



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

**Department of Psychology**  
**Psychology 431 (L20) – Current Issues in Psychopathology**  
**Spring 2010 – Course Outline**

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<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>Dr. Sally During</b>	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	EDC 287
<b>Phone:</b>	403 630-7043	<b>Lecture Days/Time:</b>	T/R 11:00 a.m.– 13:45 p.m.
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:during@ucalgary.ca">during@ucalgary.ca</a>		
<b>Office:</b>	<b>A257D</b>		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment		

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### **Course Description and Goals**

Discussion of current developments and controversies in the assessment, etiology, and treatment of psychopathology. Emphasis will be on teaching students how to strengthen their critical thinking skills using controversial issues in the field of abnormal and clinical psychology as a basis for discussion and debate.

### **Required Text**

Halgin, R.P. (2009). Taking Sides: Clashing views on controversial issues in abnormal psychology (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Dushkin/MacGraw Hill. Available in the University Bookstore. Other reading are available to download through the University of Calgary Library.

### **Evaluation**

1. 30% of your mark will be based on a multiple choice and short essay question mid-term exam scheduled during class time. The exam will cover all material covered in class prior to the exam date (up to, and including, June 8, 2010), together with corresponding text chapters. This includes material from Issues 5, 11, 14, 7, 10, 9, & 17 from the text along corresponding lecture material.
2. 35% of your mark is based on a class presentation/debate. A team of 2-3 people will debate another team of 2-3 people on a contentious issue in clinical psychology. A position paper must be submitted **at the time of the presentation**.
3. 35% of your mark is based on a final 2-hour exam scheduled by the Registrar during the final examination period. The exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions from the text, class presentations and lectures. The exam will cover all material presented during the debates, together with information covered in team position papers (which will be posted on blackboard).

Points will be deducted for position papers handed in late. Late papers must be turned in to the Psychology main office, 275 Administration Building. Late papers will be subjected to a 10% penalty per day, including weekends. Emailed papers or assignments slipped under office doors or left on desks will NOT be accepted.

## Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90%; 89.4% will be rounded down to 89%, etc.).

## Lecture Schedule

T May 18	Course overview; discussion of debate topics and format	
	Does Mental Illness Exist?	
R May 20	Gender Bias in Assessment	
	Does Attention Deficit Disorder Exist?	Issue 5
F May 21	Last day to drop a course with no W grade and tuition refund. Last day for registration/change of registration.	
T May 25	Should psychologists prescribe medication?	Issue 11
	Is Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy Ethical?	Issue 14
R May 27	Should abstinence be the goal for treating people with alcohol problems?	Issue 7
	ADHD and Ritalin	Issue 10
T June 1	CBT vs. Meds for depression	
R June 3	Psychotherapy for schizophrenia?	Issue 9
	Does Evolution Explain Why Men Rape?	Issue 17
T June 8	Eating Disorders vs. Obesity	
	Midterm Exam Review	
R June 10	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
	Debate Preparation	
T June 15	<b>Debate 1:</b> Is divorce harmful to children?	
	<b>Debate 2:</b> Are repressed memories valid?	Issue 4
R June 17	<b>Debate 3:</b> Does media violence	Issue 15

	promote violent behavior in young people?	
	<b>Debate 4:</b> Is electroconvulsive therapy ethical?	Issue 12
T June 22	<b>Debate 5:</b> Is multiple personality disorder a valid diagnosis?	
	<b>Debate 6:</b> Should mental health professionals serve as gate keepers for physician-assisted suicide?	Issue 18
R June 24	<b>Debate 7:</b> Is forced treatment of seriously mentally ill people justified?	Issue 1
	<b>Debate 8:</b> Is pornography harmful?	
	Review for Final Exam	
	Last day to participate in research and allocate research credits.	
June 25	Lectures end	
	Last day to withdraw	
<b>M June 28- W June 30</b>	<b><i>FINAL EXAM – To Be Determined by the Registrar</i></b>	

### **Psych 431 Debates and Position Paper**

**Rationale:** Presentations at 400-level psychology courses is common. The experience can be invaluable in preparing you for future oral reports, whether for graduate school, medical school, law school or the business world. The material in Psych 431 lends itself to a debate-style presentation. You will notice the textbook is organized in a pro/con format. For every topic, there is compelling evidence on both sides of the issue. There is no right or wrong answer to each issue, so there will be no winner or loser to the debates. Rather, the debates provide the opportunity to review evidence in detail (i.e. sort out opinion/myth from fact), promote discussion and critical evaluation of the issue.

**Format:** A team of 2-3 people will debate another team of 2-3 people on a contentious issue in abnormal or clinical psychology. Twenty to 25 minutes is allotted for each team's presentation and 5 to 10 minutes for each team's rebuttal. The order of speakers will be 1) Yes side – main presentation, 2) No side – main presentation, 3) Yes side – rebuttal, 4) No side – Rebuttal. Your main presentation can follow any style you think would work for the topic. The majority of students use PowerPoint slides; you can also use overheads. You don't need to provide an exhaustive background on the topic except how it pertains to your side of the issue. The debates are intended to be enjoyable, so feel free to use cartoons, video clips, class demonstrations, or other ice-breakers. However, try not to let your presentations get too casual – these are still scientific presentations.

In previous classes, the back and forth discussion during the rebuttal often become quite 'spirited.' Although I encourage this, it creates the frequent problem of going over time. Therefore, I will ask each side to limit their rebuttal comments to two major points. That is, chose two major points the other

side presented and attempt to dispute them with your evidence or arguments. The debate will conclude with questions from the class.

**Position Paper:** A 10 to 12 page (double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman or 11 point Arial) position paper must be submitted at the time of the presentation. The paper gives you the opportunity to expand on your presentation points in greater detail. Please note that it is not sufficient to use the argument that the 'research is flawed' to support your side. All research is flawed in some way. Provide specific criticisms of why research on the topic is flawed, and how this affects the credibility of the evidence. Whenever possible, look at the preponderance of evidence (e.g. results from meta-analyses) and not just one or two studies that have findings supporting your position.

The paper should be double spaced, in APA format and have at least 10 references. Please review primary source material (original articles) in addition to secondary sources. Use headings to structure the text please! You can use tables, or point form to summarize arguments or specific evidence, however, the bulk of the paper should be written in complete sentences like a regular term paper. An electronic copy of the paper should also be submitted. I will post the file on the course web page for other students in the class to download. The purpose of this is to provide the rest of the class with notes from which to study for the final. It also allows you to focus on listening to your classmate's presentations rather than frantically taking notes.

**Choosing a Topic:** I have pre-selected a sample of issues from the textbook for the debates. These topics I feel are the most interesting and controversial in the field of abnormal/clinical psychology. New findings are appearing on these issues almost every day. Selection of the topic is first come, first served. Once you have your group together, provide me with your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices for topic (name of the topic and whether you want pro or con side). You can also choose a topic that does not appear on the list but you will need to find another team of students willing to debate the other side of the issue.

**Group work:** The majority of students have no problems working together in preparing for the presentations. However, occasionally a team experiences problems within their group. The most common concern I hear is that one person is not doing their share. A few suggestions to prevent this from happening are:

1. Divide the work up logically with clear expectations on length and quality.
2. Set deadlines in advance of the presentation date to review the material within your group. For example, if you are writing a section of the paper, have it ready at least one week before the due date to review, edit, and condense the material to everyone's satisfaction.
3. Have open discussions on how the work is going and who in the group should be doing more or less. Electing a team leader is not a bad idea provided the individual delegates work equally and is not expecting to do everything themselves.
4. Please be mindful of individual strengths and weaknesses. Some students are better writers, while others are better at public speaking. Divide up the work according to the strengths of your group members.

If you are experiencing problems within your group and cannot resolve them internally please talk to me before the presentation date. We can probably work out a solution. Please do not wait until after

the presentation is done and the paper submitted to tell me about the problem. At that point there is little I can do grade-wise.

**Grading:** Your overall grade will be based on quality of the presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting material. The total 35 marks for the debate breaks down as follows:

- 15 marks for the paper (writing, organization, consistent use of APA style)
- 10 marks for the quality of the presentation (e.g. use of A/V aids, organization, clarity of speakers, flow of presentation, rebuttal comments)
- 10 marks for soundness of arguments (use of empirical evidence vs. opinions, use of material outside of textbook chapter).

**In addition, the class will rate each team on quality of presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting material using a 1-10 scale. They can also provide written comments. The rating will not be used in your mark, but I'll provide each team with average class ratings, summary of comments, and instructor grades, feedback**

### **University of Calgary Curriculum Objectives**

University of Calgary Curriculum Objectives:

- 1) This course addresses the following core competencies:
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Analysis of problems
  - Organizing information
  - Abstract reasoning
  - Insight and intuition in generating knowledge
  - Interpretive and assessment skills

These core competencies will be incorporated through the use of interactive class discussions and roleplays, focusing on the encouragement of creative thinking and experiential learning. Students are continually encouraged to critically reflect upon families' and children's experiences and capabilities. There will be an emphasis on problem formulation and the sensitive and thorough consideration of contributing variables.

2) This course addresses the following curriculum redesign features:

- a defined interdisciplinary component
- an experiential learning component relevant to the program objectives
- integration of research

The course will emphasize the value of multidisciplinary teams. Recent advances in relevant research will be discussed, together with the encouragement of critical analysis of treatment-based research.

### **Reappraisal of Grades**

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, test, etc.) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within fifteen days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the

next fifteen days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within fifteen days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

### **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

### **Academic Accommodation**

*It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation.* If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and **have not** registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. If you are seeking academic accommodation, please notify your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of the course. Note that the lecturer must approve any tape recordings of lectures.

### **Absence From A Test**

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

### **Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)**

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. **A maximum of two (2) credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation.** The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies

available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **Jun 24th, 2010**.

### **Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Student Organizations**

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 220-5567.

**Student Union VP Academic:** Phone: 220-3911 [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)  
**Student Union Faculty Rep.:** Phone: 220-3913 [socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund is May 21st, 2010**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **May 21st, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Jun 25th, 2010**.