

PSY260H1 S: Introduction to Learning and Plasticity

Winter 2024 Syllabus

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC0101	Tuesday, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	In Person: AH 400
	Thursday, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	In Person: AH 400

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

Course Contacts

Instructor: Zachary Pierce-Messick

Email: zachary.piercemessick@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours and Location: Wednesdays, 10:45-11:45am (online)

Teaching Assistants

- Kulzhabayeva, Dana: dana.kulzhabayeva@mail.utoronto.ca
- Perron, Maxime: maxime.perron@mail.utoronto.ca
- Yang, Mengyao (Catalina): catalina.yang@mail.utoronto.ca

TAs will schedule office hours to prepare for and view assignments and exams. Details will be posted on Quercus (q.utoronto.ca)

Correspondence

Quercus will be our primary means of communication throughout the course. If someone has a question related to the content of an assigned reading or to a portion of a lecture, please make a post on the Discussion Board.

Whenever possible, *please ask questions during class* so others can benefit from the answer. Of course, some questions are best asked in a one-to-one setting. For these types of questions, you have 2 primary options:

1. Attend my office hours.
2. Send an email to me (Zachary.piercemessick@mail.utoronto.ca) to request an alternative meeting time or with your questions, adhering to the following guidelines:
 - Send your email from your utoronto.ca account
 - Include PSY260 in the subject line (for context & to make sure that I see it!)
 - Clearly outline your concern or question and, if applicable, the steps you have taken so far to try to solve the problem or find the answer
 - If you do not receive a reply within 24 business hours, please send a polite follow-up email.

Finally, the course TAs are an **amazing** resource for asking questions and addressing concerns.

Course Materials

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

Course Overview

This course will explore our understanding of learning and memory in both human and animal models. We will focus on behavioral tasks and neuroscientific techniques that allow psychologists to study how experience changes the brain and behavior.

Content includes: concepts, theories, and applications of classical and contemporary learning theories, including classical and operant conditioning. Current theories of the physiological and anatomical basis of learning and memory, including synaptic plasticity, the role of the hippocampus, amygdala, frontal cortex and other brain regions. Theories will be related to a practical understanding and applications such as drug addiction, phobias and other disorders.

Course Learning Outcomes

- At the end of the course, students will have a thorough understanding of:
 - Behavioral tasks used by researchers to study learning and memory
 - The way that the brain changes due to experience
 - How learning principles impact one's everyday life
 - How to utilize learning principles to better one's life
 - Psychological disorders related to learning and plasticity
 - How to design and assess studies related to learning

Prerequisites: PSY100H1/PSY100Y5/PSYA01H3/COG250Y1

Corequisites: None

Exclusions: PSYB38H3

Recommended Preparation: None

Credit Value: 0.5

Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisite and exclusion criteria Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course:

(<https://artsci.calendar.utoronto.ca/course/psy260h1>)

If you lack any prerequisites, you will be removed. No waivers will be granted.

Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
Term Tests (2 x 20%)	40%	Term tests will be based on assigned readings and lecture content. These tests may include multiple-choice, short-answer, and fill-in-the-blank style questions.	2024-02-06,2024-03-19
Written Assignment #1	5%	This portion of the written assignment is to prepare you for the “actual” assignment (part 2).	2024-02-16
Written Assignment #2	20%	See WIT information below	2024-03-29
In-Person Final Exam	35%	Cumulative	Final Exam Period

Late/Missed Assessments

- If a student misses a deadline for an assignment or assessment for any reason, an online absence declaration via ACORN Declaration or The Verification of Illness (VOI) must be submitted. However, please note that the ACORN declaration may only be used once per academic term. Please see the section “**Specific Medical Circumstances**” below.
- Term Tests:
 - In the case of emergencies, the weight of a missed term test may be redistributed to the final exam at the instructor’s discretion.
 - A student who misses a test, lab or assignment deadline should come forward to the appropriate person in the course as soon as possible, and **no later than one week** after returning to class or the missed assignment.
- Writing Assignments part 1 and 2:
 - 10% of the assignments marks will be lost for every 24hr period or portion thereof that it is late.

Writing Integrated Teaching (WIT)

- As you are likely aware, this is a WIT course and means that you will have the opportunity to submit a written assignment and receive feedback to better your writing skills. Details about the assignment itself will be distributed in the first couple weeks of class.

Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Jan 9	Introduction	Ch1
	Jan 11	Course Themes / History	
2	Jan 16	Neuroscience of Learning & Memory	Ch2
	Jan 18		
3	Jan 23	Non-Associative Learning: Habituation, Sensitization, Familiarization	Ch3
	Jan 25		
4	Jan 30	Classical Conditioning	Ch4
	Feb 1		
5	Feb 6	TEST 1	Ch4
	Feb 8	Classical Conditioning pt2	
6	Feb 13	Operant Conditioning	Ch5
	Feb 15	Writing Assignment #1 Due, 11:59pm Feb 16th	
7	Feb 20	<i>Reading Week</i>	
	Feb 22		
8	Feb 27	Operant Conditioning pt2	Ch5
	Feb 29	Episodic & Semantic Memory	Ch7
9	March 5	Skill Memory	Ch8
	March 7	Behavioral Control	
10	March 12	Working Memory	Ch9
	March 14		
11	March 19	TEST 2	Ch10
	March 21	Emotion & Learning and Memory p1	
12	March 26	Emotion & Learning and Memory p2	Ch10
	March 28	Reading Assignment #2 Due, 11:59pm March 29th	
13	April 2	Memory & Aging	Ch12
	April 4		
Finals	April 10 th – 30 th Final Exam Period	Final Exam (35%) cumulative	

***Please note that any due dates are subject to change by the course instructor if needed. All changes will be announced in-class and on Quercus.**

Writing Resources

- Appointments can be made online with a writing center on St. George Campus:
 - <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>
- Writing Plus offers free workshops via Zoom:
 - <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/>
 - <https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/winter-workshops/>
- English is not your first language? Take a look at these resources, including “mini courses”:
 - <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/support/english-language-support>
 - <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>

Other Resources

- Information on academic integrity
 - <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>
- Student life
 - <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/>
- Health and Wellness Reception
 - 700 Bay St. Toronto ON, M5G 1Z6
 - 416-978-8030
 - Info.hwc@utoronto.ca
- Campus Safety
 - <https://www.campussafety.utoronto.ca/>
- Health and wellness
 - <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT)

I am not here to argue that ChatGPT and other generative AI (GAI) tools have no use in academia or in business. However, for a course with specific focus on developing writing skills (WIT), certain hard limits will be placed on the use of GAI. It is important to remember that some of the things that GAI can do are important skills for *you* to be able to do as well.

Appropriate use of GAI is limited to proofreading your assignment (for grammar/spelling). GAI should *not* be used for the written assignments in this course to generate drafts or outlines or to generate a thesis or main arguments. Additionally, if GAI is used, you *must* be documented in an appendix for your assignment. This should include what tool was used, what prompts were input, and how the results were incorporated into your paper.

Policies & Statements

Late/Missed Assignments

Please see above under “Marking Scheme”

Plagiarism Detection Tool

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>).

Equity and Diversity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Please note the existence of the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of an illness one may receive while protecting privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>.

For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>.

Lateness During Tests

If a student arrives late for a test, they may still take the test in the remaining time as long as no one has left the room before their arrival.

Grading Concerns

Any questions or concerns about marking should be brought to a TA within two weeks of the receipt of the graded work (although, earlier is always better!). A form will be available during term tests that students can fill out if they believe a marking error has occurred. For the written assignments, a rubric will be provided that must be referred to if a student has any issues with marking.

If an understanding cannot be reached between a student and a TA, the student may submit an appeal letter to me with details about what content that they believe was inaccurately marked. If the request is satisfactory, then I will remark the assignment or question. It is important to remember that a complete remarking may result in a higher, lower, or identical grade.

Cell Phones and Laptops

Technology can support student learning, but it can also become a distraction. Research indicates that multi-tasking 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 purposes unrelated to the class. Do not display any material on a laptop which may be distracting or offensive to your fellow students.

Religious Accommodations

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 cultural and religious traditions. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other 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 (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements

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) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>. 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 situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Academic Integrity

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019) (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic

behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, 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 <http://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 [A&S Student Academic Integrity \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity\)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity \(https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca\)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

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 other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.