



Psychology 4000A – Biological Bases of Mental Disorders - Fall 2015
Issues in Psychology (4000 Series)
Department of Psychology

Location: Tuesday, 3:05-5:45 pm, C610

Course Dropbox: adjacent to C866

Instructor:

Dr. Margaret Forgie (D850)

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Course Description:

At the University of Lethbridge, the *Issues in Psychology Series* courses are designed to allow students to expand their knowledge of the fundamental principles of several disciplines accrued during lower-level courses. This semester *Biological Bases of Mental Disorders* is intended to build upon your knowledge of abnormal psychology and the research methodology used to investigate the biological and cognitive factors implicated in the pathology of mental disorders. Students should note that this is NOT a lecture-based course. The course is not suitable for students who cannot commit to attending every class and to spending a significant amount of time each week outside of class working on course requirements. Students should note that the sociology of mental illness, current legal policies, counselling for persons with mental disorders, clinical diagnosis, and complementary and alternative treatments are NOT topics that will be emphasized in this course.

Prerequisite Courses and Background Preparation:

The prerequisites for this course are: Neuroscience 2600 and one of Psychology 3130; Psychology 3535; or Psychology 3525 and an additional 3000-level course in Psychology or Neuroscience. In addition, it is recommended that students have Psychology 2030 or an equivalent course. Students who do not have the required prerequisite courses (e.g., verified transfer credits) may be deregistered from the course without warning. In exceptional circumstances, a prerequisite waiver will be considered for a student who has adequate equivalent background. If you are considering requesting a waiver, you must contact me prior to add/drop. Submitting a request for a waiver does not guarantee that you will receive one; each case will be evaluated individually, and you will have to provide supporting documentation for prior courses not taken at the U of L.

Required Readings and Textbook:

(1) Required Readings. There is no formal textbook for course content. Required readings (e.g., journal articles) will be made available on Moodle.

(2) Required Textbook. Northey, M., & Timney, B. (2015). *Making sense in psychology: A student's guide to research and writing* (2nd ed). Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

Course Rules and Regulations:

You are expected to attend and to arrive on time for every class. Should you have an ongoing situation that prevents you doing so, please speak to me prior to the end of add-drop. You are encouraged to bring your laptop or tablet to each class to facilitate access to online resources during in-class activities. On the other hand, cell phones MUST be turned off during the class and texting is absolutely prohibited. Should you choose to use your cell phone during the class, or you are using your laptop/tablet for off-task use during the class, you will be asked to pack up your things and leave. As this is a senior course, it should go without saying that you are expected to be respectful toward your fellow classmates and your professor. Spontaneous discussion is always welcome, but that does not include using the class time for conversation and other activities that are unrelated to the course material; conducting a social chit-chat session during a classmate's presentation (or when your professor is speaking), and abruptly arriving or leaving during a class. These behaviours are rude, disrespectful, and disruptive to students and professors alike. Furthermore, a diversity of viewpoints will inevitably exist in the classroom. Voicing well-reasoned disagreement with others' viewpoints is perfectly fine; being combative, intolerant, or disrespectful towards others is not (see Part 4, Section 5). **NB.** All students are expected to be familiar with the entirety of Part 4 of the current University of Lethbridge Calendar that governs Academic Regulations, Policies, and Program Requirements. In particular, all students should have read and understood Sections 4, 5 and 9 (<https://www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar/2015-16>).

Students with Special Needs:

If you have a documented condition that prevents you from fully participating in this course, including evaluation procedures, it is your responsibility to contact me regarding your individual situation. Please note that no accommodations will be given without official notification from the Accommodated Learning Centre (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/accommodated-learning-centre/>), and not all supports are available for this course (see below).

Course Information Online:

Moodle: All course information will be available from the Moodle LMS system and students will be able to track their standing in the course by accessing the Moodle grade book. Students should check Moodle often for running updates. All students are expected to be aware of copyright regulations regarding intellectual property and distribution of course material. With the exception of information that is freely available online, all course information should be treated as copyright protected. You are free to download and print a SINGLE copy of any materials posted for your use within Moodle, and you are free to take your own notes in class and from the readings (of course!). You are not permitted to distribute the information in any form to persons not registered in this course in this semester, including turning in your material to the Students' Union Note Bank at the end of the semester. Once the information is in your hands, you are legally responsible for what you do with it. Audio recording, video recording, or taking still photographs of in-class activities or class members is strictly prohibited. This includes students with special needs. Doing so violates intellectual property rights, and the privacy of your classmates and your professor who have not consented to have their voice/questions/image captured.

Email: Other than the running posts to Moodle, my primary method of communicating with you for general notices will be via in-class announcements or by email to the class listserv. Please check your U of L email account on a regular basis, or have that account forwarded to your preferred provider. Please do your best to remember to do regular housekeeping of your U of L account so that you do not miss important notices due to a full mailbox. **NB:** If your email to me concerns questions about course information that has been made available in class, has been posted to Moodle, is given within this syllabus, is sent from a non-uleth account, or you are disrespectful to me in your wording, do not expect a reply.

Course Requirements:

(1) **Presentations (30% total)**. Students will be responsible for giving two (2) short, conference-length presentations. You will be given a maximum of 15-20 minutes (depending on enrollment) for each of your presentations (plus at least 5 minutes for a question period), with length of time strictly enforced. The presentations will be based on an introduction to your topic and background research, and then your progress on your topic later in the semester. In other words, both presentations MUST be on the same topic, and both must be related to the topic of your review paper (see Review Article Assignment below). Details of this assignment including required elements, potential topics and scheduling of dates, will be discussed in the introductory classes and all related information will be posted to Moodle. **Students should note that some elements are due one week prior to your scheduled presentation date.**

Penalty: Failure to turn in required elements on time and/or to deliver your presentation on the scheduled date(s) will result in a grade of 0.

(2) **Critical Abstracts (20% total)**. Each student is required to submit five (5) written assignments each consisting of a short critical abstract/critique of a piece of primary research. Each abstract will account for 4% of your final grade and will be assigned approximately every two weeks throughout the semester in relation to the presentation schedule. There will be no opportunity to submit a revision of an abstract for a higher grade. Details of this assignment, including required elements, will be discussed in the introductory classes and all related information will be posted to Moodle.

Penalty: If you fail to turn in an abstract on time, or you turn in an incomplete assignment, you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and those turned in more than 24 hours late will receive an automatic grade of 0.

(3) **Class Activity Assignments (20% total)**. A total of five (5) assignments, related to in-class activities will be given throughout the course. Each assignment is worth 4% of your final grade and instruction sheets for each assignment will be provided. Students should note that in-class activities include both independent and group work.

Penalty: If you fail to turn in an assignment on time, or you turn in an incomplete assignment, you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and those turned in more than 24 hours late will receive an automatic grade of 0.

(4) **Review Article Assignment (30% total)**. Students will be required to write an essay in the style of a scholarly review article of a single topic, which is the same as that of your presentations. Details of this assignment including format, required elements, and topics will be discussed in the introductory classes and all related information will be posted to Moodle. First submissions of this assignment are **due NO LATER than Tuesday, November 24, 2015 in class**. Assignments turned in to the dropbox after 4:00 pm and all incomplete assignments will be considered late submissions.

Penalties: If you fail to turn in your assignment by the first submission deadline you will incur an automatic 25% deduction to your mark and you forfeit your right to turn in a revision. Your reduced mark will account for 25% of your final grade. Assignments turned in more than 24 hours after the deadline will receive an automatic grade of 0 for 25% of your final grade.

For eligible students who choose the option of re-submitting the review article assignment for re-grading, revisions are **due NO LATER than Wednesday, December 16, 2015. All revised submissions MUST include your original draft with my comments. NO EXCEPTIONS & NO EXTENSTIONS**

Penalty: Any revision turned in after this deadline, or one that does not include your original submission, will not be graded and your mark on your first submission will stand.

Policy for Re-scheduling Presentations and Penalties for Late Submissions: With the exception of extreme extenuating circumstances all students are expected to deliver their presentations on their scheduled dates and turn in graded work on time. Supporting documentation must be provided for any request to re-schedule your presentation or for an extension on any written work. Should you find yourself in an extreme situation, please contact me ASAP via email so that I may assist you. Otherwise, penalties will be levied as described above. There will be no opportunity to re-weight course components or to complete extra work to offset missed presentations, late assignments, or poor performance on any course element.

A Note on Plagiarism: Written assignments and presentation material will be graded under the assumption that students have read and understood the contents of Northey and Timney (2015); specifically here, Chapter 5 - *Ethical Issues in Research and Writing*. All assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else's words or ideas, even if you reference those words, is plagiarism. Stringing together a set of phrases with direct quotes is not writing in your own words. Likewise, turning in virtually identical papers from a pair or group, when students have been instructed to work independently is a violation. All forms of plagiarism or misrepresentation constitute serious academic offenses. Any case of suspected plagiarism or duplication will be dealt with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable. The onus is on you to understand what constitutes plagiarism or misrepresentation and to take all steps to avoid both. It is also an academic offence to submit substantially similar work to two different courses for credit (see Part 4, Section 5 of the U of L Calendar regarding Academic Offenses).

Grading Scheme:

Letter grades will be assigned to all course components and final course percentages according to the following scale. You must meet or exceed the lower boundary for a grade category in order to be accorded that letter grade.

A+ ≥ 90	B+ 77 - < 80	C+ 67 - < 70	D+ 55 - < 60
A 85 - < 90	B 73 - < 77	C 63 - < 67	D 50 - < 55
A- 80 - < 85	B- 70 - < 73	C- 60 - < 63	F < 50