

Contact Information

Course Instructor

Steve Joordens

Email

psya01@utsc.utoronto.ca

Use only this e-mail address. Please do not e-mail Steve's personal account! If you send emails to any address other than this one, there is no guarantee that you will get a response.

Please include your student number in all communication.

Office Hours

Wednesdays 10:30 AM - Noon

Room SW415

Note: Steve's office hours are for questions about course content (i.e. stuff that was in the lecture or textbook). For administrative concerns, please visit Ainsley.

Course Coordinator

Ainsley Lawson

Email

psya01@utsc.utoronto.ca

Use only this e-mail address. If you send emails to any address other than this one, there is no guarantee that you will get a response.

Please include your student number in all communication.

Office Hours

Drop-in any time, or email for an appointment.

Room SW427C

Note: Ainsley's office hours are for administrative questions (assignment instructions, missed deadlines, accommodations, issues with SONA, etc.) For course-content questions, please visit Steve.

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.

Teaching Approach: Content AND Skills

I began teaching here at UTSC in 1995 and throughout my time here I have developed some strong ideas about how courses should be taught ... about the sorts of experiences you should expect from a professor like me. This course is, to some extent, the embodiment of my teaching philosophy. It is my attempt to provide what I think is the best possible educational experience, despite our very large class size.

I will try to do two things in the course. First, I will describe all of the critical concepts, terms, figures, theories and data that define the content area of Introductory Psychology. That is, I will “transmit the content” of this course and assuming you are receptive to that content, you will learn about the study of psychology and the directions you could take to follow up if that is your interest.

Second, throughout the course I will also give you practice thinking critically and creatively, reflecting on the knowledge you have (and don't have), and expressing your ideas in effective ways. These are what I call “cognitive skills” and they are relevant to virtually everything you do in life. Like all other skills they also develop with practice. So part of my job is to give you that practice.

Paralleling this then, some aspects of this course will include what could be called “passive” or “self-directed” learning. Thus, there will be lectures for you to watch, and a text for you to read. I've tried to choose a relevant and interesting textbook, and I will try my hardest to give interesting, fun, and relevant lectures. But ultimately it will be up to you to engage with these learning opportunities in ways that allow you to learn the content well.

Other aspects of this course will include “active” learning. That is, you will often be pushed to think, or create, or consider ... more generally to “use” the information you are learning in some active way. These active learning opportunities give your cognitive processes exercise just as a gym gives you muscles exercise, and working with content allows you to learn it more deeply.

In fact, I have actually scaled back the number of lectures and the amount of textbook reading (compared to previous years), in order to increase the amount of active learning activities. My goal is to find the right balance, one that you will find engaging, enjoyable, and one that will promote deep learning of psychology content and continued development of your core cognitive processes.

Lectures

We present the lectures for this course using what we term the **WebOption** approach. The WebOption approach combines traditional and web-based presentation of lectures in an effort to provide students with additional flexibility in terms of how and when they watch lectures. In the fall of each year PSYA01 is offered both in a traditional classroom setting (L01) and in a so-called “fully online” (L99) section. As the lectures are given in the traditional section they are taped, then made available to the “fully online” section via streaming video, usually on the same day. We then use these streaming videos again in the summer term (L99) thereby allowing us to offer this course two terms of the year.

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. In the summer session, only the web-based version of the course is available.

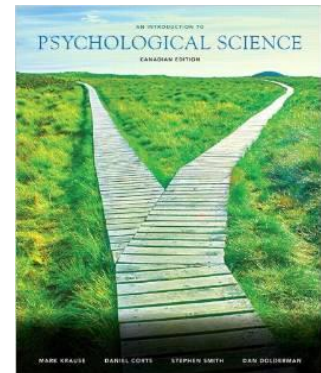
One last important note about my lectures: while my lectures will be inspired by your readings in the textbook and will often involve me discussing the same concepts, I will discuss them in different contexts and may even bring in some information not in your textbook. **You will be tested on both the textbook content AND the lecture content** so please make sure you watch all lectures and consider them deeply.

Textbook

The textbook we will be using for this course is called Psychological Science (1st **Canadian** Edition) and is authored by Krause, Smith, Corts & Dolderman.

In PSYA01 we will cover **Chapters 1 through 8** of the text in the order in which they appear.

Make sure you have the Canadian edition, not the American one!



Evaluation

With the exception of the final exam, all assessments will be performed online. A traditional in-person “sit down” final exam will occur during the exam period at end of term.

Grading Scheme:

4%	mTuner 1
6%	mTuner 2
8%	mTuner 3
10%	mTuner 4
12%	peerScholar activity
7%	Digital Labcoat
3%	Experimental participation (SONA)
50%	Cumulative final exam

YOU MUST PASS THE FINAL EXAM TO PASS THE COURSE. If you do not pass the final, exam but would have passed the course otherwise, you will receive a 45% grade in the course.

The deadlines for all course activities will be posted on the course Blackboard page. **Note that the deadlines are non-negotiable, and if you miss one because of an error on your part you lose the associated marks.**

mTuner

mTuner activities are enhanced, online multiple-choice tests that you will complete after every two chapters we cover. Each mTuner activity will contain 40 questions, and will cover the following chapters and their corresponding lectures:

mTuner 1:	1 and 2
mTuner 2:	mostly 3 and 4, but some content from 1 – 2
mTuner 3:	mostly 5 and 6, but some content from 1 – 4
mTuner 4:	mostly 7 and 8, but some content from 1 – 6

Detailed information on the dates for the mTuner activities and how to complete them will be available on Blackboard.

peerScholar

peerScholar is an online tool that helps develop your critical thinking skills. There are three phases:

- 1) You will write a short composition that presents an “argument” related to some issue specified by me (TBD).
- 2) You will be randomly assigned to anonymously evaluate assignments submitted by 6 of your peers. At the same time, six peers will be anonymously evaluating your work.
- 3) You revise your composition in light of the feedback you received, with TAs ultimately grading you on the final composition, the quality of the comments you gave to your peers, and the appropriateness of your revisions.

Detailed information on the dates for the peerScholar activity and how to complete it will be available on Blackboard.

Digital Labcoat

Digital Labcoat is an online tool gives you hands-on experience with the scientific method. There are four phases:

- (1.) Survey: You complete a survey that asks various questions about your demographics and lifestyle
- (2.) Analyze: Next, you conduct scientific analyses on the data gathered in the first phase, and try to find “cool” results
- (3.) Replicate: In this phase you will attempt to replicate the results found by your peers in Phase 2, and vote on how interesting their findings were.
- (4.) Theorize: Finally, you work with your peers to decide on the best theoretical accounts that explain the top ten most interesting, replicable findings.

Detailed information on the dates for the Digital Labcoat activity and how to complete it will be available on Blackboard.

Experimental Participation

With respect to experimental participation, many senior undergraduates, graduate students and faculty conduct research aimed at better understanding psychological processes. You will read about such research throughout the course, but to make what you read more concrete another component of the class involves you serving as a participant in ongoing research. Being a participant will give you the chance to interact directly with a researcher in the context of some specific experiment, and our hope is that you will come to a better understanding of psychological research through this experience. In a sense, this is the lab component of this course. **You earn 0.5 credits for every 30 minutes of participation up to a maximum of 3 credits.**

You use a system called SONA to find and schedule experiments. New experiments will be posted regularly. You earn your credits over the term as suitable experiments (i.e. ones that you want to do and that fit your schedule) become available. **Detailed information will be posted to Blackboard once SONA has been opened for the term** (usually starting the third week of class).

Some notes:

- If you sign up for an experiment but fail to show up for it, you will receive a **0.5 credit deduction** from your SONA grade. If you need to cancel an appointment, you must inform the researcher at least **48 hours** in advance.
- Similarly, if a researcher needs to cancel your appointment, they must inform you 48 hours in advance. If you have signed up for an experiment and the researcher fails to show up, you will still receive your credit.
- You must complete your experimental participation by the last day of classes for the term.

An **alternative assignment** has also been created for those who prefer not to participate in research studies, or who did not find any suitable experiments to participate in. The due date for the alternative assignment will be the same as the last day to participate in research. **Detailed information on the SONA alternative assignment will be posted to Blackboard.**

Cumulative Final Exam

Cumulative? What? That's right, there are no midterms in this class, just one big exam waiting for you at the end. The final exam is composed of multiple-choice questions presented in a traditional manner (i.e. using pencil and paper, not online). So you will come in to an exam room, sit down with your peers, and write the final exam using scantrons while being supervised.

The exam covers the entire course, including EVERYTHING presented in the textbook chapters we covered, and EVERYTHING discussed in lectures. I will try very hard to be fair, focusing on what I view as the relevant issues rather than the picky details. But if it is in the text or in my lectures it is fair game.

The Registrar's Office is responsible for the scheduling of the exams, so we will not know the date until close to end of term. As we have more details about the scheduling and specifics of the exam, we will post them on the course Blackboard webpage.

Note: **YOU MUST PASS THE FINAL EXAM TO PASS THE COURSE.** If you do not pass the final exam but would have passed the course otherwise, you will receive a 45% grade in the course.

Missed Term Work

Everything described above is considered a compulsory part of the class. We believe the evaluation is most fair when all students complete all components with no special consideration being applied. If you miss a course activity, **we are not able to offer extensions.**

That said, sometimes things happen. If you can provide documentation that proves you were incapable of completing an activity for a legitimate reason (legitimacy to be determined by the professor and course coordinator) then we are able to transfer the weight of that activity to the final exam. Documentation should be submitted to Ainsley in SW427C.

Some notes:

- The final exam marks tend to be lowest of all the marks in the course, so it is not in your best interest to have more weight transferred to your final exam. You should avoid this option if at all possible.
- If you miss an activity for medical reasons, you will need to have your doctor fill out the official **UTSC Verification of Illness or Injury form**, available [here](#). Instructions for filling out this form are available [here](#). Note that it is important for the form to be filled out completely, including the dates of illness and the business stamp of the physician.
- If you miss an activity because of a death in the family, you will need to provide a copy of the death certificate.
- If you are experiencing a technical issue with one of our systems, try a different browser, and if that doesn't work, try a different computer. Remember, there are computer labs on campus that work reliably with our software **so we do not accept the excuse that you only had access to one computer and it didn't work.** If you have tried all this and are still experiencing issues, do your best to document it. Take screenshots, and email the course account right away. Technical issues need be reported **before** an activity is due.
- Some examples of invalid reasons for missing an activity: issues with your computer (you can come to campus and use a UTSC computer), personal travel, confusion about deadlines or instructions, issues regarding slow connections at the last minute (submit your assignments at least an hour before they are due), technical issues reported **after** the deadline for the activity has passed.
- Note: If you are experiencing an ongoing health issue that is affecting your ability to complete your schoolwork, you should consider visiting AccessAbility Services to explore your options.

Issues with missed final exams are dealt with by the Registrar's Office, not the course instructors / administrators.

Details are available here: http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~registrar/current_students/deferred_exams

Other Notes

Research Activity

As mentioned, this course includes many innovative new tools that I believe will enhance your learning. However, science is based on data, not beliefs, and as one interested in educational technologies I will be conducting research designed to assess the effectiveness of these tools. Thus I may, on occasion, ask you to fill out a questionnaire, or I may wish to perform various analyses comparing how students do on various components of the class. If you do not want your data used in any research, please let me know and I will take steps to exclude your data from any analyses I perform.

Academic Integrity

The University highly values scholarship and academic achievement and takes very seriously any suspected or known cases of cheating and plagiarism. Students are highly encouraged to read the guide on [How Not to Plagiarize](#) and to take advantage of [writing resources](#) on campus. In addition, our campus has a general [Code of Conduct](#) that all students are expected to follow when interacting with peers, staff of faculty. The keyword here is respect, a good educational context is one in which all parties respect one another's perspective and opinions.

Personal Integrity

As I hope this syllabus shows, I take my responsibility to provide you with the best education very seriously. Part of that responsibility is to be fair with respect to how I assess your work. Part of that means judging all of my students using the same yardstick. What I have laid out above is that yardstick, the things I will ask you to do to show me what you have learned. So with this in mind please respect the following two values I hold close; (1) I firmly believe that marks are to be earned, not given ... so please never ask me to give you a mark unless you feel you have earned it, and (2) I feel it is unfair to offer any student an opportunity that I don't offer to the entire class ... so please **do not ask for any sort of special treatment**. Instead, take the course seriously, understand the expectations laid out here, and just do your best.

You're Not Alone!

There are almost 2000 students in this class, quite a transition from high school! However, I sincerely hope that you do not feel like we don't care about you ... we do! However, we obviously cannot look over your shoulder and know when you may or may not need help with something. THAT part we must leave up to you. But when you DO need help, I certainly hope we are there for you. We have set up a number of mechanisms to help you with any questions or issues you might have. Please take the time to follow the right path and you should get help soon. If we work together we can make the class feel welcoming and responsive to you, and manageable for us.

Administrative Questions. Ainsley Lawson (SW427C) provides administrative support for this course. All administrative questions about the course in general, and specific course activities should be addressed to her at the course email address (psya01@utsc.utoronto.ca). Before emailing, check that the answer to your question has not already been addressed on the Blackboard page. Check the syllabus, course announcements, and individual activity pages before sending an email.

Use only the course e-mail address. Please do not e-mail Steve's or Ainsley's personal accounts! If you send emails to any address other than psya01@utsc.utoronto.ca, there is no guarantee that you will get a response.

Content-Related Questions. Each chapter has one TA devoted to it. That TA will read the chapter carefully, and will be responsible for answering content-related questions for that chapter. If you have a question about a chapter, please email the course account (psya01@utsc.utoronto.ca), and your email will be forwarded to the appropriate TA. You are also welcome to visit Steve's office hours with your content-related questions.

AccessAbility: Let me also emphasize that students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach 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.