**\*Faculty of Health**
**Department of Psychology**
**PSYC 4180 6.0 Section F**
**CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY**
**Fall/Winter 2024 – 2025**
**Monday 8:30 pm – 11:30 pm**

Instructor and T.A. Information

Instructor: Ed Haltrecht
Email: haltrech@yorku.ca

| | 4180 F |
|---|---|
| T.A. | Ashley Siegal |
| Email | asiegel9@yorku.ca |

Course website: eClass/Moodle

Texts: There are no prescribed texts for this course. Any Stats texts or Research texts that you may have previously purchased will be helpful, but there is no need to purchase texts.
Considerable material relevant to the course will be available on eClass.
**Exams**: There are no exams in this course.

## Course Delivery

This is an in-class course. However, there are sections of the course where it works much better on-line. One such section is the learning of the SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences) (synchronously and asynchronously). Learning the statistical program will be done on-line since the computer lab normally used to teach SPSS in class is not yet available for in class sessions and online versions of the SPSS program are available to students free of charge. In some instances individual sessions and team sessions will be done on-line during normal class periods. We will discuss this further in class.

Where on-line classes are held, audio-visual of Zoom sessions will be recorded and shared on eClass. For some topics, lectures will be available on eClass prior to live sessions on ZOOM.

Please note that this is a course that depends, in part on remote teaching and learning.

Technical requirements for taking the course:
1. Students will need equipment to gain access to eClass.
2. Students will also need access to Zoom for video conferencing during tutorial sessions.
3. In addition to stable, higher-speed Internet connection, students will need a

computer with webcam and microphone, and/or a smart device with these features.

A way to determine Internet connection and speed: there are online tests, such as Speedtest, that can be run.

Useful links describing computing information, resources and help for students:

Student Guide to Moodle

Zoom@YorkU Best Practices

Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide

Computing for Students Website

## 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 substitutes
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- Students must be in an Honours program in Psychology and have completed at least 84 credits (excluding (EDUC) education courses)

## Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to York Courses Website for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

## Course Description

In this course students will develop and practice the critical thinking skills required to be analytical consumers of psychological research. The format of the course will be lectures, tutorials, peer-review sessions, and student presentations. These will be conducted on-line through ZOOM.

## 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

In this course we will discuss and demonstrate the critical thinking skills required of analytical consumers and communicators of psychological research. Students will learn to gather, interpret, evaluate, and integrate distinct, and sometimes conflicting, theories and

evidence in Psychology to arrive at an informed opinion. Students will also learn to communicate their informed opinions, both orally and in writing, at a level appropriate for
the general public.

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

- Locate research articles on emerging trends and demonstrate critical thinking about research findings in Psychology
- Critically assess the methodology used to address specific research questions
- Critically assess the statistical analyses used in simple research designs
- Correctly interpret results from reported research and from the application of simple statistics
- Evaluate the credibility of scientific evidence and differentiate it from scientific conjecture
- Communicate, in writing and orally, the methods, results, and conclusions of a research study in layman terms
- Critically assess and communicate, in writing and orally, the validity and accuracy of media reports about psychological findings

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

In the first half of the course, we will discuss and develop the basic skills required to gather,
interpret, and critically evaluate research findings in Psychology. Emphasis will be placed on evaluating research studies based on key criteria, such as, construct validity, internal and external validity, and statistical validity. These concepts will be discussed and applied to both correlational and experimental studies and to both qualitative and quantitative studies. In addition, students will acquire hands-on experience making sound arguments based on the appropriate analysis and interpretation of simple data sets.

Students will apply their critical thinking skills in various real-world scenarios. Two main themes will be explored. In one theme students will be tasked with presenting, orally and in writing, the results of primary source research articles in a manner appropriate for the general public. For example, students could prepare an evidence-based report for teachers on the validity of learning styles or an evidence-based report for lawyers on the reliability of eyewitness testimony. The actual topics to be explored will be discussed in class and will be mutually agreed upon by the students and the Course Director.

In the other theme students will be tasked with critically evaluating the validity and

accuracy of current media reports about psychological findings.  These evaluations will involve comparing the original research article to the media report.

The class will form into groups of 3 – 5 students based on areas of common interest- selected by students.

| Assessment Weighting | Date of Evaluation | |
|---|---|---|
| Evaluating Media Report presentation (10 min) | Oct 21  (Group) | 15% |
| Proposal presentation (8 min) | Nov 25 (Group) | 20% |
| SPSS assignment (1 page single space (SS)) | Feb 3 (Group) | 15% |
| Individual Media Report assignment (1 page SS) | March 24 (Individual e-mail) | 10% |
| Major Paper (6 pages SS) | April 13 (Individual e-mail) | 40% |

**Total**
**100%**

**Description of Assignments**

Please see eClass.

All assignments will be e-mailed and may include a word document or a PowerPoint (auditory and visual) presentation or equivalent.

**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**

**Late Work**

There are no exams or tests in this course. Presentations can neither be rescheduled nor made-up. Missed presentations will receive a grade of zero. Late written assignments will be penalized 2% per day (i.e., 2/100),
including each day of weekends.

Students with a documented reason for missing a course deadline, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation (e.g., Attending Physician Statement) may request accommodation from the Course Instructor. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

## 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 **without permission** of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines) | September 18 | September 18 | January 20 |
| Last date to add a course **with permission** 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 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.

Attendance Policy

No attendance is taken.

**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](#)

**ETHICS AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) - [http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/ascp/index-ascp.html](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/ascp/index-ascp.html)

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

Audio-visual recordings – both on eClass/Moodle and Zoom: 1) the recordings should be used for educational purposes only and as a means for enhancing accessibility; 2) students do not have permission to duplicate, copy and/or distribute the recordings outside of the class (these acts can violate not only copyright laws but also FIPPA and intellectual property rights); and 3) all recordings will be destroyed after the end of classes. Please see the Teaching commons going remote website particularly the section on Copyright and intellectual property at https://bold.info.yorku.ca/ and https://copyright.info.yorku.ca/students-reuse-of-teaching-materials-from-york-courses-2/ for some statements to use in your course outline about intellectual property.

1) Information about Academic Resources

Digital content: York University Libraries also has access to online content that can be linked (using permalinks) through eClass/Moodle. A Library guide on creating permalinks/stable links to articles/ebooks/electronic resources can be found in various databases/Omni (the new library catalogue) at https://researchguides.library.yorku.ca/permalinks -- that can be used in eClass/Moodle. When students click on the stable link, they will be asked to authenticate through Passport York and then they have full access to the online resource. Using these permalinks addresses copyright issues.

2) Information about Academic honesty and integrity

Please see the library resources, academic integrity, and copyright section of the Going Remote website at https://bold.info.yorku.ca/

In this course, we strive to maintain academic integrity to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing SPARK's Academic Integrity module at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic integrity range from cheating (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.) to aiding and abetting (helping someone else to cheat). All breaches in this course will be reported to the appropriate university authorities, and can be punishable according to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty."

**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/

**Course Schedule**


Sept 9          Introduction      Forming groups of  5 - 6 students – Selecting research areas
Sept 16        Selecting research areas
Sept 23        Selecting research areas
Sept 30        Selecting research areas Media Reports
Oct 7          Media Reports
**Oct 14**        NO CLASS – READING WEEK
**Oct 21 (NC)\* Assignment 1 DUE: Evaluating Media Report (Group -worth 15%)**
Oct 28           Finding and evaluating Psychological Tests
Nov 4            Proposal content
Nov 11           Proposal marking rubric
Nov 18           Proposals - review
**Nov 25 (NC)   Assignment 2 DUE: Proposals (Group -worth 20%)**

Jan 6          On-Line  Learning SPSS
Jan 13         On-Line  Data analysis using SPSS
Jan 20         On-Line  Data analysis using SPSS
Jan 27         On-Line  Data analysis using SPSS
**Feb 3 (NC)    Assignment 3: SPSS analysis and interpretation (Group-worth 15%)**
Feb 10         Creating Media Reports
Feb 17 **(NC)**   NO CLASS – READING WEEK
Feb 24         Critical thinking Part 1
Mar 3          Critical thinking Part 2
Mar 10         Critical thinking Part 3
Mar 17         Critical thinking Part 4
**Mar 24 (NC)   Assignment 4:  Individual Media Report (Individual -3 pages – worth 10%)**
Mar 31         Writing Research Papers
**Apr 13 (NC)   Assignment 5: Major Paper (15 to 20 pages) (Individual worth 40%)**

**\*(NC) – NO CLASS**

**Calumet and Stong Colleges Undergraduate Syllabi Section**

**Fall/Winter 2024-2025**

We kindly request that all HH Course Directors include the following section in their Course Outlines/Syllabi.

**Calumet and Stong Colleges' Student Success Programming:**

Calumet and Stong Colleges aim to support the success of Faculty of Health students through a variety of **free programs** throughout their university career:

- Orientation helps new students transition into university, discover campus resources, and establish social and academic networks.
- Peer Mentoring connects well-trained upper-year students with first year and transfer students to help them transition into university.
- Course Representative Program aims to build the leadership skills of its Course Reps while contributing to the academic success and resourcefulness of students in core program classes.
- Peer-Assisted Study Session (P.A.S.S.) involve upper-level academically successful and well-trained students who facilitate study sessions in courses that are known to be historically challenging.
- Peer Tutoring offers one-on-one academic support by trained Peer Tutors.
- Calumet and Stong Colleges also support students' Health & Wellness, leadership and professional skills development, student/community engagement and wellbeing, career exploration, Indigenous Circle, awards and recognition, and provide opportunities to students to work or volunteer.
- Please connect with your Course Director about any specific academic resources for this class.
- For additional resources/information about our student success programs, please consult our websites (Calumet College; Stong College), email scchelp@yorku.ca, and/or follow us on Instagram (Calumet College; Stong College), Facebook (Calumet College; Stong College) and LinkedIn
- Are you receiving our weekly email (Calumet and Stong Colleges - Upcoming evens)? If not, please check your Inbox and Junk folders. If you do not find our weekly emails, then please add your 'preferred email' to your Passport York personal profile. If you need support, please contact ccscadmn@yorku.ca, and request to be added to the listerv.