

Psychology C82

Theoretical Psychology

Academic year: 2007-2008 (Fall)

Course Instructor: Gabriela Ilie, Ph.D.

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Lectures location and time: University of Toronto (Scarborough Campus)
Room: SW-221
Wednesdays 9 am - 11 am
Course announcements and information: intranet

EMAIL: For security purposes, and time considerations, please make sure that your email messages include in the subject line: your course number, your name, and student number.

Course Description

This course represents an introduction to the problems and methods of theoretical analysis in psychology. The emphasis of the course is on developing sophistication in the techniques of theoretical analysis. The aim is to enable the student to read and evaluate the current literature in theoretical psychology. This course aims to cover both questions about theoretical psychology as well as issues within it. The first half of lectures will cover some basic tools, concepts, and methods of critical thinking and scientific reasoning as well as some basic philosophy of science. The second half will put these tools to work in considering theoretical issues in psychology.

Organization of the Course

This course will follow the structure of an advanced undergraduate seminar in which enthusiastic class participation, coming to class ready to discuss the readings assigned is very important. Participation includes attendance and punctuality (1 point for each class attended) as well as facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates' presentations, offering constructive feedback, questions, and comments, and showing respect for other's contributions (up to maximum 3 points for each class). To create a stimulating, safe, equitable discussion environment, each participant *should try to strike a balance between listening and speaking*.

Reviews (10% each for a total of 30%): The goal of the two written reviews is to provide a critical

reflection on the readings. This entails summarizing the text, offering insights, concerns, reactions, and questions following the structure of analyzing and assessing research described in class: (1) Purpose; (2) Question; (3) Information; (4) Inferences; (5) Point of view; (6) Assumptions; (7) Concepts; (8) Implications. You can choose which readings to review. Each review must be turned in on the day the seminar group discusses the readings you have reviewed. Reviews are due at the end of class. **You may not turn in a paper on the readings that you are presenting to the class as part of your group presentation.** Reviews will not be accepted late unless you can provide me with a UTSC medical note or the death certificate of a close relative who passed away shortly before the due date. Humphrey's review paper is due on December 3rd no later than 4:00 PM. Papers turned in after this time will not be accepted. The papers should not be less than 3 or more than 7 double spaced pages, in APA format.

Mid-term exam (40%)

The midterm exam includes materials from lectures, the required text and readings. The exam consists of a combination of multiple choice (MC) questions, short answer and fill in the blank questions, as well as one mini-essay question. There will be **no final exam** for this course.

Group Presentations (20% - 2 presentations worth 7% and 13%, respectively):

The group presentations will be based on the weekly readings and consist of two primary components. The first component will involve each member speaking for 5-10 minutes. You will be required to go beyond summarizing the readings and to provide the class with an expanded perspective and critical analysis of the assigned readings. You will need to engage the class using group assignments or video material discussions. To this end, you may wish to present readings supplemental to those assigned for the week (e.g., relevant journal articles, book chapters, etc.). Your presentations will be evaluated individually in terms of your 1) clarity of presentation, 2) comprehension/organization, 3) effective use of supplementary readings, if used, 4) capacity to answer questions from the class 5) your ability to engage class members into meaningful analyses of the subject presented. **It will be important to integrate the different speakers of the group so that there is no redundancy and the presentation seems coherent as a whole.** You will be expected to use presentation slides (e.g., Power Point) as part of the presentation. The second component of the presentation **is to stimulate and lead an active and relevant class discussion of the assigned readings.**

Course Evaluation	Date(s)	Weight
Class participation (attendance)	Weekly	10% (all)
Reviews of readings	TBD	10%
	TBD	10%
Midterm exam	October 24	40%
Group Presentation	TBD	7% - Smith's
	TBD	13% -
Humphrey		
Humphreys' review	December 3rd	10%

Schedule and Readings

Challenging your Preconceptions: Thinking Critically about Psychology (1995). by Rondolph A. Smith
How to Solve the Mind-Body Problem. (2000) by Nicholas Humphrey

With Good Reason an introduction to informal fallacies. (1994) by S.M. Engel
Thinking with Concepts. (1995) by John Wilson

I encourage you to obtain these books, especially the last two texts, a.s.a.p. and start reading ahead. These books are also available from Amazon.com and other web book store resources. Used texts are fine. The campus book store advised me that the last two texts may not be available in time for next week's first class. In light of this information, I suggest you try other resources for purchasing the texts, particularly if you have not taken any courses in critical analysis and critical thinking before and you are having trouble writing in academic style.

<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Sept. 12	Introduction (No readings)
Sept. 19	Conceptual Tools Engel (chapter 1); ARTICLE 1 (posted on the intranet) <i>No class presentations or reviews</i>
Sept. 26	Psychology and the Popular Press Smith (Chapters 1 and 2); ARTICLE 2 (posted on the intranet); <i>Presentation & reviews due on Article 2; Q 1 – chapter 2 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges</i>
Oct. 3	Informal Fallacies and the role of a Conceptual analysis Engel (chapter 3); Wilson (chapter 1: part 1 and part 2; Chapter 2: part 1 and part 2) <i>Reviews due on Q 3 from chapter 2 Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges</i>
Oct. 10	Statistical Seduction Smith (Chapter 3) <i>Presentation and reviews due on Q4 – chapter 3 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges</i>
Oct. 17	Mid-term (Mc, short answer questions, essay question)
Oct. 24	Anatomy is Destiny – or is it? Smith (Chapter 4) – <i>Presentations and reviews due on Q 1 or Q5 – chapter 4 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges</i>
Oct. 31	Is what you see what you get? Smith (Chapter 5) <i>Presentations and reviews due on Q 3, 4 or 5 – chapter 5 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges</i>
Nov. 7	How to Solve the Mind-Body Problem Humphrey's How to Solve the Mind-Body Problem <i>CLASS DEBATE</i>
Nov. 14	Is bibliotherapy helpful? Smith (Chapter 12)

Presentations and reviews due on Q 1 or Q4 – chapter 12 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges

Nov. 21 **Understanding our own motives**
Smith (Chapter 10)
Presentations and reviews due on Q 1, 2 or 5 – chapter 10 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges

Nov. 28 **Social influences tactics**
Smith (Chapter 13)
Presentations and reviews due on Q 1 – chapter 13 from Smith's Critical Thinking Challenges

Supplemental readings (not required) – please also check the intranet for weekly updates relevant to class discussions and references:

1. *The Definition of Psychology*. 1937 by Fred. S. Keller
2. *Methods of Theoretical Psychology*. 2001 by A. Kukla
3. *Mental traps*. 2006 by Andre Kukla