

PsyA01 - Introduction to Psychology, Part I Syllabus for the Fall of 2008

Contact Information



Instructor: Steve Joordens
E-mail: please see the [Ask a Question](#) link
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 pm until 4:30 pm
Room Number: S560

General Course Information

The study of human behaviour, and the processes and structures giving rise to it, is actually extremely broad. It ranges from issues such as basic brain structure and communication, to issues such as the way the behaviour of those around us affects our own behaviour. In general, the goal of our two Introduction to Psychology courses is to give you an introduction to research and ideas across the entire field of psychology. This is Part I of that introduction and, in it, we will focus on topics such as a Brief History of Psychological Research, an Introduction to the Scientific Process, A Discussion of Evolution in the Context of Human Behaviour, Brain Structure and Function, Basic Sensory Processes, Perceptual Processes, Memory and Consciousness.

The course is what is often described as a survey course, meaning we will try to give you a general sense of some different approaches to the study of Psychology highlighting some of the most interesting findings within each approach. Subsequent B level courses then focus on some of these approaches in more detail, and the hope is that after taking this Introductory course you will be in a good position to (a) know which sub-areas of Psychology you find most interesting, and (b) begin your studies of these sub-areas with a good general knowledge of that sub-area and how it related to other approaches within Psychology.

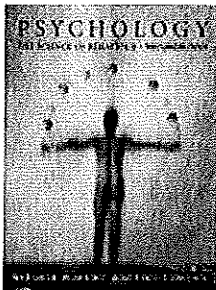
Presentation of Lectures

We present the lectures for this course across the year using what we term the WebOption approach (created by Dr. John Bassili). The WebOption approach combines traditional and web-based lectures in an effort to provide students with additional flexibility in how and when they take their courses. Specifically, in the fall of each year PsyA01 is offered both in a traditional classroom setting (L01) and using the web (L60). As the lectures are given in the traditional section they are taped, then presented to the web-based section via streaming

video. We then use these streaming videos again in the Summer term (L60) thereby allowing us to offer this course two terms of the year. Thus, in the Fall term both traditional and web-based approaches are available whereas we offer only the web-based approach in the Summer term. Note the PsyA02 is a continuation of this course. It uses the same text, and the same approach to teaching with both traditional and web-based sections available. However, in contrast to this course, the traditional section is only available in the Winter for PsyA02. In the Summer term, only the web-based approach is available.

The only real difference between the traditional and web-based sections of this course is with respect to the lecture itself. Whereas the traditional approach requires you to be in class at a certain time, the web-based approach gives you far more flexibility in where and when you view the lectures. It also allows you to pause lectures (if taking notes, or if you need a washroom break perhaps) and you can also rewind if you missed part of a lecture. Given these features, many students prefer the web-based approach. For more specific information on the approach please follow the [Information on Web-Based Lectures](#) link.

The Course Textbook



The textbook we will be using for this course is called Psychology: The Science of Behaviour (3rd Canadian Edition), and is authored by Carlson, Buskist, Enzle and Heth.

In PsyA01 we will cover chapters 1 through 9 of the text in the order in which they appear.

Note that you can either get this text new from the bookstore, or you may be able to find used copies. When purchased new, the textbook costs slightly more than \$100 and sometimes comes bundled with a CDrom. Only the textbook is necessary for this course. When thinking about the price of this (yes I know how expensive textbooks are) keep in mind that you can use this text for PsyA02 and well as for this course, at least if you take PsyA02 this year.

In addition, the publishers of the textbook also offer a [student support webpage](#) that offers a number of features you might find useful while studying and while assessing your knowledge. Especially popular are the practice tests.

Evaluation

Your mark in this course will come from a midterm, a final, two peerScholar written assignments and any experimental bonus marks you accumulate. Specifically

- The midterm exam is worth 40% of your final mark (covering Chapters 1 through 4) The final exam is worth 50% of your final mark (covering

- Chapters 5 through 9) Two peerScholar assignments are worth 5% each
- You can earn up to 3 additional bonus marks via experimental participation (see below)

The exams will not be cumulative but, rather, each will focus on the chapters indicated. Each exam consists of 50 five-alternative multiple choice exams (i.e., a question followed by five alternatives, one of which is most correct). I do not yet know when the midterm or final will be but will post the information via announcements as soon as I do. Note that despite the online lectures and online written assignments, you do have to physically be present for both the midterm and final exam. Please understand that I do not just set dates for these exams but, rather, I specify a range of reasonable dates to the registrar's office and they then set the exact day and time for the exams based on issues such as exams in other classes that my students are in (i.e., they attempt to avoid conflicts). As soon as I have specific dates I will post them in my announcements, and it is your responsibility to keep an eye on those announcements for that sort of information. The peerScholar assignments are "web-based". Specifically, each assignment has three phases. During the first phase you log onto the system and get access to a short reading or two, and you are asked to do a brief written assignments relating to the reading. You have a few days to do the reading(s) and complete the assignment, and a clear rubric is given to guide you. Once that phase is over, the evaluation phase begins. In the evaluation phase you log on again and, this time, you see and mark the answers other students have given to the same question. You will be asked to mark a number of such assignments, and we give you a few days to do that. Finally, once the evaluation phase is over, you can log on again during the feedback phase to see how you did relative to the class, and to view comments people have provided to you.

As suggested above, it is also possible to receive an additional 3% worth of bonus marks through experimental participation. To find out more about this follow the [Experimental Participation](#) link.

If you have questions about the course that are not answered in this syllabus, please first proceed to the [Ask a Question](#) page, and if your question is not answered there you will find appropriate e-mail addresses provided there. Thanks and good luck!!

Finally, let me emphasize that students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. The UTSC AccessAbility Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
