



PSY194H1F: The Psychology of Student Success



Class meets **Tuesdays 2-4pm** in **IN312E** (Innis College)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ashley Waggoner Denton (she/her/hers)
Email: a.waggoner@utoronto.ca
Office Location: Sidney Smith Hall, room 6019 (sixth 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

Preparation: Reading Quizzes (10%)

- 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.



Engagement: Participation & Collaboration (10%)

- While actively participating in class discussions is *one* way of showing you are engaged in class, this portion of your grade will also consider many other potential contributions. These include participating in small group discussions and partnered activities during class, working well with your partner/group mates on the video project, and not texting/scrolling your phone during class time. We only get two hours a week together, so it is important to be fully present during this time! This portion of your grade will be self, peer, and instructor assessed at various points throughout the semester, using a rubric that we will decide upon together during the first day of class.



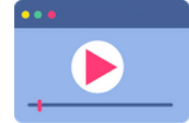
Reflection: Weekly(ish) Reflection Papers (30%)

- “Reflective writing is a process of identifying, questioning, and critically evaluating course-based learning opportunities, integrated with your own observations, experiences, impressions, beliefs, assumptions, or biases, and which describes how this process stimulated new or creative understanding about the content of the course. A reflective paper describes and explains in an introspective, first person narrative, your reactions and feelings about either a specific element of the class [e.g., a required reading; a film shown in class] or more generally how you experienced learning throughout the course.”* (USC, 2022; I highly recommend visiting their website: <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/assignments/reflectionpaper>)
- Throughout the semester you will be prompted submit 6 reflection papers (not including the reflection for the video project described below) on a roughly biweekly basis. These papers should illustrate how you have been thinking critically about the material from that part of the course 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.
- Each reflection should be approximately 2-3 double-spaced pages in length. See the course schedule below (or the assignments on Quercus) for specific due dates.



Creation: Student Success Video Project: *How do I...?*

- You will work with a partner (or in a small group) to create an engaging and educational video that effectively and accurately informs fellow students about a psychology-relevant topic related to success in university.
- Project Breakdown:
 - Project proposal & annotated bibliography (10%)
 - Submission of draft script/storyboard
 - Constructive peer feedback on scripts/storyboards (5%, completed individually)
 - Final video (including transcript and references) (30%)
 - Written reflection (5%, completed individually)
- 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 (e.g., reading quiz). 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 repeated absences.

Reading quizzes are expected to be completed *before class* each week; however, everyone gets **one late pass** which means if you need to complete a quiz after class one week, it will still count (as long as it is completed by the end of the day on the Friday of that week) and no late penalty will be applied. No explanation or documentation is necessary. However, any subsequent quizzes that are completed late will not be counted toward your grade (as explained above, it is essential that everyone come to class prepared!).

Reflection papers are due on Sunday each week (see schedule below or assignment dates on Quercus). However, there is a 12-hour grace period on all reflection papers, so you can always take a bit more time if needed, without any late penalty. For papers submitted *more than 12-hours* (but *less than 48-hours*) late, a 1-point late deduction will apply. **Papers will generally not be accepted more than 48-hours past the due date, as this means we are moving into other course content, and I want you to stay on track!** However, everyone gets **one late pass** which means if you need to turn a reflection in late, it will still be graded without penalty (so long as it is not more than one week late). No explanation or documentation is necessary.

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. Certain due dates are flexible, whereas others (e.g.,

providing peer feedback) are not.

Re-marking Policy

Requests for an assignment to be re-graded must be made within two weeks 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 the [U of T policy guidelines](#). Please be respectful of each other’s choices and levels of comfort both during class and if meeting up for groupwork. If you need to miss a class due to illness or injury, please send me an email to let me know.

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>

Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this

tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Academic Resources and Accommodations

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requests

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.

PLEASE NOTE: Because I believe that accessibility is an issue that should be addressed broadly, not only for specific individuals with appropriate documentation, I have tried my best to design a flexible course where every learner's needs can be met. For example, everyone gets one automatic late pass for reflection papers and quizzes (no explanation or accommodation form needed). Of course, if you have specific needs that have not been met by default in the design or format of the course, simply let me know (e.g., via your accommodation letter) and I will make sure it is taken care of. If you have any concerns about your ability to learn in this course, please just let me know.

Specific Medical or Personal Circumstances

If you will require consideration for missed academic work (that falls outside the scope of the attendance/late policies outlined above), please report your absence using the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN (available under the Profile and Settings menu). If your absence will be prolonged or if you have a non-medical personal situation preventing you from completing your academic work, **please connect with your [College Registrar](#)**; they will help you navigate the situation and they can reach out to me, if needed, on your behalf.

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.

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: 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 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 and Well-being

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. Everyone feels stressed now and then – it is a normal part of university life. Some days are better than others, and there is no wrong time to reach out. There are resources for every situation and every level of stress. There are many helpful resources available through your College Registrar or through Student Life (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>). If you are experiencing more acute distress, please visit: <http://safety.utoronto.ca/>. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.



Navi

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WAYFINDER

**Looking for help, but not
sure where to begin?**

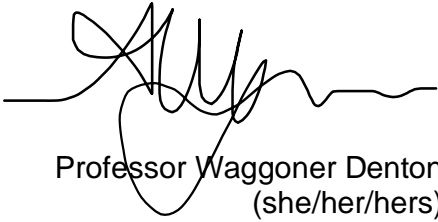
[Navi can help!](#)

Other Resources:

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

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

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

Date	Topic & Readings	Activities/Assignments
Week 1 9/13/22	<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 (due by the end of the week)</p>
Week 2 9/20/22	<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_strecher_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</p> <p>Note: In-class visit from Kate Johnson (Innis Librarian)</p> <p>After class: Reflection 2 (core values wheel reflection prompts; due by the end of the week)</p>
Week 3 9/27/22	<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>Note: In-class visit from Ben Walsh (Psychology Librarian)</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>	After class: Reflection 3 and finish goal setting activity (due by the end of the week)
<p>Week 4 10/4/22</p>	<p>Relationship Management: Working and Connecting with Other People</p> <p>Read: https://nobaproject.com/modules/the-psychology-of-groups</p> <p>https://theconversation.com/why-building-community-even-through-discomfort-could-help-stressed-college-students-121398</p> <p>Listen (or read transcript): 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>Before class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>After class: Reflection 4 (due by the end of the week)</p>
<p>Week 5 10/11/22</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 6 10/18/22</p>	<p>Attention Management II: Deliberate Practice and Deep Work</p> <p>Read: https://jamesclear.com/beginners-guide-deliberate-practice</p>	<p>Before class: Remember to keep daily journal; Complete reading/listening, but no quiz this week</p> <p>DUE TODAY: Project</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>proposal & bibliography</p> <p>After class: Reflection 5 (due by the end of the week)</p>
<p>Week 7 10/25/22</p>	<p>Emotion Management I: Procrastination and Self-Compassion</p> <p>Read: NYTimes Smarter Living: Procrastinate Much? Manage Your Emotions, Not Your Time</p> <p>NYTimes Smarter Living: Why You Procrastinate</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: Work on scripts/storyboards</p>
<p>Week 8 11/1/22</p>	<p>Emotion Management II: Imposter Syndrome and Social Comparison Theory</p> <p>Read: https://nobaproject.com/modules/social-comparison</p> <p>Kolligian Jr, J., & Sternberg, R. J. (1991). Perceived fraudulence in young adults: Is there an 'imposter syndrome'?. <i>Journal of Personality Assessment</i>, 56(2), 308-326.</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2017/10/27/560293602/radio-replay-prisons-of-our-own-making</p>	<p>Before Class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>Note: You will be given some class time for group work on your storyboards/scripts this week</p> <p>After class: Storyboards/scripts for peer review due Nov 4; Reflection 6 (due end of week)</p>
<p>Week 9 11/8/22</p>	<p>FALL READING WEEK (no class)</p>	<p>Remember to complete your peer feedback (due after reading week)</p>
<p>Week 10 11/15/22</p>	<p>Energy Management I: Circadian Rhythms and Sleep Hygiene</p> <p>Read: NYTimes: An Underappreciated Key to College</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz; MEQ</p> <p>DUE TODAY:</p>

	<p>Success: Sleep</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>	Constructive feedback on peer projects
<p>Week 11 11/22/22</p>	<p>Energy Management II: Exercise, Nutrition, and Habit Formation</p> <p>Listen: https://www.npr.org/2019/12/11/787160734/creatures-of-habit-how-habits-shape-who-we-are-and-who-we-become</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>Supplemental (optional) reading: NYTimes: How to Build Healthy Habits</p>	<p>Before class: Reading Quiz</p> <p>After class: Reflection 7 (due by the end of the week)</p>
<p>Week 12 11/29/22</p>	<p>Anxiety, Stress, and Coping</p> <p>Read: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/education/learning/mental-health-counseling-on-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</p>	<p>Before Class: Reading Quiz; Perceived Stress Scale</p> <p>After class: Reflection 8 (due by the end of the week)</p>

	university students. <i>The Psychiatrist</i> , 37(8), 253-260.	
Week 13 12/6/22	Course Wrap Up & Video Presentations Reading: None	DUE IN CLASS: Final Videos! After class: Reflections on video projects