

**Faculty of Health  
Department of Psychology  
PSYC 4180 6.0 Section A: CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY  
Wednesdays, 11:30-2:30, HNE B15  
Fall/Winter 2024-2025**

---

Please note that this course will be delivered on-campus, in person. You must be prepared to attend class in person for weekly synchronous meetings which will take place each Wednesday from 11:30 to 2:30. Because this is a seminar class that depends on discussion, *you are expected to attend class each week*. During these meetings, you will be required to interact with your peers, instructor, and TA during group discussions for participation. This class is not recorded and never will be.

## **Section 1: Basic Class Information**

### **Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: Jessica Sutherland, PhD (she/her/hers)

Office Hours: By appt

Email: [jesuther@yorku.ca](mailto:jesuther@yorku.ca) (Note: I respond to email M-F, usually between 9-5pm. You can expect a response from me within 24 hours on business days. Outside of those hours, please expect a response from me on the next business day.)

<b>T.A.</b>	<b>Danika Wagner</b>
<b>Email</b>	danika16@yorku.ca
<b>Office Hours</b>	By appt via email/discussed in class

### **What You Can Expect From Your TA and I**

- To meet your level of engagement and interest in our course;
- To be clear and transparent in expectations of you in this course;
- To prepare all necessary course content and post it well in advance of when you require it;
- To be available to support your success over email, Zoom, office hours, and in-person in class;
- To provide feedback and grades within a reasonable time frame;
- To uphold course policies and ensure fairness for all students; and
- To be professional and treat you with respect over email, Zoom, and in-class.

### **What We Expect From You**

- To be engaged and active with course materials, your instructor, and TA;
- To ensure you understand all course requirements and expectations, and ask questions if you need clarification;
- To read or watch all course documents, resources, and lectures;

- To access the numerous supports available to you in our class;
- To review your feedback on assignments and use it to improve future versions of your work;
- To ensure you understand all course policies; and
- To treat your instructor, TA, and classmates with respect and behave professionally over email, Zoom, and in-person.

**Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced**

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology)
- HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II) or substitute
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods)
- Students must be in an Honours program in Psychology and have completed at least 84 credits

**Course Credit Exclusions**

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

**Course website:** [eClass](#)

All course materials will be available on the course eClass site, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. The site will be your central access point for course materials.

**Course Description**

In this course, students will develop and practice critical thinking skills required to become responsible and analytical consumers of concepts and research in psychology. This course will include twice-weekly in-person meetings to discuss class concepts.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate ability to think critically about applications of psychological findings reported in the media.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of variety of ways to express psychological findings in everyday life.
3. Critically identify myths or stereotypes in common discourse.
4. Recognize limits of conclusions based on inferential statistics.

**Specific Learning Objectives**

1. Demonstrate the ability to collect, describe, understand, and think critically about research results and inference, and how they are communicated in both scientific journals and in the media.
2. Demonstrate ability to gather, interpret, evaluate and integrate research from distinct (and sometimes conflicting) sources to arrive at an informed opinion.

3. Effectively communicate scientific research and informed conclusions on research in a range of communication media for a general public audience understanding level.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the strengths and limitations of different communication media and use this understanding to communicate science within them.
5. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate credibility of evidence using reason and logic.

**Required Text**

1. *7 Deadly Sins of Psychology* by Chris Chambers
2. Additional readings will be posted on eClass

Please note that while you can purchase a hard copy of Chris Chambers’ book if you wish, you can also read and download it for free via York’s library. Please search for the book using the library’s search function and ensure you download and read the 2019 edition.

**Class Format and Attendance Policy**

This is an synchronous, in-person, on-campus course. As a fourth-year capstone seminar, attendance and class participation is required. Students are expected to attend class regularly prepared to discuss that week’s content. Participation grades in class will be based on attendance, class participation, and completing weekly thought papers.

**Section 2: Assessment and Grading**

**Course Requirements and Assessment:**

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Engagement – attendance, participation, thought papers. 63 points available, collect 45 out of 63 for full credit (17 freebies)	Weekly throughout	30%
Group Discussion Facilitation	(see sign-up link on eClass)	20%
Data Fraud Assignment	Draft of Methods: October 27th, 2024 Draft of Intro, Methods (revised), Results: February 2nd, 2025 Final Manuscript/Reflection: April 6th, 2025 at 11:59pm	50%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Description of Assignments**

Please note that more detailed assignment descriptions can be found on eClass and will be further discussed in class.

Engagement: Students are expected to attend class weekly, in person, prepared to discuss that week’s content. You will be graded on: 1) attendance (1 point), 2) discussion engagement (1

point), and 3) submission of thought papers BEFORE class (i.e. by 11:30am the day of class; 1 point). Thought papers should be 250+ words (longer if you'd like) and must address ALL of that week's readings. You will submit thought papers via a discussion forum on eClass before each class.

Group Discussion Facilitation: In the first several weeks of class, you will sign up to facilitate one class discussion for approximately 1-1.5 hours. You will work in groups (2-5 people) and will be responsible for completing all readings and coming prepared to facilitate discussion amongst your classmates. All members of the group must contribute to facilitation. *Note that you are required to meet with the instructor or TA at least one week in advance before you are scheduled to facilitate.*

Data Analysis Assignment: you will work in groups of 2-5 (or alone, if preferred) to decide on a publically available dataset, research question, and analysis method. You will work together to write a 5-7 page journal article (introduction/literature review, methods, results, and discussion/conclusion), and a 1-2 page reflection on your analytic process. We will spend time in class working on this together with guidance from the instructor and TA. This assignment is due April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 11:59pm.

### **Assignment Submission Requirements**

All assignments must be submitted on eClass to receive credit. Under no circumstances will assignments ever be accepted over email. Assignments submitted via documents must be submitted in .doc, .docx, or PDF formats. PDF is the ideal format, as it better preserves APA formatting. Assignments submitted as Google docs, .pages, or any other file type will not be accepted and you will receive a 0. *It is your responsibility to ensure you upload: 1) documents in the correct, accepted format, and 2) the correct document for the assignment you are submitting.* If we cannot read or open your file, you will receive a 0. If it is not the correct assignment you have uploaded, you will receive a 0. Always double-check your file was uploaded correctly and is the one you intended to submit. If you realize you have uploaded something incorrectly, please contact myself or your TA *immediately (within 30 minutes) after your submission* to correct the error.

### **Grading as per Senate Policy**

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests\* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2024-25](#)

## Final Grade 'Bumps'

All final grades are calculated according to assignments' weights in the course. Grades that are <0.5% from the next letter grade are automatically rounded (e.g. a 79.8% is automatically rounded to an 80.0%). Outside of this automatic rounding process, I will not consider any request to 'bump' a final grade for any reason, ever.

## Section 3: Important Course Policies

### Flexible Options

In my teaching, I typically use flexible options instead of absolute due dates for most assignments. Please see below for how this works:

1. For weekly participation, you have 63 points available to collect but need only 45 to receive full credit on participation. This gives you room to be sick, have a busy week, or an appointment to attend to during class time without needing any accommodation.
2. For the data analysis assignment, you can opt to hand in drafts on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup> to receive pre-grading and feedback, and re-submit those as part of your final manuscript submission. Please note the following:
  - a) Because these early submissions are not considered your final submission, no late work is accepted. You don't get a 0 on that section, you just don't get early feedback.
  - b) Failure to submit your final manuscript assignment without using your one-time 5-day extension pass will result in a 10% grade deduction per day late, up to 5 days, including weekends. After these 5 days, no work will be accepted.
3. If you are not able to attend class for your discussion facilitation day, you will be swapped to another group that is presenting within 2-3 weeks. Missing your discussion facilitation day requires extreme, unforeseeable circumstances. You will not get a choice to what you are swapped to and your new group/week will depend entirely on availability. In-person attendance will be required for this option. If you cannot attend your scheduled and re-scheduled day in person, be prepared to complete the missed test form in Section 5 below. Failure to attend for the re-scheduled facilitation will result in a 0.
4. Due date times are strict in the interest of fairness. 11:30am means 11:30am and 11:59pm means 11:59pm. Submissions after these times will either not be accepted (participation points) or they will be subject to the late penalty (data analysis assignment). If you anticipate needing to use your one-time 5-day extension pass, ensure you email it to your TA before the 11:59pm deadline. Otherwise, it will not be applied to that assignment.

### One-Time 5-Day Extension Pass

You can find the one-time 5-day extension pass on eClass. This extension pass grants you an additional 5 days, including weekends, to submit your data analysis assignment. This means that assignments using the 5-day extension pass will be due by April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 11:59pm. To redeem it, simply download it and send it to your TA in advance of the due date. This cannot be

redeemed after the due date and no further extensions beyond the 5 days will be provided. No explanation is required, simply attach it to an email to your TA and let them know when, within the 5-day period, you will submit your assignment. You can only use this pass once.

## **Section 4: Technology and Academic Honesty**

### **Email Etiquette Policy**

For our class, I respond to emails between Monday to Fridays, 9 am – 5 pm. I do not read or respond to email in the evenings or on weekends, though you are welcome to email me any time and I will respond on the next business day.

Email is the primary mode of communication between yourself and your TAs and professors outside of class. There are formal norms expected in emails in professional settings, which include university courses. Failure to use a professional format and tone can result in creating a poor impression, and not getting your questions or concerns addressed. Before you email me or your TA (as well as any other professors or TAs), please note the following:

1. It should contain a proper greeting and your name and course information. You should always address your professors and TAs by the name they have specifically told you to use. In this class, emails to me should be addressed to Dr./Professor Sutherland; your TAs should be addressed by their first name.
2. Ensure your question is not already answered in the syllabus or any documents provided on eClass (e.g. various guides, rubrics). *We will not respond to any questions that are directly addressed in the syllabus or course documents!*
3. Your email is professional in tone – it does not use slang and contains proper spelling and grammar.
4. It has a specific question, comment, or concern that is clearly stated. When appropriate or necessary, you also describe what you have already tried to resolve your question or concern.
5. It is sent as reasonably in advance as possible so we have time to respond to it. For example, emails sent at 10pm at night asking questions about an assignment due that day may not be responded to without enough time for you to adjust your work.

### **Information on Plagiarism Detection**

In this class, you will submit your data analysis assignment to Turn It In. You will be able to see your overlap percentage after you submit your assignment. Provided you have submitted early enough before the deadline, you can make adjustments and re-submit again if you need to.

There is no ‘maximum’ amount of overlap allowed; instead, we are more concerned with the *quality* of overlap rather than the *quantity*. This means that we are concerned with attempts to pass off others’ work as your own without attempts to cite properly (i.e., plagiarism). By effectively summarizing, paraphrasing, and citing properly, you can avoid problematic overlap

in your writing from sources you have used.

Please note that it is a violation of York's Senate Policy on Academic Honesty to re-use work you have submitted in previous attempts of PSYC4180, or another course, in this course without your instructor's permission. See the link below to the Senate Policy.

### **Academic Integrity for Students**

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

### **Electronic Device Policy**

This course will be delivered in-person and is discussion-based. Therefore, electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops) are permitted during class time for course-related purposes but are not essential. You may use your devices to refer to your notes or class materials during discussion.

### **Technology Glitches, Issues, and Other Problems**

It is your responsibility to ensure you know how to use features on eClass, Zoom, and your preferred word processing software (e.g. Word, Google Docs). If you are having problems with any of York's platforms (e.g. eClass), [please contact York's IT support](#). If you experience technological problems while submitting assignments that are not related to the course itself (e.g. a page not loading, your DUO Mobile not working), be prepared to provide proof of the issue/error you are experiencing, and proof that you have contacted IT support for assistance. Waiting until the last minute to submit work may leave you vulnerable to technological problems at the deadline; *therefore, do not wait until the last minute!* Vague references to "errors" encountered during submissions are not grounds to accept late work.

Mass outages that affect the entire university (e.g., eClass going down) will be addressed and a solution provided to students as soon as possible. If this situation occurs, do not panic; we will find a solution.

## **Section 5: Standard York Policies and Procedures**

### **Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment**

There are no tests or exams in this course. Please see above for my policy on missed/late assignments and extensions. Please note that use of the 5-day extension pass does not require this form.

For any missed quiz or late assignment, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office. At this time, due

to COVID-19 an Attending Physician’s Statement (APS) is not required, however, a reason for missing an evaluated component in the course must be provided.

[HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz or late assignment.

### Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to [Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates](#)

	Fall (Term F)	Year (Term Y)	Winter (Term W)
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	September 18	September 18	January 20
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	October 2	October 16	January 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	November 8	February 7	March 14
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript – see note below)	November 9 – December 3	February 8 - April 4	March 15- April 4

### Add and Drop Deadline Information

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

### Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in



the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as “Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation” (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or “encouraging, enabling or causing others” (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

### **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

*Please note that I have built in many accommodations to the course design, which gives ALL students access to accommodations normally reserved only for students registered with SAS. This includes flexible options for engagement, the 5-day extension pass, and option to submit your manuscript sections early and keep that grade or revise your work.*

### **Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

### **Course Materials Copyright Information**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC4180 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#).

## Section 6: Course Schedule

<b>WEEK – FALL 2024</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DUE</b>
September 4	Intro, Welcome	
September 11	Believe it or not?	Thought Paper #1
September 18	Living in our bubbles	Thought Paper #2
September 25	“Truth” and “Truthiness”; quick statistics and variables recap	Thought Paper #3
October 2	NO CLASS – time for you to meet for group project data selection, write Methods section	<i>Meet with your group mates! Select a dataset, decide on variables you are interested in, begin drafting your Methods section.</i>
October 9	Sin of Bias	Thought Paper #4
<i>October 16</i>	<i>READING WEEK</i>	<i>READING WEEK</i>
October 23	Sin of Flexibility	Thought Paper #5  <i>Submit Methods draft by Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59pm</i>
October 30	Sin of Unreliability	Thought Paper #6
November 6	Sin of Data Hoarding	Thought Paper #7
November 13	Sin of Corruptibility	Thought Paper #8
November 20	Sin of Internment	Thought Paper #9
November 27	Sin of Bean Counting	Thought Paper #10
<b>WEEK – WINTER 2025</b>		
January 8	Positive psych and ~wellness culture~	Thought Paper #11
January 15	Group work time – work on analyses, write Introduction and Results sections, revise Methods section if needed	
January 22	Developmental psychology	Thought Paper #12
January 29	Psychology as a business; guests: Dr. Jen Mills, PhD, C.Psych	Thought Paper #13  <i>Submit Intro, revised Methods, and Results sections by Sunday, February 2nd at 11:59pm</i>
February 5	Neuroscience	Thought Paper #14

February 12	Men are from Mars, women are from Venus – Evolutionary psychology	Thought Paper #15
<i>February 19</i>	<i>READING WEEK</i>	<i>READING WEEK</i>
February 26	Nudge theory	Thought Paper #16
March 5	Big data	Thought Paper #17
March 12	NO CLASS - Group work time – work on final submission (intro, methods/results, discussion)	
March 19	Identity	Thought Paper #18
March 26	Evaluating higher education	Thought Paper #19
April 2	The future, wrap-up, reflect on large assignments	Thought Paper #20 <i>Submit final manuscript and reflection by April 6th, 11:59pm</i>