

4th Year Seminar Descriptions 2022-23

Fall

PSY 420F – The Moralities of Everyday Life (P. Bloom)

This seminar dives into the modern science of moral thought and moral action, explored through the disciplines of cognitive science, social and developmental psychology, neuroscience, behavioural economics, and analytic philosophy. Topics include empathy and compassion in babies and young children; emotional reactions to family, friends, and strangers; the origins of prejudice and bigotry; sexuality, disgust, and purity; punishment, revenge, and forgiveness; dehumanization, and the relationship between morality and religion. No specific requirements, but participants should be prepared to read, and discuss, articles from a wide range of intellectual disciplines. **Monday 5-7 p.m.**

PSY 420F – TBA

TBA. **Thursday 9-11 a.m.**

PSY 440F - The Influence of Stress and Trauma on Abnormal Psychological Functioning (T. Grieder)

This seminar course will utilize active learning techniques to provide an evidence-based overview of the concepts of “stress” and “trauma”, and their complex relationship with neurological functioning, mental health, and various psychological disorders. A critical review of prevalent theories and application of concepts will provide students with an understanding of how stress and trauma are operationalized from neurobiological, psychological, and integrative perspectives; and, how they increase the risk and severity of abnormal psychological disorders. Ultimately, students will come to understand the complexity of the individual stress response and explore the importance of adopting a biopsychosocial perspective of prevention and treatment in vulnerable children and adults. **Wednesday 2-4 p.m.**

PSY 471F - The Visual Brain: Attention, Working Memory, and Awareness (S. Ferber)

Visual processing is a fundamental function of the human brain, relying on a cascade of neural processes to transform low level inputs into semantic content. Despite significant advances in characterizing the locus and function of key visual cortical regions and a better understanding of the temporal and spatial dynamics of this processing stream, we still lack a comprehensive framework of how the brain creates our vivid awareness of coherent objects and scenes from simple photons of lights impinging on our retinæ. This course delves into some of the most influential studies and theories across psychology subfields to gain insights into how the brain subserves visual attention, working memory, and awareness. Students will gain a firm understanding of the key debates in the field and will leave this course equipped to be both critical consumers and producers of scientific research. This course will combine lectures with student presentations. **Monday 4-6 p.m.**

PSY 490F – Human Chronobiology (M. Ralph)

This course focuses on issues of biological timing that are important to human health, development, learning/memory, and performance. Timing systems in other organisms are introduced as appropriate for each topic. The course builds a base of understanding of timing mechanisms, how they are produced at different levels of biological organization, and how disorganization can contribute to chronic mental and physical health disorders. *Tuesday 3-5 p.m.*

PSY490F – Optogenetic Probing of Animal Behaviours (J. Kim)

The course will survey a variety of genetic neuron manipulation methods being used in the systems neuroscience field, with a particular focus on light-induced neuron manipulation methods and applications. *Friday 1-3 p.m.*

Winter

PSY 420S – Evolutionary Perspectives on Social Psychology and Culture (R. Neel)

In this course we will explore evolutionary approaches to predicting and explaining human social behavior and culture. We will critically consider these perspectives' strengths and weaknesses, examining their assumptions, methods, and theoretical tools. What are better and worse ways to adopt an evolutionary perspective? How do evolutionary perspectives generate hypotheses about human social behavior, and how are these hypotheses tested? We will discuss readings that apply evolutionary approaches to understanding motivation, relationships, prejudice, intergroup relations, social learning, cultural evolution, and other topics. *Tuesday 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

PSY 420S – Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Stigma (A. Chasteen)

This course will examine contemporary issues in stereotyping, prejudice, and stigma, both from the perceiver's and the target's perspective. The focus will be on understanding current trends in the field by focusing on what has been recently published over the past few years. Connections with classic issues and research will be made through weekly presentations and discussions led by discussion facilitators. *Thursday 5-7 p.m.*

PSY 430S - The Policy Relevance of Subjective Well-being (F. Cheung)

The course will explore the emerging role of subjective well-being as a policy indicator. Subjective well-being refers to the cognitive assessment and affective feelings about the quality of one's life. Together we will examine classic and current issues related to subjective well-being research, such as: Do citizens value happiness? How can we measure happiness at the individual and population level? To what extent is population well-being malleable? Does money buy happiness? Does moving to a nicer house make you happier? Is a long and prosperous but dissatisfying life a good life? What are the benefits of population well-being? Is subjective well-being a viable policy goal? We will read and discuss research articles from

within and beyond psychology to promote a multidisciplinary understanding of subjective well-being research. The format of the course involves in-class discussion, oral presentations, and a written assignment. **Wednesday 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

PSY 460S - Biopsychological Approaches to Study Cognition (K. Takehara-Nishiuchi)

Recent advances in tools and technology open the door to investigating the biological basis of various cognitive processes, such as memory, spatial navigation, decision making, and social interaction. In this course, we will read and discuss primary research articles on biopsychological experiments using non-human animals to gain insights into how cognitive processes are associated with genetic and physiological changes in the brain. The course will include brief lectures on methods and measures used in the assigned articles; however, a basic understanding of molecular biology, neurophysiology, and neuroanatomy is expected. Successful completion of **PSY202H1** and **PSY260H1** is required; **PSY290H1** is recommended. **Tuesday 3-5 p.m.**

PSY 471S - Addiction (S. Wood)

Despite an enormous global effort to understand and treat addiction, the health and societal problems associated with substance use disorder persist. For example, drug overdoses have caused more deaths in the US than car accidents in recent years. Why do we continue to fail at treating the disease of addiction? Or are we thinking about this wrong, to begin with: is addiction actually a disease that can be treated medically? This seminar will explore questions such as these from behavioural, neuroscientific, and sociological perspectives, using evidence from non-human and human research. Prerequisites are PSY202H1/ECO220Y1/SOC252H1/STA221H1/PSY202H5/STA221H5/PSYC08H3/STAB27H3/STAC32H2, **and** PSY260H1/PSYB38H3 **or** PSY270H1/PSY270H5/PSYB57H3 **or** PSY290H1/PSY290H5/PSYB64H3/HMB200H1/PSL300H1. **Thursday 1-3 p.m.**

PSY 471S - Visual Cognition (J. Pratt)

An in-depth examination of recent research in the field of visual cognition including attention, perception, action, and memory. **Thursday 5-7 p.m.**

PSY 490S - Animal Models of Neuropsychiatric Disease (L. Corbit)

This course will critically examine animal models of neuropsychiatric disorders (e.g., substance use disorders, depression, ADHD, OCD). Emphasis will be on defining the characteristics of a specific condition and translating these to something that can be studied in an animal model. The advantages and limitations of animal models for understanding the biological bases of behaviour will also feature prominently in the course. Prerequisites are PSY 202H1 and one of PSY 260H1 OR PSY 290H1 OR PSY 240H1. **Friday 12-2 p.m.**

