

PSYC12. Psychology of Prejudice and Oppression

Course Information

Course name: PSYC12H3 The Psychology of Prejudice.

Prerequisites: PSYB10H3 and [(PSYB01H3) or (PSYB04H3) or PSYB70H3] and [PSYB07H3 or STAB22H3 or STAB23H3]

Exclusions: PSY322H

Class time: In-person Wed., 3:10 - 5 PM (view ACORN or Quercus for classroom location).

Teaching Team

Course Instructor: Dr. Kosha Bramesfeld (she/her/they)



See Quercus to learn more about your teaching team

Office hours: Wed. 1:30-2:30 & Thurs. 3:15-4:15 PM

Contact me: See “Contact Us” on Quercus for details

Email: kosha.bramesfeld@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants (TAs): Please see Quercus for information about the TAs.

*Correspondence with us must occur via the Quercus inbox or your University of Toronto email address. We will not respond to emails coming from email addresses outside of U of T.

Course website, readings, and materials

Readings for the course have been made available via the library reading list (see Quercus for access). Other materials for the course will be posted in the Modules section of our course website on Quercus. The course website should be your first stop for most course questions and inquiries. Please make arrangements to access the course materials on Quercus at least twice per week.

Course Description

Psychological research has found that our brains quickly and efficiently sort information into categories (e.g., like me/not like me; safe/dangerous). This categorization process most likely evolved because it offered our earliest ancestors a mechanism to quickly differentiate between friend versus foe. But in our current lives, this rapid and automatic categorization process can result in the development of biased beliefs (stereotypes), attitudes (prejudice), and behaviours (discrimination), even when no real threat is present. When these psychological processes are amplified within the context of unequal power structures that grant special favour to some (privilege), while denying rights and dignity to others (marginalization), then oppression occurs.

This course examines (a) the psychological processes that create prejudice, (b) the social-cultural factors that turn prejudice into oppression, (c) the various ways that prejudice is expressed in explicit and implicit ways, (d) the devastating impact that prejudice and oppression has on people’s (and society’s) health and well-being, and (e) the steps that can be taken to empower people and reduce privilege, power, oppression, and prejudice.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between prejudice and oppression; and recognize the various ways in which prejudice and oppression are experienced and expressed at the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels.
2. Recognize the various ways that prejudice, oppression, privilege, power, and empowerment are studied from within a psychological framework.
3. Identify common categories of oppression; and explore which social groups are experiencing oppression in Canada today.
4. Recognize and be able to identify, discuss, and differentiate major psychological explanations for why prejudice and oppression occur.
5. Recognize and be able to produce examples of the many ways that prejudice, oppression, privilege, power, and empowerment impact individuals.
6. Discuss how psychological knowledge can be used to reduce prejudice and oppression.
7. Recognize the potential sources of prejudice, oppression, privilege, power, and empowerment in your own life and reflect on how your social identities impact the ways that you interact with the world.
8. Reflect on how you can become a change agent to increase empowerment and directly address issues of prejudice, oppression, privilege, power, in your own communities.

Course Assessments

Marks for the course will be determined based on your engagement in the course, an in-person midterm test, an essay assignment, and an in-person final exam, as outlined below.

Marks for the course will be distributed as follows:

Assessment category	Points	Percent
Participation & engagement activities (weekly, units 1-11)	10	10%
Midterm test (in-class Wed., February 12 at 3:00 PM)	40	40%
Assignment (due Sun., March 23 at 11:59 PM)	10	10%
Final exam (to be scheduled during the final exam period, April 9-30)	40	40%
Maximum Total Points / Percent	100	100%

Note: Grades will be assessed based on the [UTSC Grading Scheme](#) for undergraduate courses. Please be aware that in a C-level course (i.e., PSYC12), the bar for “excellent” is set very high. This course requires more independent work and critical evaluation than what might be expected in a typical A-level (e.g., PSYA02) or B-level course (e.g., PSYB10).

Participation & engagement activities (10%, weekly)

Throughout the term, I will make available a variety of in-class activities and out-of-class engagement activities that can be completed for points as part of a “choose your own adventure” option for engaging in the course. There will be **at least** 12 participation/engagement points offered throughout the term. You can earn up to 10 points by completing these opportunities in any combination that you like. (See Quercus for details).

- **In-class activities.** Each week of the course will involve an in-class activity. The first two in-class activities (Jan. 8 & Jan. 15) are worth 0.5 points. After that, each in-class activity is worth 1 point. You must be present in class at the time of the activity to earn credit.
- **Engagement activities.** Throughout the term, I will also make available a range of enrichment events, activities, and assignments that can be completed outside of class for up to 0.25 to 1.0 points each.

Missed opportunities and AccessAbility. Because you have flexibility in choosing which assignments to complete, **there are no make-ups or extensions offered**. If you miss one opportunity, you can make-up for the points by completing other opportunities. If you have AccessAbility concerns or extenuating circumstances that prevent you from engaging with these activities, please email Dr. B (kosha.bramsfeld@utoronto.ca) to determine if it will be possible to transfer some or all the weight of the engagement component on to the final exam.

Midterm test (40%, in-person, Wed., Feb. 12 at 3:10 PM)

The midterm test will be an in-person, closed book test scheduled for **Wednesday, February 12** during our normally scheduled class time (90 minutes, **~3:10 PM - 4:40 PM**). The midterm test may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions and will cover content from the Unit 1-5 readings and lessons. Please see the study guides for each unit to help you target your reading and studying efforts. Information about the test, along with a set of practice questions, will be posted at least one week before the midterm. Students who miss the midterm must follow the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Policy](#) to request a make-up test.

Essay assignment (10%, due by Sun., March 23 at 11:59 PM)

There will be one essay assignment worth 10% of your total course grade. Detailed assignment guidelines will be posted on Quercus in advance of the assignment deadline. Students are expected to use these guidelines to prepare their assignments. Students who require an extension must follow the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Policy](#).

Final exam (40%, to be scheduled during the final exam period)

The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar's office during the final exam period (April 9 - 30). The final exam will be a comprehensive, closed-book, in-person exam covering the readings and lessons from all 11 units. Question formats may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. Please see the study guides for each unit to help you target your reading and studying efforts. Information about the exam, along with a set of practice questions, will be posted at least one week before the final. Please note that [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the [Registrar's Office](#) and should be declared on eService.

Tentative schedule of topics and readings

To help you prepare for class each week, a **tentative** schedule of topics and readings is presented below. You should view this schedule as a **flexible** list of topics and readings, subject to change based on our real-time pace and needs. The study guides can be accessed via Quercus Modules. They provide details about each week's readings, engagement activities, and lesson content. The readings are available on Quercus via the Library Reading List. The engagement activities can be accessed via Quercus Modules (learn more about the [engagement component of the course](#)).

Unit 1 (Jan. 8). Prejudice and oppression in a larger social-cultural context

- ☐ **Unit 1 Study Guide:** Readings, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** [Indigenous Peoples in Toronto: An Introduction for Newcomers](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** [Understanding Culture and Diversity](#) & [Building Diverse Relationships](#).
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Unit 2 (Jan. 15). Evolution, social categorization, & implicit judgements

- ☐ **Unit 2 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Ito & Kubota (2023). [Social neuroscience](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Neuberg & Schaller (2016). [An evolutionary approach to prejudice](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Edgoose et al. (2019). [How to identify, understand, and unlearn implicit bias](#).
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Unit 3 (Jan. 22). Conflict, identity, threat, & dehumanization

- ☐ **Unit 3 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Esses (2021). [Prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants](#) (★pp. 503-511).
 - ☐ **Read:** Kteily & Bruneau (2017). [Darker demons of our nature: ...dehumanization](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Community ToolBox (n.d.). [Transforming conflicts in diverse communities](#).
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Unit 4 (Jan. 29). Colonialism, power, & the invention of race

- ☐ **Unit 4 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** David & Derthick (2017). [Chapter 1: Oppression 101: An overview](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** CHRC (2023). [Discussion paper on systemic racism in Canada](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Little (2023). [Intergroup relations and the management of diversity](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Little (2023). [Race and ethnicity in Canada](#).
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Unit 5 (Feb. 5). Systems of oppression

- ☐ **Unit 5 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Pratto & Stewart (2011). [Social dominance theory](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Black & Stone (2005). [Expanding the definition of privilege](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** Aizenman (2023). [Are men hunters and women gatherers?](#)
 - ☐ **Explore:** Goerling & Wolfe (2022): [Terms](#), [sexual anatomy](#), [gender](#), and [sexual identity](#).
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★★MIDTERM TEST (Wed., Feb. 12, in-class at 3:00 PM, covers Units 1-5)★★

READING WEEK (No class: Wed., Feb. 19. Enjoy your break!)

Unit 6 (Feb. 26). The development of prejudice

- ☐ **Unit 6 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Roberts & Rizzo (2021). [The psychology of American racism](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Tropp et al. (2022). [Intergroup contact and prejudice reduction](#).
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Note. The make-up for the Midterm Test is tentatively scheduled for Wed., Feb. 26 @ 5:30 PM

Unit 7 (Mar. 5). Experiences and expressions of prejudice

- ☐ **Unit 7 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Fiske (2023). [Prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Blackburn (2019). [What is the model minority myth?](#)
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Unit 8 (Mar. 12). Mental health, empowerment, and psychological liberation

- ☐ **Unit 8 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Trujillo & Mendes (2021). [Consequences for sexual minorities in a biased society](#).
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Unit 9 (Mar. 19). Implicit bias, the criminal justice system, and structural change

- ☐ **Unit 9 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, engagement activities, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Pryor et al. (2020). [Racial disparity in police behavior](#).
 - ☐ **Review:** Edgoose et al. (2019). [How to identify, understand, and unlearn implicit bias](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** Starr, D. (2020, March 26). [The bias detective: Jennifer Eberhardt](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** Mason, B. (2020, June 10). [Implicit bias: Interview with Anthony Greenwald](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** [Implicit Association Test](#), [Police Officer's Dilemmas](#) and [Shooter Simulation](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** OHRC Interim Reports on Race and Toronto Police Services: [2018](#) and [2021](#).
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★★The Essay Assignment is due Sunday, March 23 at 11:59 PM★★

Note. March 24 is the deadline to drop courses without academic penalty.

Unit 10 (Mar. 26). Diversity, disability, and universal design

- ☐ **Unit 10 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, terms, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Nario-Redmond (2020). [Chapter 1: Introduction: Defining Ableism](#) (pp. 1 – 36).
 - ☐ **Explore:** Dirth & Adams (2019). [Decolonial theory and disability studies](#).
 - ☐ **Explore:** Roberts (2022). [Indigenous disability awareness](#).
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Unit 11 (April 2). The psychologists role in promoting social change

- ☐ **Unit 11 Study Guide:** Readings, expectations, terms, and lesson outline.
 - ☐ **Read:** Nadal (2017). [Becoming a Psychologist-Activist in the 21st Century](#).
 - ☐ **Read:** Neville et al. (2021). [Libération Training Model: A call to transform the discipline](#).
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★★The Final Exam will be held during the final exam period (April 9-30) ★★

Commitment to diversity

It is my intention that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of the classroom, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intention to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, including, but not limited to diversity related to Indigenous culture, race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, sexuality, neurodiversity, religion, dis/ability, age, parental status, and social class. Your contributions to the course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups¹. Importantly, if you anticipate needing accommodations in this course for any reason (including, but not limited to, disability/health considerations, religious/cultural accommodation, and/or economic, work, or family realities), please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work together to determine the best course of action.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

In recognition of the diverse history of this land, and the peoples who live and have lived on it, I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

AccessAbility statement

Students with diverse learning 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](#) as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. You can contact AccessAbility Services at 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.

Self-care

This course addresses issues around identity, poverty, violence, prejudice, oppression, and other forms of loss. The topics can be difficult to learn about and discuss. Students are encouraged to engage in self-care throughout the course. Resources are available on our course website on Quercus and through the [UTSC Health and Wellness Centre](#).

¹ This diversity statement uses language borrowed directly from the diversity statement example provided by the University of Iowa College of Education, <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/syllabus/checklist/diversitystatement.html>.

PSYC12 Missed Term Work Policy, Winter 2025

Overview of the missed term work procedures

- **Missed engagement activities.** Requests for accommodation on the engagement activities will not be accepted because the make-up policy has been built into the set-up of the activities. Please see the information about the [Engagement Activities](#) for details.
- **Make-up for the Midterm Test.** If you have a qualifying reason for missing the midterm, please follow the procedures outlined below.
 1. Submit the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) (*by Mon., Feb. 17).
 2. Submit the proper documentation for the absence, as outlined on the next page.
 3. The decision will be sent to your [U of T email address](#). It is your responsibility to check your email address to ensure timely receipt of our decision.
 4. The make-up test is tentatively scheduled for Wed., Feb. 26 at 5:30 PM.
- **Request for a second make-up.** If you miss the regularly scheduled midterm test (on Feb. 17) and the make-up test (~ Feb. 26), please be aware that the criterion for rewarding a second make-up will be **much** stricter, requiring formal documentation of an academic conflict, illness, or emergency or be accompanied by a request from AccessAbility, the UTSC Health and Wellness Centre, and/or the Registrar's Office. Without this formal documentation, a second make-up test may not be provided. To request a second make-up test, you must:
 - Submit a **new** [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) (*by Mon., March 3).
 - Submit **updated** documentation for the absence, as outlined on the next page. The updated documentation must cover the date of the missed make-up test.
 - The decision will be sent to your [U of T email address](#). It is your responsibility to check your email address to ensure timely receipt of our decision.
- **Extension on the Essay Assignment.** Students who require an extension due to illness, emergency, or other qualifying reason must:
 1. Submit the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) (*by Wed., March 26).
 2. Submit the proper documentation for the absence, as outlined on the next page.
 3. The decision will be sent to your [U of T email address](#). If an extension is granted, a new deadline will be set on Quercus. It is your responsibility to check your email address to ensure timely receipt of our decision.
 - **Please note: Do not wait for our 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 can, and submit it online via Quercus.
 - **Additional extensions:** If you require an extension beyond the original extended deadline, you must submit a **new** [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) and **updated** documentation that covers the entire time period from the deadline to the date of the requested extension. Please note that we generally do not grant extensions beyond the last day of class unless it is approved by the AccessAbility Office, UTSC Health and Wellness Centre, or the UTSC Registrar's Office.
- **Missed Final Exam:** [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.

Supporting documents for missed term work

AccessAbility accommodations. Submit the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) and select “AccessAbility” as the reason for needing a make-up test or extension. If your request for an assignment extension is within the scope of your AccessAbility accommodations, please upload your accommodation letter as your form of documentation (no other documentation is required). If you must miss the midterm test or your request for an extension on the assignment falls outside the scope of your accommodation letter, please **contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email me at kosha.bramesfeld@utoronto.ca to confirm the request.

Illness, injury, or emergency. If you require a make-up test or assignment extension due to illness, injury, mental health crisis, or some other type of emergency, you must submit one of the following forms of documentation (*typically **within 2 business days of the missed work**):

- **ACORN Absence Declaration.** Students may use the Absence Declaration tool to self-declare an absence once per term for a maximum of seven consecutive days. The form should be submitted within two days of the missed term work and the date of the missed term work must fall within the seven-day declaration period. Absences cannot be declared in advance, nor can they be declared after the fact.
- **Alternative documentation:** Students who cannot declare on ACORN because they have already used their one declaration for the term, or because they missed the declaration window, will need to submit alternative documentation to me (e.g., a [UofT Verification of Illness Form](#), death certificate, or a self-authored request for compassionate consideration).

Religious observances. If our midterm test conflicts with the date of a religious observance, please submit the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) (**at least two weeks before the midterm test** or as soon as possible). Select “Religious Accommodation” as the reason. (No other documentation is required).

Academic conflicts. An academic conflict occurs when two or more tests or sanctioned academic events are scheduled at an overlapping time. Having multiple tests or assignments due on the same day is not considered an academic conflict. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines and to plan ahead to study for test. Because our midterm test is scheduled during our regularly scheduled class time, it is very unlikely that you will have an academic conflict. Indeed, 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.

With this said, if some kind of valid academic conflict does occur, please do the following:

1. Submit the [PSYC12 Missed Term Work Form](#) (**at least two weeks before the test** or as soon as the academic conflict is known)
 2. Select Academic Conflict as the reason for needing accommodation.
 3. Submit evidence of your conflict (e.g., screenshots of the scheduled test or event).
 4. Provide the email address of the instructor I will need to contact to confirm the conflict.
- **Please note:** The approved accommodation that is agreed upon between me and the other instructor may involve rescheduling your other test/event, rather than rescheduling our PSYC12 test. Please also be aware that the rescheduled test might be rescheduled for the same day as your other test and may result in you taking back-to-back tests.

Academic Integrity

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) 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.

Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial. The *Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial* posted on Quercus (go to Modules >> Assignment) provides information on how to paraphrase, cite, and reference sources using APA-style citations and references. You are expected to know the content of this tutorial and to properly paraphrase and cite your sources in all assignments, papers, and presentations. Know this: if you cite and/or reference a source as part of your submitted work for this course, this is you stating that you have actually found and consulted that source. Be prepared to produce and explain any source that you cite within your course work.

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>).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (including, but not limited to ChatGPT) **is not allowed** on tests / exams and **is strongly discouraged** in the preparation of your engagement activities and assignments for the course. Please note that the use of any writing tool (including, but not limited to, generative AI) has the potential to violate two key premises of academic integrity that are core to this course:

1. Your written work should reflect your own knowledge, understanding, and critical analysis. **Asking anyone (or any tool) to do your work for you is an academic integrity violation.** Be prepared to explain anything that you submit as your work.
2. If you cite and/or reference a paper in your work for this course, this is you stating that you have actually found and consulted that source. **Be prepared to produce and explain any source that you cite within your work for this course.**

Recording and/or distributing class materials. Recording, photographing, or distributing any aspect of this course, including (but not limited to) assignment prompts, paper guidelines, lectures, guest speakers, or resources – without prior approval of all involved and explicit instructor permission **is not allowed**. This includes (but is not limited to) entering assignment prompts or paper guidelines into generative artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT) or the distribution of course materials through other questionable “studying” services (such as CourseHero).

Useful Resources for Student Success

Our course website will provide a running list of resources specific to the content of the course. In addition, you may find the following resources helpful for your general professional development as a social psychology scholar.

Academic supports²

USTC Student Policies: <https://www.utoronto.ca/studentaffairs/student-policies>

UTSC Dates and Deadlines: <https://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/dates-and-deadlines>

Writing Services: <http://www.utoronto.ca/twc/>

English Language Development Centre: <http://www.utoronto.ca/eld/>

Presentation Skills: <http://www.utoronto.ca/ctl/presentation-skills>

AccessAbility: <http://www.utoronto.ca/~ability/>

Health and Wellness: <http://www.utoronto.ca/hwc/>

Skill building, future planning, Academic Advising, Career Centre:
<http://www.utoronto.ca/aacc/>

Writing Centre

This course requires the submission of two term papers. Among other criterion, your papers will be assessed on their comprehensiveness, organization, and communication of ideas. For this reason, you are strongly encouraged to utilize the services of the UTSC Writing Centre:

<https://www.utoronto.ca/twc/welcome>

The Writing Centre supports student learning at any stage in the writing process, from planning an outline to polishing a final draft. During the term, they offer appointments, drop-in hours, and writing groups. Please plan ahead to utilize these services.

English Language Development Centre

Because of its emphasis on written and oral communication, all students in this course are expected to exhibit a high level of “Academic English”. Developing these skills can be challenging for every student, no matter their language or origin. The English Language Development Centre supports all students in developing better Academic English and critical thinking skills needed in academic and professional communication. Make use of the personalized support offered via academic writing skills development and Communication Café sessions to enhance your ability to do better in the various components of this course. Details and sign-up information can be found at: <http://www.utoronto.ca/eld/>

² I extend my thanks to Dr. Michael Souza, who compiled this list of student resources and graciously agreed to let me use them in this syllabus.