

Psychology in Context
(PSYB80H3 S LEC01)
Winter 2025 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Jessica Dere, Ph.D., C. Psych.

Class Time and Place: Tuesdays, 11:00am – 2:00pm, HW-216

Office Hours:

Drop-in in-person: 2:10 – 3:00pm on Tuesdays, room SW-521

By appointment: Most Wednesday mornings between 10:00 and 11:00am via Zoom; see Quercus for details and appointment slots. Also available upon request via email.

Course Email: psyb80.uts@gmail.com

Dr. Dere's Email: jessica.dere@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants: Ashmita Mazumder and Dasha Sandra

TA Office Hours: Conducted remotely using Zoom. See scheduling details and link on Quercus.

Please note: All dates/times listed in the syllabus are local Toronto time (Eastern time zone).

A note on email communication: All questions regarding the course, readings, assignments, etc. must be sent to the course email: psyb80.uts@gmail.com. Questions that have already been answered in the course syllabus or on Quercus may not receive a response. Students are asked to email Dr. Dere directly for personal or confidential matters.

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

Prerequisite: PSYA01H3 & PSYA02H3

Recommended preparation: PSYB70HS

Course Material: Course readings will be available via the **Library Reading List** tab on the Quercus page. A set of supplemental articles relevant to the infographic project will be provided via a Zotero library. [Zotero](#) is a free citation management software; relevant resources will be shared via Quercus and in class. Additional readings and/or other course material may be placed on the Quercus course page over the course of the semester and will be announced on Quercus.

Course description: This course builds upon foundational concepts from Introduction to Psychology and examines the field of psychological science from a critical perspective. Students will explore the contextual underpinnings of the field and learn about current debates and challenges facing various subfields of psychology. Specific topics will vary by term according to the interests and expertise of the course instructor and guest lecturers. Examination of these

topics will include considerations such as bias in the sciences, demographic representation in participant pools, methodological diversity, replicability, and ecological validity.

Learning objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students are expected to be able to ...

1. Engage in written and verbal discussions about complex and potentially difficult topics in psychological science in a critical, nuanced, and caring manner with members of the course community and the broader field
2. Identify and reflect upon key assumptions, norms, and contextual factors underlying dominant approaches within the field of psychology, including those covered in introductory courses
3. Identify and reflect upon current debates, challenges, and controversies in the field of psychology
4. Develop and clearly articulate evidence-based arguments regarding current debates, challenges, and/or controversies in the field of psychology
5. Analyze and synthesize scholarship in psychology through a critical lens, identifying challenges and advances vis-à-vis dominant approaches and methods

Class structure and culture

The course is designed for **fully in-person delivery**. My intention is to help foster an environment in which we all feel comfortable sharing and debating ideas, questions, and opinions about a variety of complex and potentially fraught topics. We all contribute to building such a culture together, and regular attendance and active engagement with course content and discussions will help to support this shared community. I also expect that we will all contribute to a class culture that is guided by principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and that we will respectfully offer and listen to different perspectives and viewpoints. I hope that we can all work together – along with the course TAs – to build a collaborative, supportive, empathic, and positive class culture.

I recognize that the in-person format may become challenging for some students at certain points in the semester. I may also encounter situations (e.g., illness) that make it difficult (or impossible) for me to attend in person, in which case we would shift to virtual delivery temporarily. I will do my utmost to communicate with you promptly and clearly and we will work together to address any shifting circumstances as needed. **Please reach out to me and the course TAs as early as possible if you have any concerns about your ability to participate in class or see any barriers that we may be able to help address.** We want to help you succeed and get as much out of this course as possible.

The course is designed to help students gain a greater awareness and understanding of various debates, challenges, and ‘hot topics’ in the field of psychology. Much of the semester is structured according to major sub-fields of psychology (e.g., social psychology, developmental psychology), alongside several broad and overarching topics (e.g., conceptualizing race and gender in psychology). To help expose students to a variety of perspectives and areas of expertise, we will have several guest speakers throughout the semester. These guest lectures

will be an integral part of the course, and students are expected to actively engage with the relevant readings and lecture content.

This is a brand-new course, and I am teaching it for the first time this semester. This is exciting! It also means that I will be trying things out for the first time and there may be some hiccups along the way. I appreciate your understanding and collaboration, and I will seek out and welcome your input, feedback, and suggestions throughout the term.

Considerations related to illness and public health

Illness: Please stay home if you are not well. Lecture slides will always be available; you are encouraged to attend office hours once you feel better, to discuss any questions you have about recent course material. Course assignments are submitted online via Quercus. If your illness coincides with a course deadline, please follow the missed term work policy below. The TAs and I will provide whatever support we can to students in challenging positions during the term.

Masks in the Classroom: The university's mask requirements have been lifted. Some members of our community may choose to continue to wear a mask. Please remember to respect each other's decisions, comfort levels, and health needs.

Delivery mode: If I need to switch to online delivery due to illness, I will let you know as soon as possible. Our online platform will be Zoom and I will communicate relevant details via Quercus. Please be sure to stay up to date with Quercus updates and announcements.

If needed, I will update these and/or other considerations over the course of the semester.

Important dates

Date(s)	Why is it important?
January 7	First class meeting
February 4	Thought paper #1 due by 11:59pm
February 11	Infographic milestone #1 due by 11:59pm
Reading Week (February 17-21)	
February 25	Thought paper #2 due by 11:59pm
March 4	Infographic milestone #2 due by 11:59pm
March 11	Thought paper #3 due by 11:59pm
March 18	Thought paper #4 due by 11:59pm
	Term test during class time
April 4	Thought paper #5 due by 11:59pm
	Infographic final project due by 11:59pm

Course schedule

Week	Date	Lecture Title	Required Reading(s)	Assignments
1	Jan 7	Introduction to the course	None	Weekly Discussion
2	Jan 14	The Science of Science <i>Zotero workshop with librarian, Nicole Slattery</i>	Aczel, 2024; Peterson and Panofsky, 2023	Weekly Discussion
3	Jan 21	Social Psychology Guest Speaker: Dr. Yoel Inbar	Berkman and Wilson, 2021; Simmons et al., 2011	Weekly Discussion
4	Jan 28	Personality Psychology Guest Speaker: Ashmita Mazumder	Bardi and Zentner, 2017; Boyd et al., 2020	Weekly Discussion
5	Feb 4	Conceptualizing Race and Gender in Psychology	Garay and Remedios, 2021; Wigginton, 2017	Weekly Discussion Thought Paper 1
6	Feb 11	Developmental Psychology Guest Speaker: Dr. Michelle McPhee	Frank et al., 2017	Weekly Discussion Infographic Milestone #1
Reading week (February 17-21)				
7	Feb 25	Cognitive Neuroscience Guest Speaker: Dr. Francesco Leri	Ricard et al., 2023	Weekly Discussion Thought Paper 2
8	March 4	Clinical Science and Practice Guest Speaker: Dr. Amanda Uliaszek	Masland et al., 2023	Weekly Discussion Infographic Milestone #2
9	March 11	Behavioural Neuroscience Guest Speaker: Dr. Marie Gadziola	Shansky and Murphy, 2021	Weekly Discussion Thought Paper 3
10	March 18	In-person term test during class time		Thought Paper 4

11	March 25	Centering Culture and Context Guest Speaker: Dr. Iloradanon H. Efimoff from TMU (via Zoom)	Durrheim, 2024	Weekly Discussion
12	April 1	Towards a New Psychology	None	Weekly Discussion Thought Paper 5 (Due April 4th) Infographic Final Submission (Due April 4th)

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

Evaluation

This course has a Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR) grading scheme for all students.

1. **Weekly discussion posts:** 15%
2. **Thought papers:** Weight depends on number of papers completed, 20% (if do 3); 25% (if do 4); 30% (if do 5)
3. **Term test:** Depending on number of thought papers completed, 45%; 40%; 35%
4. **Infographic group project:** 20%

The weight of the Thought Papers and the Term Test are linked. Together they total 65% of the final grade. Please see the PSYB80 Grade Calculator spreadsheet to be shared on Quercus to help understand various scenarios in which students can pass this course.

Please note that there are no opportunities for extra credit to improve your grade at any time during the course or after the course is over.

Weekly discussion posts: Every week, except the week of the term test, students will be asked to complete written discussion posts in response to prompts based on the week's content. Posts are expected to be between 150 and 300 words in length. These weekly discussion posts will be completed in class; **students must therefore be present in person to be able to complete the posts.** Students are asked to **please bring a laptop or tablet to be able to complete these written posts, which will be completed and submitted using Quercus.** The specific prompts will be provided part way through the given class session and a specified amount of time (e.g., 20 minutes) will be devoted to this activity in class. These are not formal written essays, but an opportunity for students to share their thoughts, reflections, and/or questions about specific course material in a written format. This will offer a valuable opportunity to practice writing in a low stakes format and to encourage critical thinking about course material, which will be helpful for the completion of the other course components (i.e., thought papers, term test, and infographic).

Weekly discussion posts will be evaluated using a simple 2-point rubric, which will be shared on Quercus; scores of 1/2 or 2/2 will constitute completion. **Students must complete a minimum of 6 (out of 11) weekly discussion posts to pass the course.** Posts must be submitted within the allotted time during the relevant lecture period.

Thought papers: Over the course of the semester, students will be asked to complete a minimum of three thought papers; they can complete up to five thought papers. Each thought paper will ask students to make connections across course readings and topics, demonstrating critical reflection and synthesis. Papers will be a maximum of two double-spaced pages, and each will have a specific prompt and related set of questions to address. Thought papers will be reviewed using the university's plagiarism detection tool (please see note below) and will be graded using a simple 4-point rubric, which will be shared on Quercus. Additional details will be shared in class and via Quercus. **Students must complete a minimum of three thought papers to pass the course.**

Term test: An **in-person term test** will be held during our class time on March 18th. This term test will cover material from the required readings, lectures, and guest speaker presentations from the start of the term through to week 9 (inclusive). Students will be asked to reflect upon course material and draw connections across readings and topics. In this way, the thought papers will be excellent practice and preparation for the term test. Additional details about specific format and content will be shared in class and via Quercus. **Students must receive a passing grade on the term test to pass the course.**

Infographic group project: Students will be asked to complete an infographic project in groups of approximately six students. Class time will be devoted to work on this project at various points throughout the term. Additional details will be provided in class and on Quercus. **Students must receive a passing grade on their group's infographic to pass the course.**

Note: University's Plagiarism Detection Tool

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Policies for Assignments and Examination in this Course

Missed Term Test: A make-up term test will be held approximately ten days following the date of the term test. Students will be permitted to take the make-up term test only if they were absent on the date of the term test due to a verified illness, a serious family emergency (e.g., death of a close family member), or religious observances. Students must follow the current departmental policy outlined below when submitting relevant documentation. Only those students who follow this process will be considered for writing the make-up term test. Students

who do not submit their documentation on time, whose documents are not accepted, or who do not write the make-up term test as scheduled, will receive a grade of zero on the term test.

Late submission of assignments: Unless you have legitimate documentation for a late assignment, 5% 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 (i.e., one minute past 11:59pm), so you are strongly encouraged to submit your assignments early to avoid any technical delays. Difficulties with the Quercus portal will not be accepted as a legitimate reason for a late assignment. If you have legitimate documentation to explain your late assignment, you must follow the departmental policy outlined below.

Please note: Late submissions will not be accepted for the weekly discussion participation activities, which will take place during class time.

Please note: It is always best to speak with me or a course TA as soon as possible if you foresee any challenges in meeting a deadline at any point in the semester. We are here to support you, and we want to work together to help you get the most out of this course.

Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedure outlined below.

Procedure:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) ("MTW Form").
2. Email **BOTH** your MTW Form and Supporting Documentation to psyb80.utsc@gmail.com according to the instructions specified below.

Supporting Documentation Requirements and Deadlines:

Reason for Missed Work	Documentation required for a first absence in the term	Documentation required for subsequent absences in the term	Deadline for submitting MTW form and supporting documentation
Illness or Injury	ACORN Absence Declaration	UofT Verification of Illness Form	<u>WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS</u> of the missed work
Bereavement	ACORN Absence Declaration	A death certificate or funeral announcement	<u>WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS</u> of the missed work
University-sponsored athletic or artistic obligation at the varsity/provincial/national level	ACORN Absence Declaration	A note from a university staff member (advisor, coach, residence staff, etc.) who can substantiate the obligation, sent directly	<u>10 BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE</u> of the missed deadline

		to the course email	
Disability-related reasons for students registered with AccessAbility Services	<p>For missed TERM TESTS,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed. <p>For missed ASSIGNMENTS,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If your desired accommodation is within the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you need 3 days), send your Accommodation Letter to the course email and specify how many days extension you are requesting. - If your desired accommodation is outside the scope of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that), contact your AccessAbility consultant and have them write to the course email detailing the accommodations needed. 		<u>PREFERABLY IN ADVANCE OF THE MISSED WORK, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE</u>
Academic Conflict (e.g. two midterms at the same time)	Screenshot from Quercus demonstrating the conflict.		<u>10 BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE</u> of the
Religious Conflict	None required		missed work

Notes:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: social activities, recreational travel, technological issues, avoidance of assessments or deadlines, work commitments
- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar’s Office and should be declared on eService.
- For ACORN absence declarations, the date you declare the absence is required to fall within the seven-day declaration period (i.e.) the absence cannot be submitted proactively or retroactively.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar’s Office [petition process](#).
- If you are unable to submit your request within the specified number of business days, you must still email your instructor within that window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the deadlines are made only under exceptional circumstances.
- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered academic conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered academic conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.
- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

Next Steps:

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor's response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you're able, and email it to your instructor.

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation**. Examples: If you were granted an extension for a paper but are still unable to meet the new deadline, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* MTW form and supply documentation according to the "subsequent absences" column in the chart above. *Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

Rights and Responsibilities

University Land Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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.

AccessAbility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations 416-287-7560 or email 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.

Recording of classroom material by students

Recording or photographing any aspect of a university course - lecture, tutorial, seminar, lab, studio, practice session, field trip etc. – without prior approval of all involved and with written approval from the instructor is not permitted.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

This is a set of core policies related to generative AI technologies in this course. Students must adhere to the following stipulations, or I will consider it a breach of academic integrity:

1. **Under no circumstances are you allowed to submit any of my course materials (e.g., lecture slides, assignment instructions) into generative AI software or related websites or apps, *for any reason*.** This can become a legal issue related to copyright. Doing so will be considered a breach of academic integrity.
2. **You cannot use generative AI or AI-powered tools while completing the weekly in-class discussion posts.** These weekly participation activities are meant to foster critical thinking and personal reflection about course topics, and therefore must reflect your own ideas and be written in your own words.
3. **In the context of thought papers and the infographic assignment:** you may use **generative AI or AI-powered tools** to proofread and suggest basic edits, but all ideas must be your own. As you write, please save drafts in case you are asked to show your work. Please note that the more you complete the thought papers without the assistance of any AI tools, the more valuable they will be as practice for the term test.
4. **If you choose to use generative AIs to assist in the preparation of thought papers and/or the infographic, you must document your use in an appendix** for each assignment, including what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work, including citations per [U of T Libraries guide](#).
5. **In the context of reviewing course materials or creating your own notes for studying:** you are free to use generative AI tools as long as you adhere to the other rules noted here.

I reserve the right to ask you to explain your process for developing and creating your assignments, and to adjust grading based on the use of generative AI supports.

Academic Integrity

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 in papers and assignments include 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, cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

On Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each

other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

The University of Toronto is a richly diverse community and as such is committed to providing an environment free of any form of harassment, misconduct, or discrimination. In this course, I seek to foster a civil, respectful, and open-minded climate in which we can all work together to develop a better understanding of key questions and debates through meaningful dialogue. As such, I expect all involved with this course to refrain from actions or behaviours that intimidate, humiliate, or demean persons or groups or that undermine their security or self-esteem based on traits related to race, religion, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance or record of offences.

I will work to establish an environment that is informed by principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, where everyone feels comfortable sharing their perspectives, questions, and feedback with one another. I welcome input and discussion about our class culture and environment at any point.

Religious Accommodation

The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Family Care Responsibilities:

The University of Toronto strives to provide a family-friendly environment. You may wish to inform me if you are a student with family responsibilities. If you are a student parent or have family responsibilities, you also may wish to visit the Family Care Office website at familycare.utoronto.ca.

Writing-related campus resources:

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is available to support you in your writing, math and stats, and English language needs. It offers online and in-person tutoring and consultations and has a variety of helpful resources. For more information, please visit CTL's Student Resource Centre at AC313 or check out <https://uoft.me/AcademicLearningSupport>.

The English Language Development Centre supports all students in developing better Academic English and critical thinking skills needed in academic communication. Make use of the personalized support in academic writing skills development and Café sessions to enhance your ability to do better in the various components of this course. Details and sign-up information: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

The Writing Centre helps all UTSC students improve their writing skills. They work with students in all years and all disciplines. Programs include writing groups, writing workshops, one-to-one tutoring, and both print and online resources. For information, resources, and to sign up for individualized feedback: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>