

COURSE SYLLABUS: PSYCH 720, FALL/WINTER 2015/2016

- Course Name:** CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY, NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOUR
- Coordinator:** Dr. Louis Schmidt Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour, PC-405
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- Office Hours:** By appointment. The best way to contact me is via email.
- Location:** Classes are held Monday afternoons from 2-5pm in PC-316.
- Objectives:** This course has three aims. (1) By offering six short modules that cover a diversity of research areas within the fields of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour, our aim is to encourage breadth of knowledge in our graduate students. Such knowledge will create a more vibrant intellectual atmosphere, broaden your scientific perspective, and help you take a more active role in a range of departmental activities (e.g., weekly colloquia, informal reading groups). (2) We aim to teach you the analytical, critical thinking, and communication skills that are needed to be a successful scientist/researcher. This objective will be addressed with short writing assignments, oral presentations, and participation in class discussions. (3) We aim to raise student awareness about *professional issues* that may not have seemed important at an undergraduate level, but that have taken on increasing importance at the graduate level.
- Logistics:** McMaster University reserves the right to change or cancel course dates, assignments and their grading weights, and deadlines at the discretion of the instructor and in case of an emergency, labour disruption, civil unrest/disobedience, etc.
- Overview:** PSYCH 720 includes 6 content modules, each lasting 3 weeks. The first 3 modules will be completed in the Fall Term; the second 3 modules will be completed in the Winter Term. Interspersed among the modules are a series of five professional development activities that focus on knowledge and skills at a graduate level.

Course Calendar (subject to revision)

Term I: Fall (September—December 2015)

Professional Issues 1

SEPT 14: *Welcome; Introduction & Overview; Graduate Experience, Dr. Louis Schmidt*

Module 1

SEPT 21: **Module 1: Models of Development (Louis Schmidt <schmidtl@mcmaster.ca>)**

SEPT 28: Module 1 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

OCT 5: Module 1 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Oct 13)

OCT 12: ***Thanksgiving Day, Canada (No Class)***

Professional Issues 2

OCT 19: *Nontraditional Paths to Academic Appointments, Dr. Paul Andrews*

Module 2

OCT 26: **Module: 2 Evolution (Paul Andrews <pandrews@mcmaster.ca>)**

NOV 2: Module 2 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

NOV 9: Module 2 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Nov 16)

Module 3

NOV 16: **Module: 3 Social Neuroscience (Sukhvinder Obhi <obhi@mcmaster.ca>)**

NOV 23: Module 3 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

NOV 30: Module 3 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Dec 7)

Term II: Winter (January—April 2016)

Professional Issues 3

JAN 11: *Media & Communication, Dr. Allison Sekuler*

Module 4

JAN 18: **Module: 4 Audition (Laurel Trainor <ljt@mcmaster.ca>)**

JAN 25: Module 4 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

FEB 1: Module 4 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Feb 8)

Professional Issues 4

FEB 8: *Time Management & Organization, Dr. Joseph Kim*

FEB 15: ***Winter Break (No Class)***

Module 5

FEB 22: **Module: 5 Perception (Hong-Jin Sun <sunhong@mcmaster.ca>)**

FEB 29: Module 5 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

MAR 7: Module 5 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Mar 14)

Module 6

MAR 14: **Module: 6 Emotion (David Feinberg <feinberg@mcmaster.ca>)**

MAR 21: Module 6 continued. Oral presentations, Week #1

MAR 28: Module 6 continued. Oral presentations, Week #2 (final paper due Apr 4)

Professional Issues 5

APR 4: *Student-supervisor Professional Relationships, Dr. Judith Shedden*

Material: You are expected to attend all lectures and oral presentations, and participate in class discussions. You are responsible for all material presented in lecture and in the assigned readings. In a graduate course you are expected to go beyond the memorization of facts to display a conceptual understanding of the material. Some students will find this difficult.

Grading: Your final grade will be based on three components. (1) A major component of your grade will be derived from the writing assignments for each of the modules. Although details of the assignments will vary across the modules and will change with the instructor, in general they will be relatively short papers (i.e., 2-6 pages) that summarize, analyze, and/or critique one or more of the assigned readings. **Each student will submit short papers for each module, and together these will count 40% toward your final grade.** (2) During the last two weeks of each module, some students will deliver oral presentations and lead a discussion that covers the assigned readings for that class. **Each student will give two oral presentations—one in the fall semester and one in the winter semester—and together these will count 40% toward your final grade.** (3) Finally, students will be graded on their participation in, and contributions toward, class discussions. Students are not expected to question or comment on everything and/or make trivial or glib remarks; when you opt to say something, it should be insightful, substantive, and/or informative. **The participation component of the course will count 20% toward your final grade.** A summary of the components and overall grading scheme is provided in the table below.

Assignment	#	%
1. Module Papers	(minimum 6)	40%
2. Oral Presentations	(2)	40%
3. Participation		20%
Total		100%

Deadlines: Unless stated otherwise, written assignments are due at the beginning of class. Unless stated otherwise, assignments are turned in one week after the class period in which the work was assigned. Late papers will not be accepted and will be given a grade of zero. Students giving oral presentations are encouraged to meet with the module instructor several days prior to their presentation, and at this meeting be prepared to discuss the target article(s) and show the instructor a draft of your presentation.

Academic Dishonesty: Attention is drawn to the Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty as found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office. Any student who infringes one of these resolutions will be treated according to the published policy. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means, and can result in serious consequences for a student such as the grade of zero on an exam or assignment, loss of course credit with a notation on the student's transcript that reads "*Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty*", and/or suspension or expulsion from McMaster University. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty, please refer to McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.