

PSYC02-L01: SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

University of Toronto Scarborough (Winter 2025)

SYLLABUS v1.0



I. COURSE OVERVIEW

- Course Description
- Prerequisites
- Learning Outcomes

II. COURSE STRUCTURE

- Classroom Expectations
- Syllabus Changes
- Core Course Requirements
- Required Readings
- Recommended Textbooks

III. ASSESSMENTS

- Research Review Project
 - Presentation (25%)
 - Term Paper (35%)
- Weekly Tasks (40%)
 - Project Milestone tasks (12%)
 - Skill Building tasks (28%)

IV. COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

- Late/Missed Work in PSYC02
- Using Generative AI in PSYC02
- Communications & Updates
- Acknowledgments

V. GENERAL POLICIES

- Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
- Land Acknowledgment
- Disability-Related Accommodations
- Religious Accommodations
- Quercus
- Plagiarism Detection
- Copyright & FIPPA Notice
- Academic Integrity
- Dept Missed Term Work Policy

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

COURSE EMAIL: psych.c02.uts@gmail.com

INSTRUCTOR

Andrew Cooper, PhD (he/him)
aa.cooper@utoronto.ca

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Simar Moussaoui
simar.moussaoui@mail.utoronto.ca

Ashmita Mazumder
ashmita.mazumder@utoronto.ca

Irys-Amelie Champagne
irysamelie.nadeau@mail.utoronto.ca

SCHEDULED CLASS & TUTORIALS (YYZ TIME)

LECTURE: MON 11:00-13:00

TUT 1: THUR 09:00-11:00 (Ashmita)

TUT 2: THUR 15:00-17:00 (Irys)

TUT 3: THUR 17:00-19:00 (Simar)

****locations available on Quercus****

OFFICE HOURS & MEETINGS

1:1 MEETINGS w/ Dr. COOPER: TUES 13:00-14:00

Book via <https://calendly.com/meet-prof-cooper>

****If you are unable to book an appointment due to a scheduling conflict, please email about an alternative time and list your availability during the current and upcoming weekdays between 08:00 and 16:00****

I. COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

The purpose of PSYC02 is to introduce students to conventions and strategies for scientific communication, with an emphasis on APA style and formatting guidelines. The course will help students build skills necessary to acquire, organize, critically review and synthesize information from the academic research literature, and to communicate their findings in a clear, effective fashion.

Prerequisites & Enrolment Limits

[PSYB01H3 or PSYB04H3 or PSYB70H3] and [PSYB07H3 or STAB23H3 or STAB22H3]. Typically limited to students in Specialist Programs in Psychology, Mental Health Studies, and Neuroscience (Cognitive Stream)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate skillful application of the formatting and style guidelines of the 6th Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
2. Develop a schema and set of strategies for effective scientific communication in terms of key principles of argumentation, organization and style
3. Conduct a systematic, focused literature review for scholarly articles using major research databases
4. Summarize and synthesize academic research to produce clear, concise and context-sensitive forms of scientific communication
5. Critically evaluate the presentation of psychological science in the popular press, both in general and in comparison to peer-reviewed scientific research
6. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively and respectfully with peers, including both providing and responding to constructive feedback

ON LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC

We move into *another* year of an ongoing global pandemic that will surely infect many of us this term. Still more of us are dealing with ongoing illness, loss, and grief on top of countless changes to our lives and routines. It is unreasonable to expect this course to be your top priority or to ask you to predict what the near future may hold.

I encourage you to be candid and open when it comes to providing feedback on how the course is going for you. If your circumstances change (e.g., becoming ill, caring for family), please let the PSYC36 team know so we can work together to adapt and respond. Likewise, please strive to be understanding and flexible with others, adding “slack” to the various systems and communities of which you are a part, many of which have been strained and stretched far beyond their limits for far too long.

II. COURSE STRUCTURE

Classroom Expectations

We all have a role to play in ensuring that everyone can learn safely during the ongoing pandemic: **I expect you to follow all University of Toronto guidelines and practices and to stay informed of any changes that might occur.** Please regularly check your official @mail.utoronto.ca email address for essential updates.

- **I strongly encourage you to wear a mask in class** if you are medically able to do so. UTSC also strongly encourages students to wear masks and provides procedure masks at all building entrances and in all classrooms. You can find information about the most effective masks in this list [recommended by PHAC](#). You can find more information about the critical role of masking in protecting vulnerable members of our community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on the course Quercus page.
- Presently, many people in Ontario do not have an easy and expeditious way to test if they have COVID-19. **Please do not come to class if:** you are ill, someone in your household is ill, you know you have been a close contact of someone who has become ill, or you have been instructed to isolate by a health authority.

My goal is to support you in meeting these expectations by providing flexible support and resources so you can have the best possible learning experience in the context of an ongoing global pandemic and institutional policies that effectively obligate in-person learning:

- For *class/lectures*, if current-semester recordings are not available, I will provide archival recordings and notes, with updates or supplements to address specific details tied to the current semester as needed.
- For *tutorials*, I will provide skeletal outlines of content. Some *assignments* will be worked on in tutorial, but all can be submitted digitally.
- Office hours appointments and meetings will be held via Zoom except when otherwise noted.

Syllabus Changes

I may make changes to the course syllabus based on pacing and needs of the class and/or updates from UTSC re: learning plans. I will notify you ASAP, and any major grading/content changes will be contingent on class vote.

Core Course Requirements

PSYC02 will require more of your time than many other C-level classes. It is based on a 2 hrs lecture + 2 hrs tutorial structure, so even if you are not attending in-person, you should account for this extra time in your own planning, as you will need to work independently on your major research projects across the semester. You are expected to be available during our scheduled class period and during your ACORN-assigned tutorial timeslot.

A typical week in PSYC02 involves:

- a required or recommended reading (with a URL link if applicable)
- a class/lecture with corresponding lecture slides
- one required task, focusing on a skill-building exercise and key research project milestone
 - *many tasks will be discussed and worked on in tutorial but can be submitted independently*
- various optional assignments and active learning tasks

Required Readings

There are only a few *required* readings for this course, reflecting a mix of articles, guidelines, and resources to improve your writing. You can find abbreviated citations for lecture-related readings in the Master Calendar below with a full set of links on Quercus. However, you will do *much* more independent reading across the semester as you find and review articles for your major term assignments.

Recommended Textbooks

The APA Manual is a valuable reference resource for students who expect to need to do more academic writing at UTSC and beyond. For students who are interested in a more engaging discussion of processes and best practices, I also strongly recommend the text by Landrum (2020) – note this is the NEW edition.

American Psychological Association (2019). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Landrum, R. E. (2020). *Undergraduate writing in psychology: Learning to tell the scientific story*. (3rd ed.). American Psychological Association.

III. ASSESSMENTS

Your final grade in PSYC02 is based on several assessments. These are described below in brief, organized by type/topic, with further description and detail provided on Quercus later in the term. **There is no final exam for this course, but your term paper MUST be submitted to pass the class (or your max grade will be 45).**

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
90%+	85-89	80-84	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	57-59	53-56	50-52

Research Review Project (RRP)

This major project provides the foundation for two specific products connected to all learning outcomes for PSYC02. You will develop a specific research question based on two assigned topic areas related to contemporary forms of technology and entertainment and domains of human psychology. Your question should be broad and non-technical enough to be of public interest, with some representation in the popular press. You have many options to choose from (with practice and support in doing so), so long as your work connects to concepts and research findings from human psychology or very closely related disciplines (e.g., neuroscience).

You will conduct a rigorous review of the scientific literature on this topic, synthesizing findings from relevant studies into a clear, comprehensible summary.

I. **Slideshow Presentation (video presentation / PDF of slides + reference list) [25%]**

→ due by 23:59 on March 20

You will create a short presentation to summarize the process and main findings of your research project, using slides (e.g., Powerpoint) accompanied by your spoken summary. Formatting guidelines, tips, and demonstration materials are available on Quercus. You will submit a digital video file with a short, recorded oral summary, a PDF of your slides, and a complete APA-formatted reference list.

II. **Term Paper (35%*)**

→ due April 4 by 23:59 Toronto time ***If you do not submit a term paper, you cannot pass the class***

Your paper is a written summary of your research review project, with an emphasis on the overall findings as well as the process of completing your investigation. As a demonstration of what you have learned during your review, you must also identify a specific gap issue in the empirical literature on your chosen research question, and provide a thoughtful potential remedy to this issue. You will receive a detailed assignment guide later in the term, including guidelines on formatting, structure and specific required elements.

III. **Required Weekly Tasks [40%]**

→ due dates vary – see course calendar and Quercus

Project Milestone tasks provide scaffolded support in executing critical steps necessary to complete your final presentation and paper, while offering a structured method of tracking your own progress and receiving timely feedback on your work from your TAs. Your TAs may follow up with you in tutorial or by coordinating a Zoom meeting based on the feedback they wish to provide. [3 required @ 4% each]

Skill Building tasks provide opportunities for advanced training in tools and techniques that underlie several important course learning outcomes. Two skill-focused surveys help you to assess your abilities and changes across the semester. Six “Skill Point” assignments will be completed across the term and typically involve reading an article and generating a short, written response. Several of these exercises will be worked on in tutorial, but all are submitted electronically and can be worked on independently. [6 “Skill Points” required @ 4% each + pre- and post-class skills surveys @2% each]

IV. COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PSYC02-Specific Policies for Late/Missed Work

Please make sure you review the Missed Term Work and Accommodations policies below. Most assignments and tasks are eligible for minor extensions, with a few exceptions related to sequential tasks and cutoff dates – please reach out to let us know! Work submitted late typically takes longer to grade, so submitting your work as soon as you can is a good strategy. For some assignments, you may be asked to submit work-in-progress to be considered for an extension.

Important Policy Notes for End of Term

- 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](#).
- **Your Term Paper must be submitted to pass the course.** You are assessed a 50% penalty up to 24hrs late, then an automatic 0 and a max grade of 45 for the course.

For Missed Term Work due to Anticipated Absences

- These might include **university-sponsored obligations** (e.g., varsity/provincial/national level tournament), **religious holidays**, or scheduled **health-related absences** (e.g., planned surgery; specialist appt)
- Please email Dr. Cooper at least 7 business days prior to the affected work. You are welcome to include relevant documentation (e.g., note from coach).

For Missed Term Work due to AccessAbility Accommodations

- Some time-sensitive assignments require additional planning to develop accommodations -- please consider contacting Dr. Cooper about accommodations early in the semester!
- In most cases, extensions would be for 1 week from original due date, with longer extensions for major assignments potentially possible in conjunction with consultation with your AccessAbility coordinator

For all other extension requests, see guide and links below

- "MTW Form" → [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#)
- Contact email for most requests → PSYCH.C02.UTSC@GMAIL.com

Situation	Skill Building Tasks	RRP Milestone Tasks	Presentation or Term Paper
AccessAbility Accomms-related request involving extension	Email PSYC02 & TA within 2d of due date; automatic 7d extension	Email PSYC02 & TA <u>before if possible</u> or within 2d of due date to make alternative arrangements	MTW → Email PSYC02 & TA <u>before if possible</u> or within 2d of due date to make plan
Acute illness, injury, or bereavement	MTW → Email PSYC02 & TA within 2d of due date; typically 7d extension	MTW → Email PSYC02 & TA within 2d of due date to make arrangements	MTW → Email PSYC02 & TA <u>ASAP</u> /within 2d of due date to make plan

For missed extensions due to ongoing illness/emergency (e.g., you are sick for more than a week) including AccessAbility accommodations, please send another request to Dr. Cooper, noting clearly in your subject line that it is a second request.

Do not wait for a response to resume work!

- Complete your assignment via Quercus as soon as you are able and submit it through Quercus – then email us to let us know it is ready to be marked!
- Check your UofT email and course announcements for any updates to due dates/requests

Using Generative AI in PSYC02

Generative AIs like ChatGPT or AI-assisted tools like Grammarly have had an enormous, disruptive effect on education and academic spaces in a relatively short period of time. I urge you to spend some time reading about the projected environmental impact of AI tools and their complex relationship with plagiarism.

Some of you may have taken classes that enthusiastically promote the use of this emerging technology in your academic work but **PSYC02 is not such a class, and the guidelines you've received for other classes don't apply here**. Below, I've outlined a set of related to generative AI technologies in PSYC02 specifically. You must adhere to the following stipulations, or I will consider it a breach of academic integrity. **Please do not assume that any specific application of AI that isn't listed here is necessarily acceptable. If you have any questions about using genAI in C02, please speak with me!**

- 1) **Under no circumstances are you allowed to submit any of my course materials (e.g., class notes, assignment guidelines) into generative AI software or related websites or apps, *for any reason*.** Doing so is considered a breach of academic integrity, regardless of whether the related task is otherwise allowed.
- 2) **For graded assignments, including your RRP paper, RRP presentation, Skill Point exercises, and progress checks:** unless you are specifically instructed to do so, you may not use generative AI tools to complete *any* written work that is submitted for grading or feedback (including writing tools like Grammarly). You may not use AI-assisted tools to script or present work (e.g., using an auto caption reader ala TikTok). If you are using a tool that may have integrated AI-assistance (e.g., an online translation tool), you should email me to notify me ahead of time of your plan to do so to confirm it is acceptable.
- 3) **For intermediate steps or preparatory work related to other projects:** I strongly discourage you from using generative AI / AI-related programs. Ultimately, any AI tool use (except where specifically instructed or allowed) must be limited to *preparatory* steps in the process of working on your assignments such as assisting with literature searching.
- 4) **If you use generative AIs at any point in any assignments, 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. This appendix never counts against you in page limits or word count guidelines.
- 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 on the basis of use of generative AI supports.

Communications & Updates

All course-related materials will be posted to Quercus, including *syllabus, additional readings, assignments & grades*. Please make sure to monitor announcements and check your Quercus-linked email regularly.

Please do not use Quercus messaging to contact the C02 Team! Post content-related questions to the Quercus discussion board. If you have questions tied to you specifically (e.g., questions about feedback on an assignment), **please email the course email (PSYCH.C02.UTSC@GMAIL.COM) and your TA (if relevant to your question)**. The C02 team will try to answer your emails within 3 business days unless you receive an automatic reply that suggests otherwise.

Confidential/private emails and AccessAbility letters should always be sent to Dr. Cooper's email. You are welcome to email me at any time! Please keep in mind that the volume of emails I receive during busy stretches of the course can be quite breathtaking, and it often takes me a week (or more!) to reply to non-urgent requests. If you have a truly urgent matter, please feel free to “bump” an email if you are awaiting a reply.

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to those who have shared ideas, materials, and feedback on this course, including but not limited to: Dr. Jessica Dere, Dr. Anthony Ruocco, Dr. Connie Boudens, Dr. David Chan, Dr. Steph Schwartz, Dr. Tahira Gulamani, and Dr. Trenton Johanis.

V. GENERAL POLICIES & STATEMENTS

Land Acknowledgment

For thousands of years, the land on which University of Toronto operates 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 – we are grateful to be allowed to work on this land.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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.

Disability-Related Accommodations

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 (<http://www.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.utoronto.ca for more information.

Religious Accommodations

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.

Quercus

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for **PSYC02 – SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY**. You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the **PSYC02 – SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY** link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me ASAP if you think there is an error in any Quercus grade.

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 website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

FIPPA Notice & Copyright

Elements of this course may be recorded on video and made available to students in the course for viewing remotely. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact me directly. Course videos and materials belong to me, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without my explicit permission. Sharing my course materials on online repositories can only serve to detract from the learning experience I can provide to you and future students.

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, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

Be careful about services offering grammar help, essay editing and proof-reading (through either human labour or AI methods). If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language or generate content that you did not write yourself, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#).

If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

It is much more effective (and safer!) to bring your draft to [UTSC's Writing Support program](#) as early as you can. If you are particularly concerned about writing in English, you may wish to contact the [English Language Development Support program](#).

If at any point you are experiencing difficulty in this course, please contact Dr. Cooper to discuss your concerns! The earlier you take this step, the better!

VII. COURSE CALENDAR ---- PSYC02 W25 v1.0						
W K DATE	LECTURE / VIDEOS	READINGS (optional*)	TUTORIAL	REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS		DUE
1 6-Jan	1.1 Class Intro & Overview 1.2 Scientific Communication Goals	*Landrum Ch 1	NONE	SKILL BUILDING	Pre-Course Survey & Academic Integrity Check	23-Jan @ 23:59
2 13-Jan	2.1 Research Project Overview I 2.2 Research Project Overview II	*Landrum Ch 2 & 5 or Siddaway et al. (2019)	NONE	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	30-Jan @ 23:59
3 20-Jan	3.1 APA Style & Grammar Guidelines 3.2 The Mechanics of APA Style	*Landrum Ch 4 & 6	23-Jan	PROJECT MILESTONE	RRP Proposal Task	23-Jan end of tut
4 27-Jan	4.1 Citations & Sources 4.2 Formatting Cites & References	*Landrum Ch 7 APA v7 Supplements	30-Jan	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	13-Feb @ 23:59
5 3-Feb	5.1 Strategies for Academic Reading I 5.2 Strategies for Academic Reading II	Sheese & Graziano (2005) *Landrum Ch 3	6-Feb	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	27-Feb @ 23:59
6 10-Feb	6.1 Narratives & Organization 6.2 (De)Constructing Arguments & Evidence	Engelhardt et al. (2011)	13-Feb	PROJECT MILESTONE	RRP Status Update	13-Feb start of tut
7 17-Feb	"READING WEEK"					
8 24-Feb	8.1 Results, Conclusions, & Limitations 8.2 Types of Scientific Communication	*Landrum Ch 8	27-Feb	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	3-Mar @ 23:59
9 3-Mar	9.1 Edits, Revisions, & Feedback 9.2 APA Formatting Essentials	Lewis Jr & Wai (2020) UTSC Writing Centre links	6-Mar	PROJECT MILESTONE	RRP Final Update	6-Mar start of tut
10 10-Mar	10.1 Psychology in the Popular Press I 10.2 Psychology in the Popular Press II	Stemwedel (2011) (+ 1 reading mid lecture)	13-Mar	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	17-Mar @ 23:59
11 17-Mar	11.1 Ethical & Legal Standards in Publishing 11.2 Publication & Peer Review		NONE	RRP PRESENTATION DUE		20-Mar @ 23:59
12 24-Mar	12.1 Big Picture on Psychological Science		NONE	SKILL BUILDING	Skill Point 	27-Mar @ 23:59
13 31-Mar	Optional Grad School Discussion Term Paper help session	& note: 2 things are due this week at the same time!	NONE	TERM PAPER DUE		4-Apr
				SKILL	End of Course Survey	@ 23:59