



PSY 420H1 S – Seminar: Evolutionary Perspectives on Social Psychology and Culture

Tuesday, 11am-1pm

Classroom: SS 560

For any online class sessions (e.g., February 28th):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88581143558?pwd=QIRFWmFDMDFlMzU2OThoRW9lSVpZUT09>

Meeting ID: 885 8114 3558

Passcode: 117462

Contact Information

Instructor:

Dr. Rebecca Neel

becca.neel@utoronto.ca

Emails will be answered within 48 hours, not including weekends.

Office Hours:

By appointment, Tuesday 1:30-2:30pm and other times as needed. Sign up for a 15-minute slot at Calendly. You can choose in person or online: <https://calendly.com/beccaneel/office-hours>

If you choose online, we will meet at this zoom link (NOT the class link above):

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/83504373931>

Meeting ID: 835 0437 3931, passcode: 250691

Use office hours to ask your course related questions. Some questions are easily answered via email whereas others require a conversation that is better held in-person. For example, shorter questions are best asked via email. Keep this in mind when deciding to email or attend office hours.

Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

- What does it mean to take an evolutionary approach to social psychology and culture?
- What are the major evolutionary theories in social psychology, and how have they been used to explain human social behavior? What are different evolutionary approaches, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the methods and assumptions of evolutionary approaches?
- What is useful about taking an evolutionary approach?
- What new knowledge has been generated by taking an evolutionary approach to social psychology and culture? When would other perspectives have generated these hypotheses or findings? Does adopting an evolutionary approach offer something unique?

- For your own research interests, what predictions would an evolutionary approach generate?

We will consider these questions throughout the course.

In addition to the above questions, in the course we will aim to:

- Develop your skills at critiquing research ideas, methods, and findings
- Develop your skills at participating in constructive scientific discussion
- Develop your writing and presentation skills

My aim for you is to understand and thoughtfully evaluate evolutionary social psychology methods and findings, to generate new research ideas, and to continue to develop your research and psychological science skills.

Note about prerequisites: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met **all** prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you **WILL BE REMOVED**. No waivers will be granted.

Structure of Weekly Meetings

This course will feature a mix of short lecture by the instructor, presentations by students, and discussion. A typical class session may consist of:

5 minutes: Announcements

10 minutes: Lecture

30 minutes: Student presentations on journal articles

65 minutes: Discussion, guided by issues raised in student response papers

For the last three class sessions, students will present their research proposal ideas to the rest of the class for feedback.

Copyright: Keep in mind: Lectures and lecture materials are the intellectual property of the instructor.

- You may not share these materials with anyone not enrolled in this course or post them on the Internet without the explicit approval of the course instructor.
- You may not record any part of the lectures or discussion unless you receive explicit permission from the instructor.
- If you are given permission to record a lecture or discussion, the recordings cannot be distributed to anyone (including other students in the course) or posted online.
- Remember that the recording is only for you to use for the purposes of studying for this course.
- I do not want to discover that a student has posted any of my materials onto a public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money. The University will support course instructors in asserting and pursuing their copyrights in such manners.

For any online class sessions only (e.g., February 28th)

Notice of video recording and sharing (Download and re-use prohibited)

- This course, including your participation, may be recorded on video and if so, will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session.
- Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright.

- Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor.
- For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor.

Reading Material/Textbook(s)

Readings will be a mix of book chapters and journal articles.
 All readings and other course materials will be available for download on Quercus.
 I will upload readings at least one week ahead of the class period when we will discuss them.

Course Evaluation/Marking Scheme

Assessment Title	Due Date	Percent(%)
Class participation	No Specific Date	20
Response papers (top 6 marks count)	Weeks 2 (Jan 16) – 9 (March 13)	24
Presentation article	No Specific Date	10
Final paper idea	2022-03-10	2
Final paper presentation	No Specific Date	10
Final paper - research proposal	2022-04-06	34
Total Percentage		100

Class participation (20%)

Good classroom participation consists of reading the articles, offering comments, listening to others, and responding to others' comments. If you are often actively participating in the conversations, that is great! If you have been contributing a lot recently, I may privately ask you to sit back for a while to ensure that everyone participates. Fair warning: I may ask you directly for your opinion on the readings or discussion (especially if you have not been contributing much that day).

Aim to contribute to discussion at least once every week, and to allow everyone else to contribute at least once as well.

This is a discussion-based course, so I expect you to come to class ready to discuss the readings. To facilitate this, I've endeavored to pick readings that are both important and interesting. So that you're not overburdened, I've limited the readings 1-2 each week. In return, I expect that you'll come to class having critically considered these readings, and ready to discuss them with your colleagues.

I also expect you to consider and respond to each other's comments, in the regular class sessions, in response to the presentation articles, and during the research proposal presentations.

Note that class attendance will count toward, but not suffice for, class participation.

During the last three class sessions, your peer feedback, in addition to questions during presenter Q&As, will count as your class participation.

Response papers (24%)

Each Monday before class, by 12pm (noon), you are to submit a Response Paper in word document format (.doc or .docx) or pdf (.pdf) for the next day's readings via the Quercus dropbox. Total max length is 2 pages double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Writing that goes over this length will not be read. Use Times New Roman 12-point font. Along with questions prepared by the instructor, these will form the basis of the day's discussion. You should address all the readings for the day in your Response Paper. **Questions or comments that bridge across readings (even across weeks) are encouraged.** A strong Response Paper will really probe the issues of the week, propose a possible moderator or mechanism for a phenomenon, think about how / whether / why a finding would apply to another context or culture, consider how the current reading connect to prior readings, etc. Ideally, you will raise issues or points that we can discuss as a group. You can address several different topics or questions within your Response Paper. You are welcome to raise questions for clarification of basic elements of the study or concepts (e.g., "why did they analyze the data using correlation,") with the instructor or in class, but these do not count for the Response Paper.

Note that you should NOT summarize the readings at the beginning of your response paper. Assume you are talking to an audience who is familiar with the reading. That said, as you make specific points about the reading, be clear what portion of or idea in the reading you are referring or responding to.

Response Paper marks:

- Response Papers that are turned in on time but do not comply with requirements (e.g., use 10 point font rather than 12 point) or do not complete the assignment (e.g., do not address all the readings) will earn **1 point**.
- Response Papers that are turned in on time, comply with requirements, and minimally complete the assignment will earn **2 points**.
- Response Papers that are turned in on time, comply with requirements, and complete the assignment with some creativity, thought, or deeper analysis will earn **3 points**.
- Exceptional (particularly thoughtful and well-written) Response Papers will earn **4 points**.

Most response papers will earn 2-3 points. Marks of 4 points are reserved for truly excellent and exceptional work. If you are regularly completing the Response Papers well, you should expect to be receiving marks of 3 points on most of your papers.

There will be 8 class sessions with Response Papers due. **You are only required to complete 6 Response Papers.** If you complete 8 Response Papers, I will take your 6 highest Response Paper marks. There will be no extra credit for completing 7 or 8 Response Papers. The maximum number of points you can earn is 24.

Because I use Response Papers to structure the next day's class discussion, and because you only need to turn in 6 of the 8 Response papers, **late Response Papers will not be accepted.**

Presentation articles (10%)

See separate handout on presentation articles – available on Quercus.

Final Paper idea (2%) – due March 10 at 11:59pm

Submit on Quercus 1-2 paragraphs on the idea you are considering. Articulate the research question you are planning to test, and the basic elements of the study design. If you are trying to decide between two ideas, send me both of them for feedback.

Final Paper presentation (10%)

During the last three class sessions, students will present their final research proposals to the class for feedback. All students will provide peer and self evaluations of these presentations. We will discuss the requirements for this presentation in more detail later in the semester.

Final Paper: Research Proposal (34%) – more information will be distributed later in the course in a separate handout. Due April 6th at 11:59pm

Propose an empirical study.

Format: APA

Organization: Include Introduction (with hypothesis/hypotheses at the end), Method (with subsections for participants, materials, procedure, etc.), Anticipated Results (with a figure or table), a brief section on Limitations/future directions (presuming that the hypothesis is supported), and References. Title page and abstract are NOT needed.

Length: No more than 10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font (not counting references or figures/tables). I will stop reading your paper after the 10th page. Be concise. Include only the literature you need to build your argument. Get to the point as quickly as you can without sacrificing clarity.

Choosing a topic and study design: You may choose any research topic you like, provided you will a) predict and measure human social behavior and b) consider at least one hypothesis derived from an evolutionary perspective (testing competing hypotheses is great, but by no means necessary). It can, but does not have to, relate to the content areas we cover in class. Also, feel free to presume that resources aren't an issue if that allows you to explore the best test of your hypothesis. Simple study designs (e.g., a 2-cell between-subjects experimental design) are encouraged.

Grading criteria: In addition to the criteria above, final papers will be marked on the strength of the research question and the argument behind it, how clearly the idea, logic, and hypotheses are articulated, and the appropriateness of the study design to test the hypothesis. Points will be deducted for typos/grammatical errors.

* Note that A+s on the final paper are reserved for truly extraordinary work.

Late papers: For each 24-hour period after the deadline, your final paper will lose five points

Course Webpage/Quercus

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>

Course Policies and Academic Resources

Attendance

Because this is a discussion-oriented class, your attendance is essential. Please make every effort to attend class.

For online sessions: It will help to make the discussion more engaging if we keep video on whenever possible. I know this is not always possible. Thank you for making your best effort.

Missed Presentations

If something comes up and you are unable to attend class during one of your presentation days, you must email me **within one week** of missing the presentation, and submit an ACORN declaration of absence form.

Penalties for Lateness

Final paper: For each 24-hour period after the deadline, your final paper will lose 5 points.

Response papers: Late assignments will not be accepted.

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 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.

Cell Phones and Laptop Usage

Good discussion depends on everyone being attentive and ready to contribute. 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.

Course communication and email policy

Some questions are best answered in person or in online meetings, and some are best answered via email. If you have a complex question, I am happy to meet with you to discuss it. Having face-to-face

discussions, whether in person or online, about complex questions or issues is generally more effective. If you have a short/simple question, email might be the most efficient way to ask it. If you don't know, send an email with your question and I'll let you know if I think it would be better to meet.

When communicating via email please adhere to the following protocols:

- Students can expect an **email response within 48 hours not including weekends** (do not email the night before an assignment is due with a question about the assignment, I might not see your email in time to send a helpful reply). If I have not answered your email in two business days, feel free to send a follow-up email.
- Please consult the course outline, other handouts, and the course website BEFORE submitting inquiries by email.
- **In the subject line indicate the course code and the topic of your email (e.g., "PSY420 essay question")**. This will help to ensure that I don't miss your email among the many that I receive.
- Begin your emails by greeting the person you are writing to (e.g., "Hello Prof. Neel", "Dear Prof. Neel")
- Emails should come from your utoronto email account to communicate with the professor and the TA (otherwise they may get marked as spam).
- All communications (verbal, email) should be respectful in language and tone and constructive in nature. This includes communications with me and with your fellow students.

Health policies and attendance:

If you feel sick with potential COVID-19 symptoms:

- Go home
- Email me (becca.neel@utoronto.ca)
- Complete the ACORN absence declaration

In-class protocols:

- Mask wearing is encouraged, but is optional and up to each of us to decide.

For 2023 S-term, a *Verification of Illness* (also known as a "doctor's note") is not required. Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration within one week of the missed class. The declaration is available on ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu. Students should also advise their instructor of their absence. Please advise myself of your absence as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of the class you missed, and no later than one week after class.

If an absence extends beyond 7 consecutive days, or if you have a non-medical personal situation preventing you from completing your academic work, you should connect with your College Registrar. They can provide advice and assistance reaching out to instructors on your behalf. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

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 (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca> and <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>). 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.

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.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning needs are welcome in PSY420. If you have an acute or ongoing accessibility need, you should contact Accessibility Services (AS). AS will assess your needs, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support and advocate for you in requesting accommodations for your coursework. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with me, and I will not unnecessarily reveal to others that you are registered with AS. Please note that it can take time to register with AS; if you anticipate that you will need accommodations, I encourage you to register as soon as possible.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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.

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/> .

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 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/>

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>).

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>)

Course Outline/Schedule

Week	Date	Tentative list of topics (likely to be revised along the way)	Assignments due
1	10-Jan	Intro to course	
2	17-Jan	Foundations I: History: Good and bad	RP 1
3	24-Jan	Foundations II: How to take an evolutionary approach	RP 2
4	31-Jan	Foundations III: Cultural evolution	RP 3
5	07-Feb	Sex and romantic relationships I	RP 4
6	14-Feb	Sex and romantic relationships II	RP 5
Reading week	21-Feb	-----	-----
7	28-Feb	ONLINE: Prejudice	RP 6
8	07-Mar	TBD	RP 7 Final paper idea due 3/10 at 11:59pm
9	14-Mar	TBD	RP 8
10	21-Mar	Final paper presentations	
11	28-Mar	Final paper presentations	
12	04-Apr	Final paper presentations	Final paper due 4/6 at 11:59