modal input of information. Material outlines will be posted on the blackboard, however. Students are allowed to audio-tape record my lectures for this course.

Evaluation:

Grades for the mid-term, presentation, and final examination will be computed as a percentage and then combined as a weighted overall average for the course. 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. The FINAL grade will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90%; 89.4% will be rounded down to 89%).

1. 30% of your mark will be based on a mid-term exam scheduled during class time. The exam will consist

- mostly of short answer question and essay questions, but may also include some multiple choice.
- 30% 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 abnormal or clinical psychology. Detailed information on the debate format and expectations is provided in the attached document.
A position paper must be submitted at the time of the presentation. Late papers will result in a loss of 10% on the overall debate grade.
 - 40% 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 short answer and essay questions from the class presentations and lectures.

Grading Scale:

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

Date	Topics	Readings
July 5/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course overview; discussion of debate topics and debate format; choosing debate teams. Careers in psychology, trends in training in psychology: Psy.D., Ph.D., and Masters level training, Psychologists and prescription medication. 	Chapter 11 (Halgin)
CURRENT ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT		
July 10/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate teams announce and get approval for their topics (come prepared with 2 topics). Projective assessment techniques, theory and application (TAT, House/Tree/Person). Rorschach assessment: can inkblots be used to assess personality? 	Lilienfeld, S. O., Wood, J. M., & Garb, H. N. (2001, May). What's wrong with this picture? <i>Scientific American</i> , 81-86.
CURRENT ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT		
July 12/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are Psychological Disorders Real? What is Abnormal Behaviour? Should Individuals with Anorexia Have the Right to Refuse Life-sustaining Treatment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coyne, J. C., & Downey, G. (1991). Social factors and psychopathology. <i>Annual Reviews in Psychology</i>, 42, 401-25. Chapter 1 (Halgin)
July 17/06	****DEBATE 1****	
July 19/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are Blocked and Recovered Memories Valid? Is Multiple Personality Disorder a Valid Diagnosis? 	Chapter 3 (Halgin) Chapter 4 (Halgin)
July 24/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcoholism: Disease, or Maladaptive Behaviour? 	Chapter 7 (Halgin) Chapter 1: Why Addiction is Not a Disease. In Peele (1989). <i>Diseasing of America; Addiction treatment out of control.</i> (pp.1-29). Lexington Books, Toronto. Leshner, A. (1997). Addiction Is a Brain Disease, and It Matters. <i>Science</i> , 278, 45-47.
TREND TOWARDS BIOLOGICAL INTERVENTION		
July 26/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are Prozac and Similar Antidepressants Safe and Effective? Is Electroconvulsive Therapy Ethical? 	Chapter 8 (Halgin) Chapter 12 (Helgin)
July 31/06	****DEBATE 2****	

Aug 2/06	****MID TERM EXAM****	
Aug 7/06	Heritage Day – No Classes!	
Aug 9/06	• Is Ritalin Overprescribed?	Chapter 10
Aug 14/06	****DEBATE 3****	
SOCIAL ISSUES		
Aug 16/06	• Is Pornography Harmful? • Review	Chapter 15 (Helgin)
Aug 17-19	Final Exam week. FINAL EXAM (to be scheduled by the Registrar)	

Reappraisal of Grades: A student seeking reappraisal of graded mid-term exams, assignments, etc. must discuss his/her work with the instructor within 15 days of the work having been returned 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 fifteen 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 fifteen 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 offence. 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 a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and **have not** registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. If you are seeking academic accommodation, please notify your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of the course.

Absence from a Test:

A completed Physician/Counsellor Statement may be required to confirm absence from a test for health reasons. The student will be required to pay any cost associated with the Physician Counsellor Statement. Note: make-up exams WILL be different from regularly scheduled exams.

Course Credits for Research Participation

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 an individual's final grade. Information about current experiments is on the Experimentrix website at <http://experimentrix.com/uc>. The read.me link at that site provides a guide to using the system and assigning your credits. The last day to participate in research and **ALLOCATE YOUR CREDITS TO YOUR COURSES** is August 15/06.

Important Dates

The last day for registration and changes of registration is July 4/06. The last day to withdraw from this course is August 16, 2006.

Psych 431 Debates

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, medical school, law school or the business world. The material in Psychology 431 lends itself to a debate-style presentation. You will notice the textbook is organized in a pro/con format. For every topic, 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.

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 main presentation can follow any style you think would work for the topic. The majority of students use PowerPoint slides; you can also use overheads. You don't need to provide an exhaustive background on the topic 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, or other ice-breakers. However, try not to let your presentation get too casual—these are still scientific presentations. 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 and a “winner” will be announced based on class input (this does not impact your grade).

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 appropriate for a 400 level university course. Avoid emotionally charged comments like “that is ridiculous”, “totally wrong”, etc. rather dispute points based on logic, and opposing data. Although they can sometimes be used effectively, beware of countering based on social or ethical norms, since they can easily be confused with personal opinions.

Paper: A 10 to 12 page (double spaced) 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 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 double spaced, 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, however 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. I will post the file on the course web page for other students in the class to download (the papers will be removed from the site at the end of the course). The purpose of this is to provide the rest of the class with notes from which to study for the final. It also allows you to focus on listening to your classmate's presentations rather than frantically taking notes.

Choosing a topic: You may choose any of the topics from your textbook for your presentation, EXCEPT for the topics I have chosen for lectures. New findings are appearing on these issues literally every day. 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 on the list 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 your 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 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.

If you are experiencing problems within your group and can not resolve them internally please talk to me 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. In rare instances where a group member is making little to no contribution, and the issue cannot be resolved, the person may be asked not participate in the debate and will be asked to do a different term paper on their own, on a topic which the student can choose with my approval. This paper will be due on the AUG 16h/06, during class time. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** The student will receive a separate grade than the group based on this paper, minus 15%, for not having participated in the debate.

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:

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