

4th Year Seminar Descriptions (2025-26)

Fall

PSY 420F – Social Psychology Seminar: *The Psychology of Human Sexuality*

Sexuality is a topic of growing interest in psychology. Although sexual selection is arguably the strongest driver of human evolution and the management of sexual needs is deeply intertwined with cultural practices, psychology has left many fundamental questions regarding human sexuality largely unanswered. This course will survey multiple issues including sexual orientation, sexual attraction, short and long-term sexual relationships, and sexual fantasy. *Please be aware that we will be covering some very sensitive material.* Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 220H1/PSY 220H5/PSYB10H3/SOC 213H1.**

Dr. Geoff MacDonald

Tuesdays 1 – 3 p.m.

PSY 420F – Social Psychology Seminar: *The Social Psychology of Language*

Language is a powerful social tool that shapes how we perceive ourselves, relate to others, and construct our social worlds. While it has been extensively studied in cognitive psychology, it has often been under-appreciated in mainstream social psychology. This seminar focuses on the psychology of language and communication, with special attention given to diverse and exceptional language experiences such as bi/multilingualism, code-switching, and heritage language use. We will explore how language influences identity formation, intergroup relations, person perception, discrimination, and other social psychological processes. Students will critically engage with foundational theories and empirical research studies across various fields to gain a multidisciplinary understanding of how language intersects with social psychological variables as well as its reflection and construction of social reality. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* and one of *PSY 220H1/PSY 220H5/PSYB10H3/SOC 213H1*; completion of one of *JLP 315H1/JLP 374H1/LIN 200H1/LIN 101H1/LIN 102H1* is strongly recommended.

Dr. Odilia Yim

Wednesdays 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

PSY 430F – Personality Seminar: *Cultivating Wisdom in Daily Life*

This seminar will involve an in-depth exploration into the construct of Wisdom. We will start by looking at different definitions of wisdom including folk beliefs and cultural differences in our understanding of wisdom. We will move on to discuss the measurement of wisdom as a state and personality trait. Finally, we will explore evidence-based practices for cultivating wisdom in our daily lives and discuss outcomes related to this. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 230H1/PSY 230H5/PSYB30H3 or one of PSY 240H1/PSY 240H5/PSYB32H3.**

Dr. Amanda Sharples

Wednesdays 1 – 3 p.m.

PSY 440F – Seminar in Psychopathology and Clinical Science: *Advanced Topics in the Practice of Psychotherapy*

This seminar will involve exploration and discussion of advanced topics relevant to clinical practice, building on concepts introduced in *PSY 343H1*. Topics include further examination of the role of the counsellor (empathy, safe and effective use of self, cultural competence and cultural humility), an introduction to specialized psychotherapy (trauma-informed care, treatment of trauma, sex therapy, treatment of addiction), an introduction to a systems approach to therapy involving multiple clients (i.e., family or couples/relationship therapy), providing virtual therapy, and the role of diagnosis in psychotherapy. Completion of this course will provide students with an introduction to some of the complexities surrounding these topics in preparation for a career providing psychotherapy to clients. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of** *PSY 230H1/PSY 230H5/PSYB30H3* **or one of** *PSY 240H1/PSY 240H5/PSYB32H3*; completion of *PSY 343H1* is strongly recommended.

Dr. Malvina Skorska

Thursdays 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

PSY 471F – Seminar in Cognition: *Addiction*

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 *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of** *PSY 260H1/PSYB38H3* **or one of** *PSY 270H1/PSY 270H5/PSYB57H3* **or one of** *PSY 290H1/PSY 290H5/PSYB64H3/HMB 200H1/PSL 300H1*.

Dr. Suzanne Wood

Tuesdays 1 – 3 p.m.

PSY490F – Seminar in Behavioural Neuroscience: *Optogenetic Probing of Animal Behaviours*

The course will provide an extensive overview of diverse genetic neuron manipulation techniques currently employed within the systems neuroscience. Emphasis will be placed on exploring light-induced neuron manipulation methodologies and their practical applications. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of** *PSY 290H1/PSY 290H5/PSYB64H3/HMB 200H1/PSL 300H1*; completion of **one of** *PSY 390H1/PSY 355H5/HMB 265H1* is recommended.

Dr. Junchul Kim

Fridays 1 – 3 p.m.

Winter

PSY 420S – Social Psychology Seminar: *Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Stigma*

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. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of** *PSY 220H1/PSY 220H5/PSYB10H3/SOC 213H1*.

Dr. Alison Chasteen

Mondays 3 – 5 p.m.

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

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.

Dr. Rebecca Neel
Tuesdays 9 – 11 a.m.

PSY 430S – Personality Seminar: *The Policy Relevance of Subjective Well-Being*

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. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 230H1/PSY 230H5/PSYB30H3 or one of PSY 240H1/PSY 240H5/PSYB32H3**.

Dr. Felix Cheung
Wednesdays 1 – 3 p.m.

PSY 440S – Seminar in Psychopathology and Clinical Science: *Advanced Topics in the Practice of Psychotherapy*

This seminar will involve exploration and discussion of advanced topics relevant to clinical practice, building on concepts introduced in *PSY 343H1*. Topics include further examination of the role of the counsellor (empathy, safe and effective use of self, cultural competence and cultural humility), an introduction to specialized psychotherapy (trauma-informed care, treatment of trauma, sex therapy, treatment of addiction), an introduction to a systems approach to therapy involving multiple clients (i.e., family or couples/relationship therapy), providing virtual therapy, and the role of diagnosis in psychotherapy. Completion of this course will provide students with an introduction to some of the complexities surrounding these topics in preparation for a career providing psychotherapy to clients. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 230H1/PSY 230H5/PSYB30H3 or one of PSY 240H1/PSY 240H5/PSYB32H3**; completion of *PSY 343H1* is strongly recommended.

Dr. Malvina Skorska
Thursdays 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

PSY 460S – Seminar in Learning: *Biopsychological Approaches to Study Cognition*

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. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 260H1/PSYB38H3**; completion of *PSY 290H1* is strongly recommended.

Dr. Kaori Takehara-Nishiuchi
Thursdays 3 – 5 p.m.

PSY 471S – Seminar in Cognition: *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*

This course will ask how changes in the developing brain can influence our understanding of how infants, children, and adults learn and think. To answer this question, we will first go over the process of human brain development. We will then cover specific topics including the development of sensory and motor systems and the development of multiple aspects of learning and memory. In all cases, we will ask whether neural measures inform our understanding of how cognitive processes change with age. Prerequisites are *PSY 202H1 (or equivalent)* **and one of PSY 270H1/PSY 270H5/PSYB57H3**; completion of **one of PSY 210H1/PSY 210H5/PSYB20H3 and PSY 493H1** is strongly recommended.

Dr. Amy Finn
Mondays 3 – 5 p.m.

PSY 471S – Seminar in Cognition: *Visual Cognition*

This course will provide an in-depth examination of several current research topics in the field of visual cognition. Visual cognition resides at the intersection of perception, cognition, and action research, and the topics covered will include attention, visual working memory, inhibition and suppression, eye movements, and motor control. The course will emphasize the critical examination of research articles and how to present scientific information in posters, talks, and written papers.

Dr. Jay Pratt
Tuesdays 3 – 5 p.m.

PSY490S – Seminar in Behavioural Neuroscience: *Animal Models of Neuropsychiatric Conditions*

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.

Dr. Laura Corbit
Wednesdays 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.