



PSY194H1F: The Psychology of Student Success



Class meets **Tuesdays 1-3pm** in **IN 312** (Innis College)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ashley Waggoner Denton (she/her/hers)
Email: a.waggoner@utoronto.ca
Office Location: Sidney Smith Hall, room 5016 (fifth floor)

I will be available after class every week for students wishing to chat or you can book an appointment with me [here](#).

Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

During your time in university you will be presented with all sorts of challenges, as well as amazing opportunities for learning and growth. While there are many different ways to define a “successful student”, the goal of this seminar is for everyone to develop the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to make the most of out of their university experience. You will discover what research in psychological science has to say about facing and overcoming various academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal challenges, as we cover topics including deliberate practice, imposter syndrome, and belongingness. You will also learn evidence-based strategies for better managing your attention, energy, and emotions, so that you are able to thrive (and not just survive) in university. In addition to learning about psychology, you will develop useful skills in scientific literacy, critical thinking, self-reflection, written and oral communication, and teamwork. This course is restricted to first-year students. Not eligible for CR/NCR option.

Prerequisites: None

Distribution requirement: Science

Breadth Requirement: Thought, Belief and Behaviour (2)

Reading Material/Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. All assigned readings are either open-access or available through the U of T Library system. Sometimes an assigned reading will actually be a podcast (you can either listen to the podcast – recommended! - or read the transcript). All course materials will be posted or linked to on Quercus.

Course Webpage/Quercus

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>. This is where you will find all course materials, assignments, quizzes, etc. If you have any questions about using this site, please do not hesitate to ask me!

Course Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & Application

- You will learn to describe psychological theories and concepts, illustrate them with personal/real-world/familiar examples, and evaluate their relevance to your own life.
- You will identify personal psychological strengths and areas for growth and formulate concrete plans for personal development.

Scientific Inquiry & Critical Thinking

- You will learn how to navigate information databases and other resources to find primary sources.
- You will learn to recognize and describe how psychologists collect and use psychological evidence to understand student “success” and learn not to accept claims without critically evaluating the strengths and limitations of different approaches.

Communication

- You will practice effective oral communication by participating in group discussions and creating an engaging educational resource (e.g., video) for other students.
- You will learn how to communicate effectively with people who have different backgrounds and perspectives.
- You will practice effective written communication by completing weekly written journals and receiving feedback on English grammar and fundamentals as well as writing style.

Collaboration & Professional Development

- You will develop your skills in collaborative thinking by participating in group discussions and a team project.
- You will learn how to pursue and respond appropriately to feedback from others to improve performance, as well as how to give constructive feedback.
- You will develop an understanding of academic culture and its norms, values, and practices, including the differences between university and high school intellectual activity and coursework.
- You will develop time-management and self-regulation strategies by meeting frequent deadlines and seeking out help from others when necessary.
- You will engage in critical reflection that will allow you to identify, evaluate, and refine your learning strategies.



Course Evaluation/Marking Scheme

Class Preparation: Reading Quizzes & Activities (18%)

- As this is a small seminar class, preparation for class is *essential* – not only to your personal success in this course, but to *everyone's* overall learning experience. Before class each week (with a few exceptions), you will be asked to complete an online quiz and/or other activity based on that week's reading/preparatory material. Completion of these activities will help ensure that you are actively engaging with the course material and that you are prepared for class discussions each week.



Class Engagement: Listening & Participation (14%)

- You will be assessed on your attendance, presence (e.g., listening attentively to classmates, not on your phone), communication (e.g., communicating respectfully to myself and other students) and responsibility (e.g., arriving on time, doing class activities as instructed).
- Class participation will be assessed based on the quality (relevance, insight added) and quantity (not too much, not too little) of your contributions. Questions that spark a class discussion or that help us clarify understanding can be significant contributions, too. In making this assessment, I am answering the question “how different would the class have been if that student would not have been present?”. Participation also includes small group activities/discussion, as I recognize not everyone may feel comfortable participating in larger group discussions (though I hope you will *all* feel comfortable as the semester progresses!).

Weekly Reflection Papers (20%)

- After every class, you will be prompted to complete a reflection based on the readings, activities, and discussion that week. These papers should illustrate how you have been thinking critically about the material from that week and its relevance to your own life. They should provide a record of the reflective thought and meaning you are making as you engage in the course. Reflective learners continually think about:
 - what they are learning
 - why they are learning it
 - how they are learning it
 - how they are using what they are learning
 - what their strengths and weaknesses in learning are
 - what their learning priorities are
 - how they can improve and build upon their learning process
 - how well they are working towards their short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Reflective learners consider:
- their motivation
 - their attitudes and ideas, and changes in these
 - the skills they need for different components of their study and learning



- what (if anything) is blocking their learning
- the gaps in their knowledge and skills, and how they might best work towards filling these.

You will submit 10 weekly reflection papers throughout the semester (see schedule below). Each reflection should be 1-2 double-spaced pages in length.

Educational Video Project: Evidence-Based Tips for Student Success

- You will work with a partner (or team of three) to create an engaging educational video that effectively and accurately informs fellow students about a psychology-relevant topic related to success in university.
- Project/Marks Breakdown:
 - 2-page project proposal (10%)
 - Constructive peer feedback on scripts/storyboards (8%)
 - Final product (25%)
 - Reflection (5%)
- See detailed instructions and rubrics in separate document (available on Quercus).

Course Policies

Attendance, Due Dates, and Lateness Policies

If you need to miss a class for any reason, please email me before class (see email and health & safety policies below) to let me know (you do **not** need to disclose the reason and **no** documentation is necessary). You are responsible for catching up on what was missed and are still expected to submit whatever is due that week. I highly recommend exchanging contact information with a classmate so that you may help each other out if you need to miss a class. If you end up missing **more than one** class, please come and speak to me (or I will request an appointment). Otherwise, your class engagement mark may be affected by your absence.

You are expected to do “before class” activities *before* class (e.g., Monday) and “after class” activities *after* class (e.g., Wednesday) and to submit things that are due “in class” *in class* (or just before).

However, if needed, you may submit your weekly activities by the end of the day *on the Friday* of that week (the “last chance deadline”). This last chance deadline is *always* available for reflection papers – i.e., feel free to submit every reflection paper on a Friday, if that works best for you. However, because not doing the readings can affect the entire class discussion, the last chance deadline should only be used for reading quizzes if it is absolutely necessary. If you submit a reading quiz *after* class on **more than one** occasion, please be prepared to meet with me to discuss the situation.

If you need an extension for any element of your video project, please send me an email or talk with me *as soon as possible*. We will figure out a solution that works best for everyone involved.

Re-marking Policy

Requests for an assignment to be re-graded must be made within one week of the return of the assignment (please send the request via email). I will re-grade the

assignment and the mark given upon the re-grade will be final (whether it is lower, higher, or the same as the original grade). Please make sure you have carefully reviewed your assignment, the feedback you received, and the marking rubric (if applicable) before submitting it for a re-grade (to ensure that you really do think it was graded inappropriately, and that you are not simply disappointed with the grade you received).

Email Policy

Please check the syllabus and the class materials posted on Quercus before sending an email. You will find answers to most of your questions there. I am available to talk and answer questions after class, or you may use the link on the first page of this syllabus to book an appointment with me.

When sending email, **you must use your official utoronto email account**, otherwise your email may be marked as spam and never received! Please use a meaningful subject line and start it with PSY194 (e.g., "PSY194: class absence"). Use a proper greeting (e.g., "Hi Dr. Waggoner Denton") and sign with your name (no need to add your student number or anything else!). State your concern clearly and succinctly. If the issue is something that would be better discussed in person, please book a meeting with me instead.

I will typically respond to your email within 48-hours, but please note that I do **not** check email on the weekends (i.e., an email sent on a Friday may not be responded to until the following week).

Health & Safety

To keep each other and our community safe, this course will follow all public health and [U of T policy guidelines](#) regarding the ongoing pandemic. These policies are subject to change, but at this moment this includes:

Mandatory masks: A mask that fully covers your nose and chin must be worn at all times while inside our classroom. You may remove your mask to drink, but please do not eat inside our classroom. We will take at least one break during class, during which you may find a safe place to enjoy a snack if needed.

If you are exempt from the mask policy for any reason, please email me prior to our first class meeting to let me know.

Daily self-assessments and uploading your proof of vaccination to [UCheck](#)

If you are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, *please stay home and do not attend class*. Let me know that you did not pass the self-assessment and we will figure out an alternative solution for you. *Please note that your class engagement grade will **never** be affected by an absence for health and safety reasons, even if prolonged.*

Grading Policy

Please note that all course marks are tentative until approved by the Department Chair and Dean's Office and recorded in the Office of the Faculty Registrar.

For more information on What Grades Mean at U of T, please see:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/general/grading-policy>

Religious Accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity due to a religious observance, please let me know as early as possible, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Academic Resources

Accessibility Needs: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your coursework. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Writing: As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/> .

English Language Learners (ELL) Program:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

ELL offers a range of programs/workshops/resources to assist all Arts & Science students who wish to improve their English language skills (including reading, listening, speaking, and writing). Please see their website for more information about these resources.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at www.writing.utoronto.ca/ .

Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

Mental Health: Everyone feels stressed or anxious now and then – it's a normal part of university life. In the most recent National College Health Assessment (published in 2017), however, 64% of UofT students surveyed reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety in the past 12 months and 45% reported having felt so depressed it was hard to function. If you are ever experiencing anxiety, depression, or any other symptoms that are preventing you from completing your work and/or benefiting from your university experience, I encourage you to investigate U of T's various resources: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>. If you are experiencing more acute distress, please visit: <http://safety.utoronto.ca/>.

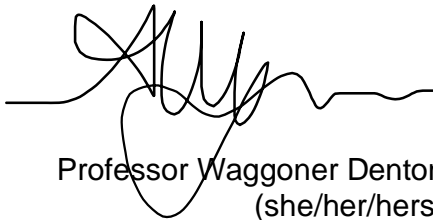
Other Resources:

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>)

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>)



Never hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to a fantastic semester with you!



Professor Waggoner Denton
(she/her/hers)

Course Outline/Schedule

(Also see PDF calendar posted separately)

Date	Topic & Readings	Activities/Assignments
<p>Week 1 9/14/21</p>  <p>Class will be held ONLINE</p>	<p>Introduction to the Course & Effective Study Strategies</p> <p>Read: This syllabus!</p> <p>Recommended: Podcast: https://www.learningscientists.org/learning-scientists-podcast/2018/3/7/episode-14-how-students-can-use-spacing-and-retrieval-practice</p> <p>Article: Dunlosky, J. (2013). Strengthening the student toolbox: Study strategies to boost learning. <i>American Educator</i>, 12-21.</p>	<p>Before class: Complete student survey</p> <p>After class: Reflection 1 (effective study strategies)</p>
<p>Week 2 9/21/21</p>  <p>Class will be held in-person (with online option for those who need it)</p>	<p>Emerging Adulthood & Finding Your Purpose</p> <p>Read: https://nobaproject.com/modules/emerging-adulthood</p> <p>Mayseless, O., & Keren, E. (2014). Finding a meaningful life as a developmental task in emerging adulthood: The domains of love and work across cultures. <i>Emerging Adulthood</i>, 2(1), 63-73.</p> <p>Watch: https://www.ted.com/talks/victor_streicher_life_on_purpose_how_living_for_what_matters_changes_everything</p> <p>Optional: Shin, J. Y., & Steger, M. F. (2016). Supportive college environment for meaning searching and meaning in life among American college students. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 57(1), 18-31.</p>	<p>Before Class: Reading Quiz; Upload photo of something that provides your life with meaning</p> <p>After class: Reflection 2 (core values wheel reflection prompts)</p>
<p>Week 3 9/28/21</p>	<p>Values, Goals, & Self-Efficacy</p> <p>Read: https://nobaproject.com/modules/self-efficacy https://nobaproject.com/modules/motives-and-goals</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz; imagining desired futures</p> <p>After class: Reflection 3 and finish goal setting activity</p>

	<p>Watch: https://vimeo.com/81530646</p> <p>Optional: Listen to https://www.npr.org/2020/08/21/904680577/you-2-0-woop-woop</p>	
<p>Week 4 10/5/21</p>	<p>Attention Management I: The Multitasking Myth</p> <p>Read: Rosen, L. D. (2017). The distracted student mind—enhancing its focus and attention. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 99(2), 8-14.</p> <p>Ward, A. F., Duke, K., Gneezy, A., & Bos, M. W. (2017). Brain drain: The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity. <i>Journal of the Association for Consumer Research</i>, 2, 140-154.</p> <p>Dwyer, R. J., Kushlev, K., & Dunn, E. W. (2018). Smartphone use undermines enjoyment of face-to-face social interactions. <i>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</i>, 78, 233-239.</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>After class: Journal/log for the week (goals, distractions); project proposal</p>
<p>Week 5 10/12/21</p>	<p>Attention Management II: Deliberate Practice and Deep Work</p> <p>Read: https://jamesclear.com/beginners-guide-deliberate-practice</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2017/07/25/539092670/you-2-0-the-value-of-deep-work-in-an-age-of-distraction</p> <p>Optional: Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. <i>Psychological Review</i>, 100(3), 363-406.</p>	<p>Before class: Remember to keep daily journal; Complete reading/listening, but no quiz this week</p> <p>DUE TODAY: 2-page project proposal</p> <p>After class: Reflection 4</p>
<p>Week 6 10/19/21</p>	<p>Relationship Management: Prejudice, Diversity, & Belonging</p> <p>Read: Bailey, K. A. (2016). Racism within the Canadian university: Indigenous students' experiences. <i>Ethnic and Racial studies</i>, 39(7), 1261-1279.</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz; UCLA Loneliness scale</p> <p>After class: Reflection 5 (for tips on expanding your bubble, see here: https://www.wnycstudios.)</p>

	<p>https://theconversation.com/why-building-community-even-through-discomfort-could-help-stressed-college-students-121398</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2020/04/20/838757183/a-social-prescription-why-human-connection-is-crucial-to-our-health</p> <p>https://www.npr.org/2020/07/27/895858974/creativity-and-diversity-how-exposure-to-different-people-affects-our-thinking</p>	<p>org/podcasts/notetoself/episodes/buzzfeed-professional-internet-readers-break-bubble)</p>
<p>Week 7 10/26/21</p>	<p>Emotion Management I: Procrastination and Self-Compassion</p> <p>Read: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/smarter-living/tips-to-stop-procrastinating.html</p> <p>Sirois, F. & Pychyl, T.A. (2013). Procrastination and the priority of short-term mood regulation: Consequences for future self. <i>Social and Personality Psychology Compass</i>, 7, 115-127.</p> <p>Wohl, M.J.A., Pychyl, T.A., & Bennett, S.H. (2010). I forgive myself, now I can study: How self-forgiveness for procrastinating can reduce future procrastination. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i>, 48, 803-808.</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>After class: Reflection 6; work on scripts and/or storyboards</p>
<p>Week 8 11/2/21</p>	<p>Emotion Management II: Imposter Syndrome and Social Comparison Theory</p> <p>Read: Fassl, F., Yanagida, T., & Kollmayer, M. (2020). Impostors dare to compare: Associations between the impostor phenomenon, gender typing, and social comparison orientation in university students. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>, 11, 1225.</p> <p>Tulshyan, R. & Burey, J. (2021, February 11) Stop telling women they have imposter syndrome. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>. https://hbr.org/2021/02/stop-telling-women-they-have-imposter-syndrome</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2017/10/27/560293602/radi</p>	<p>Before Class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>DUE IN CLASS: Storyboards/Scripts for peer review</p> <p>After class: Reflection 7; Peer feedback</p>

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Week 9 11/9/21	FALL READING WEEK (no class)	
Week 10 11/16/21	<p>Energy Management I: Circadian Rhythms and Sleep Hygiene</p> <p>Read: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/13/well/an-underappreciated-key-to-college-success-sleep.html</p> <p>Evans, M. D., Kelley, P., & Kelley, J. (2017). Identifying the best times for cognitive functioning using new methods: Matching university times to undergraduate chronotypes. <i>Frontiers in Human Neuroscience</i>, 11, 188. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2017.00188</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2018/09/20/650114225/radio-replay-eyes-wide-open</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz; MEQ</p> <p>Due BEFORE class: Constructive feedback on peer projects</p> <p>After class: Reflection 8</p>
Week 11 11/23/21	<p>Energy Management II: Exercise, Nutrition, and Habit Formation</p> <p>Listen: https://www.nexum.eu/podcast/forget-willpower-use-power-habits-wwendy-wood</p> <p>Read: de Vries, J.D, van Hooff, M.L.M, Geurts, S.A.E., & Kompier, M.A.J. (2016). Exercise as an intervention to reduce study-related fatigue among university students: A two-arm parallel randomized controlled trial. <i>PLoS ONE</i>, 11, e0152137.</p> <p>Reuter, P. R., Forster, B. L., & Brister, S. R. (2020). The influence of eating habits on the academic performance of university students. <i>Journal of American College Health</i>, 1-7.</p> <p>Trolan, T. L., An, B. P., & Pascarella, E. T. (2016). Are there cognitive consequences of binge drinking during college?. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 57(8), 1009-1026.</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>After class: Reflection 9</p>
Week 12 11/30/21	<p>Anxiety, Stress, and Coping</p> <p>Read: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/education/learning/mental-health-counseling-on-</p>	<p>Before Class: Reading Quiz; Perceived Stress Scale</p>

	<p>campus.html</p> <p>Prasath, P. R., Mather, P. C., Bhat, C. S., & James, J. K. (2021). University student well-being during COVID-19: The role of psychological capital and coping strategies. <i>Professional Counselor</i>, 11(1).</p> <p>Lally, J., ó Conghaile, A., Quigley, S., Bainbridge, E., & McDonald, C. (2013). Stigma of mental illness and help-seeking intention in university students. <i>The Psychiatrist</i>, 37(8), 253-260.</p>	<p>After class: Reflection 10</p>
<p>Week 13 12/7/21</p>	<p>Course Wrap Up & Video Presentations</p> <p>Reading: None</p>	<p>DUE IN CLASS: Final Videos!</p> <p>After class: Reflections on video projects</p>