

PsyC85 – The History of Psychology
Summer 2020 Offering
Syllabus

Contact Details:

Professor: Steve Joordens
Office: SW416
Email: steve.joordens@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Monday 3 until 4 pm ... Bb Collaborate, details soon

TA: Lauren Vomberg
Email: lauren.vomberg@mail.utoronto.ca

TA: Laura Heath
Email: l.heath@mail.utoronto.ca

Textbook:

[John G. Benjafield: A History of Psychology \(4th Edition\)](#)

Lectures:

All online and provided asynchronously. I'm hoping to have a good head start, making some of the lectures available right away, with more coming as I produce videos and get them online. Rather than posting 2-hour lectures "old school" style, I will discuss some of the information from the week's readings across 3 to 6 shorter lectures each week. Note that the lectures will not cover all of the readings, but you are responsible for all of the readings on quizzes and the final exam.

Assessment:

There will be no midterm in this course. Rather, there are twelve "Modules" that make up the course. Beginning with Module 2, each Module will begin with a low-stakes quiz on the previous module's content ... perhaps a 6 to 10 item quiz that will be worth 5% each, with you dropping your worst quiz grade (for 50% of your total grade). In addition, there will be two peerScholar activities, one that will run during the 4th week of the summer term worth 10%, and a second that will run during the 8th week and worth 15%. Each will require you to do some writing, then providing feedback to peers, then learning from the feedback you received. Finally, there will be a cumulative Final Exam worth 25% of the grade.

Overview:

Not everyone finds history fascinating ... OK, maybe only a few do ... but having an understanding of where current practices, beliefs and ideas came from is critical to being a scholar in any area. In Psychology, the way we do science now is but one example of a continually evolving set of questions and methods, and seeing that “big picture” allows you to have a much deeper understanding of the limits of current approaches.

In this history course we will cover the following topics

- The philosophical contributions of the ancients.
- The emergence of science during the Renaissance.
- French, English, and German contributions to psychology.
- Major developments related to psychology in the 19th century.
- The founding of experimental psychology.
- Schools of psychology including: behaviourism, structuralism, phenomenology, existentialism, functionalism, cognitivism, and neuroscience.
- Developments in the 21st century

Living History – The peerScholar Activities

I won't lie to you, history courses can be difficult to teach in an engaging way and thus they can be difficult to learn as well. It will sometimes seem like you are just learning about a list of people and what they thought or did, one after another after another. This can get a bit mind numbing!

In an attempt to make it a little more interesting you will do two peerScholar activities along the way. I'll provide a much fuller description of the activities as we get to them, but here is the basic notion I have in mind ...

- By no later the May 24th, you will each be assigned to “become” one of about 10 to 20 famous psychologists. You will be allowed to choose among the names we provide, but we will constrain how many can choose each figure
- Once you know “who” you are, you are to learn all you can about yourself ... well, about your historical figure. It will be up to you then to become the historian, and learn as historians do (internet, library, etc)
- In the first peerScholar activity you will interact only with others who “are” the same figure as you are. I will ask you a question and will ask you to first answer as that person would (from what you now know) ... and then provide some basis for why you think they would answer that way. You will then see how the other versions of that person answered (you will see some peer submissions) and you'll be asked to evaluate that answer. Do you agree they would say that? Why or why not? In a final step you will see what peers thought of the answer you gave, and you'll then be asked to revise your answer based on all you have learned going through the process just described. By the end of this I hope you will feel you have a deep sense of your new personality!

- In the second peerScholar activity it will be time for historical figures to meet and chat about relevant psychology issues! This time you will be interacting with peers who have learned about other figures. Once again, I'll give you each a question to answer as that figure first. But then in the second step you will see the answers given by peers (acting as historical figures) and I'd like you to respond to each AS IF you were two scientists debating some topic. So tell each what you think of their perspective ... how do you see it differently? Do you think they're wrong? Why? In the final step you will see the arguments others have applied to your original composition, and I will ask you to respond to each again as the figure you are.

These peerScholar activities are new and, honestly, I'm not completely sure how they will play out. You could leave the class with dissociative identity disorder! 😊 I think they'll be kind of fun though, and I hope they will make the experience a little more active and enjoyable,

Grade Breakdown

Module Quizzes – 11 x 5%, drop worst	50%
peerScholar 1	10%
peerScholar 2	15%
Final Exam	25%

Learning Outcomes

Whenever we create courses now we are encouraged to explicitly state what we hope you will gain by being a student in this course. Here are the outcomes I am striving for ...

Students who engage in this course in a conscientious manner will leave it with ...

- a much clearer understanding of how the psychology we practice now, in our labs and in our clinics, came to be the way it is
- a strong sense of the primary individuals that have shaped psychology, along with the roles they played, the questions they were focused on, and the impact they had
- a strong appreciation for how adopting a scientific approach has moved psychological knowledge along in a way that would not be possible otherwise, and how specific aspects of that approach came to be
- practice writing (and debating) professionally, in ways that are context appropriate while be clear and effective
- practice thinking critically and creatively, and both giving and responding to feedback in positive ways