

**Current Topics in Abnormal Psychology:
Debates and Controversies in Clinical Psychology**
(PSYD33H3 S LEC03)

Spring 2017 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Vina Goghari, Ph.D.

Class Time and Location: Friday 11:00am – 1:00pm, Room SW316

Office Hours and Location: By appointment (also talk to me before or after class)

Email: vina.goghari@utoronto.ca

*** Please note: Course announcements will be made through Blackboard. Students are responsible for monitoring the course website regularly for important announcements and updates. Class emails will also be sent through Blackboard; please make sure your listed email address is correct. ***

Course description: This course will provide an overview of debates and controversies in the field of clinical psychology. Examples of topics to be covered include do we still need psychiatrists and does positive psychology make us happier. The format of the course will be lectures and debate-style presentations. Participants will actively participate in debate-style presentations in topics of interest to them.

Course Goals: Through this course, participants will gain a broad understanding of current issues in psychopathology, develop critical thinking skills, and gain experience in consuming and critically evaluating psychology research literature.

Learning objectives: At the conclusion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe some of the most important debates and controversies in the field of clinical psychology
2. Recognize different perspectives that can be applied to debates and controversial issues in the field of clinical psychology
3. Critically evaluate information, ideas, and assumptions comprehensively and from a variety of perspectives
4. Find and use relevant sources of scientific knowledge to identify, frame, and generate solutions to debates or controversies
5. Give presentations to increase knowledge, foster understanding, and impact learning
6. Generate written material that demonstrates critical understanding of the topic by both integrating scientific knowledge, reflecting on the material, and incorporating different perspectives

Prerequisite: PSYB32H3 plus one C-level half-credit in PSY

Required Textbook:

Halgin, R. P. (2014). Taking sides: Clashing views in abnormal psychology (Eighth Edition). McGraw Hill, Iowa.

Additional Material: Supplemental readings and/or other course material if needed will also be available on the Blackboard course page.

Class structure: The first 5 weeks of this course will be led by the instructor and will be a combination of lecture and class discussion. The next 6 week of classes will involve student presentations in the form of debates. Students will be free to cover any topic not covered by the instructor. We will ensure all topics are not replicated by other students and are appropriate for the assignment.

Class schedule:

Date	Topic
January 6	Introduction to Course Myths and Mental Health Textbook Introduction – Page 7-12
January 13	What is a Mental Disorder? Textbook Introduction – Page 7-12
January 20	Does Positive Psychology Make Us Happier – Textbook Issue 1.5
January 27	Should Gay Conversion Therapy be Prohibited – Textbook Issue 3.5
February 3	Is Forced Treatment of Seriously Mentally Ill Individuals Justifiable – Textbook Issue 3.6
February 10	Examination
February 17	Debate 1
February 24	Readings Days – No class
March 3	Debate 2
March 10	Debate 3

March 17	Debate 4
March 24	Debate 5 (Instructor Away; Dr. Anthony Ruocco will moderate; session will be videotaped)
March 31	Debate 6 Papers Due

Please note: The class schedule is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Evaluation:

(1) **25%** of your mark is based on a class presentation/debate.

Format: A team of 2 people will debate another team of 2 people on a controversial issue or debate in clinical psychology. 20-25 minutes is allotted for each team’s presentation and 10-15 minutes for each team’s rebuttal. Each team will present for approximately 35 minutes. Class discussion will last 20 minutes. 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. Each member of the participant should speak largely equally.

Your presentation should be delivered via PowerPoint. You do not need to provide extensive background on the topic selected 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, etc. However, it is important to keep them professional. 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 based on logic, and opposing data, not just on opinion that is not based on evidence. 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 on the quality of presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting materials. These ratings will not be used for the grade assignment, rather for the development of student’s presentation and critical thinking skills. Each team will be provided with the feedback. *Please send your PowerPoint slides to your instructor 5 pm the day before the presentation.*

(2) **25%** A position paper must be submitted at the time of the presentation by each student. This should be written up independently based on the debate material prepared by your team.

Paper: A 10 to 12 page (double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman) position paper must be submitted at the due date. (each student hands in ONE paper, which you have independently written based on the group work). 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 majority or summary of available research evidence (e.g., results from meta-analyses) and not just one or two studies that have findings supporting your position. **Note** that your paper should **expand** the detail of your presentation and not merely summarize it. The paper should be 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. 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. Papers are due to the instructor in paper form at the beginning of class for your debate.

- (3) **30%** of your mark is based on a midterm 2-hour exam. The exam will consist short-answer and long answer/essay questions from the text and lectures up to the date of the midterm. The exam will be closed book.
- (4) **10%** of your mark is based on discussion questions. Students will be required to submit 2 *questions* per class. Please bring your questions to class to hand in: excellent, satisfactory, or needs improvement. If you will be away, please email them to me before the start of class. Be prepared to discuss your questions in class. Note that you are not required to submit questions on the day you give your presentation. These questions can be derived from the readings but may also go beyond the readings and should reflect interesting issues that are raised associated with the topic for that week. For example, questions might deal with conceptual issues or methodological issues or something else. You are encouraged to prepare questions that are interesting and provocative and be prepared to share and defend your “educated” views!
- (5) **10%** of your mark is based on class participation. It is expected that all students will prepare for and participate in class discussion. Effective participation involves both quality and quantity of responses. Quantity does not make up for lack of quality. You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions to class as demonstrated, in part, by knowledge of the readings for that week and your thoughtful analysis of the readings. You are required to come to class having completed and thought about the readings for that week. You will receive feedback on your participation mid-way through the semester. You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet at each class, but attendance alone not guarantee a good participation grade. If you will not be in class, please email the instructor prior to class.

Choosing a topic: You may choose any of the topics from your textbook for your presentation, EXCEPT for the topics that have been chosen for lectures. New research is published on these topics on a regular basis, so do not restrict your coverage of the issue to data presented in the chapters of the textbook. Once you have your team together, come prepared with your 1st and 2nd choices for a topic (name of topic, preferred date 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. If there are too many students expressing interest in a topic, I will invite students to change topics if they do not have a strong preference. If this does not resolve the issue, the topics will be assigned by draw as needed. All topics are finalized early in the class schedule.

Pair work: The majority of students have no problems working together in preparing for the presentations. However, occasionally a team experiences problems. The most common concern I hear is that one person 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 pair. For example, have your research and slides ready to be discussed and reviewed, 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 team should be doing more or less.
4. Please be mindful of individual strengths and weaknesses. Divide up the work according to the strengths of your team. However, each student should be presenting for approximately 50% of the time allotted.

If you are experiencing problems within your team and cannot resolve them internally **please talk to me well 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.

Late assignments: Unless you have legitimate documentation for a late paper, 10% of the total value of the assignment will be deducted for each day that it is late. An assignment is considered late as soon as the due date and time passes. Late questions will not be accepted without legitimate documentation. If you have legitimate documentation to explain your late assignment (e.g., a UTSC Medical Certificate completed by your doctor), you must contact Dr. Goghari as soon as possible to discuss your situation and to establish a new deadline for your assignment.

Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Emergency: All students citing a documented reason for missed term work (this includes assignments and midterm exams) must bring their documentation to the Undergraduate Course Coordinator, Ainsley Lawson, **within three (3) business days** of the term test / assignment due date. All documentation must be accompanied by the departmental [Request for Missed Term Work form](http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW) (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>).

In the case of missed term work due to illness, only an **original copy** of the [official UTSC Verification of Illness Form](http://uoft.me/PSY-MED) (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MED>) will be accepted. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.

In the case of other emergency, a record of visitation to a hospital emergency room or copy of a death certificate may be considered.

Forms should be dropped off in SW427C between 9 AM - 4 PM, Monday through Friday. Upon receipt of the documentation, you will receive an email response from the Course Instructor / Course Coordinator within three business days. The Course Instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made for the missed work.

Note that this policy applies only to missed term work (assignments and midterms). Missed final exams are dealt with by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.uts.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.

Rights and Responsibilities

INCLUSIVITY

Members of this class represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The graduate program is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across our community

Copyright in Instructional Settings:

If a student wishes to tape-record, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce lectures, course notes/slides, or other similar materials provided by instructors, he or she must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Without consent, all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

Accessibility:

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. I will work with you and AccessAbility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. 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@uts.utoronto.ca.

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>

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
- Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>).

Grade Scale:

NUMERICAL MARKS	LETTER GRADE	GRADE POINT VALUE
90 - 100%	A+	4.0
85 - 89%	A	4.0
80 - 84%	A-	3.7
77 - 79%	B+	3.3
73 - 76%	B	3.0
70 - 72%	B-	2.7
67 - 69%	C+	2.3

63 - 66%	C	2.0
60 - 62%	C-	1.7
57 - 59%	D+	1.3
53 - 56%	D	1.0
50 - 52%	D-	0.7
0 - 49%	F	0.0