

COURSE OUTLINE FOR PSYCHOLOGY 720 (2010-11)
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY, NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOUR

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of this course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Course Co-ordinator

Patrick Bennett (Room PC-412, x23012, bennett@mcmaster.ca)

Content and Schedule

This year-long course includes six modules.

Module 1: Joe Kim kimjoe@mcmaster.ca

September 13, 20, 27, October 4

Module 2: Martin Daly daly@mcmaster.ca

October 18, 25, November 1, 8 (**N.B. No class on October 11**)

Module 3: Terri Lewis lewistl@mcmaster.ca

November 22, 29, December 6 (**N.B. No class on November 15**)

Module 4: Bruce Milliken millike@mcmaster.ca

January 10, 17, 24, & 31

Module 5: Hong Jin Sun songhong@mcmaster.ca (**N.B. No class on February 21**)

February 7, 14, 28, March 7

Module 6: Patrick Bennett bennett@mcmaster.ca

March 14, 21, 28, April 4

When and Where

The course meets on Mondays, 2:30-5:30, in PC-204 during the Fall term and PC-316 during the Winter term. I will attend almost all of the classes.

Course Objectives

This course has two primary objectives. First, by offering six short modules that cover a range of research areas, our aim is to encourage breadth of knowledge across many of the areas of research represented in the department. Knowing a bit about research areas other than the one in which you specialize will help you take an active role in departmental activities, such as colloquia and informal reading groups. The more graduate students take part in such activities, the more vibrant the intellectual atmosphere in the department. Second, this course aims to teach analytical and communication skills needed for a successful scientific career. This objective will be addressed with short writing assignments, oral presentations, and engagement in discussion of course readings at our class meetings.

Assessment

Your final grade will be based on three components. First, during the last two weeks in each module students deliver oral presentations in which they lead a class discussion that covers some of the assigned readings. **Each student will give four presentations during the entire course.** The second component of your grade will be derived from written assignments. Although the details of writing assignments may vary across modules, in general they will be short (i.e., two pages) papers that

critique one or more of the assigned readings. **Students will submit eight writing assignments during the entire course.** Finally, students will be graded on their participation in, and contributions to, class discussion. A summary of the components of the overall course grade is provided in the table below:

Assignment	Fraction of Final Grade	% of Total Grade
Writing Assignments	8/14	57.1
Oral Presentations	4/14	28.6
Class Participation	2/14	14.3

Links to guidelines for the written assignments and oral presentations can be found on the course website.

Deadlines

Unless stated otherwise, written assignments will be due at the beginning of the last two classes of each module. Late papers will not be accepted and will be given a grade of zero.

You are required to meet with the module leader several days prior to delivering your oral presentation. At this meeting, be prepared to discuss the target article(s) and give an outline of your presentation.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work, and are expected to be familiar with the University's regulations regarding academic integrity (see Section 6.1, Graduate Calendar 2010-11, pp. 17).