

SYLLABUS**Meeting Minds:
The Psychology of Interpersonal Interactions**

PSYC17H3 LEC01
Winter 2025
Wednesdays 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
In-person at IA2150A

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Y. Andre Wang
Office: SW538
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm at SW538
You can schedule online appointments with me for other times during the week.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Leif Anderson (he/him)
Gale Chong (she/her)

CORRESPONDENCE

For any questions about the course, including course materials, assignments, and exams, please sent emails to: meetingminds.utsc@gmail.com.

Messages sent to other addresses (e.g., to Quercus or the instructor's and TAs' individual email accounts) may not be answered.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What happens when two (or more) minds meet—how do they interact and interconnect? Specifically, how do people “get on the same page,” and what are barriers that might stand in the way? Guided by these questions, this course will provide a broad overview of the psychological phenomena and processes that enable interpersonal connection. With a social psychological focus and diverse perspectives from related psychological, communication, and relationship sciences, this course will examine:

- How people perceive and understand others' thoughts, feelings, and intentions
- How people communicate their own inner states to be understood
- How interpersonal interactions unfold at the level of dyads (two-person interactions) and groups (collective coordination)
- How meaningful connections are developed, maintained, and disrupted

Through studying these topics, you will gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena and processes that facilitate interpersonal connection and develop tools to navigate and strengthen your own relationships.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course, you will have learned to:

- Understand interpersonal connection: Explain how thoughts, feelings, and intentions shape interactions in dyads and groups.
- Analyze barriers and strategies: Identify challenges to interpersonal connection and evaluate evidence-based solutions.
- Critically engage with research: Interpret and critique empirical studies on interpersonal psychology.
- Apply psychological principles: Use course concepts to reflect on and improve your interpersonal relationships.
- Examine real-world dynamics: Assess real-world examples of connection and disconnection using psychological theories.
- Integrate diverse perspectives: Synthesize insights from multiple psychological disciplines to understand and address interpersonal challenges.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is a lecture-based course with in-class activities that emphasize sharing perspectives (both from the readings and your own) and interacting with each other (it is the topic of the course, after all!). To create a space where all students feel comfortable fully engaging with each other, including sometimes potentially difficult conversations, lectures will not be recorded. Therefore, you should make every effort to attend class whenever possible.

Lecture slides will be available on Quercus after each class; note, however, that lecture slides do not cover all course materials (e.g., contents covered during in-class activities, in readings, or verbally delivered) and therefore are not a sufficient substitution for lecture attendance. If you know you will miss a lecture, please borrow your classmates' lecture notes.

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, a list of required readings is posted on Quercus that accompany the lectures. Whenever possible, I have chosen readings that are well-written, accessible, and apply the core concepts of this course to real-world issues. **You are expected to read the required readings prior to the lecture they accompany.** I will reference these readings in lectures, but not in full. **They will be tested on exams.**

COURSE WEBSITE

I will primarily use Quercus to make class announcements (I recommend that you turn on email notifications for announcements) and link course materials (e.g., readings, class slides, assignment instructions).

MARKING SCHEME AND DUE DATES

Your grade for this course will consist of the following components:

Component	Percentage	Due Date
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Midterm	30%	February 12 (Wednesday; in class)
Final	35%	TBD
Podcast: Episode 1	10%	February 10 (Monday)
Podcast: Episode 2	10%	March 10 (Monday)
Podcast: Episode 3	10%	March 31 (Monday)
Reflection	5%	April 4 (Friday)
Total	100%	

All due times are 11:59 pm ET on the due date, except otherwise noted.

GRADING COMPONENTS

Midterm and Final Exams (30% and 35% of course grade, respectively)

The midterm and final exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and written-response short-answer questions. Both exams are cumulative; the final exam will place greater emphasis on course materials delivered after the midterm exam. Both exams will be based on both lecture content and assigned readings.

Podcast (30% of course grade)

It would not be a true learning experience on interpersonal interactions without engaging in them yourself. That is the aim of the podcast assignment: You will create a video podcast series with your classmates (as fellow podcast co-hosts) in which you interact and talk about the psychology of interactions (meta, I know). This assignment challenges you to both connect psychological concepts to real-world experiences and test your ability to think critically and communicate effectively.

Over the semester, you will produce three 10-minute (no more than 15 minutes) podcast episodes, each focusing on a specific theme from the course (see Schedule below for general topics). Through this format, you will:

- Practice explaining psychological phenomena and theories plainly and accurately
- Reflect on how interpersonal processes underlie everyday interactions
- Develop skills in storytelling, critical analysis, and multimedia communication

For each episode, you will be co-hosting with a different classmate. Although your ability to collaborate and interact with your co-host(s) will be evaluated, you will be graded as individuals. More information and rubric for the podcast assignments are forthcoming.

Reflection (5% of course grade)

To encourage you to connect what you learn in this course to your own life, you will be asked to write a two-page personal reflection on something you learn that is relatable to you. Rather than a general summary of course materials, I am looking for specific, personal insights, such as a

memorable experience that illustrates a concept we cover in class, a curious encounter that poses questions you wonder about, or even an awkward interaction that lingers in your mind. This is an opportunity to consolidate your learning and critically apply knowledge to enhance your understanding of interpersonal processes. More information and rubric for the Reflection assignment are forthcoming.

LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

I expect punctual assignment submissions, but I recognize that various reasons might sometimes prevent you from doing so. To include flexibility for late submissions, I allow you to submit the Podcast and the Reflection assignments late without penalty, **as long as the combined hours of lateness across these assignments do not exceed 48 hours**. Each 12 hours of lateness beyond the 48-hour grace period will incur a 1-point penalty on your course grade (e.g., being 48.01–60.00 hours late cumulatively will cost 1 point, being 60.01–72.00 hours late cumulatively will cost 2 points). The late penalty will apply to the late assignment that exhausts the grace period.

Example: You submit your Podcast Episode 1 late by 6 hours, your Podcast Episode 2 late by 20 hours, your Podcast Episode 3 late by 20 hours, and your Reflection late by 12 hours. You will have exhausted your 48-hour grace period on the Reflection and incur a late penalty of $6 + 20 + 20 + 12 - 48 = 10$ hours. If your Reflection receives 4/5 (80%), then your actual grade on Reflection after applying the late penalty will be 3/5 (60%). You Podcast submission grades will not be subject to the late penalty.

Because of the flexibility introduced by this grace period, I will not consider individual requests for deadline extensions unless they fall within the scope of the missed term work policy (see Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy below).

EMAIL POLICY

- We (the instructor and the TAs) will do our best to answer your emails within 72 hours during weekdays. Expect a longer response time if you email us between Friday afternoon and Sunday evening.
- If we have not replied to your email after 72 hours during weekdays, you can follow up *in the same email thread* (instead of drafting a new email) in the off chance that we miss your first email.
- If you have questions that can't be answered briefly via email, it is best to come see me (the instructor) during my office hours. I might also suggest that we meet during office hours instead of conversing via email.
- If you email us within 48 hours of a class or due date, we may not be able to respond to you in time (or at all, if your question no longer applies by the time we get to it).

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS POLICY

The rise of generative AI tools (referred to as “AI tools” below; e.g., ChatGPT) provides both opportunities and perils for learning. My current view on these tools is that wise use of them can

facilitate learning. Referring to outputs from AI tools can be an efficient way to learn and find inspiration. More broadly, learning to use AI well is an emerging skill that we can collectively build together.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind major limitations of AI tools, such as inaccuracy, factual errors, and widely documented biases. AI tools, particularly those based on large language models, are “look back” machines; their ability to advance knowledge is limited at the moment. Therefore, the outputs from AI tools are mixed and require careful vetting.

Reflecting these views, the following policies state *appropriate* and *inappropriate* use of AI tools in this course. These policies apply to the Podcast and the Reflection assignments. The use of AI tools in midterm and final exams is forbidden.

Appropriate use of AI tools

- As learning aids (e.g., to help you understand concepts and readings)
- As initial idea generators (e.g., to brainstorm ideas)
- As writing consultant (e.g., to provide feedback on your writing)

You must disclose appropriate use of AI tools. The disclosure should consist of:

- A summary of the nature and degree of appropriate use in the assignment submission (e.g., “I used GPT-4o to generate a summary of [section of reading] and referred to the GPT-generated summary when creating the outline of Podcast Episode 2.”).
- Full documentation of your use, including outputs and the prompts used to generate them from the AI tools, as an appendix with your completed assignments. Examples of full documentation include screenshots of all interactions with the AI tools and printed web pages. If you are not sure how to do so, please check with me prior to assignment submission.
- You will not be penalized in grading for appropriate use of AI tools.

Inappropriate use of AI tools

- Directing copying text generated by AI tools in any context and claiming it as your own: Copying text generated by AI tools, much like copying text from another human’s work, is plagiarism. Instead, you should paraphrase AI-generated text (i.e., rewrite it in your own voice) or directly quote it. Either way, you need to cite the AI tools you used in APA style (e.g., <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>).

Ultimately, all assignment submissions must be your own work, and you are responsible for all contents of your submissions. Failure to properly disclose the use of AI tools may be considered an academic offense in this course.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is crucial to well-being. Finding time and space to foster and maintain mental health is central, and I want to help you do so. I encourage you to check out these resources that are available both on-campus and off-campus: <https://www.utoronto.ca/hwc/mental-health-services-and-resources-utsc-students>. Please reach out to me if you have concerns or would like to receive support.

A message from the UTSC Health & Wellness Centre: “The UTSC Health & Wellness Centre offers appointments with doctors, nurses and counsellors. We also provide peer support and student focused groups and events. Our goal is wellness for EVERY student and our vision is Transformative Inclusive Care. Thriving Community.

We are located at SL270 and can be reached by phone at 416-287-7065 or email at health.uts@utoronto.ca!

Follow us on Instagram at @wellness_uts for updates on services and events!”

SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topics	Assignment Due	Assignment
1	Jan 8	Introduction to Interpersonal Psychology		
2	Jan 15	Understanding Others		
3	Jan 22	Being Understood		
4	Jan 29	Initiating Interactions		
5	Feb 5	Dyadic Interactions	Feb 10 (M)	Podcast: Episode 1
6	Feb 12	Midterm		
-	Feb 19	No class – Reading Week		
7	Feb 26	Affective & Clinical Perspectives		
8	Mar 5	Group Interactions	Mar 10 (M)	Podcast: Episode 2
9	Mar 12	Barriers to Connection		
10	Mar 19	Repairing and Strengthening Connection		
11	Mar 26	Applications of Interpersonal Psychology	Mar 31 (M)	Podcast: Episode 3
12	Apr 2	Your Next 1,000 Interactions	Apr 4 (F)	Reflection
	TBD	Exam		

READINGS

Week 1: January 8 Introduction to Interpersonal Psychology

No reading

Week 2: January 15 Understanding Others

Malle, B. (2025). Theory of mind. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retrieved from <http://noba.to/a8wpytg3>

Parkinson, B. (2012). Social perception and attribution. In Hewstone, M., Stroebe, W., & Jonas, K. (Eds.), *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (pp. 42–65). Oxford: Blackwell.

Week 3: January 22 Being Understood

Jordan, C. H., & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.) *The self in social psychology* (pp. 461–470). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Reis, H. T., Lemay Jr, E. P., & Finkenauer, C. (2017). Toward understanding understanding: The importance of feeling understood in relationships. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11(3), e12308.

Week 4: January 29 Initiating Interactions

McEwan, B., & Guerrero, L. K. (2010). Freshmen engagement through communication: Predicting friendship formation strategies and perceived availability of network resources from communication skills. *Communication Studies*, 61, 445–463.

Epley, N., Kardas, M., Zhao, X., Atir, S., & Schroeder, J. (2022). Undersociality: Miscalibrated social cognition can inhibit social connection. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 26(5), 406–418.

Week 5: February 5 Dyadic Interactions

Higgins, E. T., Rossignac-Milon, M., & Echterhoff, G. (2021). Shared reality: From sharing-is-believing to merging minds. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 30(2), 103–110.

Yeomans, M., Schweitzer, M. E., & Brooks, A. W. (2022). The Conversational Circumplex: Identifying, prioritizing, and pursuing informational and relational motives in conversation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 44, 293–302.

Week 6: February 12 In-class Midterm**Reading Week: February 19 NO CLASS****Week 7: February 26 Affective & Clinical Perspectives**

Hodges, S. D., Kiel, K. J., Kramer, A. D., Veach, D., & Villanueva, B. R. (2010). Giving birth to empathy: The effects of similar experience on empathic accuracy, empathic concern, and perceived empathy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(3), 398–409.

Best, M. W., & Bowie, C. R. (2022). Social exclusion in psychotic disorders: An interactional processing model. *Schizophrenia Research*, 244, 91–100.

Week 8: March 5 Group Interactions

Cooney, G., Mastroianni, A. M., Abi-Esber, N., & Brooks, A. W. (2020). The many minds problem: Disclosure in dyadic versus group conversation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 31, 22–27.

Page-Gould, E. (2012). To whom can I turn? Maintenance of positive intergroup relations in the face of intergroup conflict. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3(4), 462–470.

Week 9: March 12 Barriers to Connection

Boothby, E. J., Cooney, G., Sandstrom, G. M., & Clark, M. S. (2018). The liking gap in conversations: Do people like us more than we think? *Psychological Science*, 29(11), 1742–1756.

Eyal, T., Steffel, M., & Epley, N. (2018). Perspective mistaking: Accurately understanding the mind of another requires getting perspective, not taking perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 114(4), 547–571.

Week 10: March 19 Repairing and Strengthening Connection

Chapters 9 and 10 of:

Finkel, E. J. (2017). *The all-or-nothing marriage: How the best marriages work*. New York, NY: Dutton.

Week 11: March 26 Applications of Interpersonal Psychology

Greenaway, K. H., Wright, R. G., Willingham, J., Reynolds, K. J., & Haslam, S. A. (2015). Shared identity is key to effective communication. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(2), 171–182.

Levine, E. E., Roberts, A. R., & Cohen, T. R. (2020). Difficult conversations: Navigating the tension between honesty and benevolence. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 31, 38–43.

Week 12: April 2 Your Next 1,000 Interactions

Itzhakov, G., Reis, H. T., & Weinstein, N. (2022). How to foster perceived partner responsiveness: High-quality listening is key. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 16(1), e12648.

Talaifar, S., Buhrmester, M. D., Ayduk, Ö., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2021). Asymmetries in mutual understanding: People with low status, power, and self-esteem understand better than they are understood. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 16(2), 338–357.

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.

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.

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 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 416-287-7560 or email ability.uts@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.

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 yilinandre.wang@utoronto.ca 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 to the course email	<u>10 BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE</u> of the missed deadline

Disability-related reasons for students registered with AccessAbility Services	<p>For missed <i>TERM TESTS</i>,</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 <i>ASSIGNMENTS</i>,</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 missed work
Religious Conflict	None required	

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.