

Learning and Plasticity (PSY260H1-S)

Winter 2023

Tuesday, 10:10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, 10:10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Sidney Smith, Room 2118

Instructor

Dr. Suzanne Wood

Email: suzanne.wood@utoronto.ca

Office: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 4036

Office Hours: You can schedule an [individual appointment](#) with me online

<https://calendly.com/drswood/officehours/>

Also, I will be holding [drop-in office hours](#) a day or two before the term tests; dates and times will be posted on Quercus

Teaching Assistants

Nick Hoang

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Nelly Matorina

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* TAs will announce times to view term tests and assist with writing assignments; dates and locations will be posted on Quercus

Textbook: *Learning & Memory: From Brain to Behavior*, 4th Edition; Gluck MA, Mercado E, and Myers CE (2020) Worth Publishers

I am working on getting a copy of the textbook on reserve – details TBD

Prerequisites: PSY100H1 / PSY100Y5 / PSYA01H3 / COG250Y1

Exclusions: PSYB38H3

Course Description

This course will provide a strong background in the basics of learning. We will examine how behaviour and the brain change with experience in both humans and animals.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Describe basic learning principles
- Critically assess the learning principles involved in novel situations
- Link learning principles with specific psychological disorders
- Connect learning principles to your own life
- Explain how certain types of experiences change the brain

Email

Please reserve the use of email addressed to me for personal matters, only. To ask content-related questions, please post on the [Discussion Board](#). Many students will likely have the same question, so it will benefit the whole class to see the question and answer (whether posted by fellow students or a TA). [I can only check email sporadically during business hours \(9am-5pm\)](#), since I do not check while I am teaching, in a meeting or holding office hours. [I do NOT check email after business hours \(5pm-9am\)](#). Please anticipate up to a [48-hour period](#) before you receive a response to your email. [Plan accordingly](#). I encourage you to *attend group office hours* or book *an individual appointment* with me to help clear up any questions. Please also see me before or after lecture.

Grading Criteria

Term Tests (x2)	40% (2 x 20%)
Writing Assignment Part 1	5%
Writing Assignment Part 2	20%
Final Exam	35%

Term Tests

The term tests and final exam may consist of multiple-choice, and/or short or long answer questions. All term tests and exams will be based on lectures, including videos, and reading. The final exam will be cumulative. More details will be discussed about each assessment closer to its date.

Dates and Locations of Term Tests

The dates and times of the term tests are fixed. Locations will be announced in lecture and on Quercus.

Writing Assignment

Students will have the opportunity to think more deeply about one of several topics related to the material presented in this class. Broadly speaking, students will be asked to compare two pieces of written work – one “popular” (e.g., a blog post or website) and one “scholarly” (e.g., a peer-reviewed journal article). Further details are provided in the writing assignment handout and will be discussed in lecture.

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>).

If you wish to opt out of submitting work to plagiarism detection, you must do the following:

1. Email a TA no later than two weeks before the due date indicating you wish to opt out

2. Submit a paragraph describing why this topic is of particular interest to you with your final essay
3. Submit handwritten notes used for the design of your essay with your final essay

Writing Help

Book an appointment online with the Writing Centres on St. George Campus:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>

Attend a free group workshop with Writing Plus:

<http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/>

English is not your first language? Take a look at these resources:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/support/english-language-support>

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>

Missed Assignment Deadline or Assessment

If a student misses a deadline for an assignment or assessment for any reason (illness, family situation, etc.), an online absence declaration must be submitted on ACORN. Please email me within one week if this should happen. For the term tests, if the severity of the illness warrants the absence, the weight will be transferred to the final exam. **Writing Assignment-Part 1** is worth 5 points; 0.5 points will be lost for every 24-hour period or portion thereof that it is late. A **Writing Assignment-Part 2** that is turned in late without a verification of illness will incur an 8% penalty for every 24-hour period or portion thereof. Assignments will not be accepted more than 4 days after the due date. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, it is recommended they discuss their situation with their College Registrar.

Showing up Late for a Term Test

If a student is late, the student may still sit the term test for the time remaining, so long as **no one has left the exam room before the student shows up**. On term test days, students should allow enough time to get to campus so that they will still be on time, even with TTC delays and/or flat tires and/or city-wide transportation disruptions due to national feline juggling competitions.

Questions About Grading

Any questions regarding a grade received for an item of work in this course should be brought to the attention of the TAs within **two weeks of receipt** of the graded work. For term tests, a TA will give the student a form to fill out, detailing where the marking error may have occurred. References to the textbook and/or lecture slides are also required for term tests. For the writing assignments, students must specify what parts of the rubric they believe were graded improperly, with evidence from their writing to support their complaints. If the student is not satisfied with the response of the TA, the student can submit **an appeal letter to me**. This letter must detail the item(s) in contention and why it has not been assessed accurately. A legitimate request will result in a re-grade of the entire work, which may result in a higher, lower, or identical grade.

Missed Class

It is in the best interests of all students to attend all the lectures. However, if you miss a lecture, please download the slides, get notes from your classmates, and then be prepared to ask specific questions about the lecture to a TA or myself during office hours. Do NOT ask a TA or me to give a second delivery of the lecture. **I will do my best to provide recordings of lectures using OCCS, but cannot guarantee its quality.**

Cell Phones and Laptop Usage

Technology can support student learning, but it can also become a distraction. Research indicates that multi-tasking (texting or going online) during class time can have a negative impact on learning. Out of respect for your fellow students in this class, please refrain from using laptops or mobile phones for entertainment during class. Do not display any material on a laptop which may be distracting or offensive to your fellow students. Laptops may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading course information from Quercus, or working on an assigned in-class exercise. Checking social media, email, texting, games, and other online activities are not legitimate classroom purposes. Such inappropriate laptop and mobile phone use is distracting to those seated around you. If you are going to do this and still want to sit in on class, **please sit in the back of the lecture hall** (you're less likely to distract your classmates this way).

Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto takes cases of academic misconduct seriously. UofT has detailed policies regarding misconduct, which includes:

- quoting another person's ideas in your work without clear acknowledgement
- using or possessing an unauthorized aid or obtaining unauthorized assistance in taking an exam or writing a paper
- submitting forged or altered documentation for excuses for missed exams

Any of these offenses will result in referral to the central academic integrity office and consequences that the University deems appropriate after investigation. For more information, please see: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>

Accessibility

University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have an accessibility concern about this course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or accommodation. They may be able to provide you with a College Registrar's letter of support to give to your instructors, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation.

That Other Kind of Psychology

These years can be challenging, both in and out of the classroom. University of Toronto offers services to assist students facing a wide range of emotional and psychological challenges:

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

(topics subject to change, assessment and assignment dates are fixed)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Jan. 10	[1] Introduction	
	Jan. 12	[2] Course Themes & History	1 (pp. 1-23; 1.0-1.4a)
2	Jan. 17	[3] Neuroscience of Learning and Memory	2 (pp. 35-47; 2.0-2.1)
	Jan. 19	[4] Neuroscience of Learning and Memory	2 (pp. 47-71, 2.2-2.3)
3	Jan. 24	[5] Habituation	3 (75-101; 3.0-3.2)
	Jan. 26	[6] Sensitization	3 (75-101; 3.0-3.2)
4	Jan. 31	[7] Familiarization	3 (86-95, 101-110; 3.0-3.2)
	Feb. 2	[8] Classical Conditioning: Behavioural Paradigms	4 (121-135; 4.0-4.1b)
5	Feb. 7	Term Test #1 (20%) – Weeks 1 - 4 (Lectures 1-8)	
	Feb. 9	[9] Classical Conditioning: Rules & Models	4 (pp. 135-153; 4.1c-4.1e)
6	Feb. 14	[10] Classical Conditioning: Brain Substrates	4 (pp. 153-165; 4.2)
	Feb. 16	[11] Operant Conditioning: S-R-O & Methods	5 (pp. 175-183; 5.0-5.1b)
	Feb. 17	Writing Assignment Part 1 (5%) Due (by 11:59 p.m.)	
7	Feb. 21	--- READING WEEK ---	
	Feb. 23		
8	Feb. 28	[12] Operant Conditioning: Reinforcers, Punishers & Schedules; Brain Substrates	5 (pp. 183-215; 5.1c-5.2)
	Mar. 2	[13] Episodic & Semantic Memory: Features & Models	7 (pp. 277-284; 7.0-7.1a)
9	Mar. 7	[14] Episodic & Semantic Memory: Encoding, Consolidation & Retrieval	7 (pp. 284-301; 7.1b-f)
	Mar. 9	[15] Episodic and Semantic Memory: Brain Substrates	7 (pp. 301-318; 7.2)
10	Mar. 14	[16] Skill Memory: Basics, Practice, Expertise & Talent	8 (pp. 329-347; 8.0-8.1)
	Mar. 16	[17] Skill Memory: Breadth; Brain Substrates	8 (pp. 348-362; 8.2)
11	Mar. 21	Term Test #2 (20%) – Weeks 5 - 10 (Lectures 9 -17)	
	Mar. 23	[18] Emotional Learning: Basics & Animal Models	10 (pp. 417-434; 10.0-10.1b)
12	Mar. 28	[19] Emotional Learning: Effects & Brain Substrates	10 (pp. 434-461; 10.1c-10.2)
	Mar. 30	[20] Development & Aging: Infancy & Childhood	12 (pp. 501-512; 12.0-12.1b)
	Mar. 31	Writing Assignment Part 2 (20%) Due (by 11:59 p.m.)	
13	Apr. 4	[21] Development & Aging: Adulthood & Genetics	12 (pp. 512-538; 12.1c-12.2)
	Apr. 6	[22] Addiction: review of course concepts	(pp. 166-170, 216-221; 4.3, 5.3)
Final Exam Period		Final Exam (35%) - Cumulative	