

# PSYD30 CURRENT TOPICS IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

Prof. Marc A. Fournier

*A significant feature of the human condition  
is that it is not at all clear how to live life,  
yet something must be tried.*

–William Fleeson, ARP President (2012-2013)

An intensive examination of selected issues and research problems in personality psychology. The specific content will vary from year to year.

Seminar Times: Fridays from 09:00 to 11:00 in IC328

Office Hours: Fridays from 11:00 to 12:00 in SW418

E-mail: [fournier@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:fournier@utsc.utoronto.ca)

Tel: (416) 287-7548

## **Textbook**

This term we will be reading *Optimal Human Being: An Integrated Multi-Level Perspective* (2004) by Ken Sheldon. First, Sheldon provides an integrative framework in which to locate all of the human sciences. Within this framework, Sheldon then introduces a view of personality as a functional hierarchy comprising traits/dispositions, goals/intentions, self-stories/self-concepts, and species-typical characteristics. Finally, Sheldon portrays how these levels of analysis combine and interact inside the individual, and in so doing invites us to reconsider our understanding of optimal human functioning.

## **Seminar Schedule**

Week 1	January 10	Introduction
Week 2	January 17	Chapter 1. Discussion
Week 3	January 24	Chapter 2. Presentation & Discussion
Week 4	January 31	Chapter 3. Presentation & Discussion
Week 5	February 7	Chapter 4. Presentation & Discussion
Week 6	February 14	***Class Cancelled***
Week 7	February 28	Chapter 5. Presentation & Discussion
Week 8	March 7	Chapter 6. Presentation & Discussion
Week 9	March 14	Chapter 7. Presentation & Discussion
Week 10	March 21	Chapter 8. Presentation & Discussion
Week 11	March 28	Chapter 9. Presentation & Discussion
Week 12	April 4	Chapter 10. Discussion

## Components of Evaluation

20%	Individual Participation
30%	Group Presentation
20%	Midterm Paper
30%	Final Paper

**Individual Participation.** I expect you to come to class each week having completed the assigned reading, to pay careful attention to the comments and questions of your classmates, and to contribute regularly and thoughtfully to the class discussion. You will receive course credit for each of these activities. First, I expect you to come to class each week ready to contribute to the discussion. You should submit a one-page reaction paper each week (except for Weeks 1 and 6) summarizing your comments and questions concerning the chapter that we will be discussing. Please note that I will not be formally grading your reaction papers; rather, I will be skimming them to ensure that you have made a good faith attempt to grapple with the assigned reading. You must submit your reaction papers to me *in person*; reaction papers submitted *in absentia* will not be accepted. You will receive 1% for each of the 10 reaction papers, for a total of 10%. Second, I expect you to contribute to the class discussion. Your comments should demonstrate that you have read the assigned chapter and reflected upon it. My evaluation of your comments in class will be graded out of 10%.

**Group Presentation.** I expect you to make one presentation that elaborates upon the issues discussed in the chapter you have selected. You will present in groups of three; each student should speak for approx. 15 minutes, so group presentations should run for approx. 45 minutes in length. I expect you to use PowerPoint as part of your presentation. You will be required to go beyond simply summarizing the chapter. I expect you to provide the class with an expanded perspective and critical analysis of the assigned reading; you can do so by consulting supplementary readings such as journal articles and book chapters. Your presentations will be evaluated individually in terms of your clarity of presentation, your comprehension/organization, and your use of supplementary readings.

**Midterm Paper.** I expect you to submit a **1,000-word** (i.e.,  $\approx$  4-page) midterm paper **by 23:59** on **2014-02-14** through **www.turnitin.com**. Your paper should address the following question: *Do basic psychological needs exist?* Assignment details will be discussed in class.

**Final Paper.** I expect you to submit a **1,500-word** (i.e.,  $\approx$  6-page) end-of-term paper **by 23:59** on **2014-04-04** through **www.turnitin.com**. Your paper should address the following question: *What is optimal human functioning?* Assignment details will be discussed in class.

**Turnitin.com.** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

**Late Papers.** A penalty of **10% per day** will apply to all late midterm paper submissions. Late end-of-term papers will not be accepted without permission from the Chair of the Department.

**Academic Integrity.** The University of Toronto treats academic offenses very seriously. Common academic offenses include: using someone else's ideas or words in one's own work without proper acknowledgment (i.e., plagiarism); including false, misleading, or concocted citations in one's own work; using or possessing an unauthorized aid in any test or exam; obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment; providing unauthorized assistance to another student; submitting one's own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor; falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University (including, but not limited to, doctor's notes). Offenders are caught and sanctions can be severe (zero in the course, suspension, or even expulsion). Students are expected to know and respect the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, which can be found at

**<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>**

**The Writing Centre.** Your performance in this class will depend in large part upon your ability to communicate clearly and effectively. The Writing Centre supports student learning at any stage in the writing process, from planning an outline to polishing a final draft. Their services include online resources, drop-in hours, one-on-one consultations, and writing workshops. Additional information can be found at

**<http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/main>**

**AccessAbility Services.** The principal function of AccessAbility Services is to ensure that the policies, practices, procedures, and programs at UTSC are inclusive to ensure the equal access to students with disabilities. The office thus provides accommodations to students with a documented learning, physical, sensory, or mental health disability or medical condition. Additional information can be found at

**<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/>**

**Course Website.** To access the course website, please visit the Blackboard portal login page at **<https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>** and then proceed to login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged into the portal, you should be able to find a link to the course Blackboard. This link is only available to students who are registered in the course.

**Copyright.** For the protection of privacy and copyright, any unauthorized video/audio-recording of this class is strictly prohibited.

---

**Note.** The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.